

## Special Event

Election Day 1860: The Sesquicentennial  
October 9, 2010

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

Harpers Ferry National Historical Park

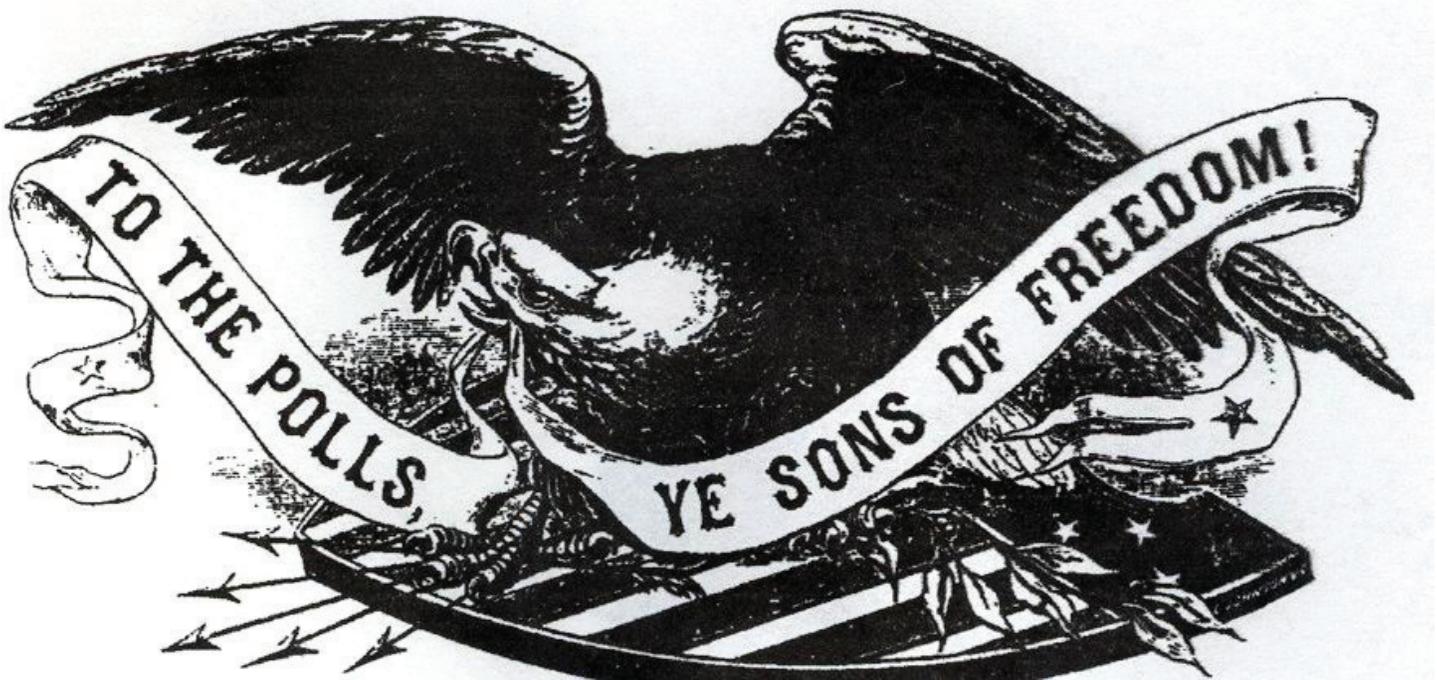


Welcome to Harpers Ferry National Historical Park. Today's living history program, *Election Day 1860* depicts the town on Election Day 1860. Stroll through this Virginia community, listen to music of the day, watch a militia competition, review the issues dividing the country, watch a military parade, learn about the candidates, and vote for the 1860 candidate of your choice.

The Republican candidate, Abraham Lincoln, is not on the ballot in the state of Virginia. Politically, the south is Democratic and hatred for the so-called "Black Republican" is intense. The most influential local politician is Armory Superin-

tendent Alfred M. Barbour. Barbour is the local elector for the Northern Democrat, Stephen A. Douglas, and holds great sway over his Armory work force and their vote for President.

Each of the presidential candidates' political platforms will be interpreted at the main tent on the park green. Displays will illustrate the social, economic, cultural and political divisions that permeated the national scene in the 1860s. Polls for the visitor and living history volunteers will be open in the park's Dry Goods Store exhibit, offering everyone a chance to vote on whom Harpers Ferry will help elect as the President in 1860.



### Historical Background



On October 16, 1859, abolitionist John Brown (pictured left) and his "Provisional Army" of 16 white and 5 black men attacked the U.S. Armory at Harpers Ferry. His goal was to seize weapons and move throughout the south arming and freeing slaves, forcing an end to slavery. On October

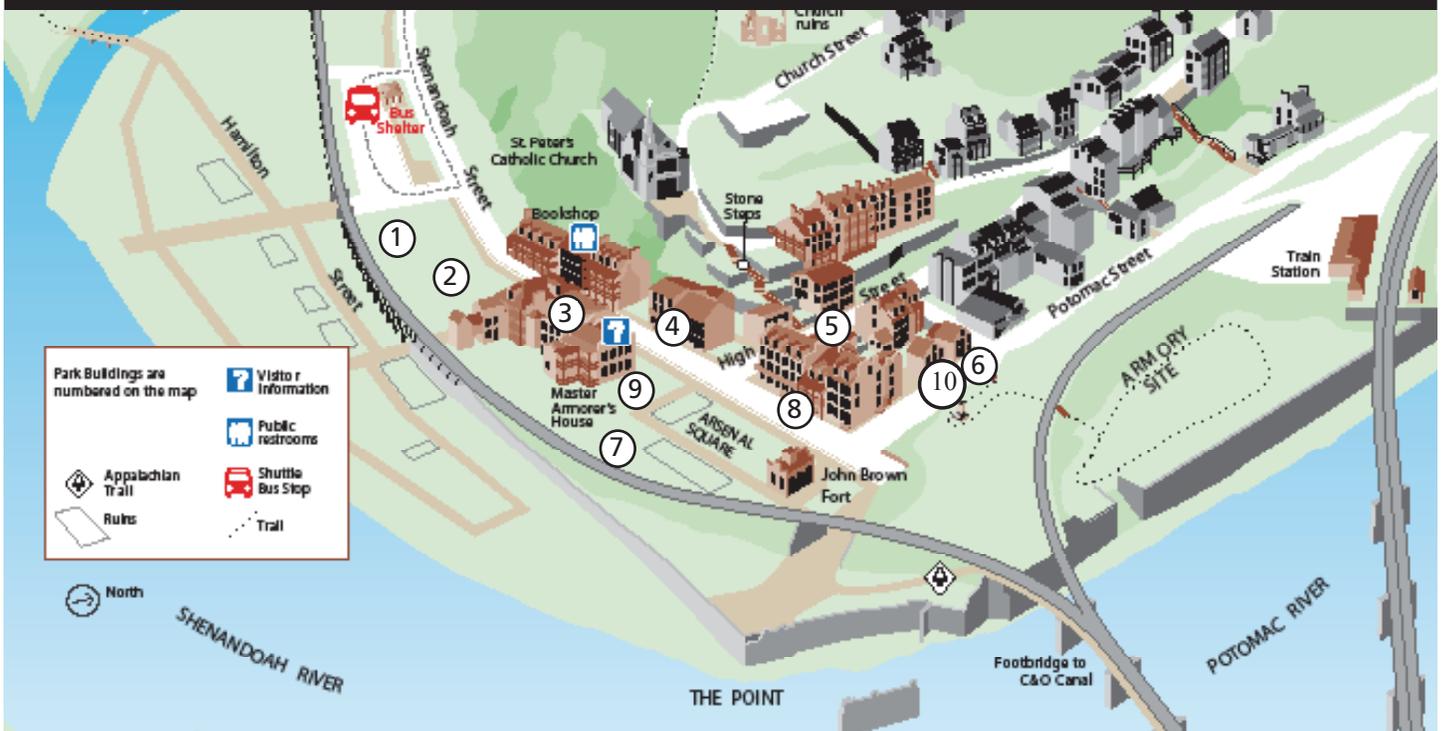
18, U. S. Marines captured Brown and some of his men at the Armory fire engine house, today called John Brown's Fort. They were tried and found guilty of treason, conspiring to lead a slave insurrection and murder. Brown was hanged on December 2, 1859, representing a murder to some and to others a martyr.

Following Brown's trial and execution, tensions increased throughout the country over the issues of slavery and political rights. The south feared

additional militant abolitionists would take up where Brown left off. The raid failed; but it polarized the nation on the question of slavery. In response to Brown's raid, the south prepared for war. Citizens rushed to join their local militia companies. Units were formed to guard against future attacks and to provide defense should the state secede from the Union. The Floyd Guards and the newly organized Armory Guards were ever vigilant at Harpers Ferry. Each night armed citizens patrolled the streets, fearful that renewed violence could occur.

On November 6, 1860, Americans, who were allowed to vote, cast their ballots for the next President of the United States. This momentous political contest resulted in the election of Abraham Lincoln and provoked secession of southern states. Civil War soon followed.

# October 9 Election Day 1860



Experience Living History! Special Exhibits Today  
Saturday 11:00 - 4:30

- ① National Perspective
- ② Local Perspective, Militia Recruiting Station  
Ladies Auction Booth
- ④ Frankels Clothing Store: Militia Uniforms
- ⑤ High St. Campaign Headquarters &  
Roeder's Home (Republican supporters)
- ⑩ White Hall Tavern: A Crossroads of National  
Politics

Time	Location	Program
11:00-12:00	②	A Divided Nation Goes to the Polls Ranger guided tour
11:30-12:00	①	The Four Pigs: A Political Fairy Tale A children's program
12:00-1:00	⑥	Defenders of Freedom Grand Militia Muster, Parade & Speeches
1:00-4:30	③	Polls Open for Voting
1:00-4:30	⑤	Campaign Headquarters open
1:00-3:00	⑨	Grand Civic Militia Barbeque: How auctions and picnics supported local militia companies in reaction to John Brown's 1859 Raid
1:00-2:00	①	A Crusade For Freedom: The Northern Perspective A musical performance by the Indiana Brass Band
2:00-3:00	②	A Divided Nation Goes to the Polls Ranger guided tour
3:00-4:00	⑧	Election Day Speeches and Debates in front of the John Brown Museum
3:30-4:00	①	The Four Pigs: A Political Fairytale A children's program
4:00-4:30	⑦	Defenders of Hearth and Home - State and local militia competition
4:30-5:00	⑦	Grand Militia Muster and Parade
5:00-5:30	⑧	The People Have Spoken Election Results