



THE DAY THEY HANGED OLD BROWN

The Making of Celebrity & Martyrdom

In *The Day They Hanged Old Brown*, John Van Atta examines the creation of *celebrity* in John Brown's time and how it differed from modern day perceptions. Yet, as applicable as the concept of celebrity is in this case, the story of Brown's notoriety represents far more. To his admirers, Brown was not merely a celebrity; he was a hero and, after his sacrificial death, a martyr. Not all celebrities rise to such levels. This story traces the meaning of heroism and martyrdom—as well as the opposite side of that coin, villainy—and suggests that John Brown's legacy helped to redefine these concepts for many Americans during the era of the Civil War.

JOHN R. VAN ATTA

August 14, 2026 @ 7 PM EASTERN

www.cwrtcongress.org/future-events/fridays.html