

Chapter 270 – John Brown Frees Missouri Slaves And Takes Them To Safety



Dates:
December 20, 1858

Sections:
• Brown Returns To Action In Kansas

Date: December 20, 1858

Brown Returns To Action In Kansas



Two Youngsters

With his Virginia raid on hold after Hugh Forbes' public revelations, John Brown returns to Kansas in June 1858, roughly a month after the cold-blooded murder of eleven Free-Staters at the Marais des Cygnes River.

But his mind is now more on Virginia than Kansas, and besides that, he is also suffering from what he calls the "ague," fits of shivering and chills commonly associated with malaria. This fells him all the way to October 1858.

Still he finds enough stamina to organize a defensive unit he calls "Shubel Morgan's Company," which includes two recruits who will die with him at Harpers Ferry: Jerry Anderson and Albert Hazlett, both veterans of various battles in Kansas.

On December 20, 1858, he is back in action, leading a party of twenty men across the Missouri border and into Vernon County, on a mission to liberate slaves. He collects a total of eleven men, women and children, in raids on two farms and decides to personally lead them to safety and freedom.

Immediately after the incursion, the Governor of Missouri places a \$3,000 bounty on his head, and President Buchanan adds another \$250 on his own.

Brown is characteristically undeterred, and organizes an expedition to take the slaves North.

On February 20 the band has reached Grinnell, Iowa. They pass through Springdale on February 25 and West Liberty on March 9. From there they head northeast through Illinois and Michigan, finally reaching Detroit, where Brown puts them on a ferry to Windsor, Ontario and a new life in Canada.

The journey has lasted eighty-two days and has covered over 11,000 miles.

It stands as one more chapter, in this case a less violent one, in Osawatomie Brown's crusade to end slavery.