

The John Brown Birthplace



Archaeological Preserve
Torrington, Connecticut

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Cover: Oldest known photograph of the John Brown Birthplace ca.1863. Collection of the Torrington Historical Society.

Above left: Archaeologists preparing to survey the John Brown Birthplace at the start of the excavation.

Above Right: Photograph of the Connecticut Freedom Trail plaque at the Birthplace site.

Left: Photograph of the John Brown Birthplace site and surrounding yard. Photographs courtesy of Nick Bellantoni.



The John Brown Birthplace Archaeological Preserve

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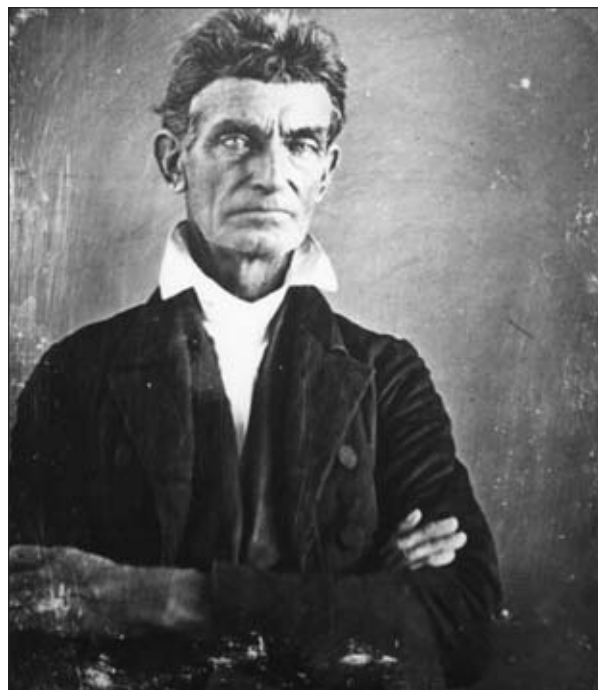
Torrington Historical Society

The John Brown Birthplace

A Connecticut State Archaeological Preserve

Introduction

On December 2, 1859, John Brown was hanged. He had been convicted of murder, slave insurrection, and treason as a result of his raid on a federal arsenal in Harpers Ferry, Virginia in October of that same year. He was willing to commit such extreme acts because of his belief that slavery should be abolished at all costs. He had hoped that his actions might spur a rebellion that would spread throughout the South and result in the freedom of all slaves. To some people he was a murderous lunatic; to others he was an unfortunate martyr for the abolitionist cause; and to many others he was a hero whose actions indirectly contributed to the onset of the Civil War, which began in 1861. What makes someone believe so fervently in a cause? In order to better understand the actions and motives of the man, it may be helpful to explore his origins and the people and ideas that were important to him.



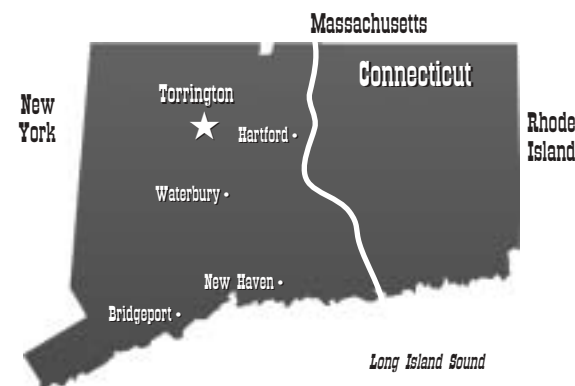
John Brown, the Abolitionist

As a child and young man, the growing abolitionist movement had a significant impact on John Brown. From its beginning in Western Europe and the United States in the late 18th century, the members of the movement sought to “abolish” the institution of slavery on moral grounds. Initially supported by religious groups, notably the Quakers, the movement was essentially non-violent. Between 1777 and 1804, all states north of Maryland abolished slavery. However in the South, where the institution had great economic value, resistance to legally ending slavery was adamant. As a result, “abolitionists” realized that political power must be used in collaboration with moral persuasion to achieve their goals. John Brown, pictured above, came to believe that the process was moving too slowly and that violence was necessary and justifiable in order to achieve freedom for the enslaved. Original ca.1856 daguerreotype in the collection of the Boston Athenaeum.

The John Brown Birthplace Archaeological Preserve

John Brown lived in Torrington with his family for the first five years of his life. Almost from the day of his execution, his Connecticut birthplace became a pilgrimage destination for those who revered the man and the principles he upheld. Although the house itself was destroyed by fire in 1918, the site has remained a destination for sightseers and admirers. The 40-acre tract containing the site is currently owned by the Torrington Historical Society, which merged in 2000 with the John Brown Association, which had been organized in 1901 with the mission to perpetuate Brown's memory and preserve his birthplace. The site is also a stop on the Connecticut Freedom Trail. An archaeological project undertaken in 2002 has resulted in the site's designation as a State Archeological Preserve. This program protects and celebrates Connecticut's diverse archaeological heritage. The Preserve program fosters a partnership between property owners and the State Historic Preservation Office to conserve

and interpret significant archaeological resources throughout the state. This educational booklet, funded through the Torrington Historical Society, celebrates the John Brown Birthplace, hoping to increase the awareness and understanding of the motives and activities of this son of Connecticut.





The John Brown Birthplace is located in a quiet wooded setting in the area often identified as the Litchfield Hills of Connecticut. The ca. late nineteenth century photograph above shows a visitor traveling up the former rocky road to the Brown house. Collection of the Torrington Historical Society.

The Setting

Torrington is located in the hills of north-western Connecticut. In 1732, the Colony of Connecticut granted the Town of Windsor several additional townships, one of which was Torrington. Three years later, Ebenezer Lyman Jr., from Durham, Connecticut, purchased a parcel from his father, who had purchased it from one of the original Windsor proprietors and became the first settler. Named for Torrington in Devonshire England, the town was officially

incorporated in October 1740 and the residents swiftly organized their own local government. Initially, the homes of the Torrington settlers were constructed in the hills to the west of the Naugatuck River. As the population slowly increased, new settlers found that the eastern hill area was equally suited for agricultural pursuits.

Until the mid-nineteenth century Torrington was primarily an agricultural community that was comprised of small family farms and a few mills along the rivers and streams. The hills of

Torrington were particularly suited for dairy cows and the area became a center for cheese, milk, and butter production. Beef and pork were also market products for the local farmers. Some of the crops raised included wheat, rye, corn, beans, and turnips.

By 1800, the population of the town had reached about 1400. The rocky hill country supported numerous family farms with many of the people of the Litchfield Hills sharing a common Congregationalist tradition.

The House

Joel Loomis, who purchased the property in 1747, might have been the first owner who actually lived somewhere on the property. Following Loomis' death in 1785, his oldest daughter Elizabeth's husband, John Morehouse, was the administrator of the estate. The will called for the division of the property among the heirs, with John and Elizabeth receiving eight acres. It is likely that they built the saltbox house, where John Brown would later be born, on their acreage. Just four years later, the Morehouses sold their parcel to David William who later sold the land and house to Owen Brown, John Brown's father.



A view of Torrington by John Warner Barber, ca. 1835. Connecticut Historical Collections.

Owen Brown

Owen Brown was born in Simsbury, Connecticut on February 16, 1771. The son of John and Hannah Brown, Owen was raised in a devout Christian family. The Brown family tradition holds that Owen was a sixth generation descendant of Peter Brown, the English carpenter who was one of the signers of the famous Mayflower Compact that was the first agreement for self-government ever put in force in America.

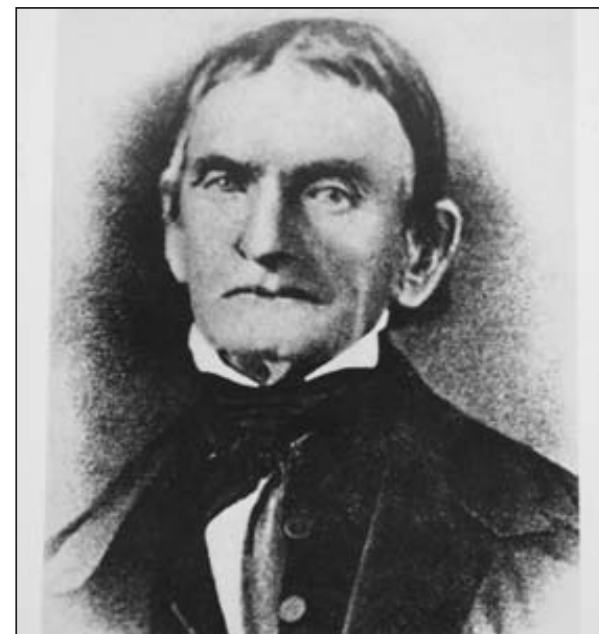
As a child, one of the most significant experiences of Owen's life took place not long after his father's death. A neighbor, Captain John Fast, sent a slave to help Hannah Brown with plowing the family fields. Years later, Owen wrote "I used to go out into the field with this slave – called Sam, and he used to carry me on his back, and I fell in love with him. He worked but a few days, and went home sick with the pleurisy, and died very suddenly."

Slavery in Connecticut

Although slavery was common in the United States during the eighteenth century, many New England states, including Connecticut, began to abolish the practice. In 1774 the process began in Connecticut when the import of slaves was outlawed. Ten years later, the state granted freedom for slaves born after 1784 when they reached the age of 21. By 1788 Connecticut residents were prohibited from participating in the slave trade. The emancipation process was a slow one with approximately 950 slaves still present in Connecticut in 1800. Historians found that there were two slaves in Torrington, Phoebe Thrall and Tilly Whiting, when the Brown family moved there in 1800. There were also three free African-Americans living near the Brown farm. In 1848 slavery was finally prohibited throughout the state.

Owen further wrote, "this was the first funeral I ever attended in the days of my youth."

During the 1780s and 1790s, Owen was exposed to a "great awakening" as a member of the Congregational Church. It was during an experience at church that Owen became a confirmed abolitionist. He wrote about his memories when a slave-holding minister from the South came to preach to his congregation. The minister had brought his slaves with him, a husband, wife and their children. When the minister was ready to leave Connecticut, his slaves were unwilling to return to the South with him. Owen wrote "there was some excitement amongst the people, with some for and some against." He was shocked when the minister said that he would leave the man and take the woman and children home with him. When one member of the Congregation asked how he could separate the married couple, the minister replied that he had married them himself, but "did not enjoin obedience on the woman." The



Owen Brown, father of John Brown. Copy of a photograph in the collection of the Torrington Historical Society.



From the day that John Brown was hanged, his birthplace became an important destination for his supporters and the many individuals who recognized the historical significance of his actions. The above photograph shows a visiting YMCA group in 1894. Photograph by F. J. Graham. Collection of the Torrington Historical Society.



Saltbox Architecture

Until approximately 1825, the primary type of architectural design for houses in New England was the salt box style. This type of structure was initially one and 1/2 stories high (to avoid the tax Queen Anne levied on all two-story houses). Later, two-story saltbox houses were common. Most of these houses had central chimneys and in many cases a partial or full lean-to rear addition. This architectural style was common for the early settlement of Connecticut, but only persisted in the more rural areas of Connecticut because many local carpenters clung to the older style of house design.

minister had reasoned that she should therefore return with him. Owen could not condone the injustice and wrote, "ever since I have been an Abolitionist" (DuBois 1909).

On February 11, 1793 Owen Brown married Ruth Mills in Simsbury, Connecticut. The couple moved to Norfolk where Owen worked as a tanner. In 1799 Owen Brown purchased a small homestead from David Williams in Torrington, about 10 miles from his Norfolk residence.

Historian Mark McEachern's research found that Owen Brown was mentioned several times

in the account books of Torrington storeowner Rebecca Hodges. Many local residents purchased or bartered goods at her store. The earliest charge for Owen Brown was on March 28, 1799, when he was charged by Hodges for the following: "to my slay [sic] to go to Norfolk 2 times." It is likely that this was the date he rented transport to move his family to Torrington. Later entries in Hodges' account books indicate that he installed window glass and made other improvements to the house. After the family settled in their new home, Owen built a tannery on the edge of his land near a small stream. His activities as a local tanner were also recorded in Hodges' account books, where several entries indicate that he was given hides to tan.

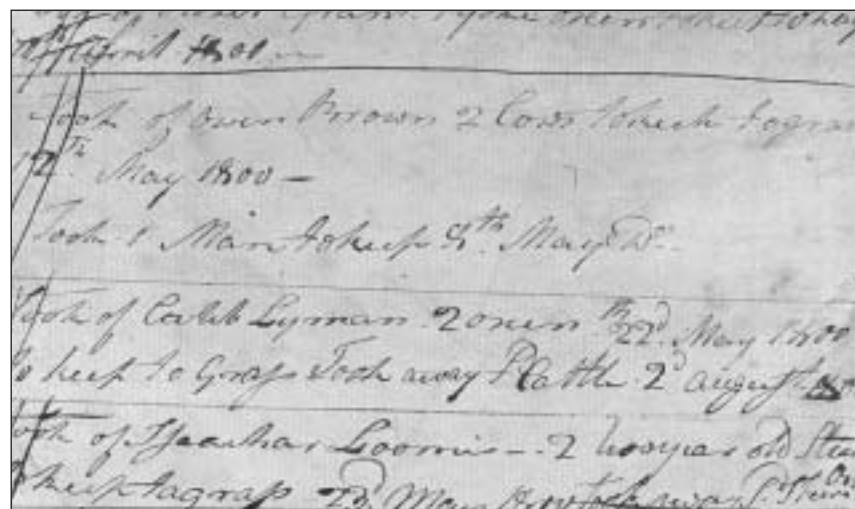
Brown's tannery and workshop was a popular destination among the men of the community. His business was often the center of lively political and literary discussions. In his *History of Torrington*, Samuel Orcutt described the shop as a place where young men would come to spend hours with Owen, who would often require his visitors to read aloud to him. His love of the written word may be the result of his painful stammering. Throughout his life, he had a severe stammer that was remarked on by a neighbor who later wrote

He was an earnestly devout and religious man, of the old Connecticut fashion; and one peculiarity of his impressed his name and person indelibly on my memory: he was an inveterate and most painful stammerer—the first specimen of that infirmity that I had ever seen, and according to my recollection, the worst I had ever known...I have never to this day seen a man struggling ... with a word stuck in his throat without

remembering good Mr. Owen Brown who could not speak without stammering, except in prayer. (DuBois 1909).

His difficulty with the spoken word did not stop him from public speaking or becoming a well-respected member of the community. While in Torrington, Owen and Ruth were admitted as members of the First Congregational Church in 1800. That same year, their son John was born in their Torrington home. In his autobiography Owen Brown wrote "in 1800, May 9, John was born, one hundred years after his great-grandfather; nothing else very uncommon."

Like many other tanners and shoemakers, Owen Brown tried to supplement his income by farming the small parcel of ground around his home. Hodges' accounts indicate that Owen often brought his animals to her pasture, probably because his property did not have good pastureland. On one occasion she "took 2 cows to keep to grass" and at another time she had "1 horse to keep to grass" for Owen Brown. The accounts also record that Owen purchased a scythe at the store and worked haying for Hodges.



In May 1800, Owen Brown brought two cows and a mare to feed in Rebecca Hodges' pasture. Daybook entry, Rebecca Hodges Store, West Torrington. Daybook in the collection of the Torrington Historical Society.

At 24 Barnallider		
Owen Brown		Cash
4/15 to 1/1/69 Laffin	4/10	10.5.2
2/20 to 1/2/69 Boston Cotton		2.. 11
7 to 1/2/69 Shoe binding		0.. 5.
10 to 1/1/69 Hair Comb		1.. 0
4/10 to 1/2/69 Tea	5/2	2.. 7
3/10 to 1/1/69 wool Cards		4.. 11
Carters & Gorton		

Owen Brown often purchased a variety of household goods at the local store. Among the items he purchased during the spring of 1800, were a hair comb, shoe binding, and tea. Daybook entry, Rebecca Hodges Store, West Torrington. Daybook in the collection of the Torrington Historical Society.

Witnessed August 29. 1795

This may Certify that I have Examined
 Mr Owen Brown Tinner and his Leather
 and think him sufficiently Inform in Tanning
 to be Recommended for a License

Daniel Wells, Tinner.

Owen Brown's Tanners License, August 29 1795. Document in the collection of the Torrington Historical Society.

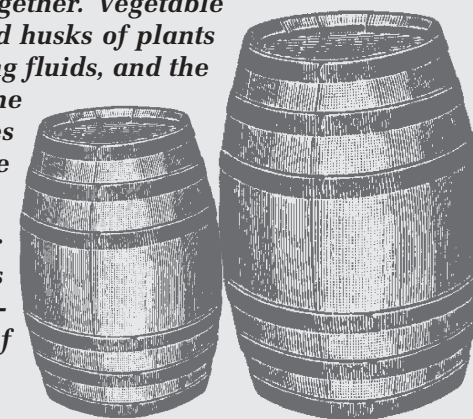
Tanning

Leather is made primarily from the skins of cattle, sheep, goat, horses, buffalo, pig, and sometimes, aquatic animals (seal, walrus, whale). Because people could not use the decomposing animal pelts directly for clothing and shoes, the process of tanning hides had been developed by the ancient Egyptians and Hebrews. During the tanning process, animal skins and hides are treated in order to clean them, preserve them and make them suitable for use.

A tanner typically follows a series of steps in order to process the animal hide. The first step involves soaking the hide in vats or barrels in order to remove any dirt and hair. During this first stage, often called liming, hides are immersed in a mixture of lime and water. After liming, any remaining hair is removed by hand and the hide is washed and "pickled" in order to delime and soften the material.

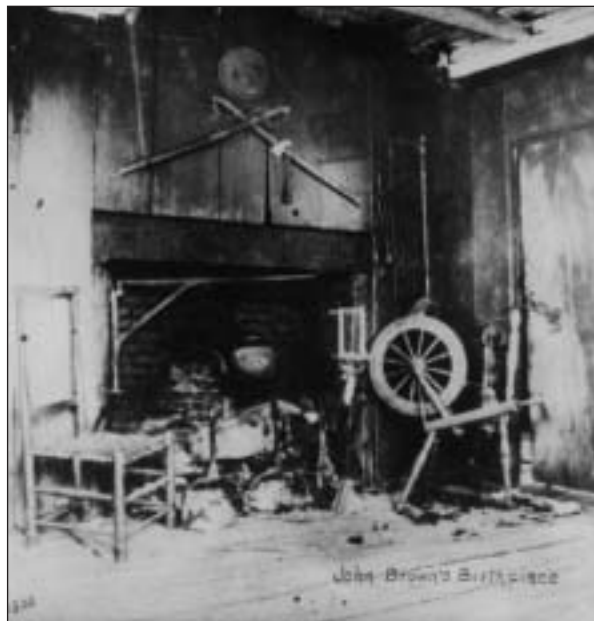
Once this stage is completed, the skins go through a second and much longer step, the actual tanning stage. Tanning derives its name from tannin (tannic acid), the agent that replaces water within the hide's protein fibers and cements these fibers together. Vegetable tanning, which is the oldest of tanning methods, involves extracting tannin from the roots, leaves, and seed husks of plants and trees (oak, beech, willow) that are rich in this resource. The extracted material is processed into tanning fluids, and the hides are soaked in large barrels or drums of increasingly strong liquor until they are sufficiently tanned. The various vegetable-tanning procedures can take weeks or months to complete and the entire process produces a very distinct and pungent odor. The end result is firm water-resistant leather. In some cases, a piece of hide was left in the barrels for years in order to achieve just the right softness and flexibility.

When the basic tanning process is completed, the pieces are ready for processing, the final phase in leather production. The tanned hide is completely dried and then dyed to give it the appropriate color. In some cases the tanner will use mixed oils and grease to lubricate the leather and enhance its softness, strength, and ability to repel water. The leather pieces are then ready to be fashioned by the craftsman into any of a variety of products including shoes and boots, outer apparel, belts, and saddles.



In 1805 Owen Brown followed the great westward migration and moved his family to Hudson, Ohio. After the family left Connecticut, Owen remained in contact with friends in Torrington, and later his son John developed business and personal connections with several residents including the Whiting family, the Brown's former closest neighbors. While in Ohio, Owen Brown continued both agricultural and tanning activities. After his first wife died giving birth to their eighth child on December 9, 1808, Owen married Sally Root the following year. Together, they also had eight children. While in Ohio, the Browns lived in a deeply religious community that was opposed to slavery and each of their children was exposed to the teachings of the abolitionist movement.

A studious man and avid reader, one of Owen's dreams was to see a school of higher education established that would admit African-Americans. Following the founding of Oberlin College in 1833, Owen Brown served as a member of the Board of Trustees (1835-1844). He was



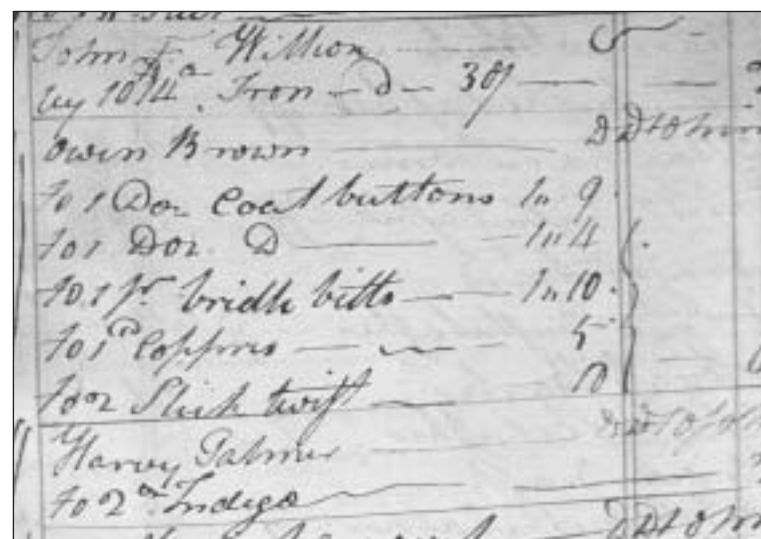
Early twentieth century photograph depicting the interior of the John Brown Birthplace. Photograph courtesy of the Torrington Historical Society.



The photograph above shows the John Brown Birthplace under repair, ca. 1890. The original photograph is a gelatin print depicting a scaffold on the eastern end of the structure. Collection of the Torrington Historical Society.

able to see his dream come to fruition when the Trustees voted to admit black students in 1835. During Owen's tenure as a Trustee, the town surrounding the college served as a model for racial harmony.

One year after the death of Owen's second wife in 1840, he married his third wife, Lucy Hinsdale. Throughout his life, his deep devotion to his family was well known. His tender treatment of all of his children was repaid with the respect and care given to him by them in his old age. John Brown's daughter Ruth remembered "One thing I always noticed was my father's peculiar tenderness and devotion to his father. In cold weather he always tucked the bedclothes around grandfather when he went to bed, and would get up in the night to ask him if



Owen Brown's name appears frequently as a customer in Rebecca Hodges Daybook. Entries from 1800 identify he purchased plates, forks and knives, ginger, rum, molasses, a spelling book, and a "damaged" glass bottle. Among the items he purchased in the entry shown above are two dozen coat buttons and bridle bits. Daybook in the collection of the Torrington Historical Society.



Photograph depicting the rear view of the John Brown Birthplace. The small lean-to addition on the northeast side of the house can be seen on the left side of the photograph. Collection of the Torrington Historical Society.

he slept warm – always seeming so kind and loving to him that his example was beautiful to see” (Sanborn 1885).

Owen Brown died on May 8, 1856, three years before the death of his famous son.

First Congregational Church

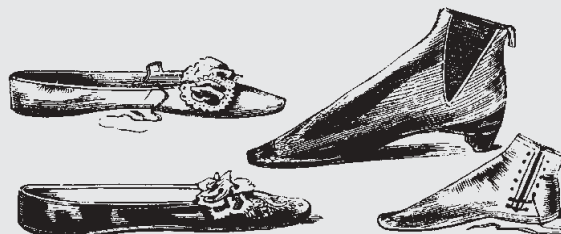
The Congregational Church was a big part of the Torrington community during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Unlike a number of Connecticut communities, the West Torrington church was known to be a tolerant one. This broadmindedness was evident in 1785 when they hired Lemuel Haynes to preach. Haynes, the first African-American ordained minister of the Congregational Church, later moved to Vermont in 1787. During the late eighteenth century, there was a widespread “great awakening” within the Congregational Church. In Torrington, 33 persons united with the church at that time. In 1792, Reverend Alexander Gillett became the pastor of the church. Eight years later, Owen and Ruth Brown were admitted as members and in November 1800, John Brown was baptized in Torrington’s First Congregational Church.



First Congregational Church, West Torrington. Built in 1849, this structure replaced an earlier church building that the Brown family attended. Collection of the Torrington Historical Society.

Shoemaking

Throughout the Colonial period local shoemakers (cobblers) and tanners produced footwear by hand. Most of these artisans had small shops located on their property where they would process leather and other animal hides for shoemaking. In 1799, when Owen Brown settled in Torrington, he was still crafting shoes the way they had been made for centuries. It was not until 1811 that a new invention changed the method of making shoes – a machine that made tiny wooden shoe pegs so that shoemakers no longer had to complete the time-consuming task of whittling them by hand.



Return to Torrington

Both Owen and John Brown made trips back to Connecticut and maintained strong ties with their Torrington friends. In 1820 or 1821, Owen visited his good friend William Whiting. While there he despaired that one of his sons was a little "wild," but that "John was a son of consolation." In 1838 John Brown made a visit to Torrington. Before returning home, he sold some oxen and purchased some sheep in both Torrington and Berkshire County, Massachusetts. On this trip he visited the Whitings where Frederick Whiting remembers him saying "I am confident some Moses will arise to deliver the Africans out of Slavery."

View of the east side of the John Brown Birthplace. Collection of the Torrington Historical Society.



The Life of John Brown

During his childhood, John Brown learned everything his father could teach him about tanning and shoemaking. However, he had other goals for his life that led him to move to Plainfield, Massachusetts when he was nineteen. While there he began to prepare to enter Amherst College under the tutelage of Reverend Moses Hallock. Although at school as a theology student, the skills learned as his father's apprentice were still a part of his daily life. Hallock's son remembered that John Brown "brought with him a piece of sole leather about a foot square, which he had himself tanned for seven years, to resole his boots. He had also a piece of sheepskin, which he had tanned" (DuBois 1909).

John Brown was not a very capable student and soon returned to Ohio where he hired a housekeeper. When he was twenty years old, he married his housekeeper's daughter, Dianthe

Lusk. Dianthe was a plain woman who John once described as a "neat and economical girl of excellent character" (DuBois 1909). Over the next decade, John Brown tried and failed at a variety of occupations. He was a tanner, a surveyor, a farmer, a postmaster, a shepherd and a wool-merchant.

Dianthe died giving birth to their seventh child on August 10, 1832. Less than a year later, John met and married seventeen year-old Mary Ann Day. Mary Ann was a hardworking woman who shared John's hatred of slavery. Together they had thirteen more children, of which seven survived to adulthood. Although John Brown's children remember him as a very rigid man and strict father, he also had a very tender side that he occasionally displayed. His oldest daughter Ruth once wrote "father used to hold all his children while they were little at night and sing his favorite songs" (DuBois 1909).

For many years John Brown was a shepherd and watched over his sheep with the same care

as he did his children. In a letter to her brother, Ruth Brown wrote that her father

would often bring in a little dead looking lamb, and put it in warm water and rub it until it showed signs of life, and then wrap it in a warm blanket, feed it warm milk with a teaspoon, and work over it with such tenderness that in a few hours it would be capering around the room (Sanborn 1885).

John Brown tended his own sheep as well as those of a wealthy merchant. He also began to buy wool on commission. He left one of his sons in charge of his Ohio sheep farm and moved to Springfield, Massachusetts. Unlike his other occupations, for a short while he was successful in the wool business. Unfortunately, he was unable to compete with the large New England wool manufacturers and began to have extensive money troubles.

As he grew older, John Brown grew more

fervent in his opposition to slavery. His upbringing and the teachings of his father instilled in him a mission to rid the United States of slavery. In a letter written to his brother he stated "I have been trying to devise some means whereby I might do something in a practical way for my poor fellow men who are in bondage" (DuBois 1909).

Brown was always looking for support, and on one trip back to Connecticut he gave a speech in nearby Hartford where he pleaded "I am trying to raise from twenty to twenty five thousand dollars in the free states to enable me to continue my efforts in the cause of freedom. Will the people of Connecticut, my native state, afford me some aid in this undertaking" (DuBois 1909).

JOHN BROWN'S MISSION

"A great victor, in defeat as great, no more, no less, always himself in both."

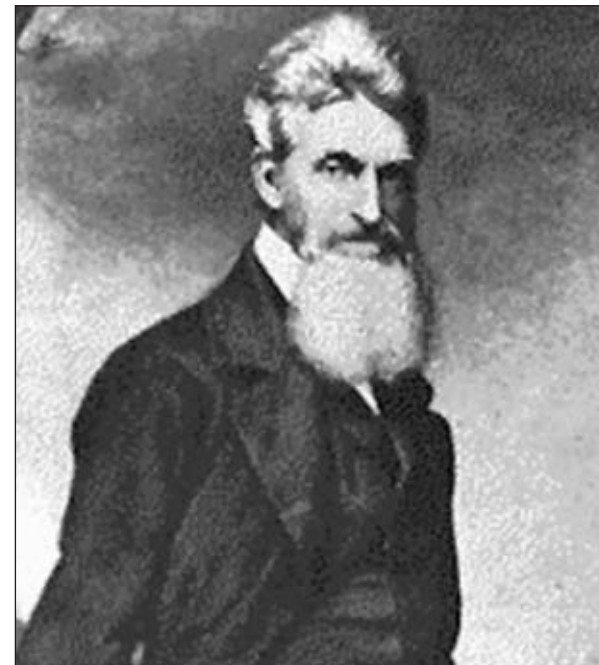
Stephen Vincent Benet

In his 59th year, as he languished in a cell in Charlestown, West Virginia, what kind of life could John Brown reflect upon? Indeed, it had been filled with events. He had attended religious schools and once thought of becoming a minister. Instead, he engaged in various

occupations such as tanner, farmer, cattleman and wool salesman. He made and lost money in these enterprises. He had two wives and twenty children and there was the constant struggle to support them (three sons died in armed conflict as they engaged in raids during their fight against slavery, and nine children died before reaching the age of ten). He had moved and traveled from place to place, including England. He had been an operative in the Underground Railroad and had lived in a freedman's community in North Elba, New York.

But the overriding passion to which he devoted his life was the cause of abolition. The first half of the nineteenth century was a period of great change in the United States. The polarizing issues of state's rights and the institution of slavery put the industrial north and the agricultural south on a collision course that eventually culminated in the American Civil War (1861-1865). Although there were countless individuals who were against slavery, both in the north and the south, one of the most famous and inflammatory was John Brown.

His life began in the small New England town of Torrington, where his close-knit family absorbed their father's ethical rigor and hatred of slavery. He evidently passed these moral precepts on to his own children, for it was at the urging of five of his sons that he joined them in Kansas in 1855 to participate in



One of the most famous and enduring images of John Brown depicts him as a distinguished, well-dressed hero with a full beard. Portrait of John Brown from Villard John Brown, 1800-1859: A Biography Fifty Years After, 1910.

the civil strife brought about by the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854.

One of the most violent incidents in Kansas occurred in 1856 when pro-slavery mobs sacked and burned the free-state city of Lawrence. Brown and a small free-state group retaliated by attacking the settlement at Pottawatomie and murdering five pro-slavery settlers. The fact that the unarmed men were brutally hacked to death with swords alienated many supporters and Brown's notoriety increased.

Convinced that peaceful social and political pressure would not prevail against the strength of the pro-slavery faction, John Brown turned his focus from the western territories to the south. He conceived a plan whereby runaway slaves and other anti-slavery participants, based in the mountains of Maryland and Virginia, would engage in guerrilla warfare designed to encourage other slaves to rebel.

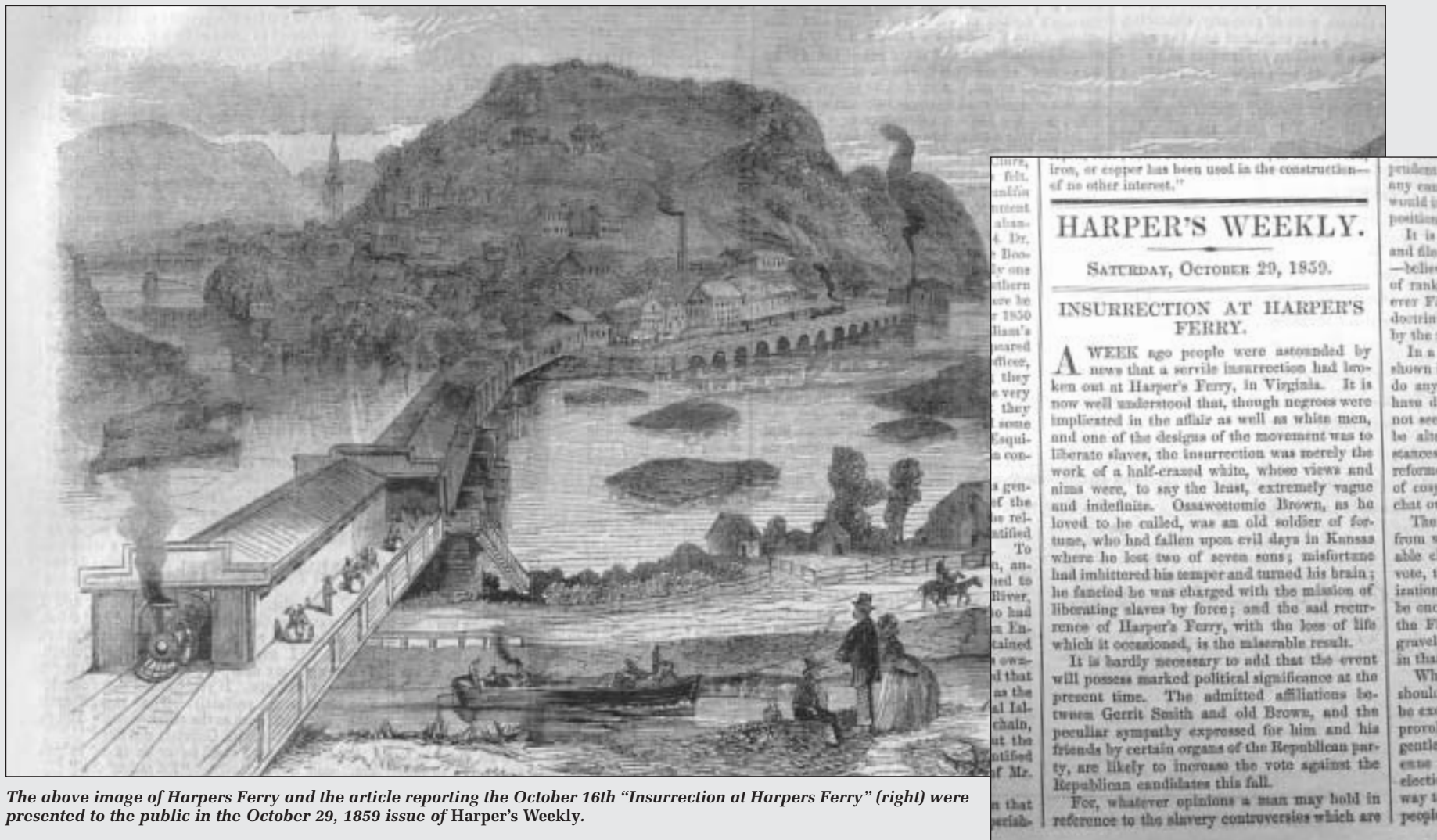
"Bleeding Kansas"

In 1854, Congress passed the Kansas-Nebraska Act, which provided for the organization of these two territories west and north of Missouri. A provision in the bill affirmed the concept of "popular sovereignty" which essentially meant that the settlers themselves could decide whether or not slavery would be allowed. Both pro- and anti-slavery adherents rushed to the new lands, hoping to make their cause the winning one. The result was a period of violence and political turbulence known as "Bleeding Kansas."

After Brown participated in the massacre at Pottawatomie in 1856, avenging Missourians raided his headquarters in Osawatimie, Kansas. (The name "Osawatimie" is believed to be a combination of the names of the Osage and Potawatomi Indian tribes.) During the action, Brown's son, Frederick, was killed, and the remaining men fled. Following this event, Brown was widely known as "Old Osawatimie."

Newspaper

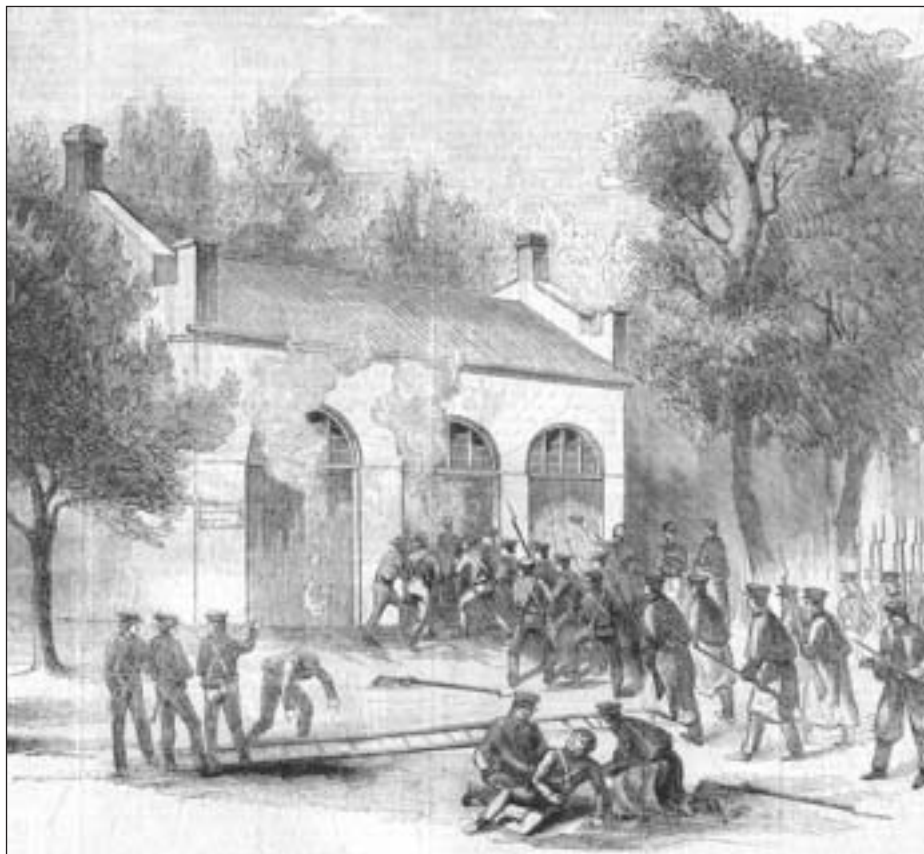
Illustrated newspapers and magazines were an extremely popular medium during the last half of the nineteenth century. Harper's Weekly and Frank Leslie's Illustrated Weekly had the largest readership. Both were suitable for reading by the entire family and contained fiction, articles on fashion, politics and other pertinent topics of the times such as the raid on Harpers Ferry and John Brown's trial and execution. Artists such as Thomas Nast and Winslow Homer contributed woodcut illustrations that were liberally distributed throughout the pages of the magazines. Harper's Weekly was not at first staunchly anti-slavery because of its many southern subscribers, but rallied to the cause with the onset of the Civil War.



The above image of Harpers Ferry and the article reporting the October 16th "Insurrection at Harpers Ferry" (right) were presented to the public in the October 29, 1859 issue of Harper's Weekly.

The Secret Six

John Brown had constant financial problems. He had a large family to support, his various business ventures failed, and he traveled constantly attending meetings and rallies and speaking for his cause. His activities in Kansas and the proposed raid at Harpers Ferry required armaments which he could not afford to buy. An excerpt from a letter he wrote in 1856 to arms dealer T.W. Carter of Chicopee Falls, Massachusetts provides an interesting example. He wrote, in part, "I very much want a lot of the Carbines as soon as I can see any way clear to pay for them: & then to get them through safe. Please write me the lowest terms at wholesale for just such Carbines as you furnish the Government." Brown eventually found backers in a group of prominent, wealthy and like-minded men in New York and the Boston area. These men who furnished aid came to be known as "The Secret Six."



The storming of the Engine House by United States Marines. Harper's Weekly, November 5, 1859.

While planning this mission, Brown, a fugitive wanted for the Kansas murders, grew a beard and went under the alias of Isaac Smith.

Although now located in West Virginia, at the time of Brown's raid, Harpers Ferry was in the state of Virginia. The town is located in the Blue Ridge Mountains where the Potomac and the Shenandoah Rivers come together. George Washington had earlier established an armory on the banks of the Potomac, but it was the arsenal building with its cache of arms that was John Brown's target. He planned to seize the arsenal, confiscate the weapons, and encourage slaves to rebel against their bonds.

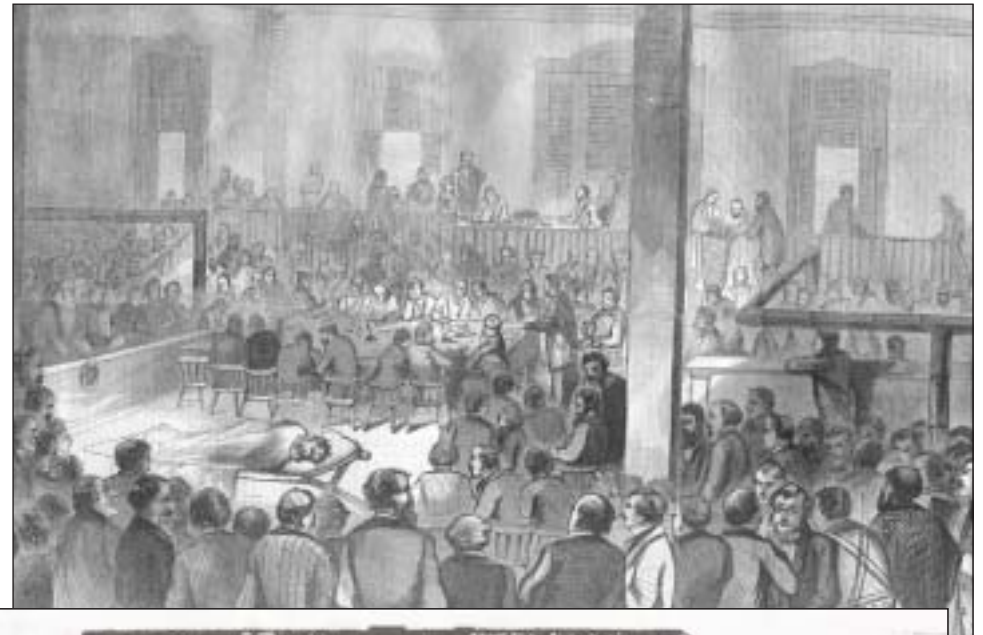
The raid on the arsenal took place on the night of October 16, 1859. Brown was accompanied by 21 men - 16 whites and 5 blacks. The raid included 3 of his sons. Although they captured the arsenal, armory, and U.S. Rifle Works, an alert was quickly raised. The next day, October 17, the local militia attacked and forced the raiders to retreat to the armory's fire engine house.

Colonel Robert E. Lee, of the US Army, arrived on October 17 with federal Marine troops and the matter came to a head the following day. Seventeen men were killed during the fighting, among them Brown's sons Watson and Oliver. John Brown and the four members of his band who were captured were imprisoned in Charlestown (Virginia at that time) on October 18th.

Brown had received several wounds during the raid and was confined to a bed both while in prison and during the actual trial which began on October 27th. During the trial, the town was filled with militia as rumors swirled about possible rescue attempts by Brown sympathizers.

On November 2, a jury of twelve men found John Brown guilty of murder, conspiracy to lead a slave rebellion, and treason according to the current Virginia statutes. The three and a half day trial was packed with spectators and members of the press. The newspapers gave the incident broad coverage and passions ran high both for and against Brown's conviction. John Brown steadfastly refused a plan by his supporters to enter a plea of insanity and conducted himself with great dignity throughout the trial and the execution, which took place one month later on December 2, 1859.

Mary Brown arrived in Charlestown on December 1. She shared a last meal with her husband and after he was hanged, accompanied his body to its burial site at their farm in North Elba, New York. On the day of his death he wrote, "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



(Above) Following the raid on Harpers Ferry, Harper's Weekly published numerous images of the events drawn by Porte Crayon, including the arraignment of the surviving raiders (November 12, 1859). This image depicts from left to right, John Copeland, Shields Green, John Brown, Edwin Coppoc, and the injured Aaron Stevens being held up by two guards. (Top Right) The crowded trial was also depicted in detail for the Harper's Weekly readers.

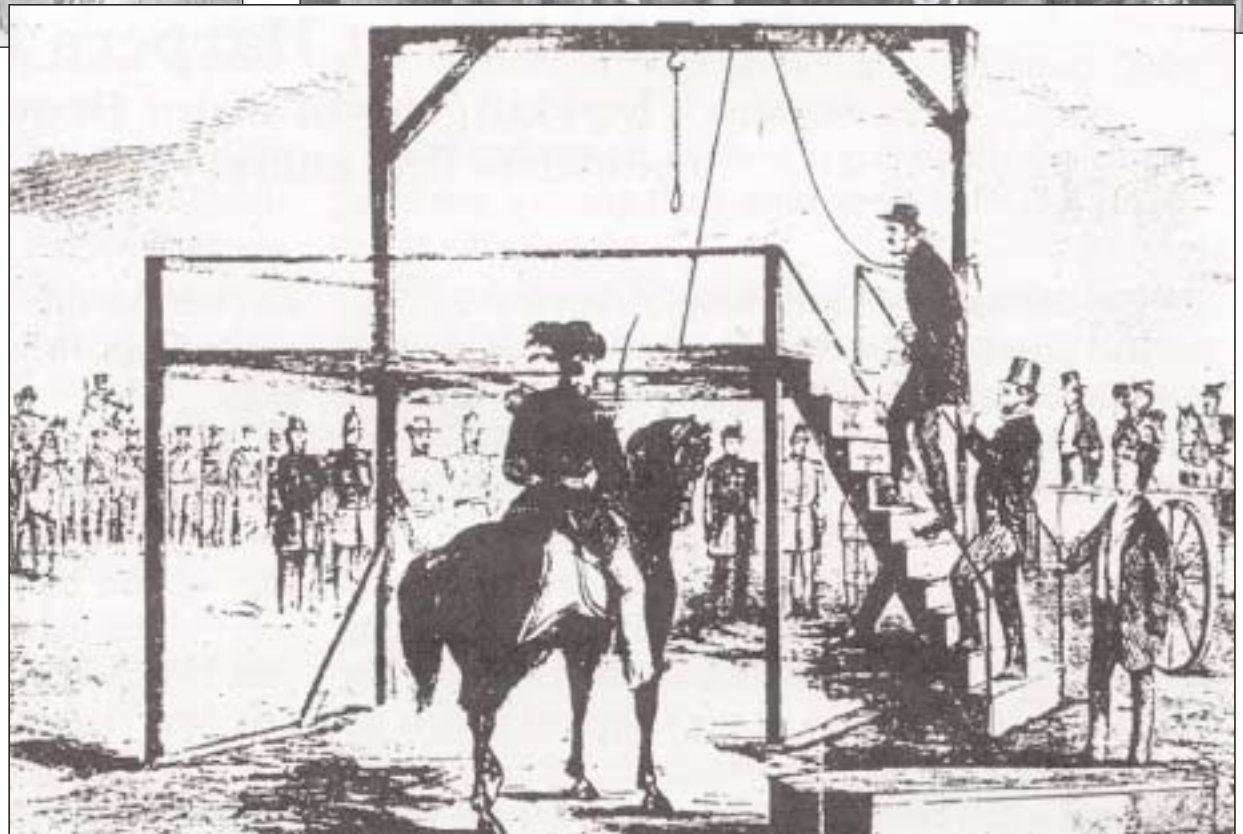
(Bottom Right) The drawing shown here is from the December 17, 1859 issue of Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper. Brown is depicted mounting the scaffold moments before his death.

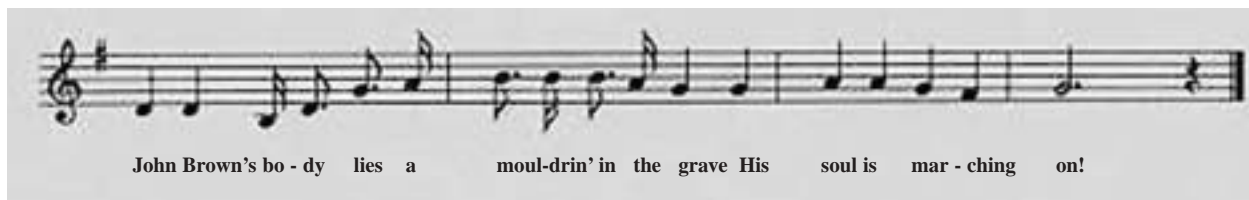
think vainly flattered myself that without very much bloodshed it might be done."

On April 12, 1861 Confederate forces fired on Fort Sumter, South Carolina - the first shots of the American Civil war.

THE LEGEND AND THE LEGACY

John Brown was both revered and reviled during his lifetime. With his death came even more notoriety. He has been widely written about in plays, articles, and books. In addition, several Hollywood movies were filmed about





The tune above is thought to be a camp song written by William Steffe; the original words were changed by soldiers serving at Fort Monroe near Boston early in the Civil War. At first the intention was simply to tease a fellow recruit who bore the same name as John Brown. Later, associated with the famous abolitionist, it became a rallying cry for Union troops as they marched into battle. The verses evolved over time, and many versions can be found. The song served as the inspiration for Julia Ward Howe (1819-1910), the social reformer, to write The Battle Hymn of the Republic.



Harper's Weekly published Porte Crayon's drawing of a "captured" and subdued John Brown (November 15, 1859). Injured and weak, Brown was confined to a cot during most of his trial.



The above cartoon was published in Harper's Weekly on November 26, 1859.

Cartoons such as the one shown above were common during the months after the raid on Harpers Ferry. Pikes, such as the one shown in the cartoon, were once well known polearms (spears) in the United States. Apparently, Brown anticipated that a number of liberated slaves would join his struggle and he planned to arm them with the pikes. About fifty of them were captured by federal troops at Harpers Ferry and the image of these pikes became associated in the popular imagination with Brown's violent activities.

JOHN BROWN'S WILL

Not surprisingly, John Brown had few material possessions to divide among his heirs. There were a few bequests of objects - such as his silver watch - and the request that any money remaining in his father's estate be allotted to various people. Perhaps most notable in the short document is the stipulation that bibles be purchased and given to each of his children and grandchildren.



African-American family at the John Brown House ca. 1890s. The Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford Connecticut.

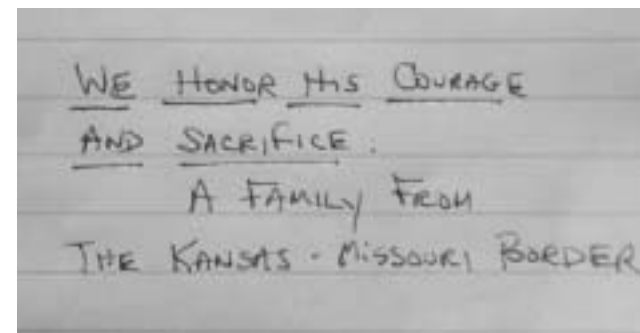
this riveting individual. Perhaps the most famous work of literature is Stephen Vincent Benet's Pulitzer prize-winning poem *John Brown's Body* whose first edition of 70,000 copies was sold out before its publication in 1928.

There are memorials at a number of sites associated with Brown such as Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, Osawatimie, Kansas, and the John Brown Farm State Park in North Elba, New York. It is reported by David Ross Bennett in *The John Brown Birthplace* that on the day of Brown's execution the first tourist arrived at his early home in Torrington. Over the years, fervent believers in his cause as well as curious sightseers visited the house, sometimes removing pieces of the building as souvenirs. Other vis-

itors have considered the site a shrine and left touching testimonials. Commemorative celebrations and exhibits have been and continue to be held at many locations over the decades.

Despite the frenzied notoriety that swirled around John Brown during the latter part of his life, the amount of attention paid to him as a historical personage during the ensuing decades has waxed and waned. Vilified and sanctified during his era, John Brown was - and continues to be - a controversial figure. His cause was just, but his methods were condemned as violent.

A pamphlet published by the Torrington Historical Society in 1992 suggests that, when trying to understand Brown and his actions, it is important that he be viewed in the context of his time. The United States of Brown's time was a

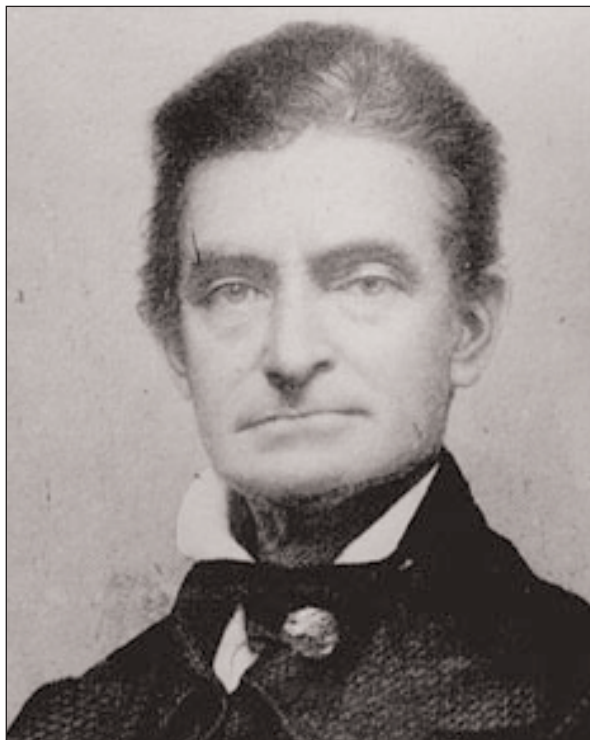


Note left by a visitor to the John Brown Birthplace. Object in the collection of the Torrington Historical Society.

country that sanctioned a brutal and violent institution - slavery. Yet, in contrast, it was a country that had been founded on the principles of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. The division that occurred as a result of these two opposing views, and the inability to resolve such a critical issue, invited the actions of a person like John Brown whose moral and religious fiber could not tolerate the institution of slavery.



Following the death of John Brown, mementos and souvenirs depicting important events during his life were popular keepsakes among his admirers. The plate above depicts the John Brown Birthplace. Object in the collection of the Torrington Historical Society.



Although John Brown is often depicted with a long flowing beard, he was actually clean-shaven for almost all of his life. He grew his famous beard as a disguise while he was a fugitive prior to the Harpers Ferry raid. His beard was present for only the last two years of his life. A copy of this famous image can be found on the web site of the Kent Historical Society, Kent, Ohio.

Murals in the Torrington Post Office

Three large hand painted murals depicting incidents from John Brown's life hang in the Torrington Post Office. Originally made for the lobby of the old Post Office on Church Street, they were dedicated on December 2, 1937, the anniversary of John Brown's death. Arthur S. Covey (1877-1960), a celebrated artist, had completed the murals at his home in Harwinton, Connecticut. Covey's sketches of John Brown's life were accepted by the Treasury Department in May 1937.



The first mural (above) depicts a young John Brown and his mother in front of his Torrington birthplace. The image embodies the Brown family's rural agricultural roots, with his mother carrying a bucket and John reaching out to the farm's calves. The second image depicted (above right) is one of John Brown visiting a Torrington classroom on one of his return visits as an adult. During his lifetime he often made speeches decrying the evils of slavery. The final mural, shown on the back cover, shows Brown leading a slave family to freedom. John Brown's wife, Mary Ann, wrote, "my husband always believed that he was to be an instrument in the hands of Providence, and I believed it too." Brown, his family, and his followers felt that it was his calling to try to end slavery by any means possible. Photographs by Meroë Morse.



Covey was one of many artists who were employed by the federal Works Progress Administration during the Depression. Other works by Covey are located in Kansas, New York, and at the Library of Congress.

The three moments in John Brown's life that were chosen by Covey to immortalize begin with an image of John Brown and his mother in front of the home where he was born. The second mural depicts Brown delivering a denunciation of slavery

in a Torrington school in 1836 or 1837, and the final mural, which is also the largest, depicts the 1859 liberation of a family of slaves from their owner in Missouri by Brown and his men. In this image, Brown is traveling with the family in stolen wagons through Kansas to Detroit, where the slaves took a ferry to Canada and freedom. (shown on back cover of this booklet). The murals were moved in 1981 to their present location at the new Torrington Post Office.

The Archaeological Investigation

In the late summer of 2002, volunteer archaeologists under the direction of State Archaeologist Nicholas Bellantoni conducted a limited investigation of the John Brown Birthplace. Sponsored by the Torrington Historical Society, the Friends of the Office of the State Archaeologist (FOSA) excavated fifteen test units at various locations across the site. Because all of the above-ground evidence of the famous abolitionist's birthplace was lost to a fire in 1918, investigators decided to look below the

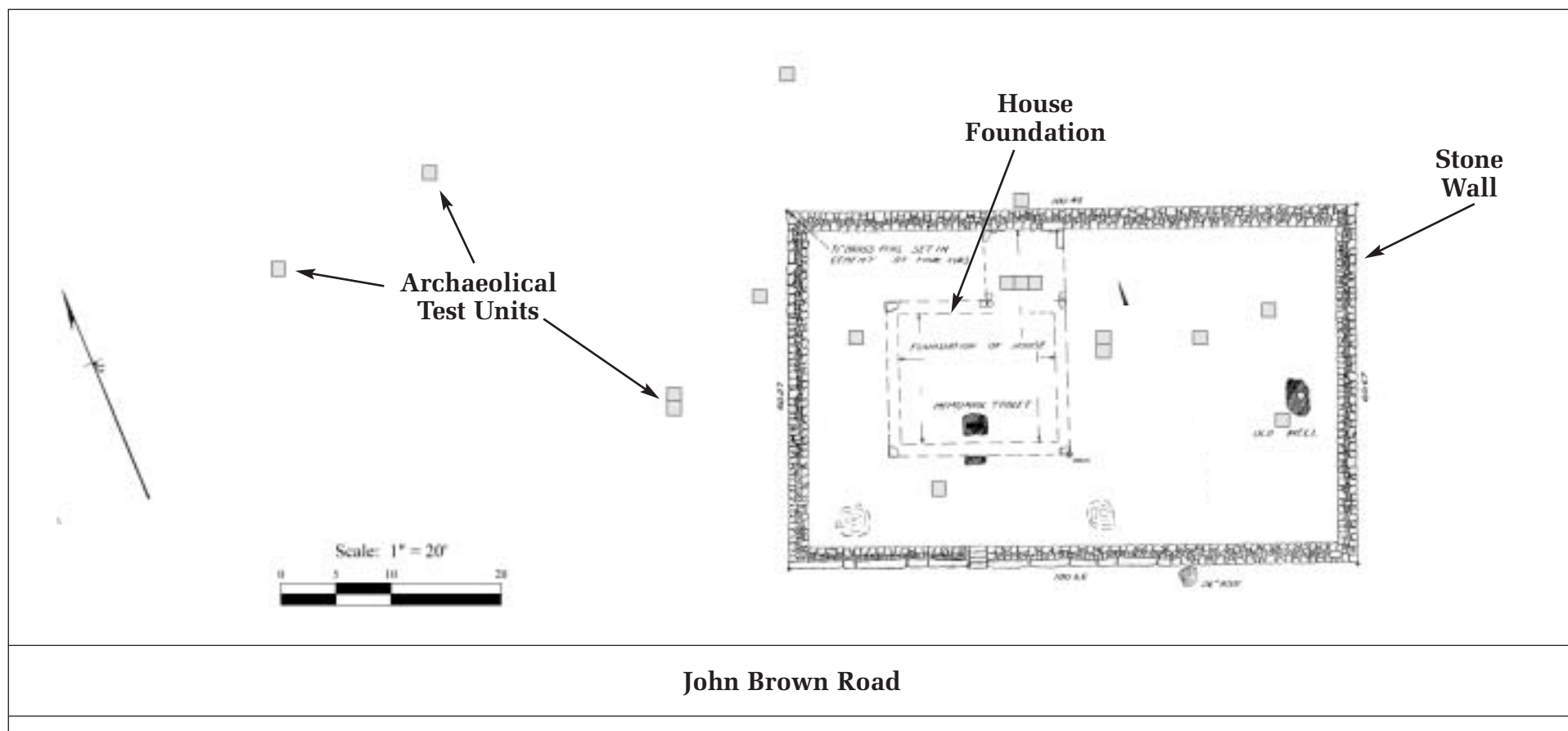
surface to reclaim some of the site's history.

Before they started digging, they tried to determine how much the landscape had changed since 1918. After reviewing documents, historic maps, and conducting interviews they found that the open cellar hole of the former house had been filled and a stone wall had been built along the rear and west sides of the ruin during the 1930s. They could find no other documentary evidence of major alterations to the ground surface and hoped to find intact features and artifacts.

The team spent several days mapping the site and excavating the test units. A well, possibly dating to the nineteenth century, a twentieth

century trash dump, and several unidentified stone concentrations were found. Directly behind the main house foundation wall, the investigators found an intact stone surface, which was determined to be the original floor of the lean-to addition of the saltbox house. This location was determined to be the most likely area to yield information on the early nineteenth century if archaeological work were conducted in the future.

The artifacts that were recovered dated from all of the periods of site occupation; from the Native American era to the present use of the property as a historic park and archaeological preserve.



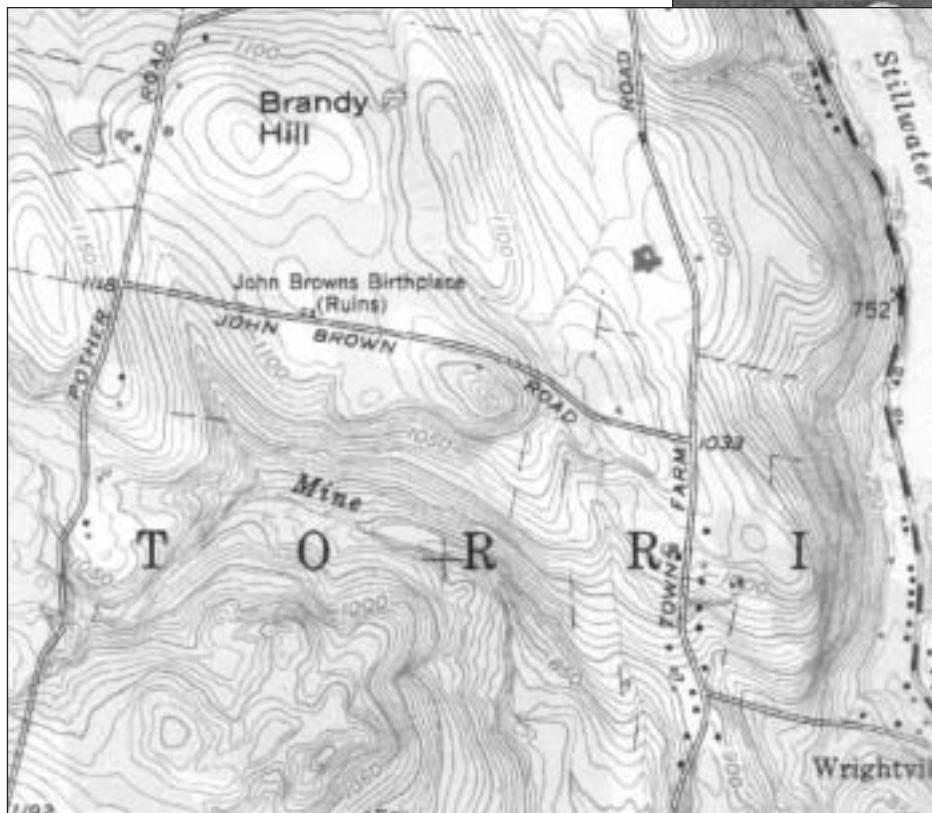
Archaeological site map of the John Brown Birthplace. The base map was created in 1933 by Douglass Little and Ralph Kirchberger for the John Brown Association.

Historical Artifacts

The artifacts recovered during an archaeological investigation can offer a glimpse of the history of a property. The types of artifacts recovered at the John Brown Birthplace include: architectural fragments (bricks, nails, window glass, mortar); ceramics (redware, creamware, pearlware, stoneware, whiteware, yellowware, and porcelain); bottle glass (various colors); organic materials (wood, bone, nuts, charcoal, shell); work-related objects (hook, tacks, spikes, ox shoe, washers, whetstone); and personal items (buttons, coins, thimble, smoking pipes, a bone knife handle, lamp fragments, pencil fragments, buckle).



The results of the excavation will help the Torrington Historical Society develop an interpretive plan for the future. Photograph courtesy of Nick Bellantoni.



Location of the John Brown Birthplace on the United States Geological Survey Map. Archaeologists use USGS maps to learn details about the topography and landscape features surrounding a site.



Volunteers, under the direction of State Archaeologist Nick Bellantoni, work on excavating and recording evidence about the former residents of the John Brown Birthplace. Photograph courtesy of Nick Bellantoni.



Volunteer archaeologists on the site of the John Brown Birthplace. Sonia Zinke, photographer, The Register-Citizen, Torrington.

The artifacts in the assemblage, or collection, can be associated with the various activities that occurred on the Birthplace site including agricultural endeavors, domestic activities, and commemorative historic site visitation. The presence of ox shoes, hooks and spikes represent the agricultural component of the site. Owen Brown kept oxen and other farm animals. Historic records also indicate that the Browns and subsequent site occupants had a

barn and other agrarian outbuildings on the property.

At historic sites, the domestic compound directly around a house is typically the location of the majority of artifactual material. As expected, household objects represent the majority of the artifacts recovered. Mark McEachern's review of local store owner Rebecca Hodges' account books from ca. 1800, found that typical purchases at her store included nails, tobacco,



Hand-painted pearlware bowl fragment. This type of earthenware dates to the period when Owen Brown and his family lived in Torrington.

tea, tableware, rum, cloth, buttons, and a variety of other small household goods.

In the Hodges' account books, McEachern also found an entry where Owen Brown bought a set of knives and forks, a set of teacups and saucers, four large plates and two small plates on March 7, 1800. As described above, objects like these were recovered during the excavation at the John Brown site.



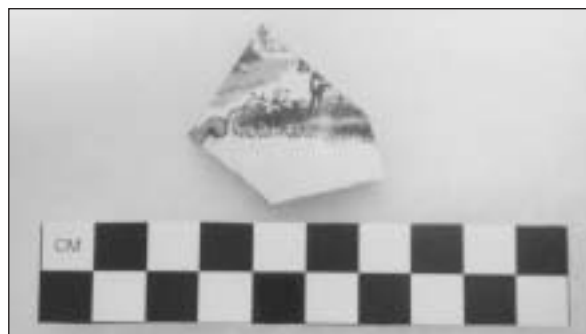
Hand-cut and wrought nails recovered during the excavation at the John Brown Birthplace.

Ceramics

Ceramics can offer a wealth of information about archaeological sites. Although easily broken, ceramic fragments are very durable and usually preserve well under ground. Because different types of ceramics were manufactured during specific historic time periods, the pieces recovered during archaeological investigations can help "date" when the site was occupied. To aid in the study of ceramics, archaeologists have created a classification system based on the recorded date of manufacture. The types of ceramics present on archaeological sites can also indicate the wealth or status of the people that once owned them. For example, the presence of expensive Chinese export porcelain, might indicate that the family was wealthy, while the recovery of only locally made earthenware could mean that the occupants were of lesser means.

The chronology of earthenware production, in particular, has helped historical archaeologists determine a site's occupation date. In addition, many of these fragments are decorated in a specific style or have a datable maker's mark on them. At the John Brown Birthplace, archaeologists recovered a large number of creamware fragments, a type manufactured from 1762 to 1820. Although most of the fragments at the John Brown site were undecorated, a number of them were early transferprint wares (1783-1820). The collection of artifacts from the site also contained a number of pearlware pieces, made between 1779 and 1830. Creamware and pearlware were popular and easily available styles at the turn of the nineteenth century. It is possible that the Browns could have purchased these types of ceramic pieces at Rebecca Hodges' store. Additional ceramic types dating to the periods of occupation before and after the Brown years were also recovered by the archaeologists and could offer clues about the many families who once lived at this historic site.

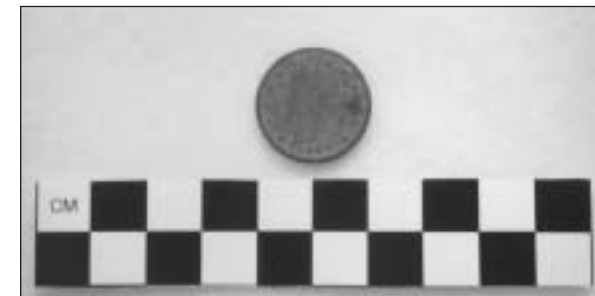
Almost immediately following the death of John Brown, the house and farm became a pilgrimage site for supporters and devotees of the abolitionist. Visitors to the site left objects behind including coins, bottles, cans, and other portable items. It is possible that during a visit to the site, one tourist might have left behind the 1905 Indian Head nickel recovered by the archaeologists.



The ceramic fragment shown above is a piece of a brown transferprint bowl. This type of tableware was popular in the early nineteenth century.

Archaeology and the Future

The excavation found that artifacts and features dating to the Brown family occupation of the homestead are still present. The possible remains of Owen Brown's tannery and additional Brown family features will now be protected on this Connecticut Archaeological Preserve.



A 1905 Liberty Head five-cent coin was discovered during the archaeological investigation. Over twenty-nine million strikes were made of this coin that was designed for the federal government by Charles E. Barber.

History of the Ownership of the Property

<u>DATES</u>	<u>OWNER</u>	<u>TRANSFER TYPE</u>
1732-1747	Josiah Gaylord	Grant
1747	Elijah Gaylord	
1747-1785	Joel Loomis	Purchase
1785-1789	Elizabeth (Loomis) Morehouse & John Morehouse	Inheritance
1789-1799	David Williams	Purchase
1799-1805	Owen Brown	Purchase
1805-1825	William Whiting	Purchase
1825-1842	William Hart Whiting	Inheritance
1842	Frederick Whiting	Purchase
1842	Lucius Buel & Ebenezer Buel	Purchase
1847-1857	Lucius Buel	Purchase
1857-1880	Moses Cook	Purchase
1880-1901	William Cook	Inheritance
1901	Carl Stoeckel	Purchase
1901	John Brown Association	Transfer
2000	Torrington Historical Society	Merge

The Homestead from 1805 to the Present

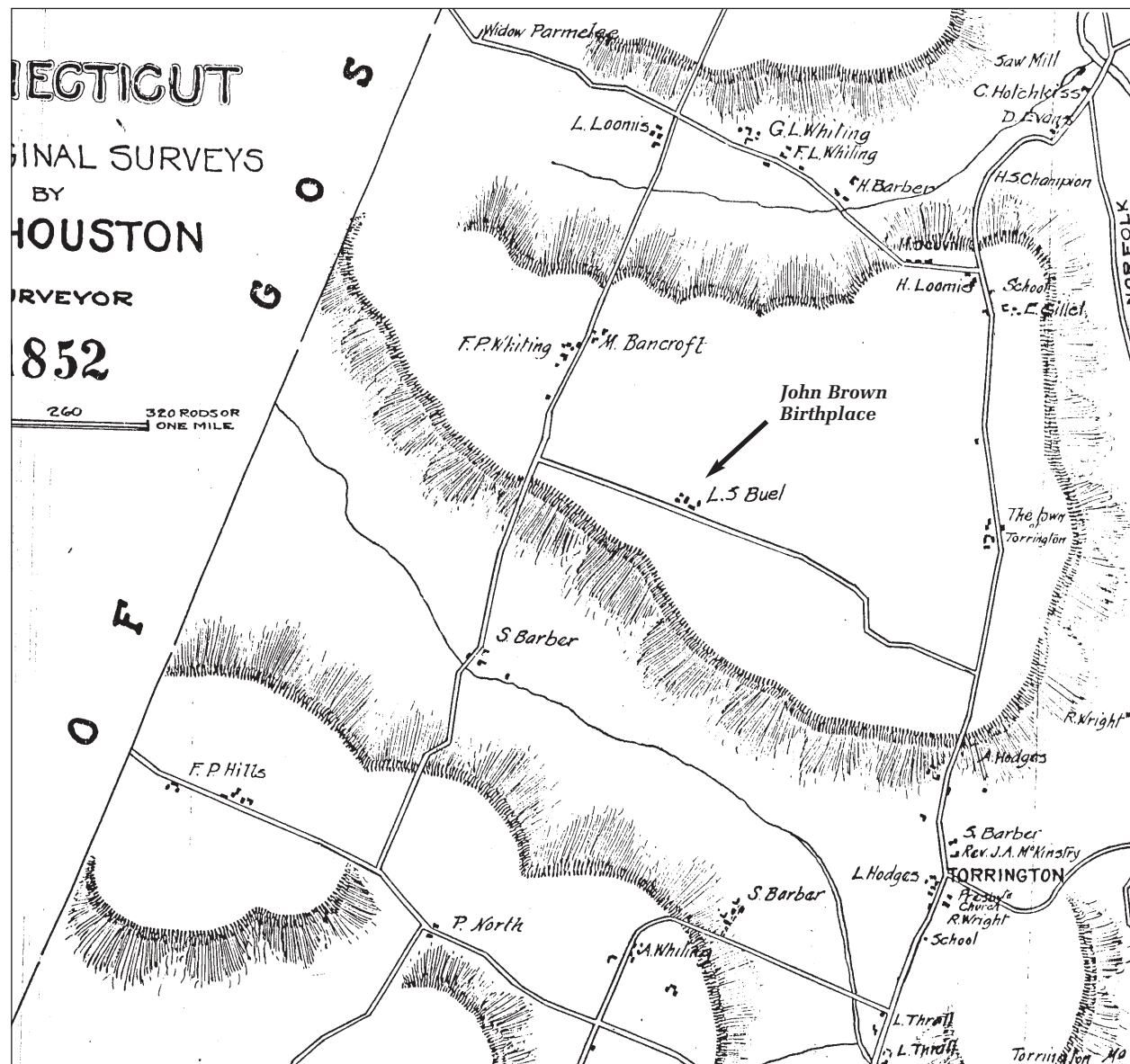
The history of the Brown homestead site can be divided into time segments for the years following 1805 when the family moved to Ohio.

1805 - 1859: Owen Brown sold the property to William Whiting. Additional acreage was acquired and the property remained in the Whiting family until 1842 when it was sold to the Buel family. In 1857, Lucius Buel sold the parcel to Moses Cook.

1859 - 1901: Immediately after John Brown's execution, Moses Cook's property acquired notoriety as curious visitors arrived. During this time period it was not managed as a historic property. Instead, the Cook family leased it to various tenants, including a few African-American families, about whom very little is known. Over the years, weather, souvenir hunters, and tenants took their toll on the house fabric. Photographs, taken in the early twentieth century, show repair work in progress. According to an article in the *Nutmeg Idler* from 1902, the last residents of the birthplace were an African-American tenant family.

1901 - 1918: The John Brown Association, formed in 1901, managed the house and grounds as a historic site. The Association's mission was to perpetuate Brown's memory and preserve the property. During this period, many tourists and admirers visited the site, which was one of the first house museums in Connecticut. In 1918, the house burned to the ground due to a chimney fire.

1918 - present: Funds to maintain the now houseless site were scarce, prompting the John Brown Association to lease the property to the Torrington Water Company in 1932. The



Clark's 1852 map depicting Torrington, Connecticut. Historical maps provide archaeologists and historians with details about former property owners and, in many cases, the layout of buildings on a site. At the time this map was created, the John Brown Birthplace was owned by Lucius Buel.

following year, the Birthplace site was graded and a stone monument was erected. The site was generally left alone until the 1990s when the Torrington Historical Society and the

University of Connecticut in Torrington co-sponsored an exhibit and symposium titled *Images of John Brown*. In 2000, the John Brown Association merged with the Torrington



(Above) Archaeologists use a transit to survey and map the John Brown Birthplace site during the 2002 field investigations. Photograph courtesy of Nick Bellantoni.

(Right) Photograph of an African-American family in front of the Birthplace. Collection of the Torrington Historical Society.

(Above Right) Newspaper articles describing the 1918 fire that destroyed the former Brown house.

FIRE DESTROYS BIRTHPLACE OF JOHN BROWN

Historic Structure in West Torrington Is Burned to Ground.

The John Brown homestead in West Torrington, one of the most historic places in Litchfield County, was destroyed by fire shortly before noon today. The cause of the fire is not known but it is believed that an overheated chimney was responsible. The automobile fire truck was summoned but when the firemen arrived the building was enveloped in flames and it was obvious that all efforts to save it would be futile.

The house was erected in 1783 and was one of the oldest houses in Torrington. It was here that John Brown the famous abolitionist, first saw the light of day.

Pictures of the historic old structure have been printed in newspapers and in many publications and its appearance is familiar to hundreds. Each season many tourists from all parts of the country have stopped there.

The building is owned by the John Brown Association.

Only the Chimney Left Standing at John Brown House

All that remains today of the John Brown homestead, which was one of the principal historical landmarks in Litchfield County, is the chimney and a cellar partly filled with blackened debris. The chimney will probably collapse as the beams which are worked into its base are badly burned.

W. A. Cowles, secretary and one of the most active members of the John Brown Association, stated today that no decision had been reached as to what action will be taken. It is probable, however, that the site of the old house will be appropriately marked with a tablet or monument of some kind. Fortunately none of the John Brown furniture or other relics were destroyed. Most of these are in the possession of Mrs. Dwight Kilbourn of East Litchfield.

Further details as to how the fire started was secured today. It appears that some soot in the chimney got afire early yesterday and Mrs. Draper disconnected the stove pipe and put salt in the chimney. This extinguished the fire on the inside but apparently the flames licked their way out of the chimney hole and set fire to the woodwork between the ceiling and the chimney. This fire was not noticed by Mrs. Draper until it had eaten its way to the upper floor and through the roof. By that time it had gained such headway that it could not be extinguished.



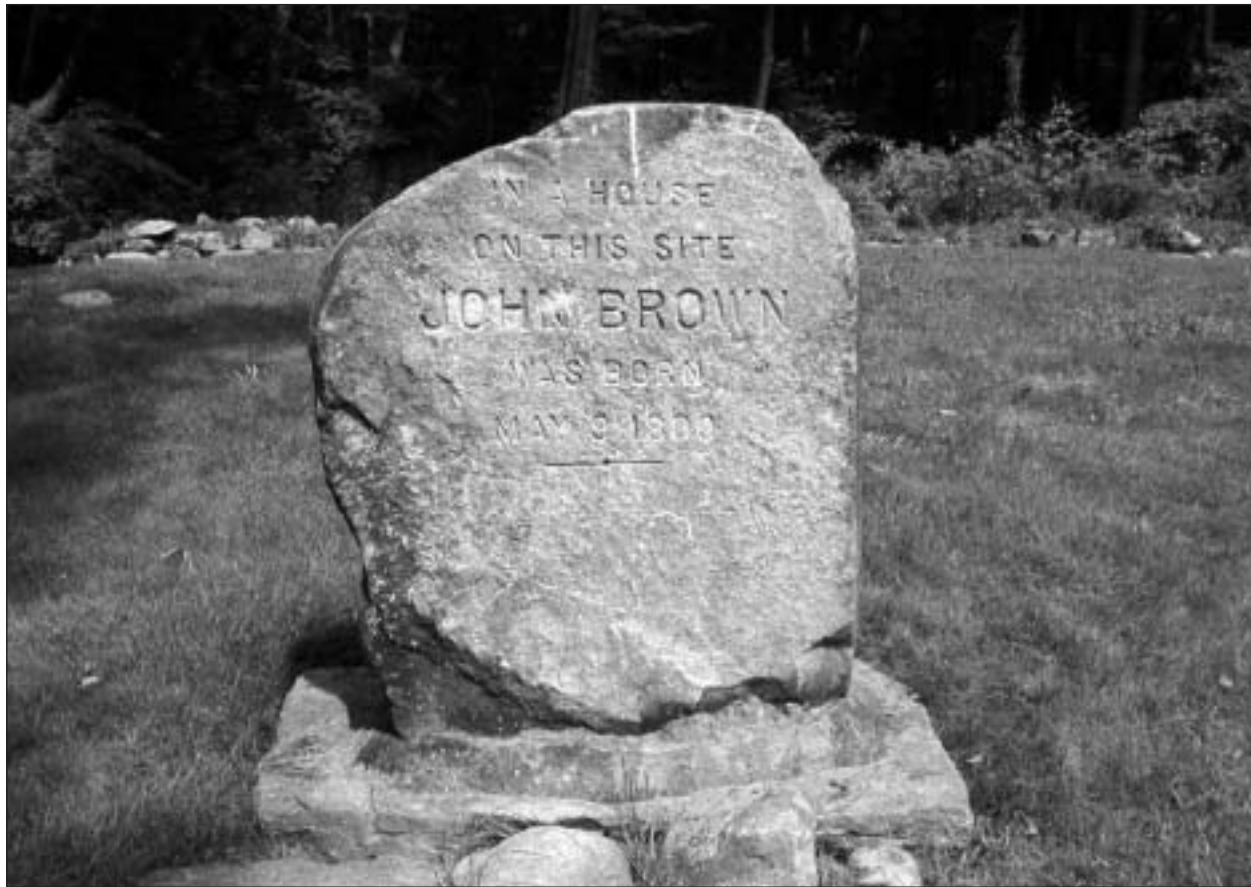
Historical Society and, together with the Torrington Water Company, began planning how best to administer the property as a historic site. The renewed interest in the site prompted the archaeological investigation in 2002. During the excavation, the archaeologists identified numerous historical artifacts and features that warranted the designation of the site as a Connecticut Archaeological Preserve.

Connecticut Freedom Trail

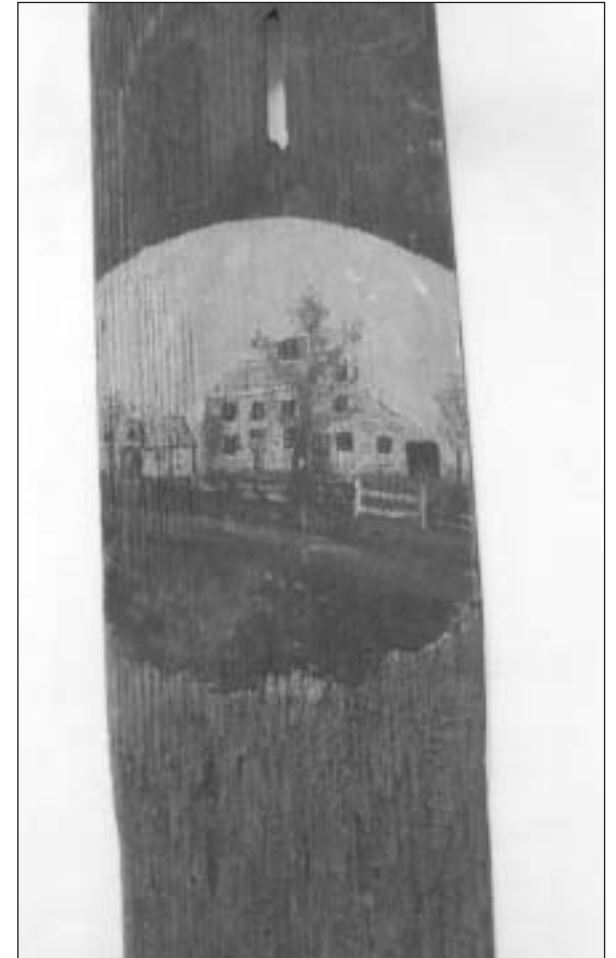
In 1995, the Connecticut General Assembly authorized the creation of a Freedom Trail, which would link the sites in the state associated with “the heritage and movement towards freedom of its African-American citizens.” The John Brown Birthplace is one of 82 such sites open to visitors seeking knowledge of the African-American experience. In 1997, the birthplace was officially placed on the Connecticut Freedom Trail.



A shingle (below right) and a section of a fireplace panel (left) are two of many pieces of the house fabric taken from the John Brown Birthplace by visitors as souvenirs before and after the structure was destroyed in a fire. These keepsakes were subsequently decorated with painted images of the house. Collection of the Torrington Historical Society.



Above is the commemorative stone that was placed at the John Brown Birthplace site by the John Brown Association. Photograph courtesy of Nick Bellantoni.



Further Reading

Bennett, David Ross, *The John Brown Birthplace*. The Torrington Historical Society, 2002.

Cohen, Stan, *John Brown: The Thundering Voice of Jehovah*, 1999.

DuBois, W. E. Burghardt, *John Brown*, 1909.

McEachern, Mark, "Torrington At the Time of John Brown's Birth." Address presented at Harpers Ferry. On file at the Torrington Historical Society, 2000.

Oates, Stephen B., *To Purge this Land with Blood: A Biography of John Brown*, 1970.

Redpath, James, *Public Life of Captain John Brown, with Autobiography of his Childhood and Youth*, 1860.

Sanborn, Franklin Benjamin, *The Life and Letters of John Brown, Liberator of Kansas, and Martyr of Virginia*, 1885.

Villard, Oswald G., *John Brown, 1800-1859: A Biography Fifty Years After*, 1910.



Postcard created by the John Brown Association showing the restored John Brown Birthplace prior to 1918.

African-American Archaeological Research

African-American Archaeology, History and Cultures: www.anthro.uiuc.edu/faculty/cfennell/bookmark3.html

National Park Service - Ethnic Heritage: African-American: www.cr.nps.gov/history/categrs/etnc1.htm

Harpers Ferry National Historical Park www.nps.gov/hafe/

Singleton, Theresa A. (ed.), *"I, Too, Am American:" Archaeological Studies of African-American Life*, University of Virginia Press, 1999.

"The Road to Freedom" video and the Auto Tour Tape set can be obtained from the Amistad Committee, Inc., P.O. Box 2936, Westville Station, New Haven, CT 06515. Tel: (203) 387-0370.

Web Sites

Connecticut Freedom Trail: www.ctfreedomtrail.com

Torrington Historical Society: www.torringtonhistoricalsociety.org



Glossary

Abolitionist: Individual in favor of abolishing slavery in the United States.

Arsenal: A place for making or storing weapons and other munitions.

Assemblage: A collection of artifacts recovered from a site.

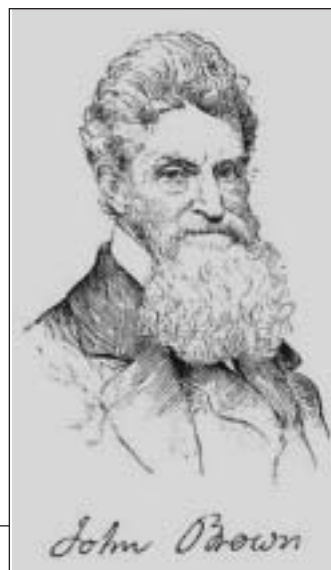
Emancipation: The release from bondage. The Emancipation Proclamation delivered by Abraham Lincoln during the Civil War (1862) freed all of the slaves in the territory at war against the Union.

Freedman: A person legally freed from slavery or bondage.

Slavery: The owning of slaves as a practice or institution.

Transit: A surveying instrument for measuring angles and distances.

Underground Railroad: The Underground Railroad was not an actual track, but a loosely connected, constantly changing trail of “safe houses” where runaway slaves could be sheltered and directed to destinations in the North or Canada where they could start new lives. Participants often used railroad terminology. For example, a stop along the trail was a “station,” someone who helped was a “conductor,” and the runaway was sometimes known as “freight.” The Uriel Tuttle House, now privately owned, was a station in Torrington, Connecticut that is still standing.



Charlestown, Va. 2^d December, 1852.
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.

One of the last acts of John Brown was to write the statement shown above (see pages 11-12).



Tobacco pipe stems found at the John Brown Site.

(Left) Drawing of John Brown from Wilson and Fiske (ed.) Appleton's Cyclopedia of American Biography, 1887-1889.



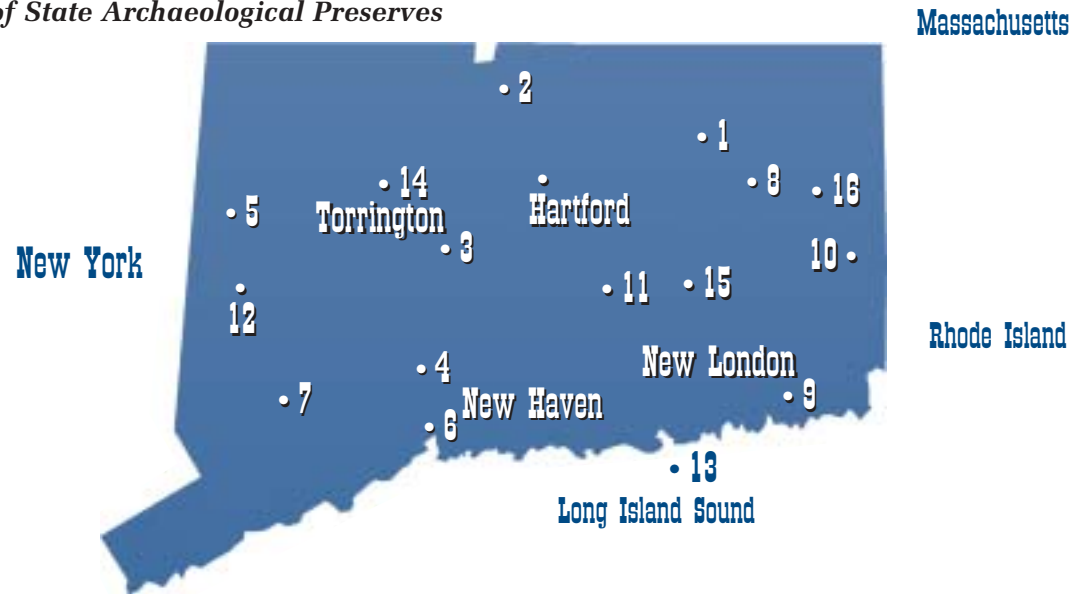
A variety of personal items, such as the buttons shown above, were among the assemblage of artifacts recovered during the excavation.

State Archaeological Preserves

Connecticut's State Archaeological Preserves (October 2004)

1. Fifth Camp of Rochambeau's Infantry, Bolton
2. Newgate Prison and Copper Mine, East Granby
3. Small Pox Hospital Rock Site, Farmington
4. Axle Shop-Spring Factory, Hamden
5. Kent Iron Furnace, Kent
6. Fort Wooster Park, New Haven
7. Putnam Memorial State Park, Redding and Bethel
8. Fourth Camp of Rochambeau's Army, Windham
9. New London Engine House and Turntable
10. Quinebaug River Prehistoric Archaeological District, Canterbury
11. *Aunt Polly*, East Haddam
12. Bridgeport Wood Finishing Company Industrial Archaeological Site, New Milford
13. Cornfield Point *Light Vessel LV-51*, Long Island Sound off Old Saybrook
14. John Brown Birthplace, Torrington
15. Air Line Railroad, Cochester and East Hampton
16. Governor Samuel Huntington Homestead, Scotland

Location of State Archaeological Preserves



State Archaeological Preserves were established by the Connecticut Legislature as a mechanism to protect significant archaeological sites. Archaeological sites that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places and/or the State Register of Historic Places qualify for designation as a Preserve, whether the land is private or public property. The National Register is the official Federal list of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture worthy of preservation. These contribute to an understanding of the historical and cultural foundations of the Nation. Similarly, the State Register of Historic Places is a census of historic and archaeological resources that are integral to the development of Connecticut's distinctive character.

The Commission on Culture and Tourism is empowered to designate archaeological sites as Preserves (C.G.S. Section 10-384). The

Commission, in coordination with the Office of State Archaeology and, when appropriate, the Native American Heritage Advisory Council, works with property owners to nominate significant sites as Archaeological Preserves. The Commission is also charged with maintaining the master listing of all archaeological preserves.

Preserves recognize both the educational and cultural value, as well as the fragile nature, of archaeological resources. Many of Connecticut's Preserves are on private land and fall under the protection of property owner rights. In addition, Connecticut law provides that, regardless of whether a Preserve is on private or public land, no person shall "excavate, damage or otherwise alter or deface the archaeological integrity or sacred importance" of a Preserve. Connecticut State Statute Section 10-390 provides significant penalties for vandalism and the unlawful collecting of archaeological remains from State Archaeological Preserves.



Photograph of artist Arthur S. Covey's hand painted mural depicting John Brown leading a family of slaves toward freedom. This mural, and two others showing scenes from John Brown's life, were produced by Covey with funding from the federal Works Progress Administration in 1937. The murals are located in the Torrington Post Office. Photograph by Robert Fenton Houser.

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