

Odette Harper

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John Brown in New York City

During the years of 1856 to 1858 John Brown made several trips to New York City. He had become a welcome and frequent guest in the home of Gerrit Smith at Peterboro in the eastern part of the state. He would often travel from Peterboro to New York making the trip in short town - to - town stages and speaking at churches to white and colored congregations along the way. In New York he was sometimes the ^{house} guest of Dr. and Mrs. J. N. Gloucester, a wealthy colored couple in Brooklyn. They contributed ^{money} to his cause.

From time to time, John Brown although never ^{sought} a member of the National Committee, an abolitionist organization with appendages in many of the larger north eastern cities, sought aid. He was often at the Committee's headquarters and the Committee sometimes supplied him with small sums of money and provisions and clothes. On January 25, 1857 he was invited to the committee's last meeting before its dissolution. The meeting was held at the Astor House. A proposition was made by one of the representatives of the Massachusetts Committee, a unit ~~from~~ that state, to furnish John Brown with arms and money to organize and drill military companies in Kansas, and to have them in readiness in any emergency, such as an invasion from Missouri. The granting of the request was opposed by Harvey Hurd who feared that Brown's design was to invade Missouri or some other slave state for the purpose of promoting a war between the North and South. Three months

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earlier Gerrit Smith had said at the Buffalo Convention, that "slavery would never be peaceably abolished but must be washed out by bloodshed," and Smith advocated such a course on the part of the Committee as would bring on open hostility between the North and South. The Committee questioned Brown but he refused to disclose his full plan or to pledge himself not to invade a slave state. He demanded that the Committee trust him and if they were not willing to do that he advised them not to grant him any thing. The Committee then voted to give him five thousand dollars, but no money was given him at that time. He was also voted and given 200 rifles. Later when he drew upon the Committee, the Committee was out of funds. When the National Committee ceased to exist shortly after this Astor House meeting a quantity of supplies chiefly clothing bedding and camp utensils became John Brown's property under the terms of their resolution.