



John Brown,  
circa 1859

John Brown’s Raiders

Twenty-one men followed John Brown to Harpers Ferry. Twenty-one individuals with different backgrounds and occupations, rich, poor, black, white, some born free and others born into bondage; men with many differences and one common goal - - to end slavery. Knowing the risks, they joined Brown’s Provisional Army and sixteen gave their lives with the hope that four million slaves would one day be free.

*“I am dying for freedom. I could not die for a better cause. I had rather die than be a slave.”*

Raider John A. Copeland, Jr.,  
December 16,1859, the day of his execution



Jeremiah  
Anderson

April 17, 1833 -  
October 18, 1859

A grandson of a  
Virginia slave -  
holder, Anderson  
lived in Illinois and

Iowa before moving to Kansas in 1857. He fought with the Free State forces and joined Brown on a raid to free slaves in Missouri in 1858. Trapped with Brown, he was bayoneted by a Marine during the final assault on the Armory engine house. He died a few hours later.



Osborne Perry  
Anderson

July 27, 1830 -  
December 13, 1872

A free African American  
living in Canada,  
Anderson worked for  
the *Provincial Freeman*

newspaper in Chatham when he met Brown at the Chatham Convention. He escaped after the raid by walking through the mountains into Pennsylvania and taking trains to Canada. He penned *A Voice From Harpers Ferry* in 1861 and joined the Union army in 1864. Osborne Anderson died of tuberculosis in Washington, D.C.



Oliver Brown

March 9, 1838 -  
October 18, 1859

Oliver was the  
youngest of  
Brown’s sons to  
join the raid. He  
fought with his

father and brothers in Kansas. Oliver and his 17-year- old wife, Martha, traveled to the Kennedy Farm in Maryland to help prepare for the raid on Harpers Ferry. He was mortally wounded on October 17 and died on the 18th.



Owen Brown

November 4, 1824 -  
January 9, 1889

Named for his  
grandfather, Owen  
fought with his  
father in Kansas  
and at Harpers

Ferry. Appointed Captain in Brown’s Provisional Army, he guarded rifles and pikes, waiting to arm others who came to join the fight at “the ferry.” His determination and great physical strength helped four raiders escape from Harpers Ferry. After several years in Ohio, he moved to California with other family members and died there.



Watson Brown

October 7, 1835 -  
October 19, 1859

During the “Bleeding  
Kansas” years, Watson  
worked the family farm  
in North Elba, New  
York, while his father

and brothers fought against the spread of slavery in Kansas. Four years later he decided to join his father at Harpers Ferry. Leaving a wife and baby he traveled to Virginia. Watson was mortally wounded on October 17 while carrying a white flag. He died on October 19 after the raid had ended.



John E. Cook

Summer, 1830 -  
December 16, 1859

Cook came from a  
well-to-do family  
and studied law in  
New York, before  
joining Brown in

Kansas to fight against slavery. An advance man for Brown, Cook moved to Harpers Ferry more than a year before the raid. He taught school and married Mary Kennedy, a local girl. Gathering supplies, Cook was stranded on the Maryland shore. He traveled north with other raiders, but was captured, tried and hanged in Charles Town.



John Anthony  
Copeland, Jr.

August 15, 1834 -  
December 16, 1859

Copeland, a free  
African American,  
was a student at  
Oberlin College in

Ohio and a nephew of Raider Lewis Leary. Captured during the raid, his conduct at his trial impressed Judge Richard Parker and Prosecutor Andrew Hunter to the extent that they would have pardoned him, had it been an option. Copeland was tried and hanged in Charles Town.



Barclay Coppoc

January 4, 1839 -  
September 3, 1861

Brother of Raider Edwin  
Coppoc, Barclay gave up  
his mother’s Quaker  
beliefs and used violence  
to end slavery. Acting as

a rear guard, he never entered Harpers Ferry and escaped. He became a first lieutenant in the Third Kansas Infantry on July 24, 1861. He was mortally injured on September 2, when his troop train plunged into the Platte River, after Confederates had burned the trestle supports. He died the next day.



Edwin Coppoc

June 30, 1835 -  
December 16, 1859

Brother of Raider  
Barclay Coppoc,  
Edwin shot and  
killed Harpers Ferry  
Mayor, Fontaine

Beckham. He was captured in the engine house, tried and sentenced to hang. The night before their execution, he and John Cook nearly escaped from the Charles Town jail. He was hanged on December 16, 1859 in Charles Town.



**Shields Green**

circa 1836 - December 16, 1859

Born a slave in South Carolina, Green escaped, finding freedom in Canada. In Roches-

ter, NY, he worked as a servant and clothes cleaner and met Frederick Douglass. Douglass introduced Green to Brown and he decided to “go with the old man.” He was captured in the Armory engine house, tried and hanged on December 16 in Charles Town.



**Albert Hazlett**

September 21, 1837 - March 16, 1860

Hazlett fought in Kansas with the Free State forces and joined Brown there in 1858. He and Osborne Anderson held

the U.S. Arsenal during the raid, escaping when their situation seemed hopeless. He was caught in Carlisle, PA, on October 22, 1859. He was tried and later hanged on March 16, 1860, in Charles Town.



**John Henry Kagi**

March 15, 1835 - October 17, 1859

Kagi was a self-educated, intelligent man who developed a hatred of slavery

while teaching in Virginia. Brown’s most trusted lieutenant, he tried to convince Brown to take the battle to the surrounding hills. Brown refused. Kagi was in charge of the U.S. Rifle Factory during the raid. Grossly outnumbered, he was shot and killed while trying to escape across the Shenandoah River.



**Lewis Leary**

March 17, 1835 - October 18, 1859

Leary, a free African American, left a wife and baby to fight against slavery. He and his nephew,

John Copeland, joined Brown on October 15. After rounding up hostages, he was ordered to hold the U.S. Rifle Factory. He was mortally wounded while retreating across the Shenandoah River on October 17 and died ten hours later.



**William Leeman**

March 20, 1839 - October 17, 1859

At age 17, Leeman left a job in a shoe factory in Massachusetts and moved to Kansas with a group of anti-slavery

settlers. There he became a member of Brown’s “Volunteer Regulars.” During the raid on Harpers Ferry, he was shot and killed while attempting to escape across the Potomac River.



**Francis Jackson Meriam**

November 17, 1837 - November 28, 1865

Despite his frailty and blindness in one eye, Meriam’s hatred of slavery

made him determined to join Brown. He served as Brown’s rear guard in Maryland and escaped Harpers Ferry. During the Civil War he served as a captain in the Third South Carolina Colored Infantry.



**Dangerfield Newby**

circa 1815 - October 17, 1859

Born a slave in Fauquier County, VA, Newby’s white owner- father freed

his son after moving to Ohio. Newby joined Brown with hopes of freeing his wife, Harriet, and their six children from slavery. At age 44 he was the oldest raider and also the first one to be killed. Following the raid, his family was sold south.



**Aaron Stevens**

circa 1833 - March 16, 1860

Stevens, a soldier in the Mexican War, had escaped from Fort Leavenworth after attacking an officer. He

joined Brown in Kansas and followed him to Virginia. Wounded while carrying a flag of truce, he was carried by Joseph Brua, one of Brown’s prisoners, to the railroad station. He was later tried and hanged on March 16, 1860 in Charles Town.



**Stewart Taylor**

October 29, 1836 - October 17, 1859

Born at Uxbridge, Canada, Taylor discovered a common bond with Brown in their

hatred of slavery. Brown’s daughter, Annie, described Taylor in this way, “He considered it his duty to go to Harpers Ferry and he did, although he knew he was going to his end.” Taylor was killed defending the engine house on October 17.



**Dauphin Thompson**

April 17, 1838 - October 18, 1859

Dauphin was the youngest of 18 children and the younger brother of

Raider William Thompson. On October 18 Thompson was trapped in the Armory engine house after the Marines stormed the building. He died from a bayonet thrust.



**William Thompson**

August, 1833 - October 17, 1859

The Thompson brothers were neighbors of the Brown family in North Elba, NY. An angry mob seized William

while he was carrying a flag of truce and held him captive in a nearby hotel. On October 17, after Mayor Fontaine Beckham was killed, the mob dragged William out to the railroad bridge and shot him in the head. They threw his body into the river and used it for target practice.



**Charles Plummer Tidd**

circa 1834 - February 8, 1862

Tidd, a veteran of the Kansas Wars, had been with Brown since 1857.

After the raid began, Tidd went back to Maryland for weapons and supplies. He joined four other raiders and escaped. He enlisted in the Twenty-first Massachusetts volunteers on July 19, 1861. He died of fever on a troop ship February 8, 1862.