**Background Information on John Brown**

This is a simple history on John Brown:

Born May 9, 1800 in Torrington, Connecticut

Parents very religious – John was taught the value of strong religious habits; also taught that slavery was a sin.

1805, family moved west to Hudson, Ohio, about 25 miles south of Cleveland.

Little schooling; preferred the “hardest & roughest” kind of play because allowed him “almost the only compensation for the confinement & restraints of school.”

Mother died when Brown was 8 years old; a terrible loss for him.

Father remarried, but Brown never accepted her as his mother.

During the War of 1812, as he would write in 1858, led cattle from father’s farm to an army post 100 miles away. On trip home, stayed with a “Very gentlemanly landlord” who owned a slave about Brown’s age; watched as one day as the landlord beat the young slave “with Iron Shovels or any other thing that came first to hand.” This was his first experience with the evil of slavery.

At age of 20 married Dianthe Lusk, who was 19. She died 12 years later while delivering their 7th child.

Remarried Mary Ann Day within a year; she bore him 13 more children. Nine of his children would not reach their teenage years.

Tried his hand at many professions: tanning, surveying, farming, wool merchant, cattleman, but never did that well in any of them. Never lost his desire to do something about slavery, however.

Followed five of his sons out to Kansas in October 1855; became captain of the “Liberty Guards,” an anti-slavery semi-militia organization.

Took part in fighting in what became known as “Bleeding Kansas,” including the late May 1856 raid on families along Pottawatomie Creek, during which Brown and his followers murdered five pro-slavery men, persons Brown suspected being part of a recent burning and looting of Lawrence, Kansas.

Brown continued to operate out in Kansas, but now was a wanted man. In one late August 1856 action against pro-slavery elements, Brown’s son Frederick was killed.

Brown called for a “Constitutional Convention” to meet in Ontario, Canada; abolitionists met to create a “Provisional Constitution” for an area of the South which Brown would rid of slavery. Brown also announced that he was planning on striking a blow on slavery at some point in the South. This was the beginning of his planning for the Harpers Ferry Raid.

With the financial backing of six Massachusetts abolitionists, called the “Secret Six,” Brown raised enough funds for his Harpers Ferry Raid.

July 3, 1859, Brown arrives at the Kennedy Farmhouse in Maryland, just a few miles from the Potomac River and the Virginia industrial town of Harpers Ferry.

Brown had recruited 21 men to assist him in his raid on Harpers Ferry. Frederick Douglass had declined, but Harriet Tubman agreed to help, but was unable to do so, ads she became ill before the raid.

October 16, 1859, Brown and most of his Raiders entered Harpers Ferry, surprising the town, and took control of the two weapons factories and the two arsenal buildings where some 100,000 weapons were stored.

The morning of October 18, 1859, U.S. Marines from Washington, D.C. stormed the Engine House, the Armory building Brown and a few of his fellow Raiders were defending – and where they were holding about a dozen hostages. In the three-minute long attack, two Raiders were killed and Brown was injured.

October 27 – October 31, 1859, John Brown’s trial took place in nearby Charles Town, Virginia; on the final day of the trial, Brown was found guilty of murder, treason against the State of Virginia, and attempting to incite slaves in rebellion. His fate: to be hanged until dead.

December 2, 1859, John Brown is hanged in Charles Town, Virginia. His body was taken by his wife the next day and is buried on their farm in North Elba, New York.