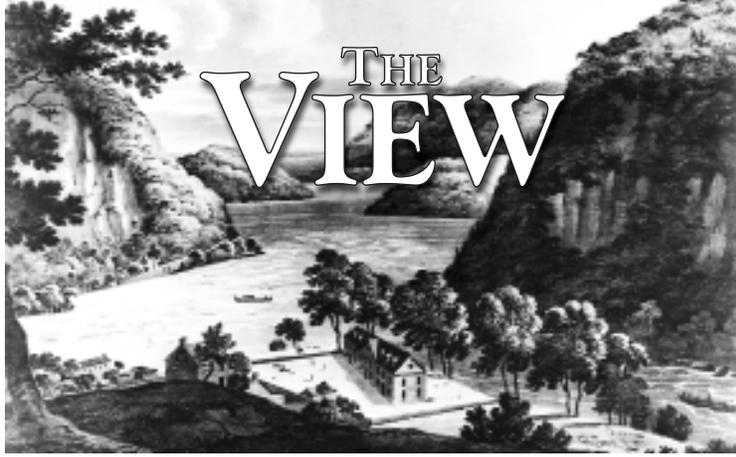


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Winter 2000



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# Harpers Ferry Park Celebrates John Brown 2000

This year marks the bicentennial of the birth of John Brown. Almost a century and a half after his death, Brown remains one of the most controversial figures in American history. On October 16, 1859 Brown, along with 21 followers came to Harpers Ferry to strike a blow against slavery. The raid failed and Brown was hanged in December of 1859. Sixteen months later the country erupted in civil war.

This May Harpers Ferry National Historical Park will host a variety of commemorative and educational events, dramatic presentations and interpretive activities that explore John Brown's life, his influence and his place in history. Partners sharing in the sponsorship of this event are this Association, the Organization of American Historians, the Jefferson County NAACP, the John Brown Heritage Association and Penn State University, Mont Alto Campus.

On Tuesday, May 9, programs will commemorate Brown's 200<sup>th</sup> birthday with the unveiling of the newly renovated John Brown exhibit and the opening of a special exhibit "Quilts Coded with Designs for Escape," with featured speaker Dr. Raymond Dobard, co-author of *Hidden in Plain View: The Secret Stories of Quilts and the Underground Railroad*. A commemorative postal cancellation and cachet will be available at the USPS kiosk set up in the park for that day, and Magpie will perform songs associated with their new play, *Sword of the Spirit* (see article on following page).

The Association will be sponsoring a mini-Elderhostel associated with the John

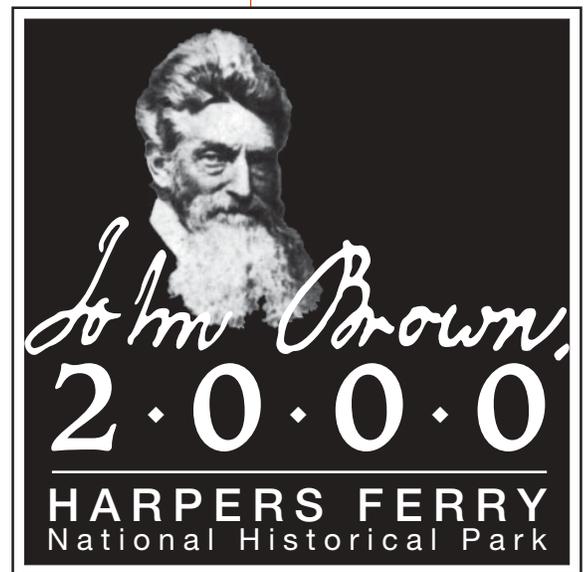
Brown commemoration on May 8-10. Please contact the Association if you are interested in attending.

The weekend beginning Friday, May 12, will feature educational programs and speakers including Congressman John Lewis of Georgia, Dr. Stephen B. Oates, author of the John Brown biography, *To Purge This Land with Blood*, and Fred

Morsell portraying Frederick Douglass. There will be public dramatic performances of *Sword of the Spirit* during the weekend.

On Monday, May 15, a three-day John Brown conference will begin on the historic Storer College Campus in the park. A call for papers has been issued and registration forms for this symposium are currently available by calling the Association office. The conference includes speakers, tours and field trips, panel discussions, presentations, a reception at the Kennedy farm, interpretive displays and a book exhibit.

The Cliffside Inn is offering a variety of accommodation rates for the period of May 9-17. The next newsletter will have a complete schedule of events, or you may check the Harpers Ferry Park Website for updates ([www.nps.gov/hafe](http://www.nps.gov/hafe)).



John Brown 2000  
commemorative logo.

*The picture which appears on our newsletter's nameplate, dating from 1803, is one of the oldest prints of Harpers Ferry. Twenty years earlier, in 1783, Thomas Jefferson had declared that this view was "worth a voyage across the Atlantic."*

## “Sword of the Spirit” A Play about the Life of John Brown and His Wife Mary

The Association will begin **John Brown 2000** by premiering a one-act play on February 18-20 at the Old Opera House featuring the last days of John Brown. Proceeds from this presentation will benefit Park commemorative activities in May. The production, researched for three years, was written by Greg Artzner and Terry Leonino, and Richard Henzel. Greg and Terry, also known as the musical group, *Magpie*, have recorded eight albums. Their most recent is a collection of songs based upon the stories of other characters in the drama of John Brown and Harper’s Ferry. They are also known for “Take Me Back to Harpers Ferry,” written for the Park’s 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Richard Henzel, co-author and director, has been a Chicago theatre legend for many years. He has appeared on stage and in films and television, and is well known for his work as director and playwright.

The play takes place in Brown’s jail cell in Charlestown, Virginia where he spent the last month and a half of his life. He received many visitors and granted interviews while he healed from his wounds and awaited execution. He also composed over one hundred letters to members of his family, including his wife Mary, as well as others. This time provided Brown with the opportunity to expound upon his life, his beliefs, and what he considered his God-given mission to destroy the evil of slavery in what he called “this guilty land.” The play will be a singular opportunity for the audience to participate as spectators in that process, as they become the “interviewer” for one last session before he is taken to the gallows. Mary, his wife, writes to him from the home of Lucretia Mott in Philadelphia, where she is staying. As the stories intertwine, husband and wife address each other “conversing” across the miles.



Greg Artzner and Terry Leonino of *Magpie*.

### Recent Patron Members

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Tradition Studio  
Keith Rocco  
Edinburg, VA

Performances will be held at the Old Opera House in Charles Town on Friday and Saturday nights, February 18 and 19 at 8:00 p.m. There will be a Sunday matinee February 20 at 2:00. Tickets are \$10.00 for adults and \$7.00 for students and are available from the Association at 800-821-5206 (535-6881 in the area). Proceeds from the performances benefit John Brown 2000 activities. Greg and Terry have also generously donated two performances for Jefferson County eighth grade students. Don’t miss the premier of this original play!

## “Before Freedom Came” Opens in February

Harpers Ferry National Historical Park is hosting a temporary exhibit developed for circulation by the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Services with assistance from the Anacostia Museum and the National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution. Adapted from an exhibition organized by the Museum of the Confederacy, Richmond, Virginia and funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities, “*Before Freedom Came: African American Life in the Antebellum South*” will open February 1.

This exhibit examines the individual, family and community life of 19<sup>th</sup> century African Americans against the backdrop of one of the most tumultuous eras in American history. Musical instruments, tools, household items, objects of spiritual significance, manuscripts and photos of black Americans—enslaved and free—are part of this exhibition.

Remembrances of slavery told through personal testimonies, traditional stories and songs and objects is the focus of this exhibition. A 220-page book with the same title, published by the Museum of the Confederacy and the University of Virginia Press accompanies the exhibition and is available at the Bookshop. This volume was awarded the American Library’s Association’s Most Notable Non-Fiction Award. The exhibit will be on display through the John Brown 2000 celebration.

## Books on John Brown at the Park Bookshop

To find out more about the life of John Brown, order these titles from the Association Bookshop by calling 1-800-821-5206.

*To Purge This Land with Blood* by Stephen B. Oates, pb \$20.95.

*John Brown, "Thundering Voice of Jehovah," A Pictorial Heritage* by Stan Cohen, pb \$14.95.

*John Brown, The Making of a Martyr* by Robert Penn Warren, pb \$11.95.

*John Brown's Body* by Stephen Vincent Benet, pb \$14.95.

*John Brown's Raid* (official National Park Handbook), pb \$4.25.

*John Brown Raid VideoPack* (includes handbook, 30 min. video, and study guide) \$24.95.

*His Soul Goes Marching On: Responses to John Brown and the Harpers Ferry Raid* by Paul Finkelman, pb \$22.50.

*Companions in Conspiracy: John Brown and Gerrit Smith* by Chester Hearn, pb \$9.95.

*Fragments to Flames: John Brown, Harpers Ferry and the Canadian Connection* by Robert Trueman, pb \$4.95.

*John Brown: A Biography* by W.E.B. DuBois, pb \$19.95.

*The Anvil* (a screenplay of the trial) by Julia Davis, pb \$6.00.

*John Brown Mysteries* by Jean Libby, ed., pb \$11.95.

*War to the Knife: Bleeding Kansas 1854-1861* by Thomas Goodrich, hb \$29.95.

## Hubert Sumlin Blues Heritage Concert

On Friday, April 7, at 8:00 p.m. the Association and the Jefferson County Branch of the NAACP will present "An Evening with Chicago Blues Legend Hubert Sumlin" at the Cliffside Inn Ballroom in Harpers Ferry. Sumlin will be backed by the popular blues band, *2Blue Ensemble*. Opening the show will be boogie-woogie keyboard extraordinaire David Bennett Cohen.

The 67 year old Sumlin was born in Greenwood, Mississippi and began playing music when he was eight years old. His professional career began when he was 16 with blues harmonica player, James Cotton. In 1953, he became Howlin' Wolf's guitarist and musical collaborator. By the 1960s Sumlin had attained legendary status and was idolized by the likes of Jimi Hendrix, Eric Clapton, and Stevie Ray Vaughan. He was featured in the 1987 film, *Hubert Sumlin: Living the Blues*.

Advanced tickets for the concert are \$12.00 for adults and \$10.00 for students and children. All tickets at the door will be \$15.00. Tickets can be purchased by calling 304-535-6881 in Jefferson and Berkeley counties, or 1-800-821-5206 from other areas. Proceeds from this concert support public education and interpretation of African American history at Harpers Ferry.



Chicago Blues Legend  
Hubert Sumlin.

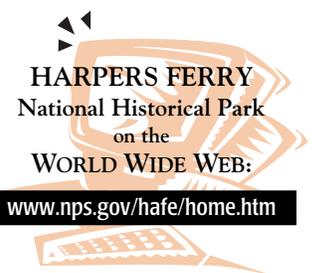
## West Virginia Memory Project Features John Brown/Boyd B. Stutler Collection

To commemorate the 140th anniversary of the hanging of John Brown, the West Virginia State Archives presents a new electronic database of materials pertaining to Brown from the Boyd B. Stutler Collection. A recognized authority on the man, Stutler (1889-1970) created one of the most important John Brown collections in existence. The State of West Virginia acquired this material in 1977.

With funding from a National Leadership Grant—awarded by the federal Institute of Museum and Library in 1998—staff at the

State Archives have digitized over 1,000 photographs from the Stutler Collection, and linked them to fully searchable descriptive text. In addition to numerous views of John Brown and his family, this collection contains contemporary artist renderings of the October 1859 raid on Harpers Ferry and Brown's trial and execution at Charles Town, as well as photographs of Brown's comrades-in-arms and other associates.

Visit this impressive online collection at <http://129.71.134.132/imlsintro.html>

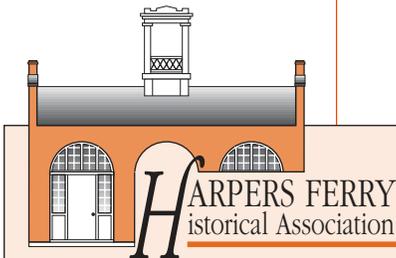


The Harpers Ferry Historical Association operates the National Park Bookshop in Lower Town Harpers Ferry. Profits from sales are returned to the park to support interpretive and educational programs to enhance your visit.

You are invited to join this unique organization and be a part of Harpers Ferry's special family. For more information call (304) 535-6881 or send e-mail to: [hfha@intrepid.net](mailto:hfha@intrepid.net)

**Harpers Ferry Historical Association**  
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Harpers Ferry, WV 25425

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## New Design Unveiled for Harpers Ferry Park Website

The Harpers Ferry National Historical Park Website, first launched on July 27, 1995, recently received a major new design makeover. Improvements include a revised site navigation structure and comprehensive site index to facilitate quicker and more intuitive access to the Website's rich and diverse content.

Additions to the Website include streaming audio and video files of a 1994 interview conducted with Dr. Stephen B. Oates on the subject of John Brown, plus

new photographs in the site's online image archive featuring the Park's *Election Day 1860* special event. The Park's online bookshop has also been revised and updated.

The Harpers Ferry Park Website has been recognized with awards of excellence from the National Association for Interpretation (1996) and the Association of Partners for Public Lands (1998).

Please explore the Park's new Website at [www.nps.gov/hafe/home.htm](http://www.nps.gov/hafe/home.htm)

## Harpers Ferry Historical Association Membership Application

**I want to join the Harpers Ferry Historical Assn.**  
Please enroll me in the following member category:

**\$10 Basic Member** – (includes *The View* newsletter and a 15% discount on all items sold in the Park Bookshop).

**\$27 Basic Plus Member** – (includes *The View* newsletter and a 15% discount on all items sold in the Park Bookshop, plus a 12-month Harpers Ferry Park entrance pass).

**\$50 Contributing Member** – (includes *The View* newsletter and a 15% discount on all items sold in the Park Bookshop, plus a 12-month Harpers Ferry Park entrance pass and the *Back to Harpers Ferry* video).

**\$100 Patron Member** – (includes *The View* newsletter and a 15% discount on all items sold in the Park Bookshop, plus a 12-month Harpers Ferry Park entrance pass, an Association Totebag, and member recognition in our newsletter and at our Annual Meeting).

**I'm already a member;**  
please note my new address below.

By notifying us of your change of address, you'll continue to receive this newsletter at your new location.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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**Please clip and mail to:**

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