



John Brown, Abolitionist (1800 - 1859)

John Brown was one of the most outspoken people against slavery, but he resorted to violent methods to advance the cause. He was born in Connecticut to a strong abolitionist and learned to hate slavery. At the age of twenty-five, he established a station on the Underground Railroad at his tannery.

In 1855, he and five of his sons went to Kansas to help the territory become a free state. In retaliation for the murders of abolitionists, Brown and his sons killed five pro-slavery settlers in cold blood. In the late 1850s, he went on several killing sprees of plantation owners in order to free their slaves. He then went to Virginia hoping to start a slave rebellion.

On the night of October 16, 1859, he captured two railway bridges and the U.S. arsenal at Harpers Ferry, Virginia (now West Virginia). He held out in the engine house of the arsenal, but was captured the next day by U.S. Marines. He was hanged for treason on December 2, 1859. After his death, John Brown became a martyr of the abolitionist movement.