



John Brown

Autograph Letter Signed ("Perkins & Brown")

Springfield, Massachusetts: 1851

\$8500

One page third-person Autograph Letter Signed and dated 1 May 1851 from Springfield, Massachusetts to William Beall. 6¾" x 7½". Letter entirely in the hand of John Brown and Signed with the name of his business "Perkins & Brown." Old folds from mailing, two tiny ink spots and a few spots of foxing, else about fine.

Fifteen years before his ill-fated raid on Harper's Ferry, John Brown operated an Ohio tannery and dealt in cattle, horses, and sheep. His business travels throughout Ohio put him in contact with fervent abolitionists and increased his desire to spearhead the movement. In 1844 he formed a partnership with Simon Perkins, and two years later in 1846 they moved the business to Springfield, Massachusetts, a progressive community deeply interested in abolition and antislavery campaigns. Unfortunately the business failed, leading Brown into his fateful life of abolitionism in Massachusetts, Kansas, and Virginia.

This letter was written just as Perkins & Brown were wrapping up their business:

"In consequence of our discontinuing business here, your letter to us of the 21st March last has been a long time laying unanswered. When our Mr. Brown was in your country he did intend to call on you but forgetting where you was located when he was near you until he passed some miles, he being in a great hurry left your account with James Patterson, Esqr to present Patterson & Miles for us & to receive a small balance in our favour; as that appeared to be true state of accounts between us. If we understand the matter right, you had over drawn your account (by expecting a better sale than was in our power to make) some Thirty Dollars, & a little over. We did suppose untill we got your letter that your account had been handed you, & the balance paid Mr. Patterson. We suppose he must have forgotten it."

Although not of earthshaking content, this letter was written in the important transitional period when Brown had decided to dedicate himself to the abolition of slavery by any means necessary. [\[BTC#423261\]](#)

Springfield Mass 1st May 1851

Wm M Beall Esqr

Dear Sir

In consequence of our dis-
continuing business here, your Letter to us of the 21st March
last had been a long time lying unanswered. When our Mrs
Brown was in your country he did intend to call on you but
forgetting where you was located when he was near you until
he was passed some miles, he being in a great hurry left
your account with James Patterson ^{Esqr} ^{Patterson} ^{Miles} to present for us & to
receive a small balance in our favour; as that appeared to
be the true state of accounts between us. If we understand
the matter right; you had over drawn your account (by expect-
ing a better sale than was in our power to make) some thirty
Dollars, & a little over. We did suppose untill we got your
letter that your account had been handed you, & the balance
paid Mr Patterson. We suppose he must have forgotten it.

Very Respectfully Yours

Perkins & Brown