

## John Ritchey to Aaron D. Stevens

From Franklin, Indiana, on March 6, 1860, John Ritchey wrote to Aaron Dwight Stevens, 1831-1860, one of the Harpers Ferry raiders still awaiting execution in Virginia, that it "it is gratifying to me, to find you, so willing to meet your sentence." Stevens, reported to be one of abolitionist John Brown's bravest men, used the alias Captain Charles Whipple while following Brown. Stevens was convicted of treason and conspiring with slaves for his part in Brown's October 16, 1859 raid on Harpers Ferry, Virginia, and was hung at Charles Town, Virginia on March 16, 1860.

Creator: Ritchie, John, 1817-1887

Date: March 6, 1860

Callnumber: John Brown Coll. #299 Box 2 Folder 6

KSHS Identifier: DaRT ID: 5353

Item Identifier: 5353

[www.kansasmemory.org/item/5353](http://www.kansasmemory.org/item/5353)

KANSAS  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY

In answer <sup>to</sup> John Brown Comrade.  
after he had 5 shots ~~in~~ <sup>into</sup> his head.

Franklin Ind. March 6<sup>th</sup> 60

My Dear Friend Stevens,

It is gratifying to me, to find you, so willing to meet your sentence, with such kind feelings. This is as it should be, you say I know your heart is right, I do hope and pray, that He who alone can make if He has not already, prepare you <sup>heart</sup> for the Society of God. Your friends can never forget you. Your letter to me shall be read to all, your friends and to those kind women in particular. I know you are young and brave, and life with all its allurement are stimulating <sup>your</sup> to extend every nerve for an extension of days, but no says the laws, and they as imperfect as they may be, are nevertheless binding in Virginia. There is no





No doubt in my mind that  
the day will come, when  
every chain that binds  
the slave shall be broken.  
You thought it right to do  
it with force of arms.  
Mrs. Stowe thought she could  
give the system a more deadly  
blow, by sending Old Uncle  
Tom south, to talk to the  
Slaveholder in a pleasing  
and winning way. The Repub-  
lican party says that Slavery  
shall not be extended over  
free Territory. So you see  
nearly every person North  
and South are opposed  
to Slavery and how to  
keep it from extending  
its withering & blighting  
curse over the land is what  
caused you to act as you  
did. You heard my advice  
to John Brown. I believe  
my mind has not understood





any change. Put your  
trust in God. Study his  
word look not to man  
for help. The God could  
not do a nobler act  
than to pardon you.  
Many of your friends were  
in doubt as to whether you  
were Stevens or Sipeka.  
Your letter relieves the  
mind of that difficulty.  
Now sir in full view of  
only ten days being  
allotted to you in  
this life, I cannot do  
any thing more than  
to commend you to  
Him that doth all  
things well. You have  
the sympathy of all the  
friends. Hoping that we  
may meet in a better  
world. Most respectfully  
your friend  
John Ritchey