

Name: Awesome Student  
Class: History 17A, TR 1:00 p.m.  
Professor Miller  
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## Intolerable Cruelty and the Deadly Nature of Sin

Sanborn, F.B. "The Life and Letters of John Brown." *WVculture*. West Virginia Division of Culture and History, n.d. Web. 24 Feb. 2013.

My name is John Brown. I was born on May 9<sup>th</sup> in the year 1800 in Torrington, Connecticut. Though my parents weren't the wealthiest of people, they had an interesting family history. A man on my father's side was one of the passengers who arrived on the Mayflower in 1620 at Plymouth. On my mother's side she descends from a man who came to New England from Amsterdam. My grandfather's on both my mother's and father's sides served in the Revolutionary War, which my father's father would eventually die in while in New York in 1776. I like to think I lived a childhood full of experience. As young as the age of four I remember being rightfully punished for theft by my mother. When I was five years old my father decided that he would move to Ohio which was a much different territory than I was used to, but I learned to adapt. We finally arrived in Ohio in 1805 and while I was initially reluctant to approach the Indians, I eventually came to embrace their company and learn from them.

During my schooling and young life I admittedly had a problem with lying, a frequent habit of mine. I did not like school though, I preferred to stay at home and work, I loved to be sent off into other lands to work very much. By the time I was twelve, I was sent off 100 miles with my only company being a group of cattle, I did not like the idea of another person accompanying me since I believed I was fully capable of doing tasks myself.

When I was eight years old my mother passed away and my father married another woman after her death. I was not able to cope with the idea of a new mother so I never fully

accepted her as I would my own mother. During the War of 1812 I became disgusted by the idea of military ideals and affairs, along with the idea of slavery. During the war I spent time with a slaveholder and was disgusted with how his slave was treated differently than others.

I find my childhood experiences helped form my adult years and my calling for life. I could not tolerate the idea of standing by while slavery was rampant. The treatment I observed during the time I spent around slaves while younger showed me the darkness that some men are capable of and I realized that I must be the light that will help eliminate such oppression in our world.

*John Brown*

Swayze, J.C. "Osswattomie Brown." *WVculture*. West Virginia Division of Culture and History, n.d. Web. 24 Feb. 2013.

I eventually ended up owning land in Osawatomie, Kansas where I lived with my wife and children. But tragedy struck in 1832 when my wife, Dianthe, died, leaving me to take care of my growing children. Following her death, my son Lewis was murdered by a man who was called "Black Jim" while traveling with my other two sons Frederick and Oliver, further worsening the feeling of dismay upon myself.

After Lewis' death, my other sons returned home to Osawatomie for a period of time. During their stay Frederick had hired a new farm hand that seemed desperate for work; Oliver had suspicions about Frederick's decision but could not determine a reason for his thoughts. One day we had heard news of this new farm hand being injured by one of the animals, while he was badly injured he had requested to see Frederick, although there was an uneasy feeling in the air about this; soon after Frederick had gone to see the new laborer, Oliver had realized that the cause of his suspicions were due to the field worker looking familiar, he soon realized that it was Black Jim, the man who killed my son Lewis. Only he had come to the realization too late, we soon heard a gunshot and Frederick was brought in, wounded, and laid to the ground with his family surrounding. I could not tolerate this violence any longer; I swore vengeance for the death of both my sons and was determined to not let them die without getting revenge on their murderer.

Following the deaths of my sons there was a night that imposed great danger on my family and our home. The ruffians that were known to commit crime became more of a burden, but the townspeople had pushed the blame onto me and wanted revenge for the crimes they

believed I committed. Even though the violent mob had set to take my house and kill me and my family, I couldn't entertain the idea of killing them unless absolutely necessary, for some them may have had children and wives of their own; I did not want innocent lives to be taken. Another reason that the men wanted to harm my family was due to their disagreement of my views on them holding slaves; I did not believe that human lives should be traded for profit, or more so any reason at all for that matter, they did not like me telling them that their practices were those of evil men. They soon set the house on fire and we were forced to flee, my daughters ran into the barn to hide only to be found by Black Jim; he had chosen to assault them and had it not been for a gun firing from the barn, I wouldn't have arrived in time. Once I arrived and saw Black Jim with a knife in his hand, I set upon to steal it and once it was wrestled away from him I plunged it into his heart, finally killing the man who murdered my sons.

These events of violence and injustice only made me want to further advance in my quest for justice in the country that I lived in. After the Battle of Osawatomie, I planned to lead a raid on Harper's Ferry in Virginia. My hopes were to take over the armory there and usher in a new age of freedom and equality. I could not let the country continue further down the road of slavery if I had a way to cease the inequality.

*John Brown*

“The Life, Trial, and Execution of John Brown.” *WVculture*. West Virginia Division of Culture and History, n.d. Web. 12 Mar. 2013.

On the night of Sunday, October 16, 1859, I led a group comprised of myself and 21 other men to Harper’s Ferry in Virginia in hopes of seizing control and taking over the armory. Our main objective was to seize the armory and arm the slaves in the area, hoping that when they were armed they would be willing to start an insurrection and free themselves and others from the shackles of the evil men that had cruelly ruled over them. It is my firm belief that we Christian men need to destroy the tree that bringeth forth the corrupt fruit of slavery, for slavery is a battle that slaves must constantly fight against without hope of winning.

My group of insurrectionists was composed of men just like myself that held the same ideas as I did, all were opposed to the enslavement that was taking place in our country. My partner, John E. Cook, who I met in Kansas, had lived near Harper’s Ferry for a few years so was knowledgeable of the area. Many of the men were not from Virginia or the most near states; I had recruited most of them from Kansas. The group consisted of 21 men, most of which were white although we did have some colored men among us, like Shields Green and Osborne Anderson.

One year prior to our attack on Harper’s Ferry, my two sons and I visited the area under the guise of being miners hoping to come about work in the area, we inquired about land and the possibility of ores in the surrounding land. During our time there, we stayed in Sandy Point, about one mile east of Harper’s Ferry. We later left only to come back and purchase a farm four miles away from Harper’s Ferry. We had delved into the act of being miners, often carrying

shovels and picks about while surveying the outside of Harper's Ferry and making our plans for the attack that would come a year later.

We, my group of insurrectionists and I, made our move on a Sunday night around ten o'clock in the evening. When we approached the ferry we encountered one of the watchmen employed there named William Williamson and we soon apprehended him as our prisoner, he had recognized my friend John E. Cook and I and had assumed we were not serious in our plans of taking the armory. We did not hold him long and let him go the next morning after the sun had risen. We did happen to encounter another watchman but we weren't successful in taking him prisoner and he escaped. Once we had taken more prisoners and secured the armory at Harper's Ferry, some men were sent to take Colonel Lewis Washington prisoner in order to acquire his slaves who we had hoped would join our cause, which they did. After the abduction of Washington, they went to the Allstadt residence and took the father and son who were residing there, also recruiting his slaves to our cause. With the adding of both Washington's and Allstadt's slaves our small army had grown considerably.

When the workers who had left Harper's Ferry at night returned to work the next morning they were taken prisoner and held in the engine house which also served as our base of operations during our capture of the ferry. We did not let them go until the final assault. The citizens of the town, hearing of our seizure of the ferry, had sent out word of our occupation and we were set upon by troops. The Charlestown troops, under the command of Colonel Robert W. Baylor, were the first to arrive. They had crossed the Susquehanna River and marched through Maryland in order to get to us at the ferry; when they arrived they advanced across the bridge at the ferry and we were forced to retreat, but we had taken a soldier named William Thompson while doing so. During the troops' attack at the bridge, some of my men had tried to swim away

but were either caught or killed in their effort of escape. After the arrival of the Charlestown troops, the Shepherdstown troops arrived as well and both forces made a joint effort of overtaking us. During the battle, my son had shot and killed Fontaine Beckham, the mayor of the town only to receive a gunshot wound shortly after which would result in his tragic death the next day; after the townspeople heard news of their mayor's death they started to demand that our prisoner William Thompson be released. He was brought out to the bridge and shot down, falling into the river.

While our fight with the troops of Charlestown and Shepherdstown kept us busy, the Martinsburg levies, led by Captain Alburtis and largely composed of railroad workers that were most likely untrained, arrived and snuck into the armory and released the prisoners we were holding; they soon tried to approach the engine house but were promptly shot at and were forced to retreat shortly following two of their men being shot. During the attack five of our men had been killed. When the sun had set it seemed as though the battles had ended for a short time.

During the night we were surrounded by a force of marines who were under the command of Colonel Lee and the following morning we set out to make negotiations regarding our current situation. Our demands were that we should be permitted to leave the armory with our men and arms without the forces pursuing us until we had reached the second toll gate, after which we would release the remaining prisoners we had and the soldiers would then be able to pursue us and fight us if we were unable to escape; the outside forces refused our initial offer. After their refusal they had decided to storm the armory in hopes of taking it back from us, the marines who were led by Colonel Harris and Lieutenant Green tried to bust our doors down with their hammers, but when that failed they rammed their way through with a ladder and opened fire on us. It was a short but fierce battle inside the armory with both sides exchanging gunfire;

we became outnumbered by the force of the marines and had lost our battle. Everything I had strived and struggled for came to a fall and my plans that I would be able to help end the torment of slavery fell short, I was reduced to failure.

We were brought out of the armory and paraded in front of the townspeople who showed great disdain for us following what he had done, if precautions were not taken by our captors I do believe that the citizens would have set upon us and hurt us out of the anger that all of them possessed. The one thing that seemed to calm the townspeople was the release of the rest of our prisoners, none of who we had treated badly. Among my fellow deceased insurrectionists was my beloved son Oliver; his brothers, John and Watson, were also wounded during our time and trials at the armory at Harper's Ferry. I felt that the conditions to which we were subjected to were unfair and not necessary; I could have set the town and the inhabitants ablaze at any moment had I so desired to, but I decided to spare them, only to be hunted down like an animal and captured. To this day I see no wrong in what I did and believe that my actions were needed due to the oppression that so many go through in this country. During our loss, my partner John Cook was able to escape into the mountains three miles away. The Independent Grays of Baltimore had gone to my house and recovered my stores of firearms and ammunition that we had planned to use, it seems as though all was lost that day.

I, Captain John Brown of Kansas, set about to free the slaves from bondage. In my failing to do so I was captured by the forces of oppression and now await my execution, I had no plans of killing the victims at Harper's Ferry; I was made to do it out of necessity for what I hoped would be a call to arms for the slaves to rise up from oppression and take back their freedom. I am now quite certain that the sins of this guilty land will never be purged away but with blood.

*John Brown*



Proclamation for John Brown Execution.” 28 Nov. 1959. WVculture. West Virginia Division of Culture and History, n.d. Web. 8 Apr. 2013.

Today is the day of my execution, December 2<sup>nd</sup> of 1859. It has been two months since I lead the attack on Harper’s Ferry with my men and one month since I was convicted of my crimes.

During the week leading up to the day of my execution, the government has declared a proclamation that grants me some form of privacy. They have barred any strangers from the surrounding counties and communities from entering Jefferson County, where I am to be executed. If found they would be arrested, most likely under force. This, along with our use of slavery, is an unnecessary plan of action; the people should not be punished for wanting to see my execution, there should be no military intervention required.

Along with the presence of the military, the Governor of Virginia has also recommended that the townspeople not only keep to themselves but to also make sure that they are armed in case any form of disobedience happens to occur. They believe that this is in the best interest for their safety. There will also be no women or children allowed anywhere near the area on the day of my execution, I believe that it is best that especially the children do not see it.

I will soon face my death and address the court with an appeal to the idea that what I did was done out of necessity and not treason. I will face my death in as good a condition as a man could hope to face his undeserved death.

*John Brown*

“John Brown’s Address.” *CivilWar*. n.d. Web. 22 Apr. 2013.

Today, December 2, 1859, is my last day upon this Earth. One month ago on November 2, 1859, I was convicted of treason, murder, and insurrection; the combination of all three charges led to the decision of the court to sentence me to death by hanging. I am to die in Charlestown, Virginia. I do not regret my choices I made leading up to my assault and seizure of the armory at Harper’s Ferry in Virginia; I made my choices and I will own up to what some may perceive as wrongdoings and what I perceive as what needed to be done for the greater good. I could not stand idly by and twiddle my thumbs while all around me, day in and day out, men, women, and children were forced to work hard for those that oppressed them for their own gain. I am a man of God and it is my belief that the children of God should not be forced to live a life serving selfish sinners and tyrants. I suppose this country was not ready for the change I had imagined and set about to accomplish; the people did not like the idea of becoming kind human beings and treating their fellow men and women with the respect that everyone under the great skies of God deserves.

I never did intend to murder anyone in my plans to seize the ferry, nor did I intend to commit treason; I wanted to bring hope to the oppressed. I should not be put to death on this day, for I believe that I was serving our God in his teachings of treating others with kindness. If I am to be killed for standing up in what I believe is right and if my blood must mingle with the blood of those killed in the name of sin and wickedness, then so be it. I will face my death even though I feel it is undeserved.

I plan to address the court one last time before I am to be put to death for my perceived transgressions against the country. I am to tell them what I have written down in the documents

before myself, that my execution is uncalled for and that I did what I did for the greater good of this nation. Perhaps one day I shall become a martyr for my deeds. Goodbye.

*John Brown*

Allen, Richard. *The Life, Experience, and Gospel Labours of the Rt. Rev. Richard Allen. To Which is Annexed the Rise and Progress of the African Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America. Containing a Narrative of the Yellow Fever in the Year of Our Lord 1793: With an Address to the People of Colour in the United States.* Philadelphia: Martin & Boden, Printers, 1833.

Richard Allen is a perfect example of what a man is capable of when not being forced to work by the oppressors of society. Richard was truly a self-made man, like Nathaniel Turner, he turned his childhood of slavery to an opportunity to learn in a world where an educated slave is frowned upon by the slaveholders. Unlike Nathaniel Turner though, he did not choose to pursue the task of vengeance, instead taking a peaceful path and becoming a man of God, something that I find very admirable. Richard Allen used his life to preach to the people of the country, spreading the words of God and later on furthering the development of the African Americans residing in our country. Allen never asked of anything in this world, instead relying on his own hard work to supply whatever he needed, this is something that may surprise some of the close-minded people that supported slavery, they may not have been able to imagine a self-sufficient black man that didn't need to be oppressed to survive. Instead of becoming a leech on society, Allen decided to spread the gospel among slaves, which I believe was needed just like my efforts and Nat Turner's efforts; we all wanted the same thing and approached our ideas differently, whether it be through spreading the good word or by not so kind actions.

Even when Allen was given the opportunity to become further successful in his career by traveling the country with another reverend, he refused out of the belief that he should not be subjugated to less than ideal conditions just for fame. He chose a life of humbleness and also a life that was guided by God. Allen formed a free African society with his colleagues that would

help black men in the community find and understand the word of God; with his newly formed group behind him, Allen set out to form the first black Methodist church. Despite the discrimination they faced by the “white” Methodist church, they held fast in their beliefs and the Lord guided them to success so that they could preach the word of God to the men and women that were still being looked down on by society.

It is people like Richard Allen that throw away the ideas that a slave can never rise up above the crowd and make something out of their lives. Richard Allen and his free African society proved the naysayers wrong, they prove that they could in fact lead a new group of men that would not let the oppressors and sinners bring their spirits down. I believe that Richard Allen was a great man of God and an inspiration to future abolitionism.

*John Brown*

Jacobs, Harriet. *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. Boston: Published for the Author, 1861.

Harriet Jacobs was subjected to treatment that I would never wish upon a slave. To be forced to endure the crude comments and desires of her master everyday would have surely been torturous to anybody. Her writing under the pseudonym of Linda Brent exposed the treatment that she, and I'm sure many other woman slaves, had to go through under the rule of such cruel masters. She had to serve under a man with wicked desires that no married man should hold, it is not the way of God. Harriet believed that beauty in a slave woman would only make their life worse once they had matured enough to be seen as desirable by their owners, that they would be taken advantage of just because they were perceived as someone's property. Not only was she forced to endure an undesirable treatment, but her children also had to put up with the unfortunate circumstance of slavery; she states that she would rather have her children starve in Ireland than be in the best condition a slave could hope for in America. Harriet herself would rather be a prisoner than a slave.

Harriet lived in a constant fear of her master, waiting anxiously for the day that he might take things to far, which she hoped would never happen. Her fear was only worsened when her master constantly claimed that he could do whatever he wanted with her due to her being his property. She had no way to protect herself and feared for not only her own life but also the life of her children; she had no choice but to run away from the terrible situation she was facing.

Harriet Jacobs appealed the abolitionists of the north who weren't able to do what they had set out to accomplish; she wanted to know why the conditions of slavery had not gotten any better. She inquired as to why they held their tongues in the face of discrimination when she was facing hardships. She did have praise for those men and women who had tried to advance the

cause of humanity even though they had been facing unfortunate situations. Harriet's testimony goes to show that not only were slaves treated bad as workers, but even the ones who were there to help families were taken advantage of and put under tremendous fear from their owners.

*John Brown*

Gray, Thomas R. *The Confessions of Nat Turner, Leader of the Late Insurrection in Southampton, Virginia, as Fully and Voluntarily Made to Thomas R. Gray.*

Boston: Lucas and Deaver, 1831. Print.

Nathaniel Turner is a man of admirable beliefs and practices. Both he and I share the same ideas about how oppression should be dealt with, it must be struck a swift blow in hopes that it can be ended quickly. I find it interesting that he chose a road not often travelled by the oppressed, he picked a path of seeking knowledge and developing himself into a more intelligent person rather than giving in to the chains of oppression and living his life submissive to his master; I believe he could be an inspiration to other generations of slaves by showing that one of the most feared things in the eyes of the oppressors is an educated and confident slave. It seems as though God had put Nathaniel Turner and I on this Earth and set us to bare a great purpose, to cut the chains that bind the mind and body of the African American slaves. Nathaniel received a sign from our great God, he was told to slay his enemies with their own weapons and Nat set out to with faith in his heart and freedom on his mind when he decided to take the actions he did.

Turner and his company of fellow slaves decided that their years of being oppressed were over with and sought out revenge on all those who had held slaves and oppressed people, which I believe is what had to be done in regards to the dire situation they were facing. I believe we are similar in the fact that we believe in freedom and justice, and also punishing the sinners who have kept the black slaves down for so long. I think Nathaniel would agree with me that the sins of the country can only be purged with the blood of those that have brought darkness upon their fellow brothers and sisters, the children of God.



While Turner had planned his attack for what would have been our nation's Independence Day, which I believe would have been fitting, for he would inspire independence all throughout the land, he had to resort to a later date. Although his plans had been delayed he still held onto his convictions the way a man should and brought justice to the families that stepped on those they conceived as lesser beings. No man, woman, or child was safe from their sins and Nathaniel Turner delivered justice to the wretched sinners, including his own master's family and neighboring households. Even though his rebellion lasted only a day, I believe he accomplished what God had desired him to do.

Nat Turner, with the grace of God, helped show the masses that we will not stand for oppression and enslavement, for it is a war against the soul of the oppressed that they must constantly fight. I only wish that I could have become acquainted with the man before he was subsequently arrested, tried, and executed for the murder of approximately fifty sinners. It is my wish that we will meet in God's kingdom and that we will be able to view the freedom of future generations in our country.

*John Brown*

Equiano, Olaudah. *The Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African, Written by Himself*. New York: Isaac Knapp, 1837.

Olaudah Equiano exposed the truth of the horrible treatment of incoming slaves that had been abducted from their homes and forced to come to this country. He viewed his white skinned, long haired, captors as evil spirits; he was not far off in believing this seeing as how only the wickedest of men would enforce degradation and oppression on their fellow human beings, for enslavement is not the way of God. Olaudah thought that the so-called “bad spirits” were going to eat him and the men, women, and children that were also abducted and forced on the ship; this shows the type of fear that went through the minds of the African abductees, it was a fear of the unknown. The oppression that Olaudah Equiano faced was so great and fearful that he would have rather been a slave in his own country than have to face the new nation that he was being brought to on the torturous ship he was forced to reside in with an uncomfortable amount of others. The conditions he describes of his journey seem like circumstances that God would never wish upon any of his children, he had no choice but to be surrounded by the sick, crying, starving, and dying people that had been taken from their homes by the white devils.

Even the slavers’ slightest showing of what some may consider hospitality was no way to treat a man. Any refusal to their demands would result in a savage beating that no innocent child of God should be put through; these men were truly sinners and would eventually have to face the judgment. Olaudah believed that these men were monsters, which I happen to agree with, any man who subjects another to unnecessary pain is not a true man at all. The only luxury that Olaudah could afford was that which he was born with, his young age and physical condition made him valuable in the eyes of the slavers, and with that believed increase in value he was not treated as badly as those who had the misfortune of not being made in the way that the sinners

saw fit. I can understand why some of the slaves would rather have killed themselves by jumping overboard into the vast emptiness of the ocean than be kept as slaves for the rest of their lives.

The events that transpired on Olaudah's travels made him think that he may have been in another world; how could the world he was accustomed to shift into the cruelty that he was now facing?

Equiano wanted to know why we Christians forced others into slavery. Had we not been taught under the word of God to treat all men as we would like to be treated ourselves? Why was it necessary for men to abduct the Africans from their own country, family, and friends to work mercilessly so their owners could achieve luxury and wealth in their life? Was the perception of great success more important than their fellow men and women? Did the slavers and owners have to force all joy out of the lives of their slaves just to live well while those around them suffered greatly? I believe that Olaudah raised great questions and brought attention to the horrible situations that many were put through just so they could live an easy life. Olaudah's writings offer a look into the lives of the miserable and I hope that the people of the nation can find fault in their ways before it is too late.

*John Brown*

Anderson, Osborne P. *A Voice from Harper's Ferry: A Narrative of Events at Harper's Ferry*. Boston: 1861.

Osborne P. Anderson was a great man. He was one of the many great men who served with me when I attacked Harper's Ferry in Virginia, and one of the few black men among our group of insurrectionists. Unfortunately he was the only African man to survive after we were attacked like savages during our possession of the armory at Harper's Ferry. He likened me to being like Moses, a comparison which I take as a great honor; he said that had it not been for me, Kansas might have fallen to slavery. During our seizure of the armory at Harper's Ferry he proved to be a good man, doing whatever he was asked of, including the abduction of Colonel Lewis Washington and the acquirement of his slaves that would join our cause. On the day of our battle with outside forces on Monday, October 17, 1859, he further proved to be an admirable follower; he made sure to arm our newly acquired former slave soldiers in order to hold our ground at the armory.

He was there with me to fight off the aggressors that wanted to overthrow our plans of future freedom for all slaves. Many partners of ours were struck down during the battle that occurred with the three factions that joined together in hopes to ruin everything we had worked so hard for; not even stopping when offered a truce and instead attacking us when all we wanted was for the fighting to stop and for peace to happen. Osborne did however question my decision making in his writings, saying that if I had not been as careless when sending some of our fellow brothers-in-arms away to my farm to gather supplies, we most likely would have succeeded. I believed my plans were foolproof and trusted in God to guide me through the conflict, although I should have sought advisement. I think Osborne was a fine man to serve with and my only regret was that so many of our fellow men fell during the battle.

Osborne served as not only a fine soldier but also a great person who thought highly of me and would have died for me. It eases me that he was able to survive where so many of his brothers had fallen. It is nice to know that he held my beliefs in high regard and sees that our attack on the armory at Harper's Ferry served as a milestone in the development of eradicating the sin of enslavement in our country.

*John Brown*

## Intolerable Cruelty and the Deadly Nature of Sin

I believe that the period of history that John Brown lived and fought through could, in one way, be perceived as a sinful time for a then uncivil country. The United States during the 1800s served as a host of intolerable cruelty, even entertaining the idea of enslaving another is repulsive in the minds of civilized people, but to actually go further than the morbid idea and act on it shows true neglect for the well being of fellow human beings. Throughout my time studying the life of John Brown, I found that when observing the times that he lived and the problems he dealt with, the culture and life that dominated the United States could be summed up by the seven deadly sins that were laid out in *The Holy Bible*. In the following passages I will try to further elaborate on why I believe that American history in the time of John Brown can be simplified in terms of the deadly nature of sins such as lust, envy, wrath, and even pride.

I'll start with what I believe was one of the most driving forces in the adoption of slavery in the United States, the sin of *sloth*. Sloth can be simplified into the simple act of a person constantly avoiding physical work or in other words, laziness; the white men that decided to set their sights on using slaves were driven to their decision out of sheer laziness. If I were a wealthy, powerful man who had already achieved a great deal of success, why would I work harder than I have to when I can force another person, or better, a large group of people to do it for me? I believe that this was the logic and reasoning behind their adoption of slavery, free labor means free income which would lead to free success and more importantly respect and power, something that a great number of people will eternally crave. This also ties in to the sin of *greed*, the desire of wealth and gain; the people that were obsessed with greed were truly selfish individuals. To put yourself and your desires in front of a suffering person is truly gross and neglectful, but such an act was common in parts of the United States while Captain John Brown

lived his life out. These men that practiced slavery were greedy, power hungry men who would set fire to the world if it meant that they could have power over the ashes and impose their rule onto those they saw lesser than them.

The next sin I would use to describe the conditions of the United States in the time frame I am writing about is *wrath*, or anger, which is the practice of someone disregarding the love and compassion that all humans should have for each other and replacing it with disregard and fury. It is my belief that the vast majority of slaveholders showed nothing but hate to the men, women and children that they owned. This total disregard for the well being of their fellow humans exemplified what it meant to show wrath and put anger out toward other people. A slave that stood up for himself or dared to go against the tyranny of an owner was faced with treatment that I hope most would consider not only unfair, but also undeserving. After wrath we arrive at *lust*, we were a lust driven nation; lust for wealth and in some cases lust for pleasure. The lust that many slaveholders had for their female slaves was another thing that encapsulated parts of this country, sometimes raping them and then making them have children all so the process of slavery could start all over again with a fresh and free workforce. This lust was yet another burden upon a society and country that would come to be known as a free land. But what kind of free land would let those that lived inside of it be taken advantage of and become victims of sinners while some stood idly by?

The next sin is *gluttony*. Gluttony is the desire to take more than what you need, which I believe all slaveholders and many others did. The people of this country practiced gluttony simply by using slaves and taking advantage of what they could produce; the action of the citizens taking more than they needed resulted in a higher demand for products that were made with the blood, sweat, and tears of slave labor. Not only was it practiced on the want of slave

labor, it had been practiced throughout the history of the United States, whether it be the sacking of a country under the name of manifest destiny or revolution based on the idea of that we should be able to take and supply for ourselves and not have to rely on others. *Envy*, the desire for other's things and accomplishments, is next. Throughout the slave holding states each different household or plantation, each owner wanted not only to become successful, but to achieve a success like those around them. They were envious of the men that had more power and influence than them, even the poorest of men had to have envied the men that controlled an entire race of people and made them work for their own economic gain. Envy leads people to do drastic things, such as the adopt slaves for work or possibly even take on another practice of sin to accomplish what their envy makes them desirous of. The last sin that I believe describes the time in America during the 1800s is *pride*. Pride is considered to be the root of all sins and also the most dangerous of them. Pride in Americans led them to believe that they were better than others, this sense of entitlement that developed over the years is a reason that I believe played a major part in the enslavement of the African race and even the servants that had been used many years prior to the adoption of slavery. When the Americans believed themselves to be better than others, it lead to them seeking out those that may have been perceived as weak and those that were of unknown cultures. Throughout American history leading up to and even past the 1800s we have seen the result that excessive pride can have on a nation, whether it be beneficial to most, like achieving our independence, or detrimental, such as adopting slaves and forcing out natives.

America's formative years can be viewed as sinful and secular depending on which way someone looks at it; for me it is summed up by the sin of our nation and the cruel practices that happened here. The practices of all seven deadly sins were rampant in this country during the



1800s and still are to this day. Although not a religious man, with the help of the knowledge I learned from the documents and writings about John Brown, my eyes were opened to what would be considered sin by very many people. I believe that with the abolition of slavery the United States distanced itself from evil and continued to try and better itself to set an example that the world should not be full of sin.

**Your assignment this semester differs from this sample a bit. Be sure to do the following:**

- 1. Include a works cited page.**
- 2. Only use three outside primary sources.**
- 3. Only use three primary sources from *America Firsthand*. Remember they don't have to be in the time, place, or condition of your character. Just choose three interesting primary sources from *America Firsthand*, and then summarize and reflect upon them as your character.**
- 4. Complete the academic inquiry questions for the outside primary sources.**
- 5. Complete the academic inquiry questions accompanying your documents from *American Firsthand*.**

**All of the formatting info is on your assignment sheet and in your syllabus, but here is quick reminder. Double-spaced. 1 inch margins. Choose whatever font you like for this font, but don't make it larger than size 12.**

**Be sure to create a title.**