

"Insurrection in Virginia," Rutland (VT) *Weekly Herald*, October 20, 1859  
<https://stampedes.dickinson.edu/document/rutland-vt-weekly-herald-insurrection-virginia-october-20-1859>

**INSURRECTION IN VIRGINIA.**—We have accounts of a serious insurrection or riot in Harper's Ferry, Virginia. The city papers of Tuesday contained the following dispatches:

BALTIMORE, Oct. 17, 1859.

A dispatch just received here from Frederick, and dated this morning, states that an insurrection has broken out at Harper's Ferry, where an armed band of Abolitionists have full possession of the Government Arsenal. The express train going east was twice fired into, and one of the railroad hands and a negro killed, while they were endeavoring to get the train through the town. The insurrectionists stopped and arrested two men, who had come to town with a load of wheat, and seizing their wagon, loaded it with rifles, and sent them into Maryland. The insurrectionists number about 250 whites, and are aided by a gang of negroes. At last accounts fighting was going on.

BALTIMORE, Oct. 17, 1859.

A dispatch from Martinsburgh, west of Harper's Ferry, received via Wheeling and Pittsburg, confirms the report of the insurrectionists having possession of the Arsenal at Harper's Ferry, and says they have planted cannon at the bridge. All the trains have been stopped. A body of armed men were getting ready to proceed thither to clear the road. There was great excitement at Martinsburg.

The military of Frederick had been ordered out.

Dispatches have been received from President Buchanan, ordering out the United States troops at this point, and a special train is now being got ready to convey them to the scene of disturbance. He has also accepted the volunteered services of Capt. Senick's company of Frederick, and has likewise ordered the Government troops from Old Point Comfort to proceed immediately to Harper's Ferry.

The insurgents, armed with muskets and bayonets, were in possession of all the streets. Men were seen in every quarter, who arrested the citizens, and pressed them into the service, including many negroes. This done, the U. S. Arsenal, Government Payhouse and all the other

public works were seized by the mob. The citizens were in a terrible state of alarm, the insurgents having threatened to burn the town. There was great excitement in Baltimore Monday afternoon, and several companies were moving for the scene of the insurrection.

The latest accounts state that the insurrectionists were commended by Capt. Brown of Kansas notoriety, and numbered originally seventeen white men and five negroes. One of the insurrectionists who was mortally wounded says the whole scheme was got up by Brown, who represented that the negroes would rise by thousands, and Maryland and Virginia be made free States.

We take the following from an article in the N. Y. Tribune of yesterday:

*The Insurrection*, so called, at Harper's Ferry, proves a verity. Old Brown of Osawatamie, who was last heard of on his way from Missouri to Canada with a band of runaway slaves, now turns up in Virginia, where he seems to have been for some months plotting and preparing for a general stampede of slaves. How he came to be in Harper's Ferry, and in possession of the U. S. Armory, is not yet clear; but he was probably betrayed or exposed, and seized the Armory as a place of security until he could safely get away. The whole affair seems the work of a madman; but John Brown has so often looked death serenely in the face that what seems madness to others doubtless wore a different aspect to him. He had twenty-one men with him, mostly white, who appear to have held the Armory from 9 P. M. of Sunday till 7 of Tuesday (yesterday) morning, when it was stormed by Col. Lee and a party of U. S. Marines, and its defenders nearly all killed or mortally wounded. Old Brown was severely wounded and his son—(we believe his last surviving son)—killed. Of the original twenty-two, fifteen were killed, two mortally wounded, and two unhurt. The other three had pushed northward on Monday morning guiding a number of fugitive slaves through Maryland. These were of course sharply pursued and fired on, but had not been taken at our last advices.

Harper's Ferry was full of soldiers and militia men yesterday, and more are constantly pouring in. Never before was such an uproar raised by twenty men as by Old Brown and his confederates in this deplorable affair.

Slave Stampedes on the Southern Borderlands