

ON THIS DAY IN WEST VIRGINIA HISTORY JANUARY 7



On January 7, 1860, the Virginia General Assembly passed an act compensating \$1,500 to state attorney Andrew Hunter of Charles Town, Jefferson County, for his legal services in prosecuting John Brown and his raiders.

CSO: SS.8.22

Investigate the Document: (John Brown/Boyd B. Stutler Collection, Z. Jacobs to Andrew Hunter, 1859 October 27; James M. Mason to Andrew Hunter, 1859 December 20; Ms78-1)

1. What is the main idea of this written document? When is it dated?
2. What do you suppose ‘martyrdom’ implies? Do you think it is applicable to John Brown?
3. A word that describes a person who favors the eradication of slavery can be found within the document—which word is it?

Think Critically: Using what you know about John Brown’s Raid on Harpers Ferry, why was John Brown’s raid at Harper’s Ferry unsuccessful? Did the raid accomplish anything in your opinion? Explain. Describe the effect of John Brown’s Raid and how it coincided with increasing sectional tensions prior to the Civil War. If you were assigned by the West Virginia Archives to create the text for a Historical Highway Marker about John Brown’s Raid on Harpers Ferry, what would be on it? (50-75 words.)

Wheeling Oct: 27-1859

Dear Sir,

I see by the News-papers
you are prosecuting Brown &
his Associates - Pardon me for
presuming to make a suggestion
or two - I am anxious not
only that these men should be
punished for their wicked &
devilish deeds: but that it should
be so managed on the part of
the Government as best to
detect & expose & degrade the
many abolitionist-pursuers
& Republicans who sympathize
with them ^{many of them} - I doubt not
love & do aid & abet them

If not too late I would sug-
=gest that Brown & Stevens be
=not tried till they are & of good
=recovered, so to remove all

pretense that they were not
able to attend to their defence
— and further I am
impressed with the notion
that it would be wise, to
long delay the execution
of Brown, after he is
convicted. When he gets
well life will become
sweeter to him & the love
& glory of ^{such a} martyrdom, grows
dull & I would spare
even him, could I thereby
get at increased numbers
of abolitionists & Free-soilers
— If the prolonging of his life
should lead to ^{no} detections, it
^{would} ~~will~~ show that we are cool
& confident ^{& able to} ~~an~~ ⁱⁿ our own
strength

And: Hunter Esq
Charleston, Va

Most respectfully
Yr Jacob

Property of West Virginia State Archives

Washington Dec 20, 1859.

Andrew Hunter Esq.
Charlestown Va.

Dear Sir,

Will you do me the favor to send me by return mail the names at full, of the following persons whom I intend to have summoned as witnesses before the select committee of the Senate in the Harper's Ferry case, — Col. Baylor, Lewis Washington, — Allstott (who was taken with his negroes) — Dangerfield (Clerk of the paymaster) — Kitzmiller (Clerk) and — Ball (the armorer.)

Oblige me also by sending me the names and place of residence of some two intelligent persons who resided in the neighborhood of Brown's house at the Kennedy farm, and who visited and knew him whilst there, though ignorant of his designs, and who can tell of the account he gave of himself and of his views in that part of the country, his habits, occupation &c. .

I shall send subpoenas for these witnesses on receipt of your letter, to be here probably on the 3rd or 4th of January. You of course, included, with a duces tecum to bring here the Brown papers, in your charge.

Very Truly Yours
J. M. Mason