

John Brown's Raid Tour Outline
Independent Service Plan
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- I. Introduction: at the Green
 - A. welcome message, safety, brief overview
 - B. Introduce John Brown
 - 1. born May 9, 1800
 - 2. lifestyle
 - 3. family
 - C. Why John Brown?
 - 1. interaction with slavery
 - 2. been taught that most forcibly by father against it
 - 3. wandering life
 - a. seeking a purpose
 - b. very pious, religious
 - D. Tensions
 - 1. Kansas in 1854 (a five year war between proslavery and antislavery factions full of death and destruction)
 - a. something must be done
 - b. sons are there
 - c. what does there

Transition: Now that we know a little bit about why Brown chooses to act against slavery, lets move on to find out why he chose Harpers Ferry.

- II. Why Harpers Ferry?
 - A. Armory and Arsenal
 - 1. how fits into plan
 - a. Brown come to believe that location within slave states should be selected where raids on slave plantations could be easily carried out and the freed bondsmen sent to safety in the North
 - i. town lay near mountains which find beneficial for hiding
 - ii. only 40 miles from PA a free state
 - iii. town had unguarded gun factory
 - 2. about armory and arsenal
 - a. 1794 established to make weapons for government
 - i. picked by George Washington because of water power, timber on hills, iron ore deposits, and family connection
 - b. becomes machined in 1816 by Hall
 - c. churning out 1500 to 2,000 weapons a month
 - d. armory layout
 - i. 20 brick building extending 6 football fields along Potomac River, employing about 400 white men who get the best wages in town
 - 3. when Brown there, 100,000 guns being stored in Arsenal buildings
 - a. all being refitted to be percussion and rifled

B. what town like in 1859

1. when John Brown arrives in Harpers Ferry area under the alias Isaac Smith in summer of 1859...
 - a. about 3,000 peoples living in town with 150 of them being slaves
 - b. dirty industrial town at the confluence to two rivers and two railroads
 - c. two-thirds of the town missing today, imagine what would have been like

Transition: As we walk to our next stop, look around you and imagine what the town would have looked like in the year 1859 right before John Brown comes. Try to see the benefits of raiding this place to free the 4 million African Americans held in bondage and think about what would have been necessary to raid a place such as Harpers Ferry. We will now move to our next stop where we will discuss Brown's plan and preparation for the raid.

III. The Plan and Preparation: at the point

- A. include Provisional Constitution
 1. serve as law the land while army of liberation institute new government
 2. new government exist side-by-side with US government
- B. finances
 1. secret committee of six individuals of varying backgrounds who help Brown raise funds for expedition
- C. sends on the raiders, John Cook, to act as spy and informant in town
- D. military drill for men helping in raid
- E. establish themselves near by
 1. adopts pseudonym Isaac Smith, a farmer looking for land and prospector
 2. Kennedy Farm, about five miles from town, eventually becomes main base of operation
 - a. daughter and daughter –in-law come to give less suspicion and lend it a homier feel
 3. gather supplies
 - a. 200 sharps rifles and pistols, 1,000 pikes
 - b. men start to come in small groups

Transition: Brown's plan took a number of years to develop and many people to make happen. To find out what actually occurred during the raid, we will move to our next stop, the Engine House.

IV. The Raid: at the Fort

- A. bands of 21 men – a Provisional Army of the United States
 1. 5 blacks and 16 whites all willing to die to free the slaves
 2. gains many of the men from time in Kansas
- B. October 16, 1859
 1. at 8pm Brown states, "*Men, get on your arms, we will proceed to the Ferry.*"
 2. rainy, cold evening that men march out into
 3. entered town around 10:30 pm where take first prisoner
 - a. William Williams, the railroad watchman

4. second prisoner, Daniel Whelan the army night watchman, taken
 - a. Brown states as enters armory with prisoners, *"I came here from Kansas, and this is a slave state; I want to free all the Negroes in this state; I have possession now the United States armory, and if the citizens interfere with me I must only burn the town and have blood."*
5. once armory taken, men split up
 - a. sent to watch bridge across Shenandoah
 - b. move to guard arsenal
 - c. move to Rifle Factory on Virginius Island to secure weapons there
 - d. sent to capture Colonel Lewis Washington, the great-grand-nephew of George Washington, so Virginia not able to organize local militia quickly
 - e. pick up John Allstadt, a slaveholder, on the way back to HaFe
6. alarms begin to sound in town when next railroad watchman come to relieve Williams, gets away
7. Heywood Shepherd story
8. increase in number of prisoners as armory workers arrive to work, all kept in Fire Engine house, the first building in the complex

C. October 17

1. town begins to be alerted
 - a. local militia notified of raid
 - b. when train on B&O let through, the railroad president, President Buchanan, and VA Governor Henry Wise notified
2. townspeople begin to move in against raiders
3. one prisoner released in exchange for food
4. militia move into town
 - a. come up through basement of Gault House Saloon
 - b. first raider, Dangerfield Newby, killed
5. Brown try a couple of truces but townspeople not believe
 - a. more raiders killed as slowly blocked in
6. town mayor Fontaine Beckham killed and townspeople outraged
 - a. Isaac Gilbert story
7. Brown separate prisoners
 - a. 11 most important moved to engine room
 - b. others remained crowded in guardroom
8. more militia arrive and come close to ending raid
 - a. able to free prisoners in guardroom
9. town go under lock down to prevent any help coming to raiders
10. during night, military activity slow while non-military activity increase
 - a. many men become drunk and rowdy
11. 90 US marines under Army colonel Robert I. Lee march on Harpers Ferry with orders from Secretary of War Floyd and President to take command of all forces in town

D. October 18

- 1.surrender terms offered and denied
 - a. Lieutenant J.E.B. Stuart present terms
- 2.Lieutenant Israel Greene command group of marines to attack fort
 - a. try sledge hammers
 - b. resort to latter used as battering ram which eventually puncture doors
 - i. allow Greene and marines to break through
- 3.battle last three minutes
 - a. 1 marine killed
 - b. 2 raiders killed immediately
 - c. 2 other raiders surrender
 - d. Brown knocked unconscious
 - e. no hostages injured

E. Raid Conclusions

- 1.at least 15 people died in raid
 - a. 9 of Brown's men
 - b. 3 citizens
 - c. 1 slave
 - d. 1 marine
 - e. Heywood Shepherd
- 2.7 raiders escape and 2 of them eventually were captured and executed later
- 3.Brown taken to be questioned where states
 - a. *"I wish to say furthermore, that you had better – all you people at the South – prepare yourselves for a settlement of that question that must come up for settlement sooner than you are prepared for it. The sooner you are prepared the better. You may dispose of me very easily; I am nearly disposed of now; but this question is still to be settled – this Negro question I mean – the end of that is not yet."*

V. Conclusion

- A. Brown taken , along with 4 captured surviving raiders, to jail in Charles Town and put on trial
 - 1.why not in Federal Court
 - 2.crimes
 - a. treason against the Commonwealth of Virginia
 - b. conspiring with slaves to rebel
 - c. murder
 - 3.Brown found guilty of all three along with other raiders
- B. at 11 am on December 2, Brown executed surrounded by 1500 soldiers
 - 1.no citizens allowed because fear escape attempts
 - 2.when die, a militia colonel yell,
 - a. *"So perish all such enemies of Virginia! All such enemies of the Union! All such foes of the human race!"*
 - 3.Brown's final words
 - a. *"I, John Brown, am now quite certain that the crimes of this guilty land will never be purged away but with blood. I had as I now*

think vainly flattered myself that without very much bloodshed it might be done.”

- b. words ended up being prophetic for the nation just 18 months after the raid would be ripped apart by war beginning with those first shots at Fort Sumter

C. Reaction to the Raid

- 1.raid created a national furor and generated a wave of emotion widening the sectional breach over slavery
 - a. conservative Northern opinion – condemn raid as word of madman
 - b. radical north – *“the best news America ever had”*
 - i. see Brown as saint and martyr
 - c. white south – shuddered
 - i. see what Brown did as large North conspiracy to instigate servile insurrection
 - ii. organization of militia companies increase
- 2.disunion would continue between north and south through 1860 when Lincoln elected and some southern states sever their ties with the union
- 3.John Brown’s final words proved true in the end by way of the Civil War
 - a. by 1863, becomes national policy to end slavery by force of arms
 - b. through deaths of 620,000 soldiers, 4 million were finally free as Brown wanted and hoped

D. Harpers Ferry after the raid

- 1.some would say that Brown’s raid on Harpers Ferry truly set off the Civil War and certainly the war did not leave the town unscarred
 - a. armory and arsenal burned within days of Virginia succeeding, the machinery moved south the produce weapons for the confederacy
 - b. 1862, the point burned to the ground removing those crucial reminders of Brown’s raid like the Wager House and the water tower Fontaine Beckham hid behind and the railroad depot
- 2.those scars left by war were further deepened after the Civil war when neglect and floods would completely destroy the towns hope of renewal

Conclusion: Many ask if what John Brown did here in Harpers Ferry was right or wrong. The answer to that question lies within each of us, something we all can consider and answer for ourselves. Harpers Ferry will remember John Brown through the Marine Corps battlefield in front the engine house and the stories we like to tell you all on these tours. I thank you all for joining me on this tour and I hope that you will pass on John Brown’s story, and the stories of countless others who walked on these streets.