

Chronology of John Brown Portraits –fourteen photo portraits of John Brown

1. John Brown in Hartford 1848/1850. Photographer: Augustus Washington (1820-1875). Quarter plate daguerreotype, Nelson-Atkins Museum 2008.6.4. mirror view

The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri. Gift of the Hall Family Foundation. Photo by John Lamberton.

The meeting of John Brown and black abolitionists in Springfield, Massachusetts, including the photographer Augustus Washington, is documented in a letter by Frederick Douglass to William C. Nell published February 1, 1848 in *The North Star*. Brown supported the African American publications and organized the defense of fugitives in Springfield in response to the Fugitive Slave Law by forming the League of Gileadites in 1850.

The two Hartford daguerreotypes were taken within days of each other, according to forensic anthropologist Eileen Barrow. The traditional portrait is listed first.

2. John Brown with abolition banner 1848/1850 Photographer Augustus Washington (1820-1875). Quarter-plate daguerreotype, National Portrait Gallery NPG 96.123. mirror view

National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution Purchased with major acquisition funds and with funds donated by Betty Adler Schermer in honor of August M. Bondi. Not to be reproduced without written permission.

Washington's daguerreotype studio in Hartford was in the Kellogg Building, owned by an abolitionist family famous for producing lithographs. E.B. and E.C. Kellogg, managing the family business at the time of Brown's photographs, produced a poster of John Brown in 1860 based on a mirror view of the bearded portrait. A catalog of the work of Augustus Washington, who emigrated to Liberia in 1853, was published by the National Portrait Gallery in 1999.

August Bondi was an Austrian-born Kansas settler who was part of John Brown's Free-State militia. He fought at Osawatomie in 1856.

In a letter to Franklin Sanborn on March 27, 1885, John Brown Jr. stated that he had possession of both Washington daguerreotypes: "*The one with flag, (which appears to be only of white or light colored cloth of some kind without stars, stripes or emblems of any sort), was taken by a Colored daguerreian artist at Hartford, named Washington. I doubt if you would consider it a good one. The other is no better perhaps, and is considerably defaced.*" (John Brown/Boyd Stutler Collection Database, West Virginia Memory Project, published in the catalog of Cowans Auctions in 2008)

John Brown Jr. died in 1895. The first daguerreotype (Image 1) was given to his sister Annie Brown Adams in California, who loaned it to Thomas Featherstonhaugh for copy by the Brady-Handy Studio in Washington D.C. in 1909. Her descendants in Ohio auctioned it in 2007 for medical expenses. The banner daguerreotype (Image 2) was recognized at a Pennsylvania auction in 1996, mislabeled. The subsequent auction realized \$115,000.

3. John Brown 1853/1854 copy by Easton's Photographic Gallery, Rochester, Minnesota, dated March 24th 1868. Carte-de-visite albumen print . Kansas Memory ID 208851. life view

Kansas State Historical Society. Donated by James Burton in 1952.

Easton's Photographic Gallery was opened in 1862 by an interracial married couple, James H. and Lucy Jane Easton, "photograph artists."

An engraving published in *The Magazine of American History* (1893) is captioned 'John Brown as he appeared in 1854.' Library of Congress

3a. Family portrait. Albumen print inscribed 'To my beloved wife Mrs. Mary A. Brown from her Affectionate husband John Brown.' Copy by the Morse Studio in San Francisco, ca/ 1880. The Bancroft Library, Lucy Higgins and Sarah Brown Papers Banc Mss 2007/152, life view The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

John Brown's daughter, Sarah, lived with her mother until Mary's death in 1884. The portrait was given to her friend Mrs. Lucy Higgins of Santa Clara at Sarah's death in 1916, as well as an original 1854 letter from John to Mary Brown. Both were donated to The Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley, in 2005 by Lori Deal, descendant of Lucy Higgins.

4. John Brown in Akron [1], August 1855. Photographer: Benjamin Battels (1823-1896). Albumen print, 6 7/8 by 5 3/8 inches. Chicago History Museum. F. G. Logan Collection ICHI 22207; life view

Chicago History Museum. Acquired from Horatio Rust in 1892.

Artifacts and letters in the F. G. Logan Collection were acquired by CHS in 1892 from Horatio N. Rust of Pasadena, who was associated with Henry and Ruth Brown Thompson.

Another print of this image is inscribed "Presented to F.B. Sanborn, Esqr, of Concord Mass by his highly obligated and admiring Friend. Springfield Mass. April 16th, 1857. John Brown."

4a. Summit County Historical Society painted photograph dated 1855 and credited to Benjamin F. Battels in the frame. Hand-painted on paper, 7 3/16 x 4 7/8 inches. Found in the hallway of the Simon Perkins stone mansion in Akron, which was purchased by SCHS in 1945.

Courtesy of the Summit County Historical Society -- Akron, Ohio

Eileen Barrow: The photos ICHI22207 and the SCHS portrait appear to be the same. The SCHS being a hand tinted version, its more youthful appearance (lack of wrinkles) is the result of the coloring, much as our computer photo enhancement of today.

The SCHS found a framed painted photograph hanging in the Perkins Mansion, which is now their museum. The legend states the date as 1855 "when John Brown spent the night at the Perkins mansion.." Battels' daguerreotype studio on 106 East Market Street opened in Akron in 1855. An article in the *Akron Times-Press*, October 29, 1930, identifies the photographer and the time of the photograph: 'On his way he stopped over in Akron to solicit more funds and more firearms and to spend a few days at the Perkins mansion on Perkins Hills. It was then that the picture was taken.'

5. John Brown in Lawrence, 1856. Photographer of daguerreotype: John Bowles (1833-1900), art rendition by Daniel Beard (1850-1941). Frontispiece of Richard J. Hinton, *John Brown and his Men; with some account of the roads they traveled to reach Harper's Ferry* with signature of Brown reproduced on it. 7 1/4 x 4 3/4 inches; mirror view

First edition in the Collection of Jean Libby (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1894)

Richard Hinton: 'from a sketch made by Dan Beard, the artist, from a daguerreotype taken in Lawrence, Kansas, September 12, 1856, by Colonel John Bowles, then residing in Lawrence. It is the only picture taken in Kansas.' April 13, 1894, notation on print at the Kansas State Historical Society, Kansas Memory ID 208878. . Location of original daguerreotype and artwork unknown. Hinton was a journalist associated with Brown in Kansas and in the raid at Harpers Ferry in 1859.

The photographer John Bowles was a stationmaster on the Underground Railroad assisting freedom-seekers in Douglas County, Kansas. He made a field daguerreotype of a free-state battery associated with John Brown (including his son Owen Brown) posing by a small cannon in September 1856. The daguerreotype was donated to the Kansas State Historical Society by Thomas Wentworth Higginson in 1878.

The artist/illustrator Dan Beard is best known for founding the Boy Scouts of America and designing the uniforms and logo. This is the only artist-original portrait in the chronology (not a painted photograph or projection painting).

6. John Brown in Hudson, 1856. (Boston Atheneum, UTB-6, 5.4, broj (no. 1). Sixth-plate daguerreotype; mirror view.

Boston Athenaeum. Donated by Sally Fairchild, a descendant of Charles and Elizabeth Nelson Fairchild, in 1942.

This image is often identified as “John Brown in Kansas, 1856.” Newspaper editor William Ritezell (*Western Reserve Chronicle*) was the originator of the daguerreotype, stated by his son in 1915: ‘Portrait taken in Hudson, Summit County, Ohio, and presented to Brown by William Ritezell.’ John Brown was in Hudson in the winter of 1856 to attend to family matters due to the death of his father, Owen Brown, in May 1856. He made public speeches about the need for Free State defense of Kansas in December, leaving for Boston by early January 1857.

Owen Brown (1771 – 1856) was one of the founding trustees of Oberlin College. Several branches of the Fairchild family (including Charles’) lived in Ohio in 1856. James Fairchild (cousin), later president of Oberlin College, was directly involved in the rescue of John Price in 1858. Brown successfully recruited three members of his 1859 raid on Harpers Ferry among the rescuers: John Copeland, Lewis Leary, and Dangerfield Newby.

7. John Brown in Boston, 1856/1857 [1] Photographer: John Adams Whipple (1822-1891) Quarter plate daguerreotype, Massachusetts Historical Society Photo. 1.18; mirror view

Massachusetts Historical Society. Donated by Amos A. Lawrence in 1869.

The back of the case is inscribed: ‘Mr. John Brown sat for this likeness for me in 1856, in Boston, after the Ossawatimie affair. [signed] February 12, 1869. Amos A. Lawrence.’

8. John Brown in Boston 1856/1857 [2] Photographer: John Adams Whipple (1822-1891)) Tintype copy of a daguerreotype by Miss M. A. Winnie of Topeka, ca. 1888–1891, 3 ¾ x 2 5/8 inches. Kansas Memory ID 3386. life view

Kansas State Historical Society. John Brown Collection.

James Redpath wrote in 1864 that John Brown had three daguerreotypes made in Boston in January 1857: one for Amos A. Lawrence (Image 7), one for Dr. Thomas Webb (Image 8) and one which Repath was given and presented to the Boston Athenaeum (Image 9). Images 7 and 8 are the same sitting. (Letter to Mr. Poole, Librarian, Boston Athenaeum, published in 1948 in the *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society*.)

KSHS acquired the massive collection papers of Thomas H. Webb in 1878. A cabinet card of this portrait in mirror view was donated to KSHS by J. H. Leonard, another Topeka photographer, on March 31, 1891. A tintype produces a reverse (mirror) image of the subject—therefore photographing a daguerreotype will produce a life view.

9. John Brown in Boston, 1856/1857 [3]. Photographer: John A. Whipple (1822-1891). Half-plate daguerreotype, Boston Athenaeum UTB-2. 5.4 Broj 1857; mirror view

Boston Athenaeum. Donated by James Redpath in 1864.

John Brown’s tour of the New England and Atlantic states (as far south as Philadelphia) from January to May of 1857 introduced his militant stance to the growing abolitionist movement. Dressed in his Kansas clothes, even carrying the chains that had bound his son John Brown, Jr., after his imprisonment following the Pottawatomie Massacre (in which he had no knowledge or involvement), the Old Man mesmerized audiences. James Redpath identified the date of the

daguerreotype “in January 1857 or in December of the year before.” It is not the same sitting as John Brown in Boston [1] and [2], although the photographer is the same, John Adams Whipple.

This image is identified by the forensic anthropologist Eileen Barrow as showing signs of a mild stroke. It was noticed independently by Dr. Tad Grenga, a plastic surgeon, when looking at the engraving (Image 9a) online. Two periods of severe illness in 1857 and 1858 are documented as ‘ague and malaria.’ One required four weeks bedridden at the home of his half-sister Florella and her husband, Rev. Samuel Adair, in Osawatomie. Another period of ‘the difficulty in my head and ear’ is documented by John Brown as occurring in April and May, 1859. (Letters to John Kagi, *Calendar of Virginia State Papers*, 1893: items [67] and [68].)

9a. frontispiece of *The Public Life of Capt. John Brown by James Redpath. With an Auto-Biography of his Childhood and Youth.* Engraving by John C. Buttre (1821-1893). Lithograph, 7 ½ x 4 ½ inches; mirror view

First edition in the Collection of Jean Libby. (Boston: Thayer and Eldridge, 1860)

James Redpath (1833-1891) was a journalist closely associated with John Brown in Kansas and with his plans for the Harpers Ferry raid. In 1858 he traveled throughout the southern United States as a ‘roving reporter,’ looking for areas of likely slave support and weak defense. On October 15, 1859, Redpath was in a Baltimore hotel, expecting the attack to begin the following week. When it was precipitated to October 16 due to local citizenry suspicions, Redpath did not understand Brown’s signal of sending the passenger train to Baltimore with the news.

John Chester Buttre, the engraver, was born in Auburn, New York. In 1841 he moved to New York City and began steel-plate engraving with considerable success. He made two engravings of Frederick Douglass from daguerreotypes for his early narratives in 1847 and 1855.

10. John Brown in Albany, February 1857 Photographer unknown. Albumen print tipped-in frontispiece of Richard D. Webb, *The Life and Letters of Captain John Brown* with signature of Brown reproduced on it, 6 ½ x 4 inches; life view

First edition in the collection of Jean Libby (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1861).

Dublin (Ireland) publisher Richard D. Webb describes his acquisition of the negative as ‘personally brought from New York by Rev. Samuel D. May, made from the original daguerreotype, at the time of Brown’s execution and funeral in December 1859.’

10a. John Brown ‘Albany’ picture, 1857. Sepia-tinted black and white print, 8 x 10 inches. John Brown/Boyd Stutler Database Collection PH 01-0040, mirror view

West Virginia State Archives, Boyd Stutler Collection

Mr. Stutler’s notes:: “Inscribed on the front, not in Brown’s handwriting, ‘John Brown A.D. February 24th.’ On the back: ‘This is an original photograph taken for me at Albany, New York, about the year 1857; It is a good picture of him at that time. William Barnes, Albany, New York, December 8, 1888.’ William Barnes was the secretary of the New York Kansas Committee.

11. John Brown in Akron [2] January 1858 Benjamin Battels (1823-1896). Copy by the Philadelphia Photographic Company, undated. Carte-de-visite albumen print. Western Maryland Room, Washington County Free Library, Hagerstown. WMR 1703. life view

Washington County Free Library (WMR). Donated by Jean Libby on October 17, 2003.

This photograph was taken in January 1858, when Brown was preparing for his Provisional Constitution and Ordinances and the Chatham Convention. He left Tabor following a long period of illness, and visited his son Jason, still living in Akron, before arriving at the home of Frederick

Douglass in Rochester in February. This is the last photograph of John Brown without his beard, which was fully grown when he returned to Boston after the Chatham Convention in June, 1858.

The same image in a painted photograph copy at the Akron Public Library is attributed to Benjamin Battels, date is suggested "June, 1858?" by an unknown past archivist. It is used in 2009 as the signature image to commemorate John Brown's last visit to Akron on June 23, 1859.

The Philadelphia Photographic Company, a reprint house, opened on 730 Chestnut Street in 1864.

12. John Brown with beard, Boston, 1858/1859 [1]. Original painted photograph by Nathum B. Onthank (1823-1888) from negative by J. B. Heywood. Inscribed to his children by John Brown on June 18, 1859, 7 3/4 x 10 3/4 inches. Gilder Lehrman Collection, GLC04447; life view

Gilder-Lehrman Collection, Gilder-Lehrman Institute of American History

This is a photograph which has been painted. Written on front bottom corner of mount is Brown's salutation and signature. With the oval blind embossment of J.B. Heywood, 176 Wash. St., Boston. It was acquired by the Gilder-Lehrman Institute at the New York Historical Society in 1994. This exhibition is its first publication.

All the bearded photo portraits of John Brown originate from the same daguerreotype, the photographer is sometimes credited as M. M. Lawrence of New York. The date of the original daguerreotype was May or June 1858. The Heywood negative was made soon thereafter.

Brown's beard is documented in accounts of the Chatham Convention, held May 8 and 9, 1858. His plans were betrayed by Hugh Forbes, a European who was employed by Brown to instruct and drill his recruits in guerilla warfare. Brown returned to Boston in mid-June to meet with the Secret Six, who had postponed their support of the planned liberation.

12a. Autographed 1858 prints of John Brown with beard.

(Top left) Richard Hinton, a journalist who was a supporter of John Brown in Kansas and Virginia, captioned a lithograph as 'John Brown at the age of 58' in *John Brown and His Men* (1894), p. 200.

(Top right) Richard Hinton's cabinet card is at the Kansas State Historical Society. It is a painted photograph that was reproduced by Mangrum & Barnett's Gallery between 1875 and 1879. Kansas Memory ID 208850.

(Bottom left) A painted photograph which was then reproduced: "The Original Photograph Presented to Allen Pinkerton by John Brown in 1858." The future famed detective owned a barrel shop in a small town near the railroads outside Chicago, and loaned a barrel to John Brown for sending flour to his family in North Elba, which is noted in a letter by John Brown from Osawatomie on Sept. 9, 1858. Collection of Jean Libby, acquired in May 2009.

13 John Brown with beard, Boston, 1858/1859 [2]. Negative by James Wallace Black (1825-1896). Library of Congress Fine Arts Collection, LC USZ62 2472. Salt print, 10 3/4 x 14 inches, life view

Courtesy of the Library of Congress and Prof. John M. Lawlor, LOC Fellow. Print registered for copyright by Black & Batchelder on December 12, 1859.

This life orientation print was entered into copyright by J. W. Black and Perez Mann Batchelder, of Boston, at the Library of Congress on December 12, 1859 (ten days after Brown's execution in Virginia and two days after his funeral in New York). On the same day (December 12, 1859) a print of John Brown was entered into copyright registration at the District Court of Massachusetts by Black and Batchelder. J.A. Whipple and J.W. Black dissolved their partnership in November 1859.

In Spring 2008, Cowans Auctions of Cincinnati, who successfully represented the Brown family in their disposition of the first Washington daguerreotype (Image 1), announced a SALTED PAPER PHOTOGRAPH OF JOHN BROWN THE ABOLITIONIST...mounted on original printed card stock

with facsimile inscription along bottom margin. Printed on the oval mounting: 'copyright 1858 by Black & Batchelder, registered at the District Court of Massachusetts' 'Pho. by Black and Batchelder, 173 Washington St., Boston' 'From the Original taken for Dr. Webb.' (Lot #629) In January 1864, the Library of Congress registration print was appended or replaced with the information that appears on the Cowans Auctions mounting:—"Photograph by J. W. Black and Batchelder, REC 1858 Vol. 34, pp. 874) from the original taken for Dr. Webb." Study of the Massachusetts Copyright Registry for 1858 does not confirm this registration, recheck pending.

A full-length projection painting by Nathum Onthank now at the Boston Athenaeum is based on the J. W. Black negative. It was reproduced in Oswald Garrison Villard's biography in 1910 with firm dating "May 1859."

Conclusions There is only one original bearded photograph. The sitting was in May or June 1858. J. B. Heywood made the first negative of the original sitting; James W. Black made a better one (or improved Heywood's) in May 1859, under John Brown's direction. The backdating of the copyright registration in Massachusetts to 1858 by James Wallace Black is evidence that the split between Whipple and Black in November 1859 was related to the John Brown photographs. Whipple displayed an unbearded print of John Brown (the 1857 daguerreotype, Image 9) in his window during the trial and execution period in November-December 1859.

14. John Brown with beard vignette, Boston, 1859. New enhanced negative by J. W. Black, May 1859, printed by Alfred Cowles Platt (1826-1884) in Sandusky, Ohio, August 1859. Albumen cabinet card, cut to 4 ¾ x 3 ½ inches to fit a frame or album. Kansas Memory ID 208848

Kansas State Historical Society. Donated by John Brown, Jr. in 1888.

The new negative, with eyes expertly retouched, was made under the direction of John Brown himself, who traveled to Boston, New York, and Ohio in May and June 1859. Alfred C. Platt, Ohio photographer, made reproductions of the vignette portrait, which was identified in 1881 by John Brown, Jr., as having been made for 'newspaper presence...[illeg]...June 18, 1859, when on his way to Harper's Ferry.' John Brown, Jr. was in Sandusky in August gathering recruits for his father's army.

The standard size of a cabinet card is 6 ½ x 4 ½ inches. Cutting removed much of the 1881 handwritten description by John Brown, Jr. A duplicate image carte de visite by Platt, originally owned by Ruth Brown Thompson, is at the Gilder-Lehrman Institute for American History at the New York Historical Society. GLC04463.02.

Chronology created and written by Jean Libby, editor@alliesforfreedom.org copyright 2009

Conventions: Images in daguerreotype, cabinet card, and carte-de-visite format in standard sizes do not repeat measurements. The history of painted photographs is described by the *Journal of American Conservation* (1985, Vol. 24, Number 2: 92-103) at first painted-over enlargements, then methods found to photo-sensitize the canvas surface on which the enlarged portrait was projected and fixed. The second method is called projection painting. It became quite popular in the 1860s with artists employed by studios.

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