

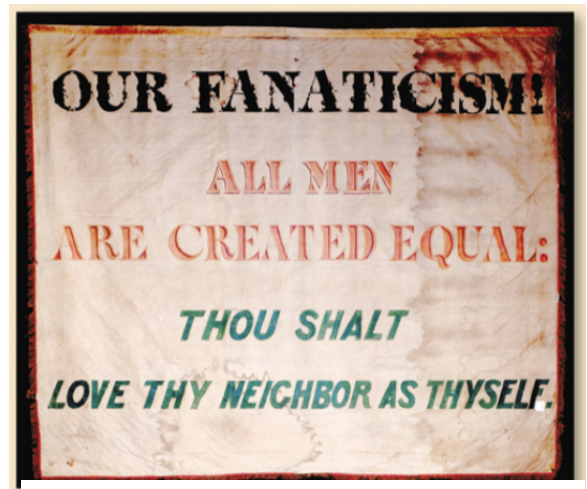
Shadow of Intention: John Brown's Declaration of Liberty of July 4, 1859

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Objective: To focus on key passages from John Brown's 1859 *Declaration of Liberty by the Representatives of the Slave Population of the United States of America* in order to better understand his intentions in planning and carrying out the Harpers Ferry raid.

Declaration of Independence July 4, 1776

*We hold these truths to be Self Evident;
That All Men are Created Equal;
That they are endowed by their Creator
with certain unalienable rights.
That among these are Life, Liberty, and
the pursuit of happiness.*



Banner used by William Lloyd Garrison at antislavery fairs and festivals (1843)

Declaration of Liberty July 4, 1859

*That Nature hath freely given to all Men,
a full Supply of Air, Water, & Land; for
their sustenance, & mutual happiness . . .*

*To secure equal rights, privileges, &
justice to all; Irrespective of Sex; or
Nation . . .*

*That it is the highest Privilege, & Plain
Duty of Man; to strive in every reasonable
way, to promote the Happiness, Mental,
Moral, & Physical, elevation of his fellow
Man . . .*



John Brown (1800-1859)
photo circa 1847

Dred Scott Decision

On March 6, 1857, Chief Justice Roger Taney issued the Supreme Court opinion. He noted:

"[African Americans] had for more than a century before been regarded as beings of an inferior order, and altogether unfit to associate with the white race, either in social or political relations; and so far inferior, that they had no rights which the white man was bound to respect; and that the negro might justly and lawfully be reduced to slavery for his benefit. He was bought and sold, and treated as an ordinary article of merchandise and traffic, whenever a profit could be made by it."

Slavery

Slavery is in violation of the Declaration of Independence.

Slavery is a brutal, cruel WAR.

"Their Slave Code, is a shame to any Nation, Their Laws, are no Laws; they themselves are no more than a Band of Base Piraticle Rulers. They are a curse to themselves, a most lamentable Blot upon Society."

NOT for the Overthrow of Government



That when any form of Government, becomes destructive to these ends, It is the right of the People, to alter, Amend, or Remodel it.

It is their Right, it is their Duty to resist & change such Government, & provide safeguards for their future Liberty."

Intention and Action

We will Obtain these rights or Die in the Struggle to obtain them. We make war upon oppression, we have no controversy with any Religious Sect, our **intention** is not to molest any Good Man, whatever may be his religious belief. "The welfare of the People; Is the first Great Law."

We therefore, the Representatives of the circumscribed [bounded, constrained] citizens of the United States, of America in General Congress assembled, appealing to the supreme Judge of the World, for the rectitude of our **intentions**, Do in the name, & by authority of the oppressed Citizens of the Slave States, Solemnly publish and Declare: that the Slaves are, & of right ought to be as free & and independent as the unchangable Law of God, requires that All Men Shall be.

Question

Why has the Declaration of Liberty been hidden in the shadows?

