

Appeasement, a word which recently has been brought into disrepute, might well be used to characterize the policy of those who founded Lawrence. From the first the settlers of Lawrence tried to pacify and appease. Finding squatters on the chosen townsite, instead of driving them off, they bought them off. But we cannot justly classify their acts as cowardice, because they were friendless in a new land and without the support of territorial or national government. The armies and the laws were all against them.

Untoward acts might well have destroyed them, yet their continued yielding made their burdens all the harder. Because they believed it best not to defend Lawrence, the town was sacked by Sheriff Jones and much property was destroyed. There had been those who would have fought from the start, and if they had, perhaps they might have met an end like that of John Brown at Harper's Ferry and Charlestown.

In Lawrence the pacifists were represented by Robinson, while those who urged action were typified by Jim Lane. It is probable that John Brown was a trouble maker, a disturber, an unhappy man to have around; and while he could not comprehend the policies of Robinson, neither could Robinson, nor Lane look as deeply into the future as did Brown. Robinson and Lane wanted to make Kansas a Free state, Brown wanted to stamp out slavery.

Historians should not forget that it was the pro-slavery men and not John Brown, who first committed murder in Kansas. Even Judge Lecompte, pro-slavery man that he was, said that Sheriff Jones' raid on Lawrence was illegal. He acted on the findings of a jury and without the authority of a court. The leaders in Lawrence, like a hen trying to hover her chickens in the path of a tornado, offered no resistance, but it did not stay the ruthless hand of Jones and his outlaw followers.