

## The Trial of John Brown (1859)

# John Brown Instructions

You are being tried for your actions at Harper's Ferry, Virginia. You are charged with :

- treason against the Commonwealth of Virginia
- conspiracy to induce a slave insurrection
- murder

### Before the trial

You must prepare a statement to make if you are called to the witness stand. You cannot be forced to testify, but you may wish to do so.

- You do not deny that you went to Harper's Ferry to free some slaves and lead them to safety. You do deny that you planned any kind of slave uprising, that you were involved in a conspiracy, that you committed treason against the state of Virginia, or that you intended murder or the destruction of property.
- While some members of your home community offered evidence of insanity in your family, and your attorney presented that evidence to the judge, you rejected it stating that you did not wish to escape responsibility in that manner.

You may choose to confer with your attorneys regarding your defense.

### During the trial

You will recline on the mattress provided, except when the bailiff says "all rise." If you take the witness stand, the bailiff will help you to stand and walk. At the end of the trial, after the jury returns its verdict but before sentencing (if guilty) or dismissal (if not guilty), you should stand and make a statement. (If guilty, read the historical statement provided; if not guilty, present an appropriate statement of your own design.)

You are injured. You may choose to moan in pain from time to time (but don't be too disruptive). You should research your behavior during the trial - did you call out in response to any witnesses?

You should read an account of the actual trial and be prepared to interact with the witnesses.