

By the Kansas Historical Society

## Letter from John Brown to his family

*Wassonville, Iowa 17th July 1857*

*Dear Wife & Children every one*

*Since I wrote last I have made but little progress; having Teams & Waggons [sic] to rig up, & load; & getting a horse hurt pretty bad. Still we shall get on just as well; & as fast as Providence intends; & I hope we may all be satisfeyed [sic] with that. We hear of but little that is interesting from Kansas. It will be a great privilege to hear from home again; & I would give any thing to know that I should be permitted to see you all again in this life. But Gods [sic] will be done. To his infinite grace I commend you all.*

*Your Affectionate Husband & Father*

*John Brown*



*Of the 20 children John Brown fathered, 11 survived into adulthood. This 1851 photograph shows John Brown's second wife, Mary Ann, with their daughters Annie (left) and Sarah (right).*

## Affidavit of Mrs. Louisa Jane Wilkinson, June 13, 1856

John Brown and a group of his supporters killed Louisa Jane Wilkinson's husband Allen Wilkinson as part of the Pottawatomie Massacre. In the following excerpt Louisa describes the night her husband was killed to the Special Committee Appointed to Investigate the Troubles in Kansas.

*My husband wanted to put on his boots and get ready, so as to be protected from the damp and night air, but they wouldn't let him. They then took my husband away. One of them came back and took two saddles; I asked him what they were going to do with him, and he said, "take him a prisoner to the camp." I wanted one of them to stay with me. He said he would, but "they would not let him." After they were gone, I thought I heard my husband's voice, in complaint, but do not know: went to the door, and all was still. Next morning Mr. Wilkinson was found about one hundred and fifty yards from the house, in some dead brush. A lady who saw my husband's body, said that there was a gash in his head and in his side; others said that he was cut in the throat twice.*

*On the Wednesday following I left for fear of my life. I believe that they would have taken my life to prevent me from testifying against them for killing my husband. I believe that one of Captain Brown's sons was in the party, who murdered my husband; I heard a voice like his. I do not know Captain Brown himself. I have two small children, one about eight and the other about five years old. The body of my husband was laid in a new house; I did not see it. My friends would not let me see him for fear of making me worse. I was very ill. The old man, who seemed to be commander, wore soiled clothes and a straw hat; pulled down over his face. He spoke quick, is a tall, narrow-faced, elderly man. I would recognize him if I could see him.*



*All of the men killed in the Pottawatomie Massacre, including Allen Wilkinson, were hacked to death with swords. John Brown purchased this sword in Ohio in 1855.*