



John Brown in Memory and Myth

Michael Daigh

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John Brown's father on the day of his birth, May 9, 1800, wrote "John was born one hundred years after his great grandfather. Nothing else very uncommon." Many years later came the 1856 Pottawatomie Massacre, where his uncommon convictions led him and his band of abolitionists to kill five pro-slavery settlers in Franklin County, Kansas. Three years later, Brown's raid on Harpers Ferry and his subsequent trial and execution helped push an already divided nation inexorably toward civil war.

This is the story of John Brown, the age he embodied and the myth he became, and how the tragic gravity of his actions transformed America's past and future. Through biographical narrative, his life and legacy are discussed as a study in metaphor and power and the nature of historical memory.

John Brown in Memory and Myth Details

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From Reader Review John Brown in Memory and Myth for online ebook

Danielle Tremblay says

First of all, I must say that I won this book in GoodReads giveaways in exchange for an honest review.

John Brown, born on May 9, 1800-December 2, 1859, was a white American abolitionist and a major player at the beginning of the Civil War. He was for true equality whatever the races. And he believed armed insurrection was the only way to overthrow the institution of slavery in the United States.

The book's first two sections deal with Brown's life and the framing of his personality. The third presents his raids and actions in Kansas, along with his trial and its aftermath.

Michael Daigh delves into Brown's psychology and outlines the reasons for his actions and the effects they had on his family and the nation. There is much to learn here about Brown's mental make-up.

During the 1856 conflict in Kansas, Brown commanded forces at the Battle of Black Jack and the Battle of Osawatimie. Brown's followers killed five slavery supporters at Pottawatomie.

In 1859, Brown led an unsuccessful raid on the federal armory at Harpers Ferry that ended with his capture. Brown's trial resulted in his conviction and a sentence of death by hanging.

The life of John Brown has been the subject for several novels and movies which have all contributed to the legend of the most well known abolitionist of his day and ours.

This book is a good biographical history and historical evaluation of John Brown, the age he embodied and the myth he became, and how the tragic gravity of his actions transformed America's past and future. Through biographical narrative, his life and legacy are discussed as a study about power and the nature of historical memory. The author did an impressive historical research. It's very well annotated, written, organized and presented and contains a strong bibliography.

It's a welcome addition to community's culture and academic library 19th Century American Biography collections. This is a fascinating history of a man and his era. It does read like a textbook at times and can be a bit dry. However, it should be read by every serious student of the coming of civil war or and by non-specialist general readers with an interest in the life and legend of John Brown in particular.

The book is a bit expensive (I can't complain about it since I got it for free), but it is well worth the cost. I recommend it highly.

Nadine says

Scholarly, well written, recommend! You learn about the society, individuals and notable events of the US so you can see in context how John Brown's life was influenced and the moral and ethical dilemma faced by him and society at the time. I am not a history specialist, but as an interested in history reader, I learned so much. I am thankful I received a copy from Goodreads First Reads for review because I am so much more conversant on the history of the time.
