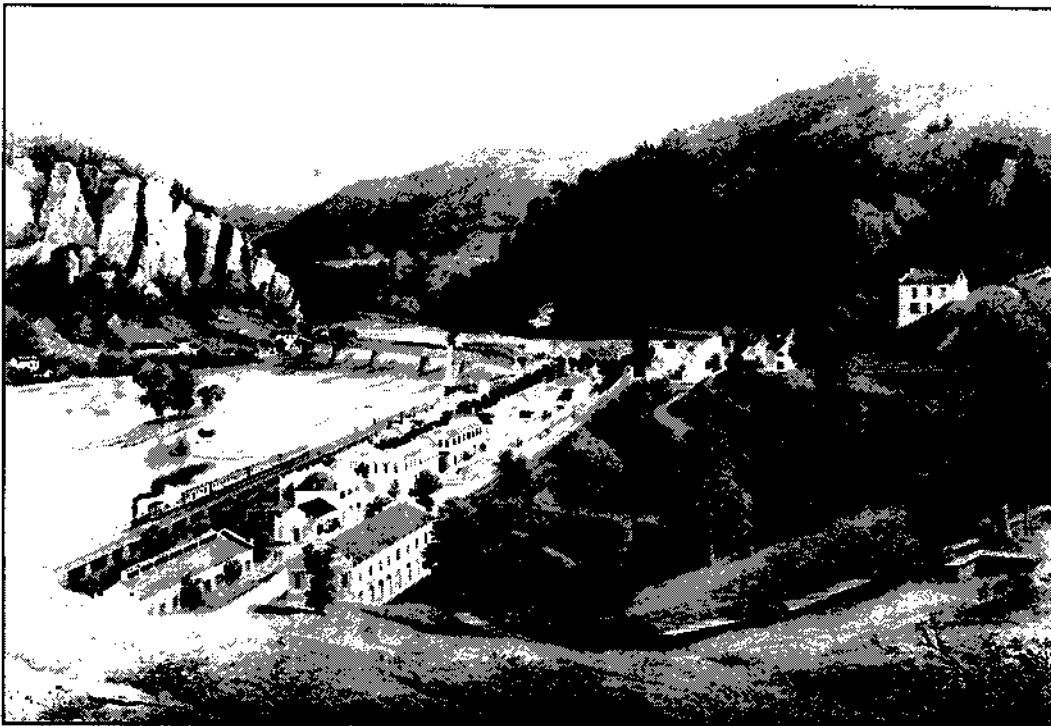


"To Preserve the Evidences of a Noble Past"
An Administrative History
of
Harpers Ferry National Historical Park



Teresa S. Moyer
Kim E. Wallace
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Catoctin Center for Regional Studies
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Table of Contents

List of Maps and Illustrations	i
List of Abbreviations	v
Key to Package Numbers	vi
Foreword and Acknowledgements	vii
Introduction	1
Chapter 1: History of Harpers Ferry	8
Chapter 2: Establishing a National Monument: The Local Campaign	61
Chapter 3: Establishing a National Monument: The Federal Role	82
Chapter 4: Early Monument Administration	107
Chapter 5: Harpers Ferry Becomes A National Park	159
Chapter 6: The Park Changes Course	213
Chapter 7: Expanding the Vision and Completing the Park	267
List of Source Material Collections	353
List of Interviews	355
Bibliography	356
Appendices	
A: Authorizing Legislation	361
B: Major Land Acquisitions	362
C: Building Inventory and Building Maps	363
D: Regional Affiliation	364
E: Superintendents	365
F: Staff Organization Charts	366
G: Visitation Statistics	367
H: VIP Visitors	370

Maps and Illustrations

Foreword

Map 1: Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, Federal Lands Managed by HAFE, Adjacent National Parks and other Federal Lands

Chapter 1: History of Harpers Ferry

Fig. 1: View of the Island Virginius, in the Shenandoah, at Harpers Ferry taken near Jefferson's Rock (HF-490, Harpers Ferry NHP).

Fig.2: U.S. Armory in Harpers Ferry, 1857 (HF-256, Harpers Ferry NHP).

Fig. 3: The Storming of the Engine House by the United States Marines, 1859 (HF-222, Harpers Ferry NHP).

Fig.4: The Federal Camp on Bolivar Heights, 1862 (HF-31, Harpers Ferry NHP).

Fig. 5: John Brown Fort on its original site, 1890-91 (HF-57, Harpers Ferry NHP).

Chapter 2: The Local Campaign

Fig. 6: Henry Temple McDonald, view taken while president of Harpers Ferry National Monument Association, photograph taken in northeast room of Brackett House (HF-1682, Harpers Ferry NHP).

Fig. 7: Aerial view of 1936 flood. 29th Division Aviation, Maryland National Guard (HF-1724, Harpers Ferry NHP).

Fig. 8: Harpers Ferry, March 20, 1936, postcard depicting Lower Town after 1936 flood (HF-366, Harpers Ferry NHP).

Fig. 9: Mary V. Mish, mid-1960s (Washington County Historical Society).

Fig. 10: Transfer of Deed to Harpers Ferry National Monument from State of Maryland to Federal Government, December 29, 1952. From left to right: Senator Kenneth McLaughlin, Attorney General Fox, Attorney Morgan Martin, John Newcomer, Mayor Gil Perry, Director of State Parks Carl Johnson, Buck Lisle, Elbert Cox, Incoming Mayor Marland, Governor Okey Patteson (HF-307, Harpers Ferry NHP)

Chapter 3: The Federal Role

Fig. 11: John Brown Monument and War Tablets on site of the fire engine house, no date/20th c. (HF-1041, Harpers Ferry NHP).

Fig. 12: Old Castle on Bolivar Heights, April 9, 1956, demolished 1963. David Cruise, Conservation Commission of West Virginia (NHF-641, Harpers Ferry NHP).

Fig. 13: Marmion Row and Harper House, 1955. Gift of Ames W. Williams 1979 (NHF-3845, Harpers Ferry NHP).

Fig. 14: High Street, Partly park and privately owned buildings, park buildings 12a, 13, 14, 15, and 16, 1955. Gift of Ames W. Williams 1979 (NHF 3860, Harpers Ferry NHP).

Fig. 15: Shenandoah Street, May 22nd meeting, 1955. Abbie Rowe (HF-311, Harpers Ferry NHP).

Chapter 4: Early Monument Administration

Map 2: Lands Donated to or Acquired by the United States for Harpers Ferry National Monument, 1953-1939

Fig. 16: "Work in progress – 1960 excavation. Visitor interest was remarkable as the gun parts were uncovered." (HFR-662, Harpers Ferry NHP).

Fig. 17: John Brown Raid Centennial Celebration, Marines storming a mock fort, 1959 (NHF-1408, Harpers Ferry NHP).

Chapter 5: Harpers Ferry Becomes A National Park

Map 3: Lands Donated to or Acquired by the United States for Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, 1960-1969

Fig. 18: Lewis Nichols (recorder), Bradley Nash (guest), Walter Garrison (President, Town Council), Front row: Supt. Prentice, Senator Randolph, Mayor Gilbert Perry, early 1960s (NHF-3980, Harpers Ferry NHP).

Fig. 19: John Brown Fort crossing intersection in Lower Town, 1968 (NHF-3152, Harpers Ferry NHP).

Chapter 6: The Park Changes Course

Map 4: Lands Donated to or Acquired by the United States for Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, 1970-1979

Fig. 20: Rep. Harley O. Staggers, Sen. Jennings Randolph, William C. Everhart, Secretary Stewart L. Udall, and Sen. Robert C. Byrd view Interpretive Design Center model, September 21, 1967 (Harpers Ferry Center).

Fig. 21: Interpretive Design Center, 1974. Edwin A. Fitzpatrick (NHF-3471, Harpers Ferry NHP).

Fig. 22: Interior of Building 35 – Dry Goods Store, Park Aid Jesse Engle during “Olde Tyme Christmas” 1973. Edwin A. Fitzpatrick (NHF-3422, Harpers Ferry NHP).

Fig. 23: Blacksmith Shop, Interior of shop (Building 43) with Blacksmith Arnold Schofield and apprentice working on iron work, 1975. Edwin Fitzpatrick. (NHF-3554, Harpers Ferry NHP).

Fig. 24: Parking lot, 1960s (NHF-2396, Harpers Ferry NHP).

Fig. 25: Unsold Building under restoration, Buildings 9 (on right), 11 and 12 on left, 1976. Martin Conway (NHF-3737, Harpers Ferry NHP).

Chapter 7: Expanding the Vision and Completing the Park

Map 5: Lands Donated to or Acquired by the United States for Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, 1980-1989

Map 6: Lands Donated to or Acquired by the United States for Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, 1990-1999

Fig. 26: Streetscape, Package 110, 1990s (Harpers Ferry NHP).

Fig. 27: Cavalier Heights Visitor Center, bus station (Binder 13, Harpers Ferry NHP).

Fig. 28: Aerial view of Lower Town during 1995-96 season of floods (Harpers Ferry NHP).

Fig. 29: Flood cleanup, Blacksmith Shop during flood 1995-96. Architect’s Office, Harpers Ferry NHP.

Fig. 30: John Brown Fort and Lower Town, 1990s (Binder 13, HAFE sheet 11, Harpers Ferry NHP).

Map 7: Lands Donated to or Acquired by the United States for Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, 2000-2004

Appendix C

Map 8: Park Buildings in the Historic Town Area

Map 9: Park Buildings in the Camp Hill Area

Map 10: Park Buildings in Outlying Areas

Abbreviations

Locations of material cited

AO	Archeology Office
BH	Brackett House
CO	Curatorial Office
HAFE	Harpers Ferry National Historical Park
HFC	Harpers Ferry Center
HFHA	Harpers Ferry Historical Association
MH	Morrell House
NARA-MA (Ph.)	National Archives and Records Administration, Mid-Atlantic Region, Philadelphia
NPSDC	National Park Service, national office, District of Columbia
WCHS	Washington County Historical Association

Collections cited

Admin. Coll.	Administrative files, HAFE
Archy Files	Archeology office files, HAFE
Chief of Int. Coll.	Chiefs of Interpretation Paul Lee and Dennis Frye files, HAFE
Dessauer Coll.	Architect Peter Dessauer files, HAFE
Franzen Coll.	Architect Archie Franzen files, HAFE
Hebb Coll.	Natural Resource Management Specialist Bill Hebb files
Interp Coll.	Living history and interpretation files, HAFE
NPS HD Coll.	National Park Service History Division Collection, NPSDC
NPS History Coll.	National Park Service History Collection, HFC
PR Coll.	Public information officer files, HAFE
RG 79	Record Group 79, National Park Service records, NARA
Scrapbook Coll.	Scrapbook Collection, Curatorial Office or Morrell House, HAFE
VS Coll.	Visitor services files, HAFE

Key to Package Numbers

Harpers Ferry NHP continues to assign package numbers to describe its systemic projects involving archeology, exhibit development, interpretive development, maintenance, and preservation. A key to the packages described in the Administrative History is below.

Package 110: North east end of Shenandoah Street in Lower Town, rehabilitation and supporting historical and archeological research of buildings 8, 9, 10, 11, 11a, 12, and 12a, with mechanical system in 16a

Package 112: Park general, archeological salvage, sewer line construction in Lower Town

Package 114: Construction of Cavalier Heights Visitor Center, park entrance road, visitor parking area, bus storage facility, and supporting historical and archeological research

Package 115: Lower Town, Rehabilitation of buildings 3, 14, 27, 28, 40, and 43

Package 116: Middle of Shenandoah Street in Lower Town, rehabilitation and supporting historical and archeological research of buildings 32, 33, 33a, 34, 34a, 35, and 36 and surrounding landscape

Package 118: Lower Town area, rehabilitation and supporting historical and archeological research of buildings 5, 7, and 16/16a and immediate surrounding landscape.

Package 119. Preservation and rehabilitation of buildings 44 and 45 in Lower Town; buildings 56, 57, and 59 with surrounding landscape, Upper Town

Package 123: Stabilization and supporting historical and archeological research of historic ruins on Virginius Island

Package 212: Stabilization of historic B&O Railroad bridge piers ruins in the Potomac River

Package 226: Maryland Heights cultural study

Package 228: Restoration and supporting historical and archeological research of Virginius Island Canal Walls

Package 301: Loudoun Heights cultural study

Package 313: John Brown Museum renovation

Package 320: Landscape development for Lower Town, Virginius Island, and park in general

Foreword and Acknowledgements

In November 2001, Harpers Ferry National Historical Park entered into a cooperative agreement with the Catoctin Center for Regional Studies (CCRS, Frederick Community College, Frederick, MD) to commission an administrative history of the park. In turn the Catoctin Center sought the partnership of the Center for Heritage Resource Studies (CHRS, University of Maryland, College Park, MD) to carry out the project. Paul Shackel, director of CHRS, was employed by the park as an archeologist from 1989 to 1996 and drew on that expertise as the author of the Introduction and Chapter 1. Teresa Moyer (CHRS) and Kim Wallace (CCRS) researched and coauthored the remaining chapters.

The authors would like to take the opportunity to reflect briefly on what the administrative history has shown them about the work that takes place at Harpers Ferry NHP. Talk is made of the broad work of the National Park Service and the important benefits the agency provides to the nation. Administrative histories of the national parks are usually intended as reference works for future management personnel or to inform park projects, as is this one. Indeed, the history of the park at Harpers Ferry to a degree reflects the evolution of the NPS as a whole. We can quantify the “then” versus “now” of the park: the expansion of acreage, the increase of staff size, the number of visitors. We can detail the activities, debates, and developments. But in many ways, the administrative history of Harpers Ferry NHP is the story of a small town made into a small park that gained big park status over time largely due to the perseverance of the many people who worked there and formed their own visions for it.

Over the course of National Park Service administration at Harpers Ferry, a set of goals established at the outset of the park planning were constantly re-evaluated and sought after. From land acquisition to the interpretation of resources, from the delicate balancing act of public relations to the preservation of park resources for the public benefit, the administrative history of Harpers Ferry NHP provides a means to understand the relationships possible between the shaping of cultural landscapes and the influential changes in national consciousness toward such places. Our perspective from the early twenty-first century on its development realizes the concerted work at Harpers Ferry toward fulfilling the NPS goal of preservation and education. It, furthermore, shows how staff members working to fulfill the ideals of the NPS mission constantly face the realities, conflicts, and satisfaction of what is in everyday practice a hard thing to do. From this vantage, the administrative history of Harpers Ferry NHP both represents many of the complicated challenges experienced by the NPS as a whole and suggests some of the hard-won experience it can share.

The authors are indebted to many people who provided advice, expertise, and access to research materials. We are especially grateful to local residents and past and present park staff who granted us oral history interviews and generously shared their time and memories. (A full list of interviews may be found in the Sources section.) The search for documents and institutional memory ranged across the park and employees were unfailingly gracious in allowing us access to office files and basement storage rooms. Naming all those who offered assistance would result in a virtual staff roster. We would like to thank all park staff, especially Gayleen Boyd, Judy Coleman, Matt Graves, Nancy Hatcher, and Bill Hebb.

For assistance at other NPS-affiliated facilities we thank:

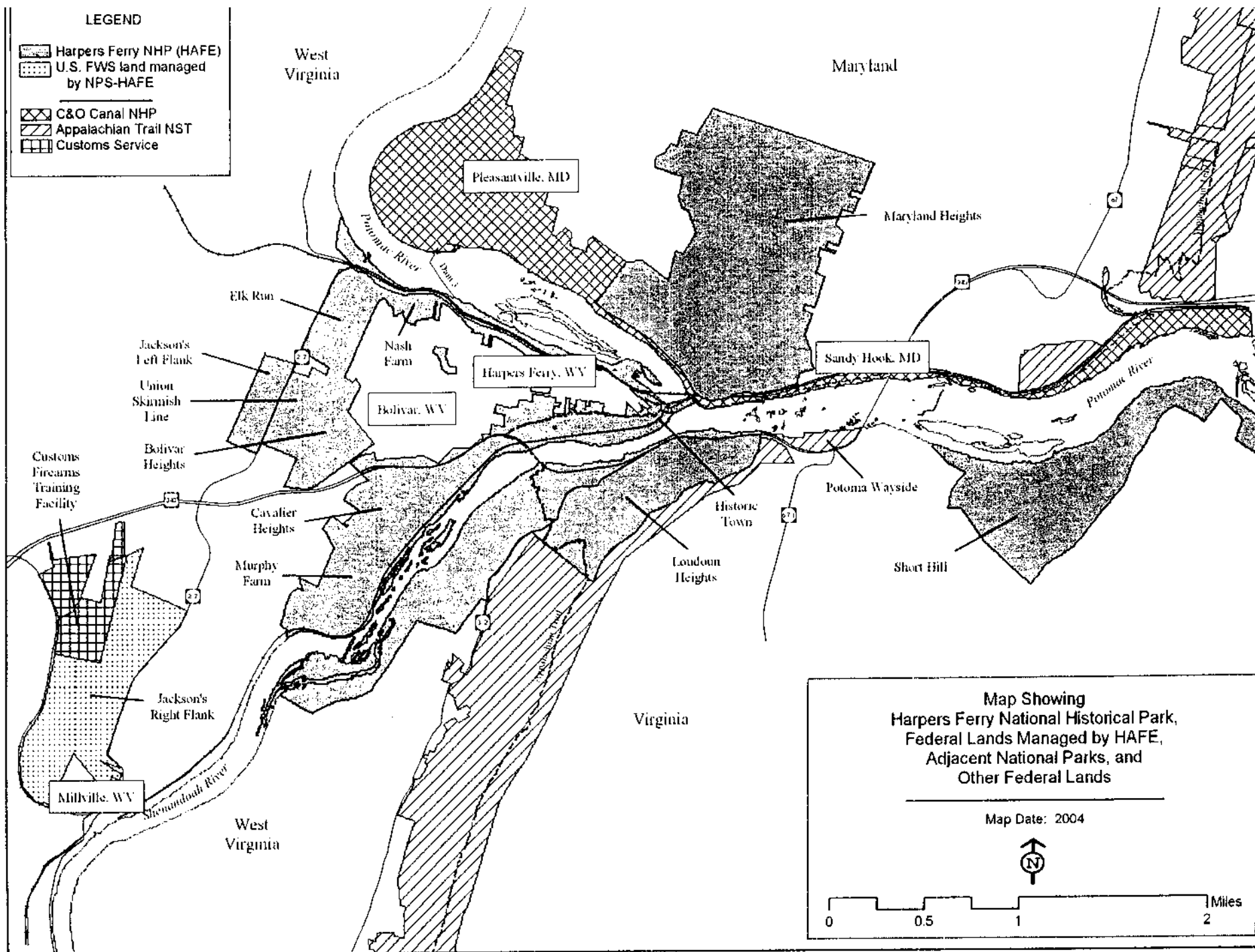
Laura Feller, Historian, National Center for Cultural Resources, NPS
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Mindy Marsden, Washington County Historical Association, Hagerstown, MD
Dr. Robert Florian, Professor Emeritus, Salem International University, Salem, WV

LEGEND

-  Harpers Ferry NHP (HAFE)
-  U.S. FWS land managed by NPS-HAFE
-  C&O Canal NHP
-  Appalachian Trail NST
-  Customs Service



Map Showing
Harpers Ferry National Historical Park,
Federal Lands Managed by HAFE,
Adjacent National Parks, and
Other Federal Lands

Map Date: 2004



0 0.5 1 2 Miles

Introduction

American Indians inhabited Harpers Ferry's shorelines for centuries prior to European contact. Archeology in recent years shows that these people exploited the area's abundant natural resources as they made their seasonal rounds through the region. The "pumpkin flood" in the mid-eighteenth century is the earliest Euro-American recollection of American Indian presence in the area. In the 1780s Thomas Jefferson admired the vast beauty found at the confluence of the Shenandoah and Potomac rivers. He sat on the shoreline cliffs of the Shenandoah River and wrote in his *Notes on the State of Virginia* that the view was; "one of the most stupendous scenes in nature" and that it was; "worth a trip across the ocean" to see. As he wrote these passages the area had a ferry operated by Robert Harper and a few buildings, including a mill and a tavern. George Washington speculated on land along the Potomac valley, and while serving as president of the United States he supported the development of a National Armory at Harpers Ferry.

In the early nineteenth century manufacturing proceeded slowly, but not quietly. The early armory operated under a system of patronage and workers often resisted any new labor saving devices. One dissatisfied armory worker murdered a superintendent who tried to implement a new work discipline. Needless to say, John Hall's perfection of interchangeable parts at the armory displeased many craftsmen. The creation of uniform parts became known as the American System of Manufacturing and other industries adopted this method of mass manufacturing. Interchangeable parts, mass production, and low paid labor became the norm for the armory worker as well as for all other laborers in American industries.

Harpers Ferry is most widely known today for the attempted slave revolt led by John Brown in 1859. While his venture to capture weapons and to free enslaved African Americans

failed, he became a martyr and a symbol for the abolitionist movement. During the Civil War, the town changed hands many times and the largest Union surrender occurred on Bolivar Heights. Devastated by the war, Harpers Ferry's economy rose from its ashes by the 1880s. Small industries in Lower Town and on Virginus Island played a part in its revival, while the region increasingly catered to tourists. Many people traveled to Harpers Ferry on the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, taking daily excursions to visit Island Park, the railroad built amusement park, and to see the remains of the armory, Civil War fortifications, and John Brown's Fort.

Storer College, established after the Civil War for the education of newly freed slaves, was the center of several early civil rights events. Frederick Douglas visited the campus in 1880 and reminded his audience of the link between the Civil War and the abolitionist movement, a connection that many southern and northern whites quickly forgot after his death. It was a memory of the war that lasted through the Jim Crow era. In 1906, W.E.B. Du Bois and the Niagara Movement, the predecessor of the NAACP, held its national meeting at the college. Du Bois spoke about the increasing loss of African American political, civil, and social rights and he urged the conference to protest their situation until they obtained equality.

Comparison of what Harpers Ferry National Historical Park sees as significant today to those drafted for the initial Monument are only one way to see a broadening of interpretation of what is considered important for this national park. It is difficult to summarize Harpers Ferry's past as first done in the 1930s. The tides that now run through the park are not only thematic, preservation based, or interpretive, but convey a reflexivity of the park's identity and history of visibility as a model for others. Within the framework of an administrative history, the impression is that the earlier history with its defined focus on John Brown and the Civil War represented a history controlled by the real practical concerns of management as much as by a

thematic structure reflecting the attitudes of the American public. It is easier, to some degree, to discuss the past at Harpers Ferry through how we have come to know the history of this area and the choices made to deal with it. In turn, learning about the process through which these decisions were made provides lessons to current and future NPS administrations.

While floods and the great economic depression of the 1930s devastated Harpers Ferry, several people including Storer College president, Henry McDonald, president of the Washington County Historical Society, Mary V. Mish, and Congressman Jennings Randolph worked tirelessly to make Harpers Ferry a national historic site. Harpers Ferry was designated a national monument in 1944 and ten years later the NPS had a presence in town. It became, once again, a popular tourist attraction in America's growing heritage tourism industry.

While an abundance of architectural and archeological evidence indicates that a Victorian town once thrived in Harpers Ferry, the National Park Service administrators decided in the 1950s to remove any sign of post-bellum architecture and ignore its Victorian history.¹ A letter dated 25 April 1954, between professionals describes the condition of the town. The writer notes, "As you intimate, the place is a slum. Its qualifications are chiefly historical rather than architectural. Its appeal is sentimental rather than historical or aesthetic. Still there is an attractive aura of decay and ruin which it would be a pity to mar by a rash of restoration."² The Service did not follow these recommendations and by the late 1950s many post- Civil War era structures were removed and restorations began.

Regional Chief of Interpretation J.C. Harrington asked Supervisory Ranger Frank Willett to photograph a "before" record of Harpers Ferry in March 1955.³ Copies of these photographs are amongst the Harpers Ferry National Monument files at the National Archives and Records Administration in Philadelphia, and document one starting point for the profound changes that

Harpers Ferry has undergone since then. But while the photographs taken of Harpers Ferry over time capture the physical appearance of the area, they do less justice to the changing philosophies of the National Park Service to its resources and what they can be used to communicate. These changes are not only methodological, but also ideological.

Celebrating John Brown and the role the town played in the American Civil War dictated how the new National Monument was to be interpreted and restored. Adopting contemporary historic and preservation philosophies, the National Park Service removed any buildings that did not fit into the proposed 1859 through 1865 time period. Other early restorations of the townscape included the removal of several Victorian structures that stood in the former arsenal yard. This work was accompanied by the first archeological excavations in Harpers Ferry and included the search for the armory arsenal. The arsenal was the structure that John Brown hoped to seize in order to capture weapons to supply newly freed slaves. Restoring the town to the Civil War era remained a major part of the restoration philosophy through the 1970s when the NPS dismantled and restored Wager Block to its 1850s appearance.

Much like other national shrines, like Williamsburg, Monticello, and Mount Vernon, the restored built landscape at Harpers Ferry reflects an important effort by the NPS to enforce a particular national memory of the place. For Harpers Ferry the restored landscape reflects the Civil War era and it became part of the growing enthusiasm for remembering Civil War sites when the nation needed props and educational tools to help quell growing civil strife in the United States.⁴ Commemorating the Civil War and the meaning of heroism — obedience and dedication to a higher authority, became an important and overriding concept in Civil War parks. The official expression was concerned with promoting and preserving the ideals of cultural leaders and authorities, developing social unity, and maintaining the status quo.⁵

The Civil Rights Movement had a major impact on the way peripheral groups became part of the national public memory. In the 1960s many scholars began to participate in the “new social history” and write histories from “the bottom-up.” Research intensified on groups that were not traditionally part of the national public memory. Because of this movement national parks struggled with broadening the interpretation perspective of the park, especially if it meant going outside of the boundaries of the enabling legislation. Each park’s enabling legislation is a product of its era. For instance, in the first part of the twentieth century, national parks were created by Congress to support a public memory and adopted a preservation and interpretive philosophy that celebrated traditional figures that reinforced patriotism, economic development, and American ingenuity (e.g., George Washington Birthplace National Monument, Fort Raleigh National Historic Site, Saugus Iron Works National Historic Site). By the last quarter of the century many newly created national parks celebrated diversity and warned Americans of past tragedies (e.g., Frederick Douglass National Historic Site, Women’s Rights National Historic Park, Manzanar National Historic Site). Therefore, the internal conflict at many national parks that were created before the 1970s is about which memory should be fostered. Should administrators only support a memory that bolsters nationalism, as stated in a park’s original enabling legislation, or should a park explore issues that are relevant to our lives today, like social and economic inequities and multiculturalism?

Harpers Ferry’s enabling legislation was written very broadly and beginning in the 1980s the administration of the park’s interpretive programs responded to the call of the new social history. The creation of the Development Concept Plan and a new Interpretive Perspective also recognized the failing of the previous attempts to time freeze the park and it called for a broadening of the park’s interpretation, thus giving a new direction to restoration, landscape,

history, interpretation, interpretation, and archeology. Harpers Ferry National Historical Park expanded its interpretive perspective to include the entire nineteenth century. Restoration projects began to consider not only the armory and Civil War histories, but also the later Victorian era. Exhibit space dedicated to interpreting Storer College opened in the 1980s and an exhibit dedicated to the black experience in Harpers Ferry opened in the early 1990s. The park now actively celebrates black history month, and in 1996 the park commemorated the 90th anniversary of the Niagara Movement meeting held in Harpers Ferry. Women's history is now a theme pushed by some living history staff members as they reexamine the roles and perspectives in the histories of the town that has traditionally been dominated by men. Native American history continues to be underrepresented or presented as a subset of the park's environmental interpretations, thus undermining the importance of this subject matter. Archeological materials found in a new permanent park exhibit, has made significant contributions to telling the story of the everyday interactions between people of varying status and ethnic affiliation during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Environmental issues now have a voice in the park's interpretation.

In many cases, this changed historical and restoration philosophy has guided the most recent renovation projects at Harpers Ferry. For instance, several major projects, including a cultural landscape analysis, historical research and archeology in the commercial district and on Virginus Island have addressed issues that focused upon the everyday lives of residents who lived, prospered, struggled, and worked in this small industrial town. They have informed new construction and restoration projects and no longer are Victorian facades changed to look like antebellum architecture. A trail with interpretive waysides through Virginus Island interprets industry on the island from the early nineteenth century through the turn of the twentieth century,

although the lives of craftsmen and laborers, the majority of the island's population, is yet to be told. On Virginius Island some of the ruins are maintained and protected with shallow rooted vegetation and they provide the image of a site in decay. Protecting the sites and maintaining the image of perpetual decay helps to instill the notion of continuity. Landscapes in Lower Town have been redesigned to highlight domestic and industrial historic cultural resources.

The story of Harpers Ferry may appear to have progressed in a unilinear and uncontested fashion. It is easy to step back and see the major changes over a half a century follow a smooth progression. But while change was being proposed it was sometimes contested and delayed. Battles had to be fought within the NPS, within the park, and within the community.

The primary purpose of park administrative histories is to document the changing NPS management of a site to the present day. They serve other purposes, as well. One of these is to illuminate the choices that bring us to the experience of Harpers Ferry that we have today. But another is to provide the park with case studies to learn from and to inform future decisions and ways of approaching the resources of the park. The story of how these decisions and debates played out in the making of the national park follows.

¹ Catherine Gilbert, Maureen D. Joseph, and Perry C. Wheelock, *Cultural Landscape Report: Lower Town, Harpers Ferry National Historical Park* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, Department of Interior, Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, National Capital Region, 1993).

² Letter, Fritz to Pete, April 25, 1954. CO/HAFE.

³ Regional Chief of Interpretation, Region One J.C. Harrington to Willett, March 4, 1955, Memo "Photographic Record," HAFE Correspondence 1955, Box 5 Pt. 1, Entry 405, RG79, NARA (Ph).

⁴ David Blight, "'For Something Beyond the Battlefield': Frederick Douglass and the Struggle for the Memory of the Civil War." *Journal of American History* (1989) 75, no. 4:1156-1178; John Bodner, *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992).

⁵ Bodner, *Remaking America*, 13.

Chapter 1:

History of Harpers Ferry

Early Settlement at the Ferry

Harpers Ferry lies in the gap of the Blue Ridge Mountains at the confluence of the Shenandoah and Potomac Rivers. Little is known about the area's prehistory, although archeological excavations performed in the late 1980s and early 1990s in Lower Town indicate that American Indians inhabited the region on a seasonal basis for at least several centuries before European contact.¹ In 1733, Lord Fairfax, proprietor of these lands, allowed Peter Stevens to establish a ferry crossing on the Potomac River. Stevens' appearance in the region was part of a larger migration to the lower Shenandoah Valley and western territory by German, Quaker, and Scots-Irish from southeastern Pennsylvania and the tidewater region. They sought new agricultural and commercial opportunities and Stevens' ferry facilitated travel through the Blue Ridge Mountain region.²

After a fourteen-year tenure on Lord Fairfax's land, Stevens sold Robert Harper his log cabin, corn patch, and ferry equipment. Harper also received three additional patents from Lord Fairfax that allowed him to control lands on both sides of the Potomac River for his ferry operations. Harper originally occupied Stevens' cabin, but he later constructed his dwelling one-mile down the Shenandoah River near his grist mill and saw mill. He subsequently built a tavern at the rivers' confluence, but he died in 1782 before completing it. His property was divided between Sarah Harper, the only child of his

brother Joseph, and Robert Griffith, a relative of his wife. Sarah Harper married into the Wager family and they owned what later became the town of Harpers Ferry.³

Thomas Jefferson traveled through northern Virginia in October 1783 to document the region's resources. He stopped at Harpers Ferry, sat on the cliffs adjacent to the Shenandoah River, and remarked in his *Notes on the State of Virginia* that the view was "one of the most stupendous scenes in nature."⁴ George Washington was also enamored with the region, but for a very different reason. From the end of the French and Indian War, Washington speculated on land along the Potomac River. He became deeply involved in the affairs of the Potowmack Company and dedicated himself to improving navigation along the river. Such improvements, he believed, would attract trade to the ports of Alexandria and Georgetown and would create economic growth in the new Federal City and the Potomac Valley region.⁵

The Early Armory Town

Prior to the American Revolution the colonies relied on England for their supply of weapons, although during the war France became the major supplier. During the 1790s the new nation was in a precarious situation. Spain claimed territories on the southern and western border, holding Florida and the Louisiana Territory. England, still hostile to the newly independent United States, controlled the entire northern border with its Canadian possession. The English government in Canada often supplied American Indians with arms and encouraged them to attack nearby settlements in the United States. In 1794, England and the United States signed a treaty of peace, but the French claimed that the

treaty violated the Franco-American alliance of 1778. Tensions grew between France and the United States and Congress prepared for new hostilities.⁶

In 1794 the United States Congress legislated the establishment of armories for the manufacture and storage of arms. President Washington urged Congress to place an armory at Harpers Ferry. He received endorsements from Georgetown and Alexandria merchants who stood to profit from hinterland trade.⁷ Washington noted that Harpers Ferry was the "most eligible spot on the whole river in every point of view...."⁸ The U.S. Congress sent French engineer Etienne Rochfontaine to study the site; he disagreed with Washington's assessment. He claimed that the area lacked convenient grounds for arms manufacturing and the lands tended to flood. Therefore, Rochfontaine concluded that water powered manufacturing would be unpredictable. Washington ignored the engineer's advice and proceeded to acquire the lands necessary for construction of the armory. The Wager family managed to keep a six-acre portion, known as the Wager Reserve, adjacent to the armory grounds, and they received the right to monopolize mercantile trade. The Wagers also retained a 3/4-acre ferry concession along with the rights to transport all traffic across the Potomac.⁹

Congress appropriated funds in 1798 for the development of federal arsenals and armories at Springfield, Massachusetts, and Harpers Ferry, Virginia. Construction of the Harpers Ferry armory began in 1799, although the lack of skilled mechanics and laborers continually beleaguered the government. A temporary force of 100 soldiers under the command of Major General Charles C. Pinckney was stationed at Harpers Ferry to protect the town from possible invading forces. The soldiers also provided necessary labor for the armory canal construction.¹⁰

Early manufacturing proceeded slowly since the new manufacturing establishment was continually besieged by problems. While workers had completed the armory canal by 1802, it often leaked, thus slowing production. Poor health conditions continually plagued armorers and their families. The government did not provide all of the necessary housing needed to accommodate its workers, and by prior agreement between the U.S. government and the Wager family, armorers could not construct dwellings on the Wager Reserve. Since inland areas were too hilly or mountain-like for construction, most workers erected their homes in the low-lying river banks along the Shenandoah River. These areas harbored various diseases, and inhabitants were afflicted with many of these maladies.¹¹

Thomas Jefferson commissioned the Lewis and Clark expedition in 1803 and much of the equipment for the venture was made or procured at Harpers Ferry, including rifles, tomahawks, knives and a collapsible iron canoe. By the turn of the century the town had developed quickly and an observer described it as consisting of a post office and about 15 houses.¹² By 1810 it had "a good tavern, several large stores for goods, a library, one physician, and a professor of the English language."¹³ The town's population increased to 700 people and included 197 armory workers and 12 workshops. The privately owned parcel adjacent to the armory, the Wager Reserve, developed into a profitable commercial area. The Wagers constructed the Harpers Ferry Hotel in 1803, and they eventually leased the structure to various innkeepers. While the armory developed on the Potomac side of the town, the area along the Shenandoah shore contained stables and was used for grazing by the armory horses. Houses were scattered throughout the

town, and Harpers Ferry developed in what appears to be a haphazard fashion, conforming to the area's topography rather than to any formal plan.¹⁴

West of the commercial district, private manufacturing developed with the exploitation of water power on Virginus Island. Virginus Island did not convey to the United States in 1796, nor did the Wager family control it. The 1751 land grant to Harper did not include the island and, therefore, the government and the Wagers could not claim it. Since neither entity could claim ownership, squatters inhabited the site and eventually Armory Superintendent James Stubblefield acquired the land. He subdivided and sold the Virginus Island, making a substantial profit. Sparsely inhabited in the 1820s and early 1830s, the island developed as a mill village and contained industries that supported the armory operations and included enterprises like a machine shop, saw mill, oil mill, grist mill, and tannery. The industries focused on local markets, both domestic and armory-related, making machinery, tools, and replacement parts for the latter.¹⁵

John Hall and the American System of Manufacturing

During the early decades of the nineteenth century, the Beckham, Stephenson, Stubblefield, and Wager families dominated almost every aspect of daily life, including armory work, in Harpers Ferry. Together, these four families formed a powerful oligarchy, referred to by some of their contemporaries as the "Junto." They had every intention of maintaining the status quo so they could continue to monopolize and dominate Harpers Ferry life. Laborers who did not support the Junto, or who did not remain silent, risked unemployment and harassment from other armory employees.¹⁶

Skilled craftsmen worked at the armory for the first several decades of the facility's operations. Throughout their careers they gained a high degree of manual skill and knowledge regarding the many different aspects of gun making. While the early skilled armorers could produce the entire gun, an early form of division of labor existed where artisans would make a particular part of the gun, such as lock, stock, mounting, or barrel. The Master Armorer's principal duty included coordinating the output of each gun part and determining work assignments so that an equal number of parts would be made simultaneously. In all likelihood, an armorer could make several parts of the gun in a month, depending on the need for a specific unit. In 1807, Harpers Ferry gun manufacturing consisted of six separate branches: barrel making, lock forging, lock filing, brazing, stocking, and finishing. During the late 1810s and through the next several decades, piecework became a prominent form of production in the armory. One armorer became responsible for producing one part or completing one stage in the production of a gun component. Prior to 1816, the two national armories had made no effort to standardize their products. In fact many of the pre-1816 weapons show a great deal of variation, often reflecting the whims and skills of the artisan.¹⁷

During this era the military invited John Hall, an inventor and manufacturer from Maine, to establish workshops west of the Lower Town commercial district. He was contracted by the U.S. Government to produce breechloading rifles at \$25 each, comprised of interchangeable parts. Hall's manufacturing ideas endangered what remained of craft production and threatened to change armorers from skilled craftsmen to wage laborers who tended machines.¹⁸

When Hall arrived at Harpers Ferry, he consulted with Stubblefield regarding the equipment and materials he needed to begin production. Stubblefield offered him some of his most derelict buildings, including a dilapidated sawmill once operated by Robert Harper in the 1780s along the Shenandoah River. Some buildings were described as being in a "state of decay as renders it disreputable in its appearance, and uncomfortable & unwholesome to the workmen."¹⁹

Between 1821 and 1827 Hall created a makeshift operation and developed many new types of machinery for manufacturing. Each machine had to be readjusted by a machinist each time a new piece needed to be manufactured, causing a delay between the production of each piece and the rifle's eventual assembly. Hall would complete an entire run of about one thousand parts before the machines could be readjusted for the manufacture of another piece. This inefficient process meant that machine tenders were released from their duties until Hall could set the machines to make the next piece. To complicate matters for Hall, the raceway system and water supply was unreliable and insufficient to operate all of the machinery simultaneously.²⁰

Despite these setbacks, an 1826 inspection report of Hall's rifles described that he had successfully completed the first fully interchangeable weapon ever made in the United States. The manufacturing had been completed without skilled craftsmen tending the machinery. Hall noted that his machinery was so accurate that they could be operated by, "boys of but eighteen years of age, who never did a stroke of work in his life."²¹

Many armory workers considered Hall as an intruder and a danger to the craft production system. He often felt threatened by the local townspeople and on occasions he wrote about the necessity of training others to perform his tasks in the case of his death

"an event not improbable anywhere at my time of life, and still less in this neighborhood."²² The Junto worked to gather Congressional support to expose the high cost of the project to forestall additional funding for Hall's project. While the Junto made life miserable for Hall by threatening to withhold funding and by harassing him in the streets, its members failed to discourage him. The Harpers Ferry factories continued to manufacture Hall's breechloaders even after he left town in 1840 because of his failing health. His contribution to arms manufacturing eventually led the way to the manufacture of the Model 1842, the first musket developed with interchangeable parts. Hall's innovations revolutionized manufacturing on a global scale to the point where manufacturing with interchangeable parts became known as the "American System of Manufacture."²³

New Transportation, and Industrial Growth

The growth of private and public industries and new forms of transportation heightened Harpers Ferry's importance as a transportation center between the Ohio and Shenandoah Valleys and the East. The linking of Harpers Ferry to regional and national networks was instrumental to its social and economic growth. One of the first developments in transportation was the improvement of the road system. The Harpers Ferry, Charles Town, and Smithfield Turnpike Company, organized in 1830, connected Harpers Ferry with the West. That same year the Frederick and Harpers Ferry Turnpike Company constructed a toll road linking those two towns and by 1834 two stagecoach companies competed in Harpers Ferry--the Baltimore and Winchester Mail Stage Company and the People's Line of Troy Coaches.²⁴

The arrival of the Chesapeake & Ohio (C&O) Canal in 1833 offered cheaper transportation for people and goods. By December 1, 1834, the Baltimore & Ohio (B&O) Railroad had completed a line to a point opposite Harpers Ferry on the Maryland side of the Potomac. Four months later, in March 1835, the Winchester and Potomac Railroad made its first trip from Winchester to Harpers Ferry. The B&O Railroad constructed a bridge across the Potomac River in 1837, joining the head of the Shenandoah Valley with the main Baltimore and Ohio line to the east. This new transportation proved to benefit Harpers Ferry's economy.²⁵

The Winchester and Potomac Railroad ran through Virginus Island, and facilitated economic development within the island community. For several decades the manufacturing on the island supported the local economy, but with new and easier connections to the regional and national markets capitalists changed their market focus. For instance, the grist operation on Virginus Island originally served as a custom mill, catering to the local population. After the arrival of the railroad the owners of the mill upgraded machinery and transformed it into a merchant mill since it supplied larger regional and national markets.²⁶

The use of waterpower and the close connections to the railroad line encouraged the development of cotton factories on Virginus Island. The Harpers Ferry and Shenandoah Manufacturing Company, a large cotton mill, and the Valley Mill, a second and smaller cotton mill upriver, operated on Virginus Island during the late 1840s. These mills changed the labor orientation on the island from predominantly craft to wage labor. During this era, Virginus Island grew to 182 inhabitants living in 28 dwellings. Over twenty percent were foreign born, most of them weavers from England, Ireland, and

Scotland. A small portion of the inhabitants on the island consisted of enslaved and free African Americans.²⁷

Resisting the American System

Skilled craftsmen and a task-oriented production characterized manufacturing at the armory during the first several decades of the nineteenth century. "Above all, [the armorers] considered themselves artisans, not machine tenders, and, as such, believed in the dictum that an armorer's task consisted in making a complete product--lock, stock, and barrel."²⁸

Superintendent Stubblefield supported the craft system and he helped armorers resist the introduction of any forms of mechanization. By the 1820s many reports began to surface about his administration's mismanagement of the armory, including the misappropriation of funds. Stubblefield faced charges in 1827 and he received tremendous support from influential political friends and the Ordnance Department found him not guilty. But when additional charges were made against Stubblefield in 1829 his friends were silent and he was found to have lacked the vigilance and efficiency required of the position. Stubblefield resigned August 1, 1829.²⁹

Thomas Dunn's appointment in 1829 as superintendent pleased most members of the Ordnance Department and the manufacturing community believing that he could "restore peace and correctness to the Establishment." Dunn reinstated many of the rules and regulations established by Roswell Lee, the Springfield Superintendent, who acted as the Harpers Ferry Superintendent during Stubblefield's 1827 trial. "Among other things, the rules forbid loitering, gambling, and consuming alcoholic beverages on armory

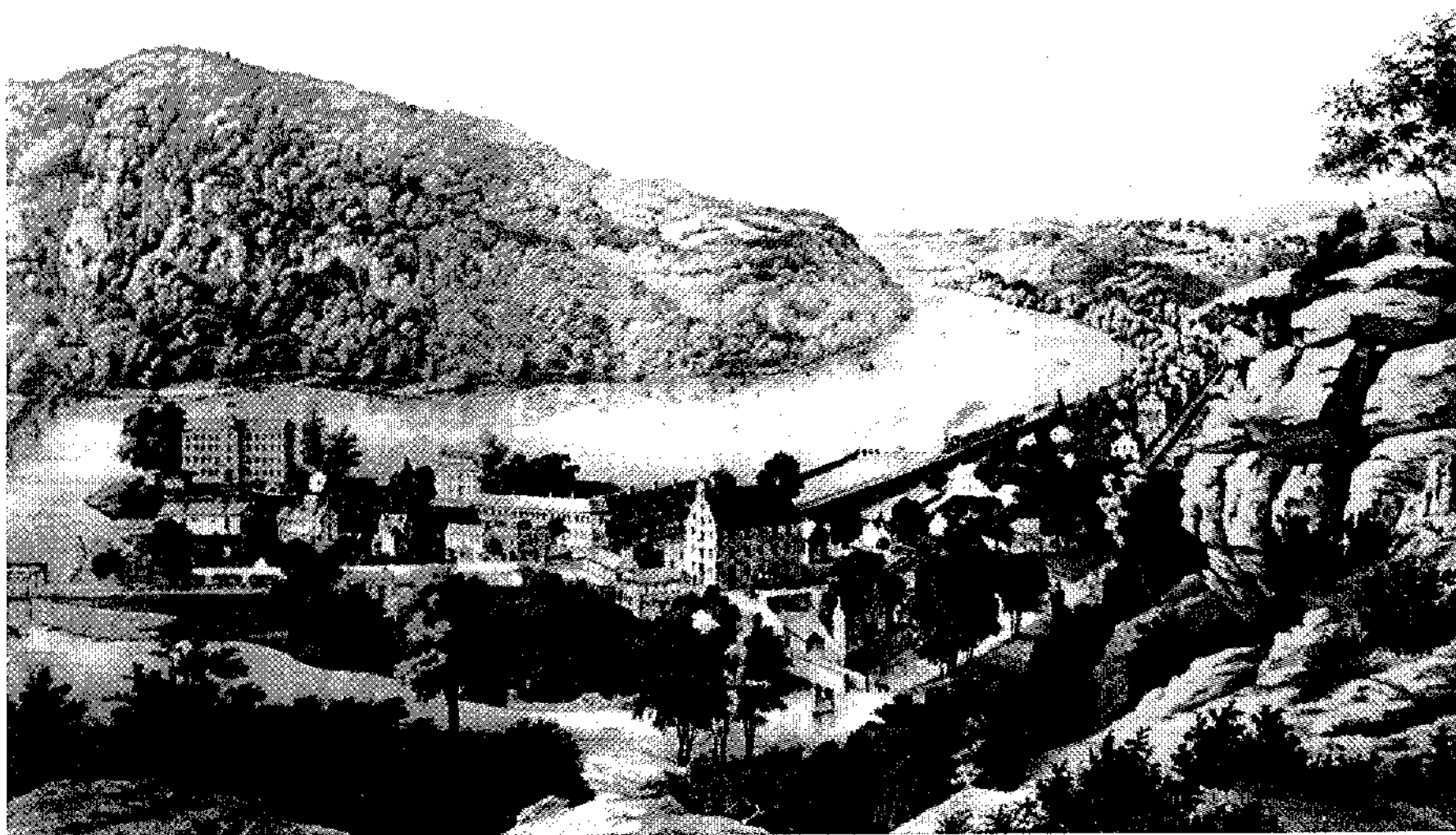


Fig. 1: View of the Island Virginius, in the Shenandoah, at Harpers Ferry taken near Jefferson's Rock (HF-490, Harpers Ferry NHP).

premises, made unexcused absences punishable by immediate dismissal, and held each armorer personally responsible for the damage or destruction of tools consigned to his use."³⁰

Unaccustomed to the new regulations, armorers protested by harassing Dunn outside of the armory gates. Ebenezer Cox was one of the discontented workers released by an acting superintendent during Stubblefield's 1829 trials. Cox had asked to be reinstated but Dunn denied his request. On January 29, 1830, Cox approached the superintendent's office and shot and killed Dunn at point-blank range. Cox became a folk hero among the armorers; whenever subsequent managers tried to impose factory discipline Cox's name was always mentioned to the armory officials.³¹

George Rust succeeded Dunn as the armory's superintendent in 1830. He was considered a Virginia gentleman who spent most of his time in Loudoun County, attending to the affairs of his estate. Rust's tenure appears to be uneventful, and he operated to prevent any stirring events, unlike his predecessor.³²

Edward Lucas, a congressional representative from the Harpers Ferry area, succeeded Rust as armory superintendent in 1837. During seven years of his predecessor's administration, the armory remained in a state of disorganization and to some extent it continued into Lucas' tenure. Misappropriated monies were a long standing problem in the armory, and there were few checks and balances in place when concerning the armory's money.³³

Early in 1841, a military officer, Major Henry Craig, replaced the armory's superintendent and took action to control the work process. With a military background, Craig enforced a disciplined factory system and dictated orders for all armorers to follow

under his leadership. Hours of work were established; idle, drunk or disorderly employees were dismissed; workmen were required to explain their absences; and abusive or disrespectful language was not to be tolerated. A second offense meant dismissal. These were very much the same rules imposed in 1827 and enforced by Thomas Dunn in 1829. Citizens and armorers who opposed the replacement of the civil superintendency met, and the local newspaper wrote editorials against the new system.³⁴

Throughout the 1830s two types of labor existed in the factory -- day workers and pieceworkers. In 1841 Craig ordered these occupational differences should be abolished. All armorers and workers were to labor the same amount of hours each day. Craig also stationed a guard at the armory gates to regulate and monitor the ingress and egress of armorers and visitors, and he installed a clock at the factory. A public time-keeping device had not existed in the armory before that time.³⁵

The armorers were outraged by the new military discipline, and the thought of conforming "to the hours for labour indicated by the bell" made them fear becoming "mere machines of labor."³⁶ In a letter to President Tyler they wrote that "The armorers of the Harper's Ferry Armory, feeling that their rights as Freemen have been wrested from them...."³⁷ The pieceworkers led a strike that lasted for a week, only to be told by President Tyler that he considered "the workmen as the bone and sinew of the land and its main dependence in war and in peace..." but that "they must go home and hammer out their own salvation."³⁸ Throughout the 1840s armorers continued to resist their new work conditions and imposed factory discipline.³⁹

In 1844, Superintendent Major John Symington, an engineer, created a plan to renovate the armory's architecture, town plan, and labor system. The facilities contrasted

sharply with the orderly layout found in the New England factory system. Most of the armory buildings were unsuited for the implementation of a division of labor because they lacked architectural and functional unity. As part of the plan, Symington demolished Hall's Rifle Works, placed fill above the rubble, and erected a new rifle factory. Other buildings were also replaced in the musket factory on the Shenandoah River.⁴⁰

Armorers' discontent did not slow the reorganization of the daily customs of workers and the rebuilding of the factory. Between 1845 and 1854, a total of 25 new buildings were erected at Harpers Ferry. The new armory buildings were of a Gothic architectural style and contrasted sharply with the almost random planning of the earlier armory buildings. Interchangeable manufacturing was well under way, and armorers who once considered themselves craftsmen now tended machines, following the rhythmic motions dictated by industry.⁴¹

Townspeople and armorers were disheartened by the new industrial discipline enforced by Superintendent Symington, and he received considerable political pressure as Congressional candidates campaigned to end the armory's "military system." In 1854 Congress ordered the removal of the military system, and a civilian armorer, Henry Clowe, became the next superintendent. But Clowe removed more men in four years than the military superintendents had in 13 years. Most of these men possessed important skills necessary for the operations of the armory, but Clowe punished opponents and rewarded allies. In response to these measures armorers reverted to their old habits, the payroll increased, and arms' manufacturing dropped to its lowest level since 1845.⁴²

An inspector from the Ordnance Department suggested "that measures of economy should be speedily adopted, or that all work should soon cease and the

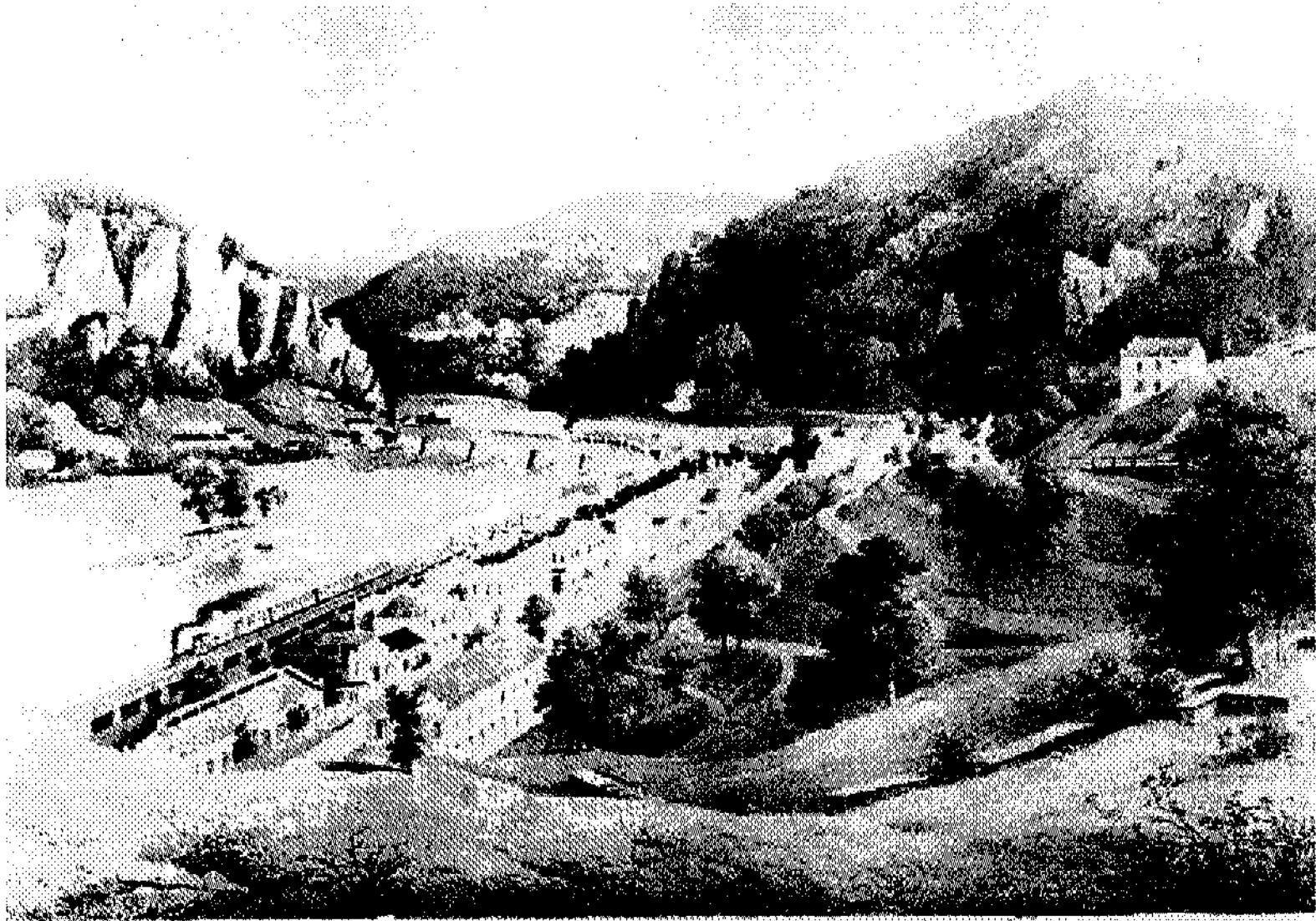


Fig. 2: U.S. Armory in Harpers Ferry, 1857 (HF-256, Harpers Ferry NHP).

establishment be closed." These poor results left the Secretary of War no choice but to relieve Clowe of his duties in 1858. In December 1858, Alfred Barbour became the next civilian superintendent. Barbour cut the payroll from 400 to 250 employees, and all remaining workers received a 10 percent reduction in wages. Barbour's actions did not go unnoticed and the *Virginia Free Press*, in Charles Town, Virginia, warned the new superintendent of the displays that had been made against his predecessors, including the assassination of Thomas Dunn.⁴³

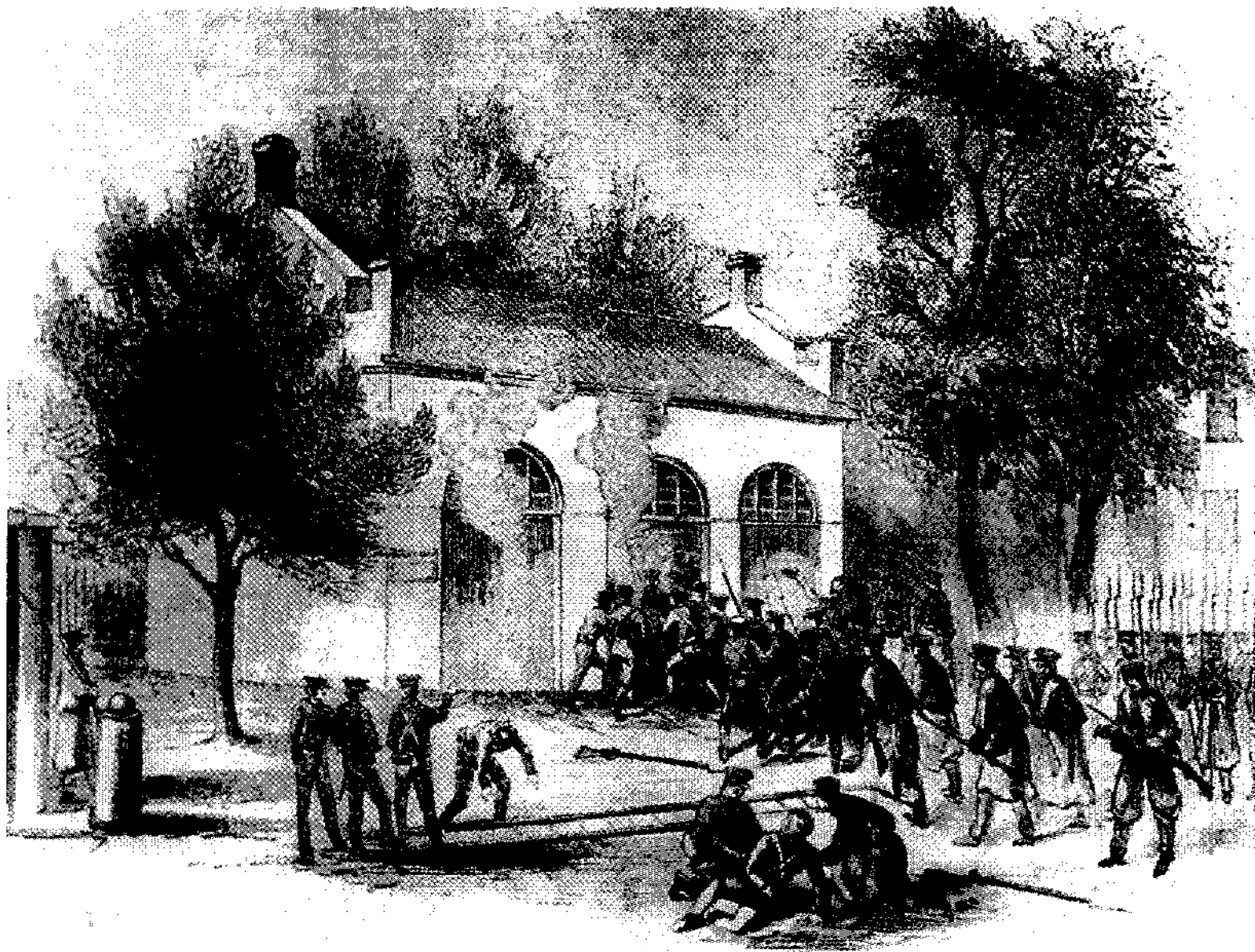
John Brown's Raid and The End of The Armory Era

John Brown saw Harpers Ferry as the key component in his plans to abolish slavery after he had gained a reputation as a militant abolitionist. Enticed by promotional literature, he and part of his family moved to the Kansas territory, which in 1854 was in the midst of a debate over whether it should be a free or slave territory. The pro-slavery faction won the 1854 election; pro-slavery members from Missouri had crossed the boarder and stuffed the ballot box. A civil war erupted in Kansas and the Brown family joined the battle on the side of the free-staters. James Redpath, an east coast correspondent, covered the Kansas civil war and sensationalized the deeds of John Brown, calling him a warrior-saint.⁴⁴

As his reputation grew, Brown met some of the most influential northeastern abolitionists. In 1858 he revealed to a select few his secret plan to attack the South, including Frederick Douglass and Franklin Sanborn. Harpers Ferry was a key component in John Brown's militant abolitionist plans. He would first attack Harpers Ferry where thousands of weapons were stored after their manufacture in the armory. After news of

the attack became known, he believed that slaves would revolt, leave their plantations and join his cause. They would then march south, creating a chain reaction of slave uprisings. As slaves joined his cause he would arm them. If his plan failed he believed his actions would at least serve to focus Northerners' emotions for their hatred of slavery and thus promote a crisis.⁴⁵

Brown created a Provisional Constitution that would create a new state in the southern mountains. He rented the Kennedy farmhouse on the Maryland side of the Potomac River for several months. On the night of October 16, 1859, Brown and his party of 21 men approached Harpers Ferry. They easily overpowered the armory guard and captured the federal arsenal with relative ease, taking hostages. Ironically, the first casualty of the raid was an African American baggage handler for the railroad, Hayward Shepherd. As the town filled with panic, many of the town's families fled from the Lower Town area. The church bells tolled and townspeople and farmers were warned of an insurrection. The next day Brown remained on the armory grounds, and refused to escape when he had the chance. By 11:00 A.M. a small battle raged within Harpers Ferry. Some of his men found themselves at the rifle works waiting for orders to withdraw, but Brown, stationed on the armory grounds, mysteriously delayed his withdrawal. The Jefferson Guard from Charles Town arrived and secured control of both bridges. An angry and increasingly intoxicated crowd surrounded the armory. Brown no longer had the opportunity to flee with hostages and weapons, and under fire, he and his men took refuge in the armory engine house. Those still stationed at the rifle works were killed as they tried to flee.⁴⁶



THE STORMING OF THE ENGINE-HOUSE BY THE UNITED STATES MARINES (APRIL 19, 1859)

Fig. 3: The Storming of the Engine House by the United States Marines, 1859 (HF-222, Harpers Ferry NHP).

A group of marines under the command of Colonel Robert E. Lee arrived at Harpers Ferry on the night of October 17th. The following morning Lee sent J.E.B. Stuart to the engine house under a flag of truce and handed Brown a note from Lee, asking for his unconditional surrender. Brown refused, Stuart jumped away from the door, waved his cap, and a party of marines stormed the fort. They finally overpowered Brown and his men at the engine house. Brown's war for slave insurrection had lasted only 36 hours and not a single slave had come to Harpers Ferry. Some of the slaves Brown had forcibly liberated during his raid refused to fight with him; others escaped and returned to their owners.⁴⁷

The event left the north and the south in a panic. Governor Henry Wise of Virginia decided to prosecute Brown in a Virginia court rather than turn him over to a federal court. Northerners received news of John Brown's raid with varying degrees of condemnation and approval. Brown also participated in creating his own martyrdom. While waiting for his execution, he wrote his brother that he was worth "inconceivably more to hang than for any other purpose." At his last public statement from the Charles Town jail Brown remarked, "I John Brown am now quite certain that the crimes of this guilty land will never be purged away, but with blood. I had as now think; vainly flattered myself that without very much bloodshed; it might be done."⁴⁸ Brown was hanged in Charles Town, Virginia (now West Virginia) for treason on December 2, 1859.

Brown's attack on Harpers Ferry helped to polarize the country on the issue of slavery. Northern abolitionist fervor increased dramatically behind Brown's cause. At the hour of Brown's hanging, the city of Albany, New York, fired a 100-gun salute. Church bells tolled from New England to Kansas, and many towns closed to mourn his death. In

Cleveland a banner hung in the street citing one of Brown's last phrases "I cannot better serve the cause I love than to die for it."⁴⁹ The engine house where Brown and his men took refuge immediately became known as the John Brown Fort and became a symbol of the abolitionist movement. Scholars claim that Brown's actions were some of the most notable deeds that ignited the Civil War.⁵⁰

After John Brown's Raid, Superintendent Barbour proceeded cautiously when he hired new armory employees. He feared that hiring northern armorers would only add to any sectional tensions. The community stirred whenever they heard that the Springfield master armorer was planning to fill a vacancy in the Harpers Ferry Armory. The *Virginia Free Press* published a rebuttal from Barbour and he denied that he offered the position to a Northerner, since no Northern man would be safe in Harpers Ferry, although he recognized that worthy armorers labored in the North. Instead, a Harpers Ferry master machinist, Armisted Ball, filled the position.⁵¹

In September 20, 1860, Barbour presented his resignation to the President of the United States. The President refused his resignation after reflecting on the political consequences of this action. Barbour had the support of the Harpers Ferry community and the U.S. government saw him as a stabilizing factor for both the armory and the community. The Virginia legislature in January 1861 called for a state convention to settle Virginia's status within the Union. Barbour was elected as a member of the secession committee from Jefferson County, and he promised his constituency that he would vote to preserve the Union. The War Department was eager for Barbour to represent Union sentiments at the convention.⁵²

While Barbour remained Harpers Ferry's Superintendent, his attempted resignation from this position several months earlier may have foreshadowed his eventual intentions regarding Virginia's secession. The assembly commenced on February 13 in Richmond with a majority of the delegates attending with the notion of preserving the Union (120 out of 152). Barbour had hoped to be back at his post in Harpers Ferry by March 1, although the deliberations extended into April. Lobbyist agents from South Carolina, Georgia, and Mississippi pressured delegates, including Barbour, to vote for secession. Friends and relatives urged Barbour to abandon the Union. In late March, Barbour asked for the removal of troops from Harpers Ferry, and shortly after he resigned his position as superintendent. Barbour voted one last time on April 4 against secession. After the fall of Fort Sumter and Lincoln's call for troops to suppress the rebellion, the secession ordinance passed on April 17.⁵³

Barbour arrived at Harpers Ferry in the morning of April 17 after traveling 24 hours from Richmond. He addressed a growing crowd at the armory gates. Barbour announced that he signed the ordinance of secession and that he sided with the state that he loved, rather than with the Union. The majority of the crowd greeted his news with cheers, but others yelled "treason." Fistfights erupted. Barbour became the chief quartermaster to General J.E. Johnston, and he held the office throughout the war.⁵⁴

Harpers Ferry and the Civil War

After Virginia seceded from the Union, seizing the armory and arsenal at Harpers Ferry became a major objective for the Confederacy. Lieutenant Roger Jones, stationed at Harpers Ferry with 50 regulars and 15 volunteers, feared that an advancing force of 360

Confederates would capture the town. Before these forces arrived on April 18, 1861, Jones set fire to the federal factory buildings and abandoned the town. The arsenal, along with 15,000 guns, was destroyed, although the townspeople, in an attempt to salvage their livelihood, saved the machinery. The local newspaper, *Spirit of Jefferson*, claimed the burning of the arsenals and workshop as a criminal act. It noted that the event would be remembered in a similar way as the John Brown Raid.⁵⁵ John Brown, the paper claimed, deceived the community under the assumed name of John Smith and that April 18, 1861, would henceforth be associated with Lieutenant Jones of the U.S. Army "as the very prince of smooth faced deceivers." The newspaper also claimed that the "demon of destruction is abroad along our entire border. If the first fortnight witnesses such destruction, what are we to expect from the northern vandals if they be not checked?"⁵⁶

Stonewall Jackson, the Confederate commander of Harpers Ferry in April and May 1861, fortified Maryland Heights, the highest landform that overlooks Lower Town, with about 500 Kentuckians and Virginians. He also ordered the construction of Block Houses on Loudoun Heights, the second highest landform adjacent to Harpers Ferry. Maryland citizens complained that Virginia soldiers "forcibly entered private houses, seized personal property, and insulted and threatened unoffending citizens." Property was destroyed on Maryland Heights and boarder residents perceived this act as tantamount to an invasion. Angry protests by the Maryland governor led Virginia's governor to promise full and liberal compensation for any property damage caused by Virginia troops.⁵⁷

Southern forces vacated the town on June 14, 1861, burning the B&O Railroad Bridge and the musket factory shops as they withdrew. The Confederates returned shortly

after and burned the trestle bridge that crossed the Shenandoah River and the rifle factory that lined the same river.⁵⁸

From 1861 to 1863 Harpers Ferry was occupied alternately by Union and Confederate troops. At times neither side claimed the town and Joseph Barry, a local historian, characterized it as a "no-man's land." The town was mostly deserted and portions were in a ruinous state.⁵⁹ Annie Marmion, a resident of Harpers Ferry, stated that the town's population during non-occupied times declined from a pre-war total of 2,500 down to "less than 20 families."⁶⁰ Food and safety during these periods were the major concerns of the residents. "The great objects in life were to procure something to eat and keep yourself out of sight by day, and your lamps or rather candle light hidden by night, lights of every kind being regarded as signals to the Rebels were usually regarded by a volley of guns."⁶¹ Marmion also remarked, "To the Village of Harpers Ferry as to other places it meant threatened starvation, but it also meant desolation inconceivable."⁶²

On February 7, 1862, a Confederate sniper in Harpers Ferry killed a Union soldier patrolling the Maryland shore. Union troops retaliated by burning 14 buildings in town in an area known as "the point,"⁶³ including hotels, stores, taverns, warehouses, the B&O depot, office and restaurant, and the toll house. The landmass at the confluence of the Shenandoah and Potomac Rivers that once thrived with commerce became a barren wasteland.⁶⁴ Generally, "all that winter - '61-'62 - Harpers Ferry presented a scene of the utmost desolation. All the inhabitants had fled, except a few old people, who ventured to remain and protect their homes, or who were unable or unwilling to leave the place and seek new associations."⁶⁵

Union troops reoccupied Harpers Ferry on February 22, 1862. A soldier from the 15th Massachusetts described the reoccupation of the town: “The streets are thronged with troops constantly arriving....” He described Harpers Ferry as a “ruined town with its burned and shattered buildings... [The town] was entirely deserted by its former inhabitants....”⁶⁶ Nathaniel Hawthorn wandered through the former armory grounds and described it as: “a waste of shapeless demolition. Heaps of gun barrels rusted in the rain. The brightest sunshine could not have made the scene cheerful, nor taken away the gloom from the dilapidated town.... [I]t had an inexpressible forlornness.”⁶⁷

The railroad bridge was rebuilt and the first locomotive in nine months crossed into Harpers Ferry on March 18, 1862. Protecting the railroad, a lifeline for the Union army, was essential for Northern military success. The Army created a Railroad Brigade and placed its headquarters in Harpers Ferry. On March 29, 1862, General McClellan appointed Dixon S. Miles to lead the force. Most of the Federal soldiers in occupied Harpers Ferry were new, undisciplined troops, and Miles often complained about the lack of battle-ready soldiers under his command.⁶⁸

Because of his mission to protect the railroad, Miles gave little attention to the fortification of Harpers Ferry. He did construct an earthwork across Camp Hill, but it was surrounded by higher and more strategic positions, such as Maryland Heights, Loudoun Heights, and Bolivar Heights, leaving this fortification vulnerable to enemy attack from above. Major General Wool, commander of the Union Army’s Baltimore-based Middle Department, urged Miles to construct a blockhouse at the highest point on Maryland Heights, but Miles failed to act on the general's request.⁶⁹



THE FEDERAL CAMP ON BOLIVAR HEIGHTS, 1862
HARPER'S FERRY NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

Fig. 4: Federal Camp on Bolivar Heights, 1862 (HF-31, Harpers Ferry NHP).

By September 1862 General Robert E. Lee believed that taking Harpers Ferry was a necessary first step in his invasion of the North. He dispatched 23,000 soldiers, who took control of Maryland and Loudoun Heights, and fired down on Union troops. On September 15, 1862, 12,693 Federal troops surrendered to Stonewall Jackson. Two days after this surrender, Union and Confederate troops fought to a stalemate at Sharpsburg, Maryland. On September 18th General Lee retreated into Virginia, and two days later the Army of the Potomac regained possession of Harpers Ferry and fortified Maryland and Loudoun Heights.⁷⁰

Reoccupation was not a pleasant scene. Harpers Ferry was "Sadly worn, almost washed away by the ebb and flow of war."⁷¹ Miles Clayton Huyette of the 125th Pennsylvania Infantry remarked, "All about us was the wreckage of the fighting ... and the unburied bodies of the dead of both armies." Gen. Alpheus Williams wrote that the "stench proved abundantly."⁷²

In October 1862, President Lincoln visited Harpers Ferry to congratulate McClellan and his troops for their victory at Antietam and to urge McClellan to push on. The President visited the armory grounds and John Brown's fort.⁷³ On Bolivar Heights, where Miles had surrendered a few weeks earlier, Union troops marched in review before McClellan and President Lincoln. Lincoln also reviewed the troops on Loudoun Heights where the proceedings were comparatively quiet since "there was no room for maneuvering troops at this camp."⁷⁴ Loudoun Heights remained occupied by Federal troops until October 28, 1862, when the 2nd Division was moved to Bolivar Heights.⁷⁵

Spring brought new hope to the region as Unionist counties in the western part of Virginia voted to rejoin the Union. Jefferson County, which contained Harpers Ferry, had

many southern cultural ties. Even so, under Union occupation, its citizens had felt safe from marauding Confederate guerrilla bands. On May 28, 1863, the polls opened and Harpers Ferrians voted 196 to 1 to rejoin the Union. On June 20, 1863, West Virginia became a state in the Union.⁷⁶

In June 1863, after the Confederates routed Federal troops at the Second Battle of Winchester, the Federal garrison in Martinsburg and the retreating troops from Winchester fell back to Harpers Ferry. Rather than turning their attack on Harpers Ferry, the rebels continued to march north into Pennsylvania.⁷⁷ One soldier reported, “The evidence of a heavy force in front of us and around continues to be visible. For several days past, we have seen trains of wagons of almost endless length, creeping along our front from left to right.”⁷⁸

Federal troops abandoned Harpers Ferry to join others in Gettysburg in preparation for what was to become one of the war’s major confrontations. The Confederates occupied and held uncontested control of Harpers Ferry into the first few days of July. There they found large quantities of abandoned commissary, quartermaster, and ordnance supplies.⁷⁹

After Lee’s retreat from Gettysburg, Federal troops returned by July 13, 1863, and never again abandoned Harpers Ferry. The 5th Ohio Infantry were the first Union troops to occupy Harpers Ferry.⁸⁰ When the 14th Connecticut arrived their band played the new and popular air “John Brown’s Body.” The entire division took up the song as they crossed the river, and a few minutes later the ragged formation solemnly trudged by Brown’s fort in a hushed manner.⁸¹

One soldier described, "I wish you could have seen the people come out and welcome us. Some of the women fairly cried for joy and pulled us into the houses and gave us all we wanted to eat, but they are pretty destitute here, having been stripped of everything by the rebs."⁸² Another described the town as desolate and in ruins. "[W]ar has had its effect and laid every thing waste and barren ... and the entire place is not worth \$10."⁸³

Feeling that they were safe in the presence of a large Union army, civilians, families of officers, and newly freed slaves flocked to Harpers Ferry. Lower Town Harpers Ferry became a major depot and supply center and citizens and merchants streamed back to provide services to the occupying army. Boarding houses developed along the main transportation corridors, catering to soldiers and other visitors, such as wartime correspondents.⁸⁴ A soldier, Joseph Ward, wrote in August; "You have never seen a place grow as this has since we came in. Now the streets about sunset are full of ladies, but when we came there was none to be seen."⁸⁵

Any semblance of peace and tranquility for the townspeople under the Union occupation was short-lived. General Jubal Early attacked the town in July 1864 on his way to capture Washington, D.C. Union troops held the heights and, therefore, control of the town. During the last year of the war, General Philip Sheridan fortified Harpers Ferry to secure supplies for his army. His men re-roofed the burned musket factory and established a supply depot in the building. John Mosby, a Confederate committed to guerilla warfare in the Harpers Ferry region, constantly badgered the wagon trains. These actions necessitated the deployment of large numbers of Union troops to Harpers Ferry to protect shipments from further harassment. During these last two years of the war, many

offices, boarding houses, restaurants, and other businesses opened to serve the expanding military and civilian populations.⁸⁶

On August 28, 1864, Sheridan began his historic campaign down the Shenandoah Valley.⁸⁷ General Ulysses S. Grant ordered Sheridan to "Do all the damage to railroads and crops you can. Carry off stock of all descriptions, and negroes, so as to prevent further planting. If the war is to last another year, we want the Shenandoah Valley to remain a barren waste."⁸⁸ As many as 1000 wagons and railroad cars, escorted by thousands of Union soldiers, supplied Sheridan's efforts. The wagon trains and railroad cars returned, usually filled with wounded soldiers from both sides, and prisoners. In the late summer and early fall an average of 100 prisoners a day were processed through Harpers Ferry. Sheridan had soundly defeated Early at Winchester on September 19, and again three days later at Fisher's Hill. The Confederate hold on the Shenandoah Valley had been weakened severely. By the end of September the B&O Railroad had repaired and reopened the line to Martinsburg where they sent supplies. There, wagons could use a macadamized road that ran south to Staunton, Virginia. After a victorious campaign down the valley to Staunton, Sheridan withdrew to Martinsburg for the winter and the supply depot was shifted back to the Rifle Factory on Hall's Island in Harpers Ferry.⁸⁹

At the end of the war Harpers Ferry existed in a deteriorated state. Union troops occupied the town for more than a year after Lee's surrender at Appomattox. Every day, residents endured "the ear-piercing notes of the fife and the boom of the drum heard on the streets."⁹⁰ Many Confederate sympathizers returned to Harpers Ferry only to find their dwellings either ransacked, rented by the United States Government, or occupied by squatters. The squatters claimed that they had the right to occupy the houses since they

were the booty of war and they claimed their loyalty to the Union. The government took a passive role regarding the private ownership of buildings, but a new commanding officer, General Egan, attempted to allow the Confederate sympathizers to reclaim their property. The army reassigned Egan before he could complete this task.⁹¹

"What a God forsaken place!" wrote Annie Marmion describing the condition of Harpers Ferry. A New Englander visiting the town also remarked about the destruction and general decay:

It is said to have been a pleasant and picturesque place formerly. The streets were well graded, and the hillsides above were graced with terraces and trees. But war has changed all. Freshets tear down the centre of the streets, and the hillsides present only ragged growths of weeds. The town itself lies half in ruins.... Of the bridge across the Shenandoah only the ruined piers are left; still less remains of the old bridge over the Potomac. And all about the town are rubbish, filth and stench.⁹²

From John Brown's raid in 1859 through the end of the Civil War, Harpers Ferry had experienced "six years of hell."⁹³

Post War Revitalization

Immediately after the Civil War, some Harpers Ferry citizens became optimistic about the prospect of revitalizing the armory since a small operation had been reestablished in August 1865. Daniel Young, former foreman of the rifle factory, aided by Zadock Butt and about forty workmen, set up shop to repair damaged guns. If the armory was not reestablished, townspeople wanted the government to place the property on the market. General Grant reported in 1867 to the Secretary of War that the United States no longer required the Harpers Ferry grounds and recommended against rebuilding the armory. He suggested that the lands should be sold; if not sold, then leased. In 1868,

Congress passed an act to sell public lands, buildings, machinery, and waterpower privileges to the Shenandoah and Potomac Rivers. With no economic base, the town was described as "Next to Dead" and a "Village of Paupers."⁹⁴

After the war, however, many Americans became intrigued with the social and economic conditions of the defeated south. A new literary genre developed that included the travel accounts of northerners who reported on living conditions and lifestyles in the south. These anecdotes provide valuable ethnographic regional descriptions and one such account is J. T. Trowbridge's visit to Harpers Ferry during the summer of 1865. He wrote from the position of an abolitionist, although he claimed that all of his writings were non-biased and faithful.⁹⁵

Trowbridge arrived in Harpers Ferry at dusk and went to the only existing town hotel, The Shenandoah House. It stood as a new, unpainted, four-story wooden building that looked more like a barracks than a hotel. It lacked shutters and window blinds. "The main entrance from the street was through a bar where merry men were clicking glasses, and sucking dark-colored stuff through straws. And this was a 'first-class' hotel kept on the European plan," wrote Trowbridge.⁹⁶ The only thing that consoled him was that the hotel sat on the Potomac banks with a scenic view of Maryland Heights.⁹⁷

Situated along the Potomac River, the hotel also stood next to the B&O Railroad. Naturally, this proximity to the tracks meant a very restless night for Trowbridge.

How often during the night the trains passed I cannot now compute; each approaching and departing with clatter and clang, and shouts of men and bell-ringing and sudden glares of light, and the voices of steam-whistle projecting its shrill shriek into the ear of the horrified night, and setting the giant mountains to tossing and retossing the echo like a ball.⁹⁸

The town, Trowbridge noted, stood in the midst of stupendous scenery and he claimed that it could make a favorite resort area. After climbing Maryland Heights on the winding, military roads, he viewed the surrounding valleys and the town below and remarked that the town is mostly destroyed, surrounded by rubbish, filth, and stench. "The place never will be anything again," explained one Harpers Ferry citizen to Trowbridge.⁹⁹

John Brown's "Engine House" had escaped destruction and still stood in the armory grounds. It had suffered some damage from battle, but "... no rebel hands were permitted to demolish [it]. It is now used as a storehouse for arms."¹⁰⁰ Harpers Ferry, "redeemed from slavery, and opened to Northern enterprise, should become a beautiful and busy town."¹⁰¹

A revitalization of transportation routes through Harpers Ferry provided promise towards economic revitalization. The Bollman Bridge, originally under construction before the Civil War, was rebuilt and completed by 1870. Across the new wrought iron structure "trains rumbled into town, discharging passengers at the new depot, or unloading freight at the siding with noise and commotion that regularly interrupted the quiet of the community."¹⁰² Harpers Ferry became an important depot as the B&O Railroad expanded to Wheeling, West Virginia, Pittsburgh, and other western cities in the 1870s and 1880s. The C&O Canal also resumed operations and entrepreneurs shipped coal, wheat, flour, lumber, and corn through Harpers Ferry to the port of Georgetown. The canal reached its commercial peak in the mid-1870s while the railroad played a major role in the town's economy through the 1920s.¹⁰³

Racial Tensions and African-American Activism

White northern Baptists under the direction of Reverend N. C. Brackett helped to establish schools for recently freed blacks in post-bellum Shenandoah Valley. In February 1867, John Storer of Sanford, Maine, donated \$10,000 to establish such a college in Harpers Ferry. On October 2, 1867, Storer College began classes with nineteen pupils. Throughout most of its existence, the college was controlled by the white administration and governing board, both of which dictated the college's mission. The goal of the school was to provide technical skills and an education for African Americans so they could provide for themselves in a segregated society.¹⁰⁴

The institution originally occupied the armory Paymaster's house, which served as a dwelling, school, and church. The college petitioned the U.S. Government in 1868 to allow the college to acquire the former homes of other armory officials on Camp Hill, along with several acres. Additional contributions from the Freedman's Bureau facilitated the erection of Lincoln Hall, a dormitory.¹⁰⁵

Storer College developed in an era when the country remained deeply divided along racial lines and the *Spirit of Jefferson*, the local Harpers Ferry newspaper, often confronted abolitionist policies. Members of Storer College, faculty and students, were not welcome in many parts of Harpers Ferry's commercial district. Ku Klux Klan members often threatened students and teachers. One teacher was "hooted at" when she went to the local post office because of her affiliation with the college. Residents even stoned her in the streets several times. It became necessary that armed militiamen escort Storer College women into the town.¹⁰⁶

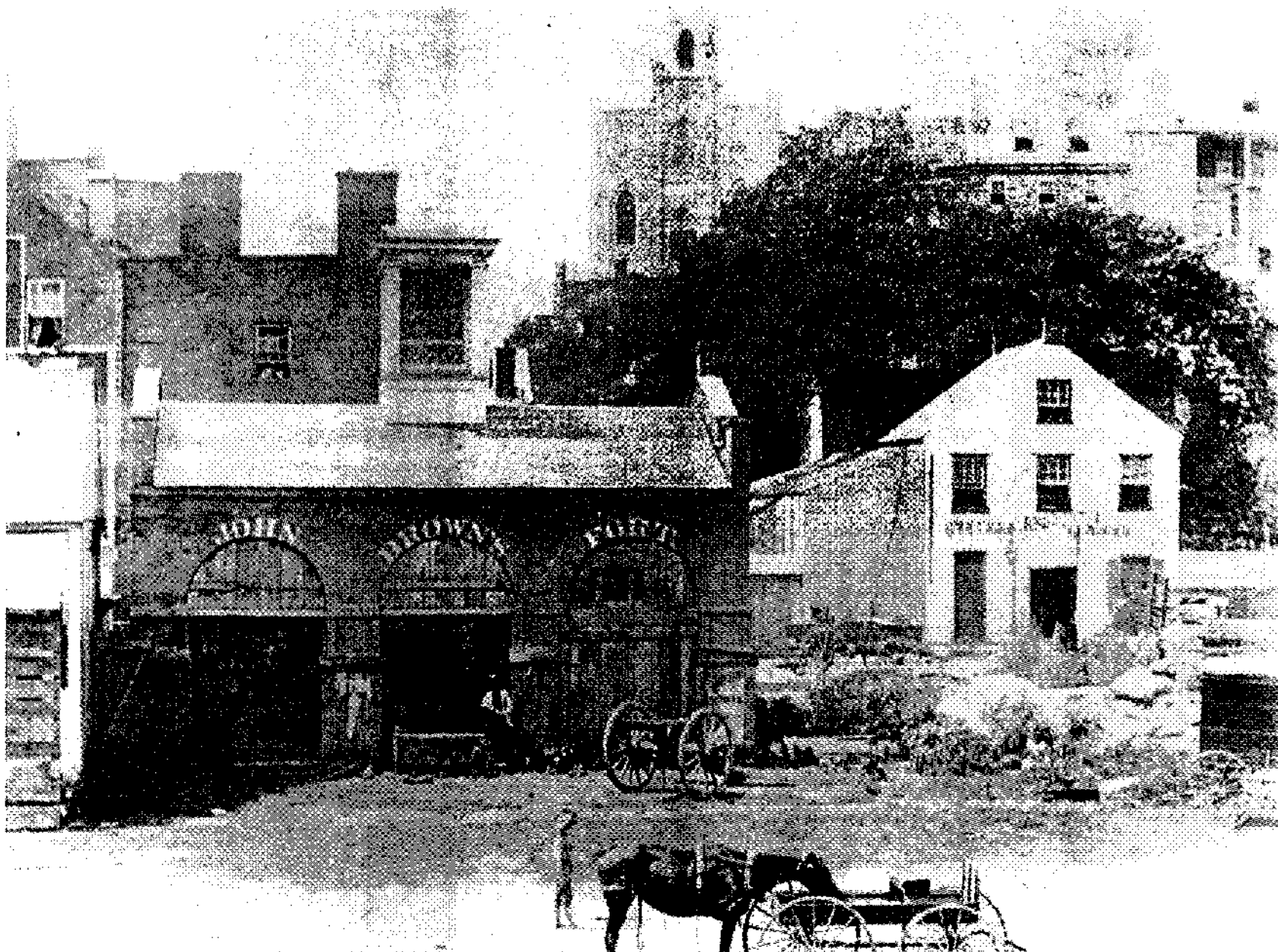


Fig 5: John Brown Fort on its original site, 1890-91 (HF-57, HFNHP).

During the summer months Storer College converted its dormitories to boardinghouses to accommodate tourists who visited Harpers Ferry.¹⁰⁷ One person wrote in the Washington, D.C., African-American newspaper *The Bee* that; “the whites have seized with avidity upon every spot, and only one hall is reserved for the colored people.”¹⁰⁸ The John Brown Fort in Lower Town became a destination for many African American visitors. One author in *The Bee* wrote that it stood “where a heroic soul made a stand for liberty, not for himself primarily, but for his ‘brother in black....’ His fort still stands, a shrine for lovers of liberty.”¹⁰⁹

While tourists visited the John Brown Fort, some local townspeople were not excited about the prospect of having the structure nearby. As long as this abolitionist symbol stood in Harpers Ferry, there existed the threat of a possible influx of African Americans to visit the fort. The townspeople began to express their enthusiasm for ridding the town of the fort. In 1888 a rumor claimed that the John Brown Fort would be moved to a New York park. The local newspaper's editor wrote in favor of this idea and exclaimed “& joy go with it.”¹¹⁰

Racial tensions grew, often fueled by rumors. For instance, in October 1890, a *Spirit of Jefferson* supplemental ran an article titled, “To Africanize West Virginia.” The story spread fear among working class families since the subtitle claimed “To colonize the state with the blacks of the south. West Virginia working men to be turned out of the mines and the shops, to give place for the Negro of the south.”¹¹¹

The following year Thomas Savery, proprietor of the John Brown Fort, sold it to the John Brown Fort Company. The company wished to exhibit the structure at the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago. The sale became necessary when the Baltimore and

Ohio Railroad planned to move the railroad tracks 250 feet west from the banks of the Potomac River. The John Brown Fort stood within the railroad's new right-of-way. While in Chicago, the fort drew only eleven people paid admissions at fifty cents a piece. Since the John Brown Fort Company had paid \$60,000 to move the structure, it lost a sizeable sum of money.¹¹²

By 1895, Mary Katherine Keemle Field, a newspaper reporter from Washington, D.C., came to the fort's rescue. Field contacted Alexander Murphy, a local farmer and businessman, who agreed to deed five acres of his farm, Buena Vista, for the placement of the fort. With Field's efforts the fort was moved in 1895, several miles from its original location and from the railroad line.¹¹³

After the Supreme Court upheld legal segregation in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, the John Brown Fort became a prominent symbol in the struggle for racial equality. In July 1896, the first national convention of the National League of Colored Women met in Washington, D.C., and they took a day trip to the John Brown Fort at the Murphy Farm.¹¹⁴

One of the most momentous occasions in early twentieth century activism took place on the Murphy farm a decade later. In August 1906, the second meeting of the Niagara Movement, led by W.E.B. Du Bois, was held in Harpers Ferry. Many African Americans saw Harpers Ferry as the symbolic starting point of the American Civil War, ignited by John Brown's Raid. The Niagara Movement was founded in Buffalo, New York, in 1905 with fifty-four members from eighteen states, although they had to meet in Erie, Canada, on July 11, 12, and 13 since Buffalo hotels would not accommodate African Americans. The principal guidelines for establishing the movement included

freedom of speech and criticism, an unfettered and unsubsidized press, manhood suffrage, the abolition of all caste distinctions based simply on race and color, the recognition of the principle of human brotherhood as a practical present creed, the recognition of the highest and best training as the monopoly of no class or race, a belief in the dignity of labor, and a united effort to realize these ideals under wise and courageous leadership.¹¹⁵

In 1906, nearly 100 visitors came to Harpers Ferry for the Niagara Movement meeting. At 6:00 AM on August 17, 1906, the conference participants left the convention site, Storer College, and began their journey to the engine house, about a mile away on the Murphy Farm. As they approached the fort they formed a single file procession, removed their "shoes and socks, and walked barefoot as if treading on holy ground."¹¹⁶

Later that day at Storer College Du Bois read the Niagara Address to the delegation, telling the congregation of African Americans' increasing loss of political and social rights: "We claim for ourselves every single right that belongs to a freeborn American, political, civil, and social; and until we get these rights we will never cease to protest and assail the ears of America."¹¹⁷ He continued:

The battle we wage is not for ourselves alone but for all true Americans. It is a fight for ideals, lest this, our common fatherland, false in founding, become in truth the land of the thief and the home of the slave -- a byword and a hissing among the nations for its sounding pretensions and pitiful accomplishments.

He claimed that he did not believe in obtaining equal rights through violence, but,

We do believe in John Brown, in that incarnate spirit of justice, that hatred of a lie, the willingness to sacrifice money, reputation, and life itself on the altar of right. And here on the scene of John Brown's martyrdom we reconsecrate ourselves, our honor, our property to final emancipation of the race which John Brown died to make free.... Thank God for John

Brown! Thank God for Garrison and Douglas! Sumner and Philips, Nat Turner and Robert Gould Shaw....¹¹⁸

The events of the Niagara Movement went virtually unnoticed by the local and national white newspapers.

In 1909 the College Trustees of Storer College voted to buy the John Brown Fort. Members of Storer College began negotiating with Murphy shortly after his 1903 purchase, and in 1909 the college agreed to pay \$900, which cleared Murphy's purchase price and court costs. Dismantled in 1910, the fort fell prey to souvenir hunting. The structure was rebuilt near Lincoln Hall on campus grounds.¹¹⁹

The Struggle to Revitalize Water Power

In 1869 government lands in Harpers Ferry were sold at public auction, with prices ranging from four to five times their true value on easy credit, with no cash down. Many townspeople purchased properties at inflated prices based on the speculation that entrepreneur F.C. Adams would vigorously redevelop the waterpower industry. Adams and a set of investors purchased the federal armory grounds without any money deposited, although the deed would not convey until the transaction was paid in full. Adams' intention was not to redevelop the lands, but to challenge legally the B&O Railroad's right to establish a route through the former armory lands. He hoped for a large court settlement from the railroad since any realignment would hinder the use of the former armory canals. Not knowing of Adams' scheme, many entrepreneurs began to build stores in the lower town commercial district; other buildings were renovated, and new "cottages" were built. Prosperity was once again in sight.¹²⁰

Waterpower had been the catalyst for much of the industrial growth prior to the Civil War in government and private industries, but fewer industrial initiatives developed in the post-war era. Residents waited for Adams' industrial initiative. Abraham Herr, the sole proprietor of Virginus Island, was the principal owner of the community's flour mill industry. The mill had received substantial damage during the Civil War. In 1867, Jonathan Child and John McCreight, industrialists from Ohio, purchased the properties, buildings, water courses, and water rights from Herr for \$75,000. These two men entered into partnership with others and converted a brick cotton factory into a flourmill.¹²¹ Child and McCreight had renovated the workers' domestic dwellings and surrounding grounds when the great flood of September 30, 1870 devastated Virginus Island, extensively damaging the new flour mill facilities and obliterating the foundry, machine shop, saw mill, a number of houses, and outbuildings. The flood also destroyed any hopes for the immediate revival of Lower Town.¹²²

Adams lost his battle against the railroad in 1874, because the court ruled that the easement granted in 1838 was still binding. The lands reverted to the government since he had not made any down payments, or subsequent payments. Another flood in November 1877 inflicted further damage on the community. Many of the buyers from the 1869 auction filed applications for abatement, claiming they had paid inflated, speculative prices and that their new, flood-worn property had lost considerable value. An act of Congress on June 14, 1878, allowed purchasers of lots to make application for abatement as part of their 1869 bids. Twenty-nine purchasers who had originally paid a total of \$39,755 for their properties received abatements of \$9,668.35. The flourmill on Virginus Island was reopened and operated intermittently into the 1880s.¹²³

Upstream from the flour mill Thomas Savery purchased the armory grounds on the Potomac, the rifle factory site, and water rights of the Shenandoah River in 1884. In 1887 he organized the Shenandoah Pulp Company, and began construction of a dam, lake, and pulp mill upstream on Hall's Island, the former site of John Hall's workshop and the federal rifle works. Eventually, the pulp company purchased Virginius Island and leased the remaining dwellings, although the tenants were not necessarily pulp mill employees. In 1890 Savery developed the Potomac shoreline and created the Harpers Ferry Paper Mill. He incorporated the old armory rolling mill, armory dam, and armory canal into his operations. While the use of waterpower increased on the Potomac and Shenandoah shores, citizens in Lower Town developed and rebuilt the main business district on Shenandoah Street. A two-block corridor was filled with new commercial establishments, giving the town the character of a bustling and profitable commercial district.¹²⁴

Harpers Ferry suffered again during the 1889 flood, as many of the improvements constructed over the preceding decade were either damaged or destroyed. Merchants once again rebuilt the business district. For instance, the McGraw family undertook several initiatives. They added a substantial addition to the rear of the old master armorer's house with the intention of operating a hotel or boardinghouse. In April 1892, McGraw advertised his new venture for rent as a "large, new stone and brick dwelling, 26 rooms, fine location. A splendid opening for a first-class Boarding House."¹²⁵ The McGraw family had established themselves as leading entrepreneurs in the Harpers Ferry community and in 1895, the *Spirit of Jefferson* remarked, "If Harpers Ferry had a few more enterprising men like Mr. McGraw it would not be long before we would have our

town supplied with water and electric lights, and then what a delightful place this would be.”¹²⁶

That same year James McGraw established the Harpers Ferry Brewing Company to join his operating bottling works on the north bank of the Shenandoah River. He sold the Brewery several years later, although it operated under several different owners for over a decade. The bottling works also continued to exist under several different owners until 1942.¹²⁷

During this same era, many new structures were erected on Shenandoah and High Streets, the center of the town's commercial district. The Hotel Conner was constructed on a portion of the former arsenal grounds south of Shenandoah Street. It consisted of three stories that accommodated both boarders and tourists. Adjacent to the hotel was a restaurant for its patrons. Close by, Murther Walsh constructed a new building that he used for his store and residence. James Garland Hurst purchased the master armorer's house and he refurbished it and lived in it with his wife for over 30 years. On High Street many smaller commercial establishments developed.¹²⁸

Commemoration and Tourism

Beginning in the 1880s and 1890s touring battlefields and other areas of historical importance became a popular recreational activity among Americans. Visiting these places served as a continual reminder of patriotic acts and civic duties. The early preservation movement surrounding Civil War era sites began with a patriotic motive to preserve a tangible past and to provide a coherent cultural identity.¹²⁹

Harpers Ferry became a popular tourist spot along the B&O Railroad and the C&O Canal. After the war, citizens developed and rebuilt the main business district in the Lower Town area to cater to tourism. The B&O Railroad played an influential role in the development of Harpers Ferry's tourism. In 1880 the railroad constructed a 20-acre amusement park on an island in the Potomac River that provided recreation for residents and tourists.¹³⁰ Mayor Gilbert E. Perry recollected, "That was Island Park," he said. "You wouldn't believe it, but when I was a boy, it was every bit as gay as Coney Island."¹³¹

Visitors to Harpers Ferry were either day travelers or those who owned or rented cottages in the community. Tourist brochures described several important landmarks, including the site of John Brown's fort and the ruins of the United States Armory.¹³² William Savery, owner of the armory grounds, sold a right-of-way to the B&O Railroad and, after 1891, fourteen feet of railroad berm fill covered the John Brown Fort's original foundation on the musket factory grounds as the railroad through Harpers Ferry was realigned. The first thing tourists saw as they crossed the Potomac and entered town was an obelisk monument erected by the railroad marking the fort's original location. Adjacent to the feature the federal government placed iron tablets commemorating the Confederates' 1862 siege of the town, during which more than 12,500 Union troops surrendered. The tablets were mounted there for, "the enlightenment of travelers concerning the fighting that took place in the capture of Harpers Ferry by the Confederate Army in September, 1862."¹³³ Also visible from the tracks were several remaining foundations of the former musket factory. In 1916 the B&O Railroad landscaped the grounds around the musket factory foundations with trees and shrubs. By 1923 a large park-like garden filled the remains of the old armory grounds.¹³⁴ The garden's design

"incorporated the embankment, the matured trees and ornamental shrubs planted along the old river wall, and the rectangular outlines of old building foundations, creating a distinctive gateway of monuments, history, and ornamental landscape."¹³⁵ The town celebrated many of these landscape changes made by the railroad as they were incorporated into an unofficial "public square."¹³⁶

Heyward Shepherd Memorial

Harpers Ferry remained a small industrial town supported by mercantile businesses and tourism through the Victorian era. In 1894 the *Virginia Free Press* reported that African Americans, led by Frederick Douglass, wanted to erect an obelisk to commemorate the deeds of John Brown.¹³⁷ The following year an obelisk commemorating John Brown was erected at the site of the engine house on B&O Railroad property. One of the great ironies of John Brown's raid on Harpers Ferry was that the first person killed was Heyward Shepherd, a free African American working for the B&O Railroad; the editor of the *Virginia Free Press* responded to the erection of the obelisk by suggesting that "white people erect a monument to the memory of Brown's first victim at Harper's Ferry."¹³⁸

About ten years later the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) debated the erection of a "faithful slave monument." They wanted a monument dedicated to "the loyal slaves to whose care the women and children were entrusted during the entire period of the War Between the States."¹³⁹ In a speech at the 1920 UDC annual national meeting, President-General Mary McKinney told the group, "The hero of Harpers Ferry was not the Soldier of Fortune, but a black man who gave his life for his friends. Honor

his memory. With a thrill of appreciation tell to future listeners the story of this faithful slave, who stood between Southern womanhood and a renegade adventurer.”¹⁴⁰

The committee struggled to find an appropriate site for the memorial. Initially, they contacted the B&O Railroad and asked for permission to erect the monument on its property.¹⁴¹ Henry McDonald, town recorder for Harpers Ferry and president of Storer College, wrote the B&O Railroad that the council “look[s] with disfavor upon the placing in our midst such a monument as proposed with the inscription thereon suggested, as being likely to occasion [*sic*] unpleasant racial feelings in a community where we are so entirely free from it. We see no good purpose that can be served in this case and believe that harm would result to our community.”¹⁴² The railroad agreed, believing that the monument “might disturb the existing pleasant relations.”¹⁴³

After a decade of work to locate a place for the monument, the UDC and the Sons of Confederate Veterans (SCV) finally succeeded when a Harpers Ferrian allowed the monument to be placed on the sidewalk adjacent to his building. A date was set for the dedication, and the speakers included Henry McDonald, as well as members of several southern heritage groups. Prior to the dedication, many of McDonald’s friends, colleagues and an African American newspaper questioned his participation in the event.¹⁴⁴

On October 10, 1931, about 300 whites and 100 blacks came to the dedication of the Heyward Shepherd monument.¹⁴⁵ The granite boulder was covered with a Confederate flag and surrounded by green ivy. Henry McDonald made the introductory remarks. He proclaimed that the event should not be a day to “remember discord and a past, however memorable and glorious,” but that instead we should look into the future

with “the spirit of peace” inspired by the memorial.¹⁴⁶ Then Matthew Page Andrews offered what was billed as the historical address of the dedication. Andrews’ speech criticized John Brown and justified slavery, rather than memorializing Heyward Shepherd. He claimed that John Brown was mentally ill and suffered from “some kind of warped psychosis or paranoia.”¹⁴⁷ The next speaker, president general of the UDC, Elizabeth Bashinsky, told of her love of country, and also of her devotion to the Confederate flag. She remarked, “Heyward Shepherd’s conduct was honorable, just, and true, and merits the praise we bring him.”¹⁴⁸ Like Andrews, she proceeded to demonize John Brown, and spent the majority of her time talking about the loyalty of many slaves during the war.¹⁴⁹

After Bashinsky’s speech the memorial was unveiled. It still stands today, and its inscription reads:

ON THE NIGHT OF OCTOBER 16, 1859,/ HEYWARD
SHEPHERD AN INDUSTRIOUS/ AND RESPECTED COLORED
FREEMAN,/ WAS MORTALLY WOUNDED BY JOHN/ BROWN’S
RAIDERS. IN PURSUANCE/ OF HIS DUTIES AS AN EMPLOYEE
OF/ THE BALTIMORE AND OHIO RAILROAD/ COMPANY,/ HE
BECAME THE FIRST VICTIM OF THIS ATTEMPTED
INSURRECTION.

THIS BOULDER IS ERECTED BY/ THE UNITED
DAUGHTERS OF THE/ CONFEDERACY AND THE SONS OF/
CONFEDERATE VETERANS AS A/ MEMORIAL TO HEYWOOD
SHEPHERD,/ EXEMPLIFYING THE CHARACTER AND/
FAITHFULNESS OF THOUSANDS OF/ NEGROES WHO, UNDER
MANY/ TEMPTATIONS THROUGHOUT/ SUBSEQUENT YEARS OF
WAR, SO/ CONDUCTED THEMSELVES THAT/ NO STAIN WAS
LEFT UPON A RECORD/ WHICH IS THE PECULIAR HERITAGE/
OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE, AND AN/ EVERLASTING TRIBUTE
TO THE BEST/ IN BOTH RACES.¹⁵⁰

The chairman of the memorial committee, Mary Dowling Bond, placed a wreath on the monument. The Storer College Singers were scheduled to sing next. Taking

exception to the tone of the event, the musical director, Pearl Tatum, stood and turned to the crowd. She protested the tone of the event and remarked to the crowd, "I am the daughter of a Connecticut volunteer, who wore the blue, who fought for the freedom of my people, for which John Brown struck the first blow. Today we are looking forward to the future, forgetting those things of the past. We are pushing forward to a larger freedom, not in the spirit of the black mammy but in the spirit of the new freedom and rising youth."¹⁵¹ The choir group then sang their schedule of songs. Reverend Dr. George F. Bragg, a distinguished African-American clergyman, gave the benediction.¹⁵²

The *Afro-American* immediately attacked both McDonald and Reverend Bragg for their participation in the ceremonies.¹⁵³ The *Washington Tribune* called McDonald and the trustees, the "white Judases" of Storer College. The paper noted that they were the men who assisted the UDC in erecting a memorial to "glorify human slavery." The *Washington Tribune* remarked that the college was "a failure" and "a detriment to Negro freedom and manhood," and it urged African Americans to ostracize the college. The *Afro-American* remarked, "it was written in every facial expression that Dr. McDonald, apologist for those Southern whites, who would desecrate John Brown's memory while glorifying the slave regime, must go."¹⁵⁴

A letter written by McDonald over a decade later may provide some clues as to why he supported the monument in the first place. While contemplating retirement in 1943 he provided a paternalistic view of race relations. He wrote, "I am one who firmly believes that white people and colored people should cooperate in such institutions for the benefit of colored men and women. I still think our ancestry, training and larger fitness enable us – white people – to do something for colored students, which they can

get in no other way.”¹⁵⁵ McDonald weathered the immediate storm, and retired 12 years later. An African American, Dr. Richard McKinney, replaced him.

Remembering a Past at Harpers Ferry

By 1920 Harpers Ferry was a small town that catered to local and regional needs. Island Park, the amusement park built by the railroad in the 1880s, fell into disrepair and the number of visitors to town decreased tremendously, although boardinghouses and hotels were still filled to capacity during the summer months. The town contained a bank, three livery stables, two barber shops, a millinery store, two feed and hardware stores, a cleaning and pressing business, two department stores, a dry goods store, the Conner Hotel, three lunch rooms and a creamery, a bakery, a confectionery, two butcher shops, two blacksmiths, a shoe repair shop, a drug store, two doctors, two funeral parlors, three coal yards, the pulp mill, bottling works for soft drinks, and a volunteer fire department.¹⁵⁶ It also appears that many of the residents found employment across the river in Brunswick in the B&O Railroad yards.

As the automobile became an increasingly popular mode of transportation, excursions on the railroad lines decreased. Floods continued to hamper the town's growth and efforts to rebuild after each flood decreased substantially.¹⁵⁷ One person recollected:

Then came the floods of 1924, washing away the Island Park Bridge. Then in [1936] floods washed away the toll bridge. Another flood followed in [1942]. One by one businesses were ruined and closed out. Shirley Nichols moved his pharmacy to Charles Town and the A&P Store moved to Shepherdstown.¹⁵⁸

In the 1920s the Interwoven Knitting Mills operated in Lower Town for several years. In 1925 a fire destroyed the paper mill and the pulp mill ceased functioning in

1935. The Virginia Power Company purchased Virginus Island and in 1935 the two remaining families on the island were told to vacate the area as the power company developed plans to submerge the island for hydroelectric development.¹⁵⁹

The 1936 flood destroyed the bridges that entered Harpers Ferry. A 1941 history of Harpers Ferry remarked, "Today the town is wholly a residential and resort town. The water power once used to turn the wheels of the arsenal is utilized by a power company that generates electricity for use in Bolivar and Harpers Ferry and feeds its surplus current to Brunswick, Maryland."¹⁶⁰ One of the town's last industries, the bottling works, discontinued operations in Harpers Ferry after the 1942 flood.

The Writer Programs, a depression-era Works Progress Administration project, developed local histories for numerous American communities in the 1930s. Many researchers based their syntheses on local research and oral accounts, and these community histories were designed in part to encourage tourism. In 1941, the Writer's Program described Harpers Ferry as:

war-battered and flood damaged, is but a relic of the thriving village that before the War between the States centered about the Government armory and Hall's Rifle Works and seemed destined to become an important industrial town.... [O]nly the memory of the early industrial activity remains. Residents find employment in the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad shop at Brunswick, Maryland, four miles away, in near-by quarries, and in the small retail shops of the town.¹⁶¹

While tourism declined significantly during the Great Depression, Harpers Ferry retained some regional and national recognition. The WPA history remarked;

In the summer, tourists-service enterprises blossom along the main thoroughfares; tourist homes, closed during winter months, reopen; and post card and souvenir venders are busy. Nearly every citizen considers himself a volunteer guide, and a few charge small fees for conducting the sightseer up the natural stone steps, past the Harper House to Jefferson's Rock and John Brown's Fort. During winter months the town's folk return

to their quiet round of church suppers, bingo parties, knitting circles, and occasional trips to the movies at Charles Town or Martinsburg.¹⁶²

Yet in 1945 *National Geographic* article described the town as, “Thus it has suffered so grievously from a succession of floods that the lower part of the town looks like an Italian hill village after the Nazis left, almost bereft of residents and trade alike. The little town is one of steep, and tall narrow gabled houses, almost stately in their old time simplicity of line, even though half in ruins on their hillside perches.”¹⁶³

For centuries a cast of characters shaped the stories of Harpers Ferry. The recognition of these stories would be integral to the greater recognition and preservation of the area in the twentieth century and beyond. The history of Harpers Ferry was about to be embraced on another scale, making a new story to add to the old. Enthusiastic supporters would join Henry T. McDonald and the NPS, and they had their work cut out for them.

¹ Archeological excavations behind Park Buildings 33, 34, 34A, 35, and 36 uncovered prehistoric remains that including diagnostic lithics and ceramic. The ceramics found included; Accokeek Cord Marked (Early Woodland, 750-500 BC), Marcey Creek (Early Woodland, 1200-1000 BC) and Seldon Island Cord Marked (Early Woodland, 1000-700 BC). In Paul A. Shackel (editor). *Interdisciplinary Investigations of Domestic Life in Government Black B: Perspectives on Harpers Ferry's Armory and Commercial District*. (Harpers Ferry, West Virginia: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Harpers Ferry NHP), 4.72.

² Frederick Gutheim, *The Potomac* (New York: Reinhart and Co., Inc., 1949), 49; James P. Noffsinger, "Harpers Ferry, West Virginia: Contributions Toward a Physical History" (Harpers Ferry, WV: Harpers Ferry NHP, 1958); Paul A. Shackel, *Culture Change and the New Technology: Archaeology of the Early American Industrial Era* (New York: Plenum Press, 1996), 26.

³ Noffsinger, "Harpers Ferry, West Virginia," 6, 221-223; Shackel, *Culture Change and the New Technology*, 27; Joseph Barry, *The Strange Story of Harpers Ferry With Legends of the Surrounding Country* (1903 Rpt. Shepherdstown, WV: Shepherdstown Register, Inc., 1988).

⁴ Qtd. in Noffsinger, "Harpers Ferry, West Virginia," 16.

⁵ Robert Mitchell, *Commercialism and Frontier: Perspectives on the Early Shenandoah Valley* (Charlottesville, VA: Univ. Press of Virginia, 1977), 59,127; Merritt Roe Smith, *Harpers Ferry Armory and the New Technology: The Challenge of Change* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Univ. Press, 1977), 27-28; Shackel, *Culture Change and the New Technology*, 29.

⁶ Stuart E. Brown Jr., *The Guns of Harpers Ferry* (Baltimore: Clearfield, Co., 1968), 9-10.

⁷ Smith, *Harpers Ferry Armory and the New Technology*, 29-30.

⁸ George Washington to Tobias Lear, November 2, 1795, CO/HAFE, photostat from *The Diaries of George Washington 1748-1799*, edited by John V. Fitzpatrick, On file, CO/HAFE.

⁹ Catherine Gilbert, Maureen D. Joseph, and Perry C. Wheelock, *Cultural Landscape Report: Lower Town, Harpers Ferry NHP* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, Department of Interior, Harpers Ferry NHP, National Capital Region, 1993), 3.8; Washington to Lear; Smith, *Harpers Ferry Armory and the New Technology*, 147.

¹⁰ Shackel, *Culture Change and the New Technology*, 30.

¹¹ Smith, *Harpers Ferry Armory and the New Technology*, 137-138; James Stubblefield to George Bomford, May 16, 1818, Reel 21, no. 3: 244-45, CO/HAFE.

¹² Brown, *The Guns of Harpers Ferry*, 30; Joseph Scott, *A Geographical Dictionary of the United States of North America* (Philadelphia: Archibald Bartram, 1805).

¹³ Vale qtd. in Noffsinger, "Harpers Ferry, West Virginia," 20.

¹⁴ Joseph Annin, to William Armstrong, June 24, 1813, Reel 13, no. 1:16, CO/HAFE; Shackel, *Culture Change and the New Technology*, 30.

¹⁵ Shackel, *Culture Change and the New Technology*, 32.

¹⁶ Smith, *Harpers Ferry Armory and the New Technology*, 145-149.

¹⁷ Smith, *Harpers Ferry Armory and the New Technology*, 78-79; Brown, *The Guns of Harpers Ferry*, 13-14.

¹⁸ Smith, *Harpers Ferry Armory and the New Technology*.

¹⁹ John Hall to George Bomford, October 5, 1835, qtd. in R.T. Huntington, *Hall's Breechloaders: John H. Hall's Invention and Development of a Breechloading Rifle with Precision-made Interchangeable Parts, and Its Introduction into the United States Service* (York, PA: George Shumay, 1972), 96; Shackel, *Culture Change and the New Technology*, 34.

²⁰ Huntington, *Hall's Breechloaders*, 36; Shackel, *Culture Change and the New Technology*, 34.

²¹ Qtd. in Smith, *Harpers Ferry Armory and the New Technology*, 239; Shackel, *Culture Change and the New Technology*, 34.

²² John Hall to George Bomford, March 24, 1831, Microfilm Reel 22, no. 11:1022-25, CO/HAFE.

²³ Smith, "Eli Whitney and the American System of Manufacturing," in *Technology in America: A History of Individuals and Ideas*, ed. Carroll W. Pursell, Jr. (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1991), 45-61; Huntington, *Hall's Breechloaders*, 36; Shackel, *Culture Change and the New Technology*, 36.

²⁴ William C. Everhart, "A History of Harpers Ferry" (Harpers Ferry, WV: Harpers Ferry NHP, 1952); Charles W. Snell, "A Compendium of the Commercial and Industrial Advertisements of the Business and Manufacturing Establishments of Harpers Ferry and the Island of Virginus, 1824-1861, Virginia" (Harpers Ferry, WV: Harpers Ferry NHP, 1973); Shackel, *Culture Change and the New Technology*, 37.

²⁵ Millard K. Bushong, *A History of Jefferson County* (Charles Town, WV, 1941), 83-84.

²⁶ *Jefferson County Deed Book [JCDB]*, September 1825, Jefferson County Court House, Charles Town, WV, vol. 14, no. 3:43; Shackel, *Culture Change and the New Technology*, 39.

²⁷ Jack Bergstresser, "Water Power on Virginus Island, Written Historical and Descriptive Data," *Historic American Engineering Record (HAER)* No. VW-35 (Washington, DC: Historic American Engineering Record, National Park Service, 1988), 3; Mary Johnson and John Barker, "Virginus Island Community: Preliminary Social Analysis, 1800-1936" (Harpers Ferry, WV: Harpers Ferry NHP, 1993).

²⁸ Smith, *Harpers Ferry Armory and the New Technology*, 67-68.

²⁹ James Symington to John Eaton, May 26, 1829, Reel 22, no. 8:714-32, CO/HAFE; James Stubblefield to John Eaton, June 1, 1829, Reel 22, no. 8:736-39, CO/HAFE.

³⁰ Smith, *Harpers Ferry Armory and the New Technology*, 255.

³¹ *Virginia Free Press (VFP)*, February 3, 1830, Microfilm, CO/HAFE; *VFP* February 17, 1830, 3; *VFP* 17 March 1830; see account of trial *VFP* 28 July 1830, 2; Barry, *The Strange Story of Harpers Ferry*, 15-25; Smith, *Harpers Ferry Armory and the New Technology*, 256-57; Shackel, *Culture Change and the New Technology*, 65.

³² Barry, *The Strange Story of Harpers Ferry*, 27.

³³ Shackel, *Culture Change and the New Technology*, 66.

³⁴ Orders, Craig, Henry K. 29 April 1841, 18 May 1841, 7 June 1841, 16 July 1841, 10 August 1841, CO/HAFENHP, Reel 23, no. 2:137-47; *VFP* 17 June 1841, 2; *VFP* 12 August 1841, 2; *VFP* 11 August 1842, 1.

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- ⁴⁰ Shackel, *Culture Change and the New Technology*.
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- ⁴⁷ Osborne Anderson, *A Voice from Harpers Ferry* (The Black Heritage Library Collection, 1861 Rpt., Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, 1972), 36; Richard Hinton, *John Brown and His Men*, (London: Funk and Wagnall, 1894), 311ff, 709ff; O.G. Villard, *John Brown, 1800-1859; A Biography Fifty Years After* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1910), 440; Stephen B. Oates, *To Purge this Land with Blood*, 293-300; Shackel, "Terrible Saint."
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⁵⁸ A.P. Marmion, *Under Fire: An Experience in the Civil War* (Comp. and ed. W.V. Marmion, Jr., Harpers Ferry, WV: William Marmion, 1959).

⁵⁹ Barry, *The Strange Story of Harpers Ferry*; Snell, "Harpers Ferry Repels an Attack," L.C. Drickamer and K.D. Drickamer, (ed), *Harpers Ferry: On the Boarder of North and South with "Rambling Jour", A Civil War Soldier. The Civil War Letters and Newspaper Dispatches of Charles H. Moulton, 34th Mass. Vol. Inf.* (Shippensburg, PA: White Mane Publishing Co., Inc., 1987), 124.

⁶⁰ Marmion, *Under Fire*, 4.

⁶¹ *Ibid*, 7.

⁶² *Ibid*, 6.

⁶³ The point is commonly referred to as the area that is approximately bound by the Shenandoah and Potomac Rivers and the railroad tracks.

⁶⁴ Barry, *The Strange Story of Harpers Ferry*, 119-121.

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, 121.

⁶⁶ Qtd. in Chester G. Hearn, *Six Years of Hell: Harpers Ferry During the Civil War*. (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1996), 93.

⁶⁷ Nathaniel Hawthorn, "Extracts from 'The Conflict of Conviction,' n.d., CO/HAFE, HFB-216. Shackel, *Archaeology And Created Memory*, 23.

⁶⁸ Snell, "The Fortifications at Harpers Ferry," 50.

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- ⁸⁸ United States War Department (USWD), *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and the Confederate Armies*, vol. 43, no. 1, (Washington, DC: The War Department. Government Printing Office, 1880-1901), 202.
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Chapter 2:

Establishing a National Monument: The Local Campaign

Many people contributed to the formation of Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, originally authorized as a National Monument in 1944. Congressman Jennings Randolph submitted the authorizing legislation and supported the park during his later career as a Senator. Congressman Harley O. Staggers lent his influence to instigate the cooperation of state and federal bureaucracies. Federal planners and Department of the Interior officials viewed the town as worthy of park status in the context of regional and national preservation planning. But for providing the essential local vision and pragmatic perseverance, Harpers Ferry NHP owes its existence to two people—Henry Temple McDonald and Mary Vernon Mish.

Henry Temple McDonald was born in Blue Earth, Minnesota in 1872. He earned bachelors and masters degrees from Hillsdale College, a Freewill Baptist college in Hillsdale, Michigan. One of his classmates there was Elizabeth Mosher, daughter of Hillsdale's president and granddaughter of one of the founders of another Baptist institution—Storer College in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia. Elizabeth's mother taught French and history at Hillsdale and was a trustee of Storer College. It was probably through this acquaintance that McDonald came to the attention of Storer trustees. After working for two years as school principal in Hillsdale, he was hired as Storer's principal in 1899. Two years later McDonald and Elizabeth Mosher were married and McDonald's position was upgraded to president of the college.¹ McDonald was an avid amateur historian and as he became familiar with the eastern panhandle of West Virginia he also became a tireless promoter of the region for its natural beauty and history. In



Fig. 6: Henry Temple McDonald, view taken while president of Harpers Ferry National Monument Association, photograph taken in northeast room of Brackett House (HF-1682, Harpers Ferry NHP).

addition to membership in a variety of church and civic organizations, McDonald belonged to the state historical society and was a charter member of the Jefferson County Historical Society. In this capacity in the 1920s, he worked on an ambitious project to identify historic sites and then erect historic markers around the area. McDonald lobbied West Virginia legislators to provide state funds for the marker project, arguing that it would promote tourist revenues and raise awareness of the area. This experience, combined with the social networking involved in his job and civic and fraternal organizations, prepared him for the task of establishing the Harpers Ferry National Monument.

Harpers Ferry was identified as a potential national historic site by the federally sponsored historic sites survey authorized by the Historic Sites Act of 1935. It is unclear whether survey officials nominated the town and then sought local support through Dr. McDonald or whether McDonald saw opportunity in the Act to promote his adopted town and brought it to his Congressman's attention—or both. His interest in promoting the local area for a national stage was evident as early as 1929 when he was organizing a campaign “to secure the location of the Summer White House” at Harpers Ferry.² In any case, by 1936 he had helped persuade men in “high government positions” including Jennings Randolph to visit for a tour and meeting on March 17 to discuss the nomination. The meeting was postponed and federal assistance made more urgent by the St. Patrick's Day flood.

In 1938 McDonald made another push to commemorate Harpers Ferry and organized a new civic meeting. In a letter urging politicians and citizens to attend he remarked that, “The establishment of this site and its development will mean thousands



Fig. 7: Aerial view of 1936 flood. 29th Division Aviation, Maryland National Guard (HF-1724, Harpers Ferry NHP).



Fig. 8: Harpers Ferry, March 20, 1936, postcard depicting Lower Town after 1936 flood (HF-366, Harpers Ferry NHP).

of tourists annually and will mean a continuous golden wave of wealth to this whole general section.”³ Over 200 people attended the meeting held in the High School auditorium and Mayor Lewis Nichols presided over the event. McDonald remarked that he had a letter of support from Governor Harry Nice of Maryland and Governor Homer A. Holt of West Virginia also promised his cooperation. All of the eastern panhandle counties sent representatives and Congressman Randolph asked that the community unite behind this cause. A representative of the B&O Railroad emphasized that a park would pay big dividends to the community with the development of tourism. Many other politicians attended and the meeting helped to renew community interest in the project. Conrad Wirth, Assistant Director of the NPS and Ronald F. Lee, NPS historian, represented the National Park Service. The attendees created countywide committees to arouse interest in the movement and secure necessary funds for the project.⁴

West Virginia Congressman Jennings Randolph introduced a bill to establish Harpers Ferry as a National Historical Park with a \$40,000 appropriation (HR8788) but could not get support for this wartime funding. He submitted a bill again in 1943 (HR1184) this time without a specification of funds but apparently had still not coordinated his effort with the Department of the Interior. Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes recommended against enactment of the bill because it duplicated the 1935 Historic Sites Act but did not provide funds necessary to acquire the already designated site.⁵ McDonald continued his promotional effort and saw another opportunity to publicize Harpers Ferry in 1943. He wrote to the state superintendent of public schools and to Jennings Randolph for help in getting a new U.S. ship named for the town. Randolph replied, dutifully apologetic, in December reporting that a new tanker ship had

already been christened as the Harpers Ferry earlier that month, but that the Congressman did not know about the event in time to arrange what he knew McDonald would consider “proper publicity.”⁶ Randolph submitted the Harpers Ferry bill a third time (HR3524) in 1943. This version specified that either the site itself or money to acquire the site would be donated to the federal government. The Secretary of the Interior also assured the Congressional Committee on Public Lands and the Bureau of the Budget that the Department would not request funds to administer the site “during the present war.” With these provisions the bill was passed June 30, 1944 and signed into law by President Franklin D. Roosevelt.⁷

This federal legislation was a huge success for McDonald, but his work was really just beginning. The Monument still existed only on paper. His next task was to figure out how to acquire land. First he needed to know what land he was authorized to obtain and his experience getting this information proved a portent of his future relationship with the National Park Service in which the NPS establishment kept its distance and followed its own agenda distinct from the local one. An NPS committee (Asst. Reg. Dir. E.M. Lisle, Reg. Landscape Architect Ralph W. Emerson, and GNMP Supt. J. Walter Coleman) was assigned to reconnoiter and recommend boundaries. McDonald hosted and toured the committee in October 1944. In December and again in January, he wrote to the Regional Director and to Supt. Coleman asking for the committee’s report and map with their boundary recommendations. He was very exasperated not to have received a map from the committee within six weeks of their survey visit. He continued to ask for it, explaining the urgency of submitting appropriation requests to the impending session of the West Virginia legislature, and NPS officials continued to assure him he would

receive the map as soon as it was completed.⁸ The recommended boundary map was finally sent to the Interior Secretary July 31, 1945 and approved by him on August 21, but McDonald wasn't sent a copy until October 18. NPS Director Newton B. Drury wrote a cover letter with an apology that seems rather peremptory considering their promises and the blatant time lag. It suggests a degree of NPS annoyance with McDonald and his persistent peeved inquiries.⁹

The 1936 flood destroyed the bridge into Lower Town Harpers Ferry and by 1945 rebuilding plans gave McDonald another reason to petition various government officials. He was less than pleased when he learned that engineers wanted to relocate the bridge to cross the Shenandoah further upriver at Bolivar.¹⁰ He made locating the bridge at the original site into downtown Harpers Ferry part of his historic site lobbying effort, arguing that this direct access was crucial for the economic well being of the town and for access to the future historic site. In preparation for a meeting about the new bridge McDonald wrote Congressman Randolph with suggestions for using the opportunity to publicize the National Monument proposal.¹¹ In promoting historic designation for Harpers Ferry, McDonald often stated that it would be a central link or hub for a scenic parkway being planned for the region—an extension of Skyline Drive through Harpers Ferry to Antietam – and for this too he thought a direct bridge into town was crucial. He wrote to National Park Service and roads officials, state and federal representatives and the West Virginia governor and had enough influence that these officials conferred among themselves to prepare a response, but not enough influence to change relocation plans. Eventually McDonald made the concession of asking for a spur bridge built on remaining piers, but state road officials told him the cost of a spur bridge, \$100,000, could not be justified.¹²

In response to an inquiry from Cong. Randolph on McDonald's behalf, Assistant Director of the National Park Service A.E. Demaray recommended against a direct bridge into Harpers Ferry. NPS historians and planners deemed direct through-traffic as detrimental to the historic scene and supported West Virginia's plans to provide only indirect access to Harpers Ferry from Rte. 340 through Bolivar. Demaray summarized the NPS opinion that diverting traffic this way would better preserve the "basic historic and scenic qualities which attract tourists." McDonald must have felt betrayed when he learned the NPS position in this roundabout manner, and he rebutted Demaray's position in a letter back to Randolph but didn't get anywhere.¹³ Even after Jennings lost re-election McDonald asked him to put in a word with the governor in support of a direct-access bridge.¹⁴ He pursued the issue with Jennings' successor Congressman Melvin C. Snyder, citing the planned Skyline Drive parkway extension from Front Royal to Harpers Ferry and on to Washington via Antietam, Gettysburg and Frederick. U.S. Roads Commissioner E.L. Worthington answered Congressman Snyder's inquiry in the negative. Federal roads officials would not rebuild the bridge into Harpers Ferry and cited the NPS judgment against it as the basis of their decision.¹⁵ McDonald's inquiry to West Virginia Governor Meadows prompted the West Virginia roads commissioner to write to McDonald with the same negative explanation.¹⁶ McDonald did not give up until the new bridge was under construction, but when he finally conceded the issue, he did an about-face, embracing the NPS view in the interest of his ultimate political goal. "Today the new bridge across the Shenandoah is opened for traffic," he wrote to Congressman Staggers. "The rumble and jumble and roar of the trucks in our old town, will be a thing of memory. It is all a blessing to the place."¹⁷

The persistence McDonald demonstrated in the bridge effort was equaled in maintaining the movement to establish the Harpers Ferry Monument. His will to continue momentum after the 1944 authorization was supremely frustrated by the seeming bureaucratic languor of the National Park Service. Even after receiving the prospective boundary map, which authorized approximately 1,383 acres, there was uncertainty about how to proceed and government inertia apparently caused by the fact that the NPS had no authority to take direct action. McDonald was left to continue in much the same fashion as before 1944—lobbying representatives and carrying out his own public relations campaign to garner public support. He urged sympathetic citizens to contact their government representatives because he assumed he would need at least statutory if not monetary support from the legislatures in West Virginia and Maryland. He published an article promoting the monument in the *West Virginia History* magazine and gave presentations on Harpers Ferry history and the Monument effort to a variety of civic organizations including the Berkeley (WV), Washington and Frederick (MD) county historical societies, state and local chapters of women's and business groups. He solicited endorsements¹⁸ in support of the Monument from these groups, organized visits and tours including a conference of newspaper editors, and enlisted assistance from B&O executives. The B&O Railroad's advertising manager offered to correct "inaccuracies" McDonald pointed out in their "Historic Harpers Ferry" brochure and sent him four hundred copies for distribution to the visiting newspaper editors. McDonald also asked the B&O's president to have company lobbyists to the West Virginia legislature put in a good word for the Monument.¹⁹

In 1949 McDonald finally succeeded in getting the attention of freshman West Virginia Congressman Harley O. Staggers and this coup seems to have provided the breakthrough McDonald was looking for. Staggers informed NPS Director Conrad Wirth that he was interested "in reactivating" the Harpers Ferry National Monument Project, prompting Acting Director Demaray to renew contact with McDonald. Demaray wrote to offer assistance and to check on the "status of the land acquisition program." Additional help came from Staggers' home state. Demaray also received an inquiry about "rejuvenating the project" from the West Virginia Industrial and Publicity Commission.²⁰ McDonald planned another St. Patrick's Day promotional dinner meeting at Harpers Ferry for March 1950, this time with West Virginia Governor Okey Patteson in attendance. Gov. Patteson was persuaded of the project's value and registered an official inquiry on its status with NPS. In May 1950 Assistant Director Conrad Wirth notified McDonald that they were conducting a supplemental study for Governor Patteson to determine specific boundaries and monies needed to acquire lands.²¹ The Governor [re]appointed a Harpers Ferry National Monument Commission (recognizing McDonald's de facto leadership by making him chair) to determine property values and move the effort forward. McDonald took the opportunity to renew his effort in Maryland. He wrote to Governor William Preston Lane in July 1950 outlining the history of Monument work, emphasizing Maryland's crucial role. He estimated the value of proposed Monument property within Maryland at \$50,000.²²

For all McDonald's single-minded determination, the Harpers Ferry National Monument would not have been established if he had not had a counterpart agitator with expertise and connections in the state of Maryland. Of the estimated 1,383 acres desired



Fig. 9: Mary V. Mish, mid-1960s (Washington County Historical Society).

for the Monument, about half were in Maryland. Thus McDonald had targeted Maryland as well as West Virginia governors with letters and sought to arouse sympathy of Maryland residents with talks to the Frederick and Washington County historical societies. In 1946 he met his match in determination and political chutzpah in the person of Mary V. Mish, then president of the Washington County Historical Society.

Mary Vernon was born in New York in 1905. Her father served as Washington Bureau Chief of the Chicago *Daily News* for thirty-three years and Mary was raised as a member of Washington society, attending the National Cathedral School for Girls and the Connecticut College for Women. She left college after two years to marry Frank Mish, a Washington County native. They lived in West Virginia in an eighteenth-century farmhouse she called "Maidstone-on-the-Potomac," just opposite Williamsport, Md., but she and her husband were considered Washington County citizens based on their property holdings, work and his family connections there. His father and brother both served county judgeships. Mary soon became active in the Hagerstown Garden Club, Arts and Letters Club, and the Washington County Historical Society. She served as president of the historical society for seven years, resigning in 1949 to supervise restoration of the "Hager House," homestead of Hagerstown's founder. Working against "apathy and even protest" she was eventually successful in saving the house and transforming it into a museum for the society. She also took on the renovation of city founder Adam Stephen's home in Martinsburg, West Virginia, and helped save Fort Frederick from deterioration. A reputation as "an antiquary with a missionary's zeal" brought her a governor's appointment to statewide service as a founding trustee of the Maryland Historical Trust in 1961. Her determination to preserve history in the region earned her the first Maryland

Heritage Award from the Maryland Historical Society in 1962 as well as the grudging epithet “petticoated bulldozer” for “her relentless pursuit of an objective” from Hagerstown editorial writers.²³

In a 1963 annual report to the members of her historical society, Mary Mish recalled that Dr. McDonald first sought her assistance with the Harpers Ferry project on July 4, 1946 at the rededication of the Washington Monument near Boonsboro. He wanted the Washington County Historical Society to sponsor land acquisition for the monument in Maryland. He probably did not realize what an enthusiastic co-conspirator he had found. Mish’s family had “made annual three-week pilgrimages” from Washington to Harpers Ferry throughout her childhood. Her father started taking short holidays there during the Spanish American War when he could not be far from his newspaper work in Washington. She claimed that he often predicted the site would become a “national monument” with “‘villas’ on Loudoun Heights, up the Shenandoah, and the C&O Canal ... turned into a river boulevard.”²⁴ This picturesque vision Mr. Mish developed in the 1890s would become a theme of subsequent visions vying and entangling with the historic vision through the twentieth century and into the twenty-first. Mary Mish and Henry McDonald did yeoman work in carrying out a nitty-gritty campaign of political maneuvering to fulfill their own vision of preservation for posterity then, once achieved, turned it over to others with no strings attached.

The Washington County Historical Society was already lobbying for a project with the Maryland legislature, but Mary had her 200-member society ratify a resolution of support for the Harpers Ferry Monument in late 1946, and she began looking for opportunities to promote the project. In 1948 she wrote McDonald that the outlook for

Harpers Ferry might be improving with the preservation of sites along the C&O Canal. On the West Virginia side, McDonald began lobbying a new congressman, Harley O. Staggers, who proved sympathetic to the cause.²⁵ Then in the spring of 1950 West Virginia Governor Okey Patteson was won over and the project seemed closer to reality. McDonald sought precedents and advice on forming a national park straddling several states from the Director of the Tennessee Division of Parks. Director S.C. Taylor replied that in the case of the Great Smoky Mountain National Park the land had been acquired over a period of ten years by Tennessee and North Carolina with donation monies. For the Cumberland Gap National Historical Park, three bordering states appropriated funds, purchased the land and then deeded it to the federal government.²⁶ But just as Mish and McDonald's efforts seemed finally to be taking momentum, war in Korea intervened. Both feared that attention and resources even on a state level would be diverted indefinitely. Mish was discouraged by a further setback in November when her friend Gov. Preston Lane lost his bid for reelection. In dismay she wrote McDonald that she would have to "start over" with her acquisition efforts in Maryland.²⁷

Nevertheless the McDonald-Mish team kept pushing. Working via a connection through one of the WCHS members, Mish attempted to get Maryland State Senator Kenneth McLaughlan to put \$31,000 for Harpers Ferry acquisitions into the state budget, but she warned that there is "little hope for us with the war situation being what it is." After a reconnaissance visit by NPS Assistant Regional Director Lisle from Richmond, McDonald had to report that they must add \$50,000 to the original estimate for property acquisition, the total in both states to \$350,000.²⁸

In contrast to Mish and McDonald's discouragement, by this time NPS officials seemed undaunted and focused on Harpers Ferry. Assistant Director Conrad Wirth met with West Virginia Congressman Staggers and sent McDonald suggested legislation for West Virginia drafted in the NPS legal division, but cautioned "in any references to it, it should be referred to as a suggestion from your Committee—and not from the National Park Service." He reminded McDonald that similar legislation would be required from Maryland and volunteered to brief Maryland Congressman J. Glenn Beall. Immediately after their meeting with NPS officials, Congressman Staggers notified McDonald that he and Beall both went on to meet Maryland Governor-elect McKeldin to encourage an appropriation from Annapolis.²⁹

To assess their chances in Maryland, McDonald even consulted a Baltimore public relations firm. One of the firm's principles, Philip R. Winebrenner, informed McDonald in January 1951 that, "this is a poor time to develop Maryland support for the project." After "appraising sentiment here" Winebrenner found only a few people aware of the project and of those, most opposed it. "They associate it with the proposed C&O Canal Parkway from Great Falls to Cumberland," Winebrenner continued and that "has run into some rather strong opposition." There was also competition for state dollars from the largest ever requested appropriation for park development at Sandy Point and Patapsco. Winebrenner didn't believe "any other park appropriation has a chance while these two are pending," and furthermore, he reported that Joseph F. Kaylor, the state director of Forests and Parks opposed the Harpers Ferry project.³⁰

Finding this news hard to comprehend and never passing up an opportunity to press his cause, McDonald responded to the consultant's summary. Of course, he said, the Harpers Ferry and C&O Parkway projects would be literally "interconnected" by

a short sky-line drive from Maryland Heights to Antietam via the War Correspondents Arch" and when Virginia's Skyline Drive was extended to Harpers Ferry "in the [Harpers Ferry] Monument we shall then have a hub from which and definitely related to which there will radiate the finest of highways to lure the tourist to the very heart of western Maryland and the eastern United States....The very earnest hope of West Virginians is that our sister state will consider our duty to preserve the evidences of a noble past, but to include the view of a long and economically advantageous tomorrow."³¹

Mish for her part had regained her optimism and took the report in stride while adapting her strategy to the intelligence it provided. She urged McDonald not to be discouraged saying that she knew Winebrenner well. "His wife is my oldest sister-in-law's best friend of many years standing," and in this pronouncement indicated that she was in control of the situation. Within two weeks she was able to tell McDonald that an appropriations bill presented by Senator McLaughlin was in the Maryland legislature's Finance Committee and was supported by the Clerk of the House and the Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee "both of whom are my staunch friends and members of our Historical Society Board."³² In reply, McDonald expressed his relief and thanks, "as always you give one [re]assurance and let light in on the dark spots. I think you have done yeoman service in Maryland. And I want you to know that all you have done and are doing is deeply appreciated." Mish returned the praise—"your keeping me so well informed has acted very much to the advantage of our undertaking in Maryland. I have been able to proceed with the authority of knowing what I was talking about and of having the facts before me. This has given me confidence in myself—and, I believe, has

reacted by giving others confidence in me. I do thank you very much for your faithfulness in this respect.”³³

Armed with information provided by McDonald, Mish went to work on several fronts. She advised McDonald to refrain from linking Harpers Ferry with the proposed C&O parkway which was “receiving opposition” in Maryland from the Chamber of Commerce and in newspaper editorials. Through her political contacts, she also began to put pressure on Joseph Kaylor who held relevant power as the state Director of Forests and Parks. She conducted a more public campaign to dissociate Harpers Ferry from John Brown. She complained to newspaper editors, to a state legislative committee and anyone else who would listen that newspaper reports calling Harpers Ferry the “John Brown park, in so many words” rather than the Harpers Ferry National Monument were “inaccurate and biased.”³⁴ Kaylor and John Brown proved to be persistent obstacles to the establishment of the park but Mish was happy to report promising news after she attended a meeting of political and civic leaders at the Hotel Alexander in Hagerstown. “When I appeared at the luncheon today the first thing that I heard from one of the delegates was that, through bargaining power, Mr. Kaylor had been adequately taken care of. Next, I was promptly informed that the Chamber of Commerce was not fighting us but was at war with the Canal parkway. So much to the good temporarily.” Most importantly, she continued, “the ‘strong men’ of the meeting today went on public record for us. I refer to the Senator [McLaughlin], Mr. Bloom, Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, and to Mr. Miller Clerk of the House. In so many words, our best supporters are the ones with the most influence. In addition, our friend Mr. Swain is chairman of the Republican State Central Committee! What more do we want?”³⁵

In West Virginia meanwhile, McDonald seemed more removed from any maneuvering in distant Charleston and enjoyed the considerable weight of Governor Patteson's support. The composition of the Harpers Ferry National Monument Commission appointed by the governor and headed by McDonald indicates the project also had wider political support. Members included U.S. Congressman Harley Staggers, West Virginia State Senator Ralph Bean, State Delegate and Finance Committee Chair William P.C. Perry from Charlestown, and Mr. C.F. McClintic who was director of the West Virginia State Conservation Commission. (At McDonald's request, the governor added Harpers Ferry Mayor Gilbert E. Perry to the Commission in October 1950.)³⁶ With the approach of the 1951 legislative session, McDonald drafted a letter from the Harpers Ferry National Monument Commission to all the West Virginia state legislators making his case for their support of the Monument and claiming endorsements from the "West Virginia Federation of Women's Clubs, Lions, Kiwanis, Chambers of Commerce, civic and fraternal organizations."³⁷ In February he wrote to Mish that their bill had been introduced in the West Virginia legislature and that its "prospects are good." Delegate Perry telegraphed McDonald when the state house passed the bill in a unanimous vote. J. Howard Myers, Clerk of the West Virginia Senate confirmed the bill's final passage in March 1951, informing McDonald that, "I feel it my duty to call your attention to the fact that Governor Patteson personally was interested in this legislation, and played a large part in its enactment."³⁸

Full establishment of the park depended upon support from both states and McDonald remained in suspense about developments in Annapolis. He wrote Sen. McLaughlin asking for confirmation of "rumors here suggest[ing] that the Maryland

legislature passed legislation in harmony with that passed in Charleston.”³⁹ He heard from Mish at the end of March. “The HFNM has passed both [Maryland] Houses and has *probably* been signed by the Governor.”⁴⁰ After so many years of effort, Mish’s letter confirming their victory in Maryland represented a personal triumph. “Thank you for this last letter,” he replied. “I shall file it with like other valuable letters, for my children to see. I know they will be happy to have it to read, when in the long to-morrow, they may need something of the kind to look over, and to know that I really did live.”⁴¹

McDonald died in November 1951. Some years later Mish recalled how crucial Maryland’s appropriation was to the establishment of the park and what a close call “joint” passage of the Maryland and West Virginia legislation had been.

This is a bold statement to make, but, to paraphrase Dr. McDonald’s thoughts, there would have been no Monument, as is, without the co-operation of Maryland. The money simply would not have been forthcoming from Charleston without the reassurance from Maryland that it would co-operate.... This achievement was a nip-and-tuck procedure.... It could never happen again in a thousand years. I do not mean [there] would have been no Monument had I not been where I was at the right time (God forbid!), but I do mean that it would have taken years longer. I was given sound assurance of that when the Maryland delegates told me, after a favorable vote, that Maryland would not have gone along *when it did* had not word reached the Legislature at a critical moment that West Virginia funds were being voted on the assurance that Maryland was co-operating! There’s a tangle for you! I still quake when I think how close that whole deal came to being a complete fiasco.⁴²

Even before McDonald got the good news from Annapolis he fired off a letter to Wirth asking if the NPS “can not come right into the picture after July 1 and proceed with the problems, which will arise here. They may not be difficult—and again—some one may raise some trouble and cause delay.”⁴³ He was apparently referring to problems that might develop if property owners objected to selling at appraised values. Wirth agreed that the NPS would be able to assist but was unclear on specifics. McDonald and a

delegation from Harpers Ferry – Mayor and Mrs. Perry, and resident and (retired government official) Bradley Nash – met with NPS officials in Washington in June and reported to Mish that he believed they saw “eye to eye.”⁴⁴ But there was still considerable work for the West Virginians to complete before the NPS was officially represented on site and the Monument was established. Governor Patteson gave Kermit McKeever, Chief of the Division of State Parks, power of attorney to begin acquisition of property on behalf of the state.⁴⁵

After McDonald’s death, Mayor Gilbert Perry took over the role of promoting and seeing the Monument effort through to conclusion. Mish later wrote that “Dr. McDonald and Gilbert Perry did not see eye to eye (it was mutual; they were so different) nevertheless, I must add here that Mayor Perry has also been a dedicated supporter of the Monument, and that he tried in every respect to continue the *rapport* that he knew existed between Dr. McDonald and me. So far as I am concerned, he succeeded.”⁴⁶

Founding acquisition for West Virginia was completed in 1952 and presented to the United States at a ceremony in Charleston by Governor Patteson on January 16, 1953. The National Park Service determined the Monument’s official establishment date as May 13, 1953 when the U.S. officially accepted all property titles as clear.⁴⁷

Maryland acquisition took considerably longer with Mish supervising, maneuvering, complaining to 1965 when the Department of the Interior officially “cleared” all deeds on “this unimproved acreage” on Maryland Heights. The first Maryland funds of \$40,000 came from 1952 budget with the Department of Forests and Parks designated to conduct acquisition with Assistant Director Karl E. Pfeiffer in charge. An additional \$25,000 was appropriated in 1956. The WCHS worked in cooperation

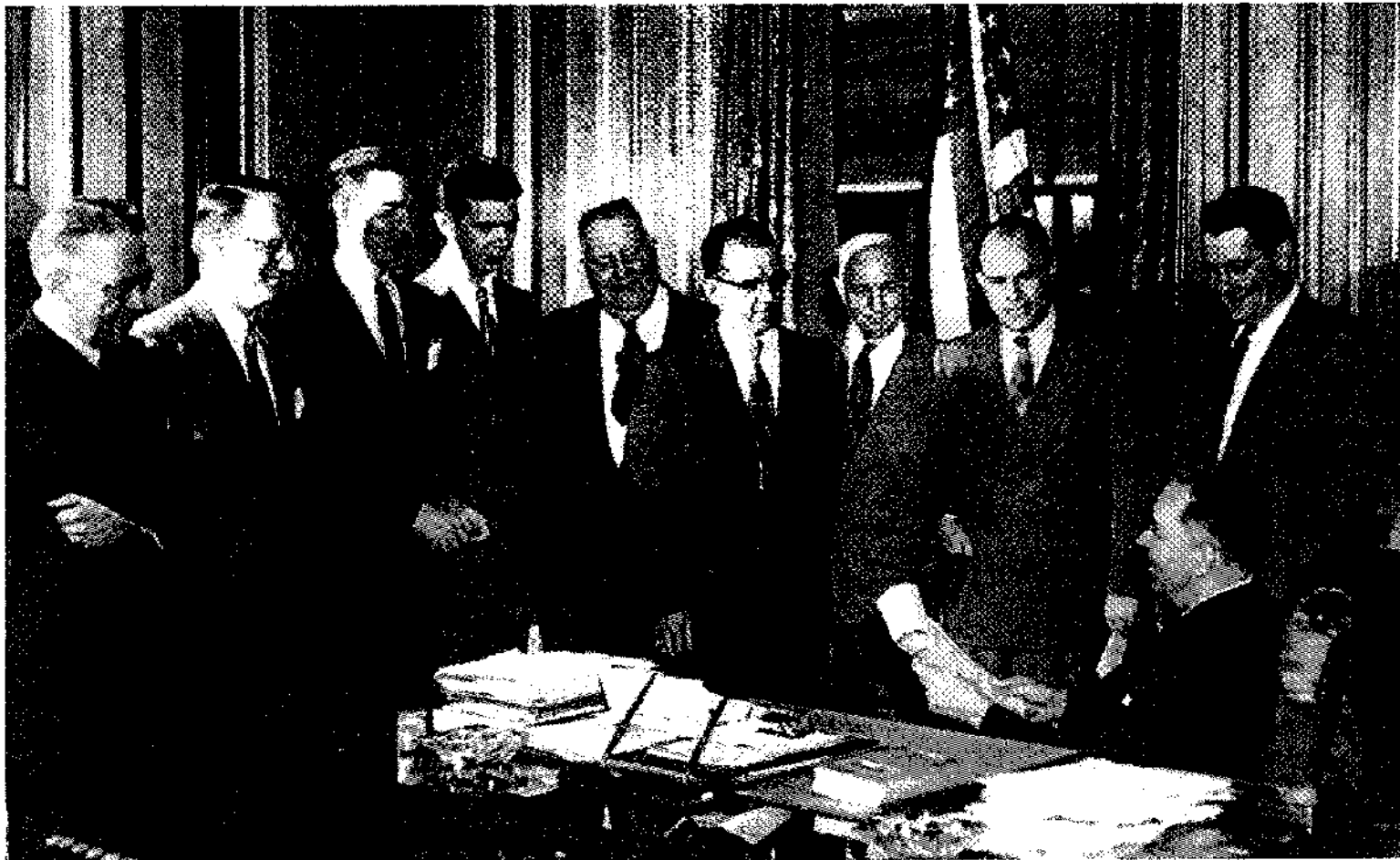


Fig. 10: Transfer of Deed to Harpers Ferry National Monument from State of Maryland to Federal Government, December 29, 1952. From left to right: Senator Kenneth McLaughlin, Attorney General Fox, Attorney Morgan Martin, John Newcomer, Mayor Gil Perry, Director of State Parks Carl Johnson, Buck Lisle, Elbert Cox, Incoming Mayor Marland, Governor Okey Patteson (HF-307, Harpers Ferry NHP).

with the parks department to acquire land and received some pay \$1,000 for title searches. The complexity of the titles and the logistics of identifying and obtaining consent of as many as thirty-five heirs per property caused the long time delay in adding the Maryland property to the Monument. In her report for 1959 Mish also noted for the record that the “disinterest of two of our local attorneys, as appointed by the attorney general...gravely hampered” the acquisition work.⁴⁸ In correspondence, Mish chafed over what she viewed as incompetence and inefficiency of Pfeiffer’s office and of attorneys assigned to title searches. In 1954 she was grateful to have recruited Charlotte Fairbairn, local resident with expertise in local history and arcana of Washington County courthouse records, to the project. She enjoyed using Fairbairn’s ingenuity to show up Pfeiffer and wrote her friend in 1955 “maybe we can jointly pull that plum out of the present pudding which is the HFNM.”⁴⁹

The first Maryland purchase—the Baker property of 120.5 acres--was made in July 1954. At the 1959 John Brown Centennial celebration a “token presentation” of over 600 acres was made from Maryland to the NPS. Kaylor gave a speech and made the official presentation.⁵⁰ Mish must have chafed at Kaylor’s prominence at this event for she believed he had never supported the Monument and in the beginning had actively obstructed it. Much of her work in the early 1950s consisted of behind-the-scenes political maneuvering to neutralize his opposition.⁵¹ She also continued her campaign for public support, cultivating newspaper editors for favorable publicity, submitting her own articles and attempting to dispel the public perception that Harpers Ferry NM was a John Brown memorial. She took great satisfaction that, in contrast to West Virginia, Maryland

was able to acquire all its property without having to resort to condemnation proceedings.⁵²

¹ Untitled history of Storer College, File "Other Sites Considered," NPS HD Coll., HD/NPSDC.

² Flyer "A Public Meeting" Box 4, Folder 2, McDonald Coll., CO/HAFE.

³ Henry T. McDonald, Chairman, Historic Site Committee to My Dear Sir, February 11, 1938, Box 1, McDonald Coll., CO/HAFE.

⁴ McDonald, "Plans Go Forward to Develop the Harpers Ferry Historical Park Site," *Spirit of Jefferson*, June 22, 1938: 1, CO/HAFE, Harpers Ferry National Monument Establishment, vol. 2, 1934-1940; *Martinsburg News*, February 25, 1938, 4; *Farmers Advocate*, February 18, 1938, 1.

⁵ "Asks for \$40,000," *Spirit of Jefferson* (March 13, 1940) newspaper clipping, scrapbook, Jennings Randolph Collection, SIU; Harold L. Ickes, Secretary of the Interior to Mr. Peterson, Chairman, Committee on the Public Lands, April 26, 1943. 600, Folder "Lands, Harpers Ferry," Box 54, RG 79, NARA-MA (Ph).

⁶ McDonald to Dr. W.W. Trent, July 7, 1943, McDonald Coll., CO/HAFE.

⁷ Acting Secretary of the Interior Abe Fortas to Chairman, Committee on the Public Lands Mr. Peterson, February 25, 1944; Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes to Director, Bureau of the Budget Mr. Smith, June 27, 1944, 600, Folder "Lands, Harpers Ferry," Box 54, RG 79, NARA-MA (Ph).

⁸ Chief of Lands Conrad L. Wirth, Memorandum for the Regional Director, Region One, October 10, 1944, Folder "HFNHP 1938-1954," NPS HD Coll., HD/NPSDC and McDonald letters December 1944 and January 1945, Folder 1, Box 1, McDonald Coll., CO/HAFE.

⁹ Director Newton B. Drury to McDonald, October 19, 1945, Folder 1, Box 1, McDonald Coll., CO/HAFE.

¹⁰ McDonald to Jennings Randolph, October 29, 1945 and other late 1945 letters, Folder 1, Box 1, McDonald Coll., CO/HAFE.

¹¹ McDonald to Jennings Randolph, January 28, 1946, Folder 2, Box 1, McDonald Coll., CO/HAFE.

¹² Chief Engineer, W. Va. Road Commission L. O'Neal to McDonald, February 20, 1946, Folder 2, Box 1, McDonald Coll., CO/HAFE.

¹³ A.E. Demaray to Jennings Randolph, July 25, 1946 and McDonald to Jennings Randolph, July 30, 1946, Folder 2, Box 1, McDonald Coll., CO/HAFE.

¹⁴ McDonald to Jennings Randolph, January 25, 1947, Folder 3, Box 1, McDonald Coll., CO/HAFE.

¹⁵ McDonald to Melvin C. Snyder, February 6, 1947 and E. L. Worthington to Melvin C. Snyder, March 17, 1947, Folder 3, Box 1, McDonald Coll., CO/HAFE.

¹⁶ W. Va. Roads Commissioner to McDonald, November 12, 1947, Folder 3, Box 1 and [late 49], Folder 4, Box 1, McDonald Coll., CO/HAFE.

¹⁷ McDonald to Staggers, September 29, 1949, Folder 4, Box 1, McDonald Coll., CO/HAFE.

¹⁸ Berkeley County Historical Society letter of endorsement to W.Va. Governor Meadows, January 28, 1947, Folder 3, Box 1, McDonald Coll., CO/HAFE.

¹⁹ B&O Advertising Manager R.C. MacLellan to McDonald, April 7, 1950, Folder 6, Box 1 and McDonald to President, B&O Railroad Roy B. White, January 1, 1950, Folder 5, Box 1, McDonald Coll., CO/HAFE.

²⁰ Acting Director A.E. Demaray to Harley O. Staggars, September 6, 1949 and Demaray to McDonald, September 2, 1949, Folder "HFNHP 1938-1954," NPS HD Coll., NPSDC.

²¹ Assistant Director Conrad Wirth to McDonald, May 4, 1950, Folder 6, Box 1, McDonald Coll., CO/HAFE.

²² McDonald to Gov. William Preston Lane, July 10, 1950, Folder 1, Box 2, McDonald Coll., CO/HAFE.

²³ Obituary, June 3, 1968; "Main Street," *The [Hagerstown] Daily Mail* (July 29, 1963); "Maryland Heritage Award Established," *Maryland History Notes* [Maryland Historical Society] Vol. 20, No. 3 (Nov. 1962); "Tawes Appoints Historical Trust," *The Baltimore Sun* (May 28, 1961), WCHS.

²⁴ Mish to Alfred Mongin, June 28, 1960; Mish, "Annual Report, HFNM," January 1963; Mish to J. Garvin Hager, March 14, 1950; Mish Coll., WCHS.

²⁵ Mish to McDonald, May 24, 1948 and Staggars to McDonald, September 27, 1949, Folder 4, Box 1, McDonald Coll., CO/HAFE.

²⁶ S.C. Taylor to McDonald, April 12, 1950, Folder 6, Box 1, McDonald Coll., CO/HAFE.

²⁷ Mish and McDonald letters, July-August 1950, Folder 1, Box 2 and Mish to McDonald, November 10, 1950, Folder 2, Box 2, McDonald Coll., CO/HAFE.

²⁸ Mish to McDonald, December 4, 1950 and McDonald to Conrad Wirth, December 4, 1950, Folder 3, Box 2, McDonald Coll., CO/HAFE.

²⁹ Conrad Wirth to McDonald, December 5, 1950 and Staggars to McDonald, December 7, 1950, Folder 3, Box 2, McDonald Coll., CO/HAFE.

³⁰ Philip R. Winebrenner to McDonald, January 26, 1951, Folder 4, Box 2, McDonald Coll., CO/HAFE.

³¹ McDonald to Winebrenner, January 27, 1951, Folder 4, Box 2, McDonald Coll., CO/HAFE.

³² Mish to McDonald, January 31, 1951 and Mish to McDonald February 12, 1951, Folder 4, Box 2, McDonald Coll., CO/HAFE.

³³ McDonald to Mish, February 13, 1951 and Mish to McDonald, February 15, 1951, Folder 4, Box 2, McDonald Coll., CO/HAFE.

³⁴ Mish to McDonald, February 19, 1951, Folder 4, Box 2 and Mish to McDonald, March 9, 1951, Folder 5, Box 2, McDonald Coll., CO/HAFE.

³⁵ Mish to McDonald, February 19, 1951 and McDonald to Conrad Wirth, February 21, 1951, Folder 4, Box 2, McDonald Coll., CO/HAFE.

³⁶ McDonald to Governor Lane, August 12, 1950 and Patteson to McDonald, October 13, 1950, Folder 2, Box 2, McDonald Coll., CO/HAFE.

³⁷ McDonald to "Honorable Sir," December 19, 1950, Folder 3, Box 2, McDonald Coll., CO/HAFE.

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- ³⁸ McDonald to Mish, February 21, 1951, Folder 4, Box 2 and J. Howard Myers to McDonald, March 15, 1951, Folder 5, Box 2, McDonald Coll., CO/HAFE.
- ³⁹ McDonald to Sen. McLaughlin, March 21, 1951, Folder 5, Box 2, McDonald Coll., CO/HAFE.
- ⁴⁰ Mish to McDonald, March 27 and March 30, 1951, Folder 5, Box 2, McDonald Coll., CO/HAFE.
- ⁴¹ McDonald to Mish, March 29, 1951, Folder 5, Box 2, McDonald Coll., CO/HAFE.
- ⁴² Mish to Alfred Mongin, June 28, 1960, Mish Coll., WCHS.
- ⁴³ McDonald to Conrad Wirth, March 17, 1951, Folder 5, Box 2, McDonald Coll., CO/HAFE.
- ⁴⁴ Conrad Wirth to McDonald, March 23, 1951 and McDonald to Mish, June 23, 1951, Folder 5, Box 2, McDonald Coll., CO/HAFE.
- ⁴⁵ Governor Okey Patteson to McDonald, July 11, 1951, Folder 5, Box 2, McDonald Coll., CO/HAFE.
- ⁴⁶ Mish to Alfred Mongin, June 28, 1960; see also Mish to Gilbert E. Perry, May 15, 1955, Mish Coll., WCHS.
- ⁴⁷ "Patteson Presents Deed For National Park," *The Charleston Daily Mail* (January 17, 1953), newspaper clipping; Director, State of West Virginia Conservation Commission Carl J. Johnson to Regional Director Elbert Cox, January 19, 1953; Assistant Director, Specialized Services, Jackson E. Price to Regional Director, Northeast Region, July 14, 1965, Memo "Establishment date, Harpers Ferry," Regional Director, Northeast Region Ronald F. Lee to Superintendent, Harpers Ferry, July 21, 1965, Memo "Establishment date," "Harpers Ferry Correspondence 1952," Box 4, Ent. 405, RG 79, NARA-MA (Ph.).
- ⁴⁸ Mary V. Mish, "Annual Report," to the Washington County Historical Society, Mish Coll., WCHS.
- ⁴⁹ Mish to Charlotte [Mrs. Edward Wood] Fairburn, February 3, 1955, Mish Coll., WCHS.
- ⁵⁰ Text of Kaylor's speech, "HFNM" vertical file, WCHS.
- ⁵¹ "Forestry Official Opposes Monument," newspaper clipping "HFNM" vertical file, WCHS.
- ⁵² Mary V. Mish, "Annual Report" to the Washington County Historical Society, 1963 and 1965, Mish Coll. WCHS.

Chapter 3:

Establishing a National Monument: The Federal Role

The roots of federal interest in commemoration of Harpers Ferry history may be traced to the late nineteenth century when the War Department placed five iron tablets outlining Civil War troop movements around the town. The War Department established Antietam National Battlefield in 1890, and the tablets' interpretive text placed Harpers Ferry in the context of the Antietam campaign. They described "The Capture of Harpers Ferry September 15, 1862" as a prelude to the Battle of Antietam on September 17. The tablets were installed in a prominent spot beside the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad's brick station. The early cooperation between the railroad company and the government presaged a long-running relationship of overlapping interest in promotion and preservation of the town. In spring 1935 Antietam NB Superintendent John K. Beckenbaugh surveyed government property beyond battlefield boundaries and reported on the condition of the five narrative tablets at Harpers Ferry. While they had stood by the station platform, he wrote, they "were kept painted and in good repair by the Railroad Co.," but when the station was moved to its present location in 1931 the B&O did not move the markers and apparently battlefield caretakers, spared the necessity of regular maintenance, had forgotten about them. Beckenbaugh found them "so faded that they can scarcely be read . . . and no tourist ever sees them so that they are at present answering no good purpose." He acquired permission from the B&O Railroad vice president to move them to a new site on railroad property ("there being not other land available"), but this time, following the shift in transportation patterns, they would be

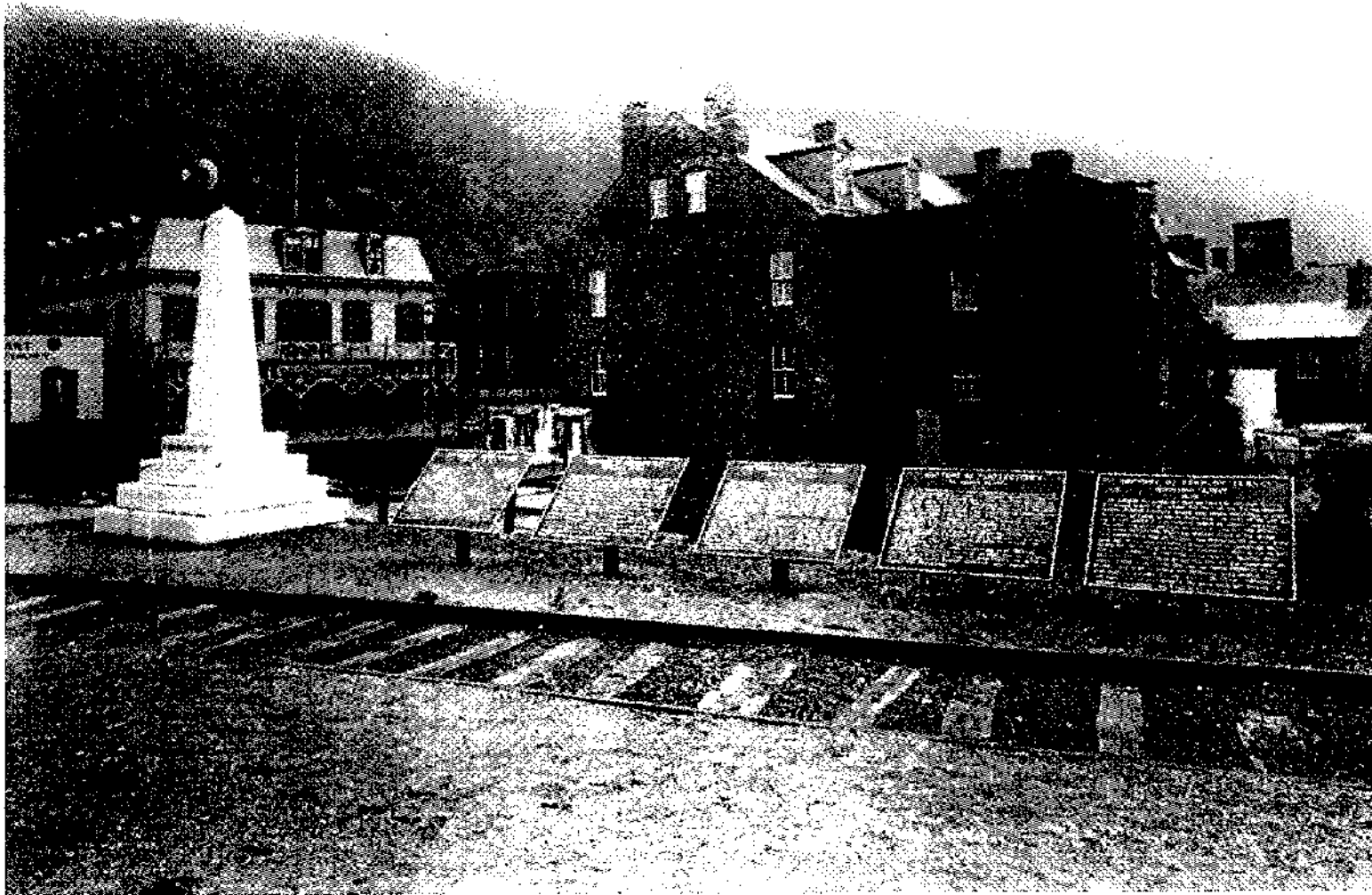


Fig. 11: John Brown Monument and War Tablets on site of the fire engine house, no date/20th c. (HF-1041, Harpers Ferry NHP).

“right along the main highway – U.S. 340 ... a highly desirable location.” His plan was approved by the NPS Branch of Lands and Use.¹ Placing the signs on railroad property put them directly in the path of their expected audience of tourists, summer, and weekend visitors who came to this mini-resort area for its combination of historic ambiance, recreation and dramatic natural setting. “Mountain” resorts accessed and promoted by the railroad were typical of the turn-of-the-century period. National examples included the western national parks. Braddock Heights on the trolley line between Frederick and Hagerstown and Pen Mar on the Western Maryland Railroad are local examples. The impulse to support historic preservation as a way of promoting civic values came out of the same constellation as tourism for therapeutic and commemorative educational uplift.²

In 1902, the McMillan Report, an influential planning document for Washington, D.C., emphasized the importance of park space both for the city center and for the city in its regional context. Published as *The Improvement of the Park System of the District of Columbia*, the report extolled the potential of the Potomac River and the C&O Canal. “Already the canal is used ... by pleasure seekers in canoes, and by excursion parties in various craft. More and more will the canal thus be used as an attractive route between the populous city and the natural charms of the picturesque region between Cabin John Bridge and Great Falls.” Although still operated as a commercial thoroughway, canal traffic was much reduced from its peak in the 1870s and its slow pace and “natural” setting allowed the report’s authors a romantic vision of an “ancient waterway” with a “primitive character and quaint beauty.” Washington in the eighteenth century saw the Potomac River as an avenue to enrich the city with economic resources from the hinterlands. By the early twentieth century urban and regional planners saw another kind

of resource more ephemeral but nonetheless essential. Flood damage in 1924 ended any pretense that the canal was any longer a viable commercial enterprise and gave engineers and planners an opening to propose converting the property into a roadway superior “from the standpoints of beauty, historical interest, grade and distance.” Though some continued to view the proposed road as a commercial artery funneling goods from the nation’s interior east, officers of the National Capital Park and Planning Commission supported the road as an unobtrusive “parkway” from the city west into natural river and mountain scenery. By the early 1930s the route was envisioned as part of a larger regional system of parkways providing an increasingly urban citizenry with access to restorative experiences of natural and historic settings.³ Harpers Ferry had everything needed for a central role in this design--dramatic scenery at the convergence of the Shenandoah and Potomac rivers, historic associations ranging from George Washington to Stonewall Jackson and John Brown, a strategic location at the hypothetical intersection of the canal and an Appalachian parkway, and historical and geographic links to other proposed attractions including Antietam and Gettysburg battlefields.

The public ethic and political interest in nationalism as seen in American tourism and concern for significant natural areas brought about by public works projects resulted in the development of legislative protections for America’s resources and of agencies to administer them. The Antiquities Act of 1906 gave the President “the power to establish national monuments on Federal lands for the purpose of protecting historic landmarks, historic and prehistoric structures, and other objects of historic or scientific interest.”⁴ The Antiquities Act provided the only federal protection for historic sites, and preservation activists within the administration and on Capitol Hill worked to strengthen

and expand that precedent. In 1916, the National Park Service was established. As a land management agency for the protection of designated natural resources, the NPS devoted itself to the preservation of the American landscape and to the study of native peoples. The continued efforts of preservation activists brought about the Historic Sites Act of 1935, which authorized the Secretary of the Interior to survey historic properties of national significance.⁵

Federal agencies, officials and other influential educated citizens were aware of Harpers Ferry as a site with significant cultural resonance since at least the 1890s. The local resort economy faltered in the 1920s with the decline of the amusement park, the impact of the 1924 flood and the rise of automobile travel. But by the 1930s a number of factors combined to bring more specific federal attention and action back to Harpers Ferry. As we have seen, at least one prominent local citizen was seeking renewed recognition and revitalization for the town based on its historic and natural setting. Dr. McDonald's efforts fit within a broader context of interest among scholars in proving American exceptionalism and of an accelerating national preservation movement. Franklin D. Roosevelt came from a social background supportive of cultural initiatives. He was also very interested in roads and regional planning. In 1924 he had served as president of New York's Taconic State Park Commission, which oversaw the design of the Taconic State Parkway from the city into the Hudson River valley. As president he wrote Secretary Ickes to endorse a parkway following a "mountain route" from Shenandoah National Park across Maryland and Pennsylvania along the "eastern slope of the Blue Ridge" to the Berkshires in Massachusetts.⁶ Members of the Roosevelt administration generally shared an interest and philosophical belief in culture and nature

as agents of social uplift. Working within an administration dedicated to combating the Depression with proactive government initiatives, they saw opportunities to integrate progressive cultural initiatives into New Deal recovery programs. After the Historic Sites Act, the NPS was selected to provide a bureaucratic foundation for cultural programs. Transfer of the War Department properties and further acquisition brought more land under its jurisdiction, but the Act also placed on the NPS the responsibility for a national survey of historical and archeological sites. The Works Progress Administration conducted the historical surveys and reconnaissance and sought a complete catalogue of sites relevant to American history.⁷ Prompted by McDonald's lobbying and Roosevelt-era ideals, a West Virginia politician took up the cause of promoting Harpers Ferry. Jennings Randolph was born in 1891. He was elected as a New Deal Democrat in 1932 to represent the 2nd District of West Virginia, then extending from Elkins and Morgantown to the eastern panhandle. He sponsored a bill (H.R. 5849) in 1935 to establish Harpers Ferry National Military Park in "the area where the most important events of [John Brown's] raid took place." Because the bill did not specifically delineate the area, another NPS report was ordered to "consider this question."⁸

While locals and federal agencies considered Harpers Ferry for a national historical park, the National Park Service was developing a philosophy for what historical parks should be and an administrative structure to see to it. This new arc for park development would eventually enable the NPS to accept Harpers Ferry into its system. During the 1920s, the NPS defined education as a way to link the philosophy of the NPS with public needs. The National Parks Educational Committee (the predecessor to the National Parks Association) in 1918 planned at the end of the World War to assume

functions of an “educational character” and was particularly enamored of the idea of parks as classrooms and museums of nature.⁹ By 1920 Stephen T. Mather called for each park to establish a natural history museum to exhibit regional flora, fauna and minerals. Impressed by naturalist programs in regional parks in the west, Mather installed staff at Yosemite to that purpose in 1921 and the positive response encouraged the NPS to broaden its programs to guided hikes, campfire talks, and lectures illustrated with motion pictures. The “ranger persona” contributed equally to the experience of parks for the public. As an authoritative presence in parks, they were characterized as hardy, knowledgeable, masculine guides to the American wilderness.

Few historical parks existed in the NPS before the 1930s and Director Horace Albright was largely responsible for their inclusion. Administrative reorganizations in the 1930s reflected the growing significance of historical parks to Service operations and to the professional position of historians. Verne E. Chatelain was appointed in 1931 as the first chief historian in the Branch of Historic Sites. In 1933, he outlined standards for designating sites on the Historical Sites survey already underway,

First of all, the sites themselves must be listed with a fair degree of completeness. Second, they must be classified according to definite standards which themselves ought in turn to be thoroughly tested. Third, the entire historical program, as it should ideally exist some day, must be projected, but the contribution of the separate areas as well as relationship of each area to the system as a whole must be studied and determined for the sake of the visitor who may never see all the areas.

The same year, the War Department transferred its National Battlefields and the historic forts and structures on them to the NPS. Historical sites with a military theme threatened to outnumber all others and Chatelain cautioned against this, continuing,

American history, whether one starts with prehistoric Indian life in the mound, pueblo and cliff-dwelling, or with the explorations, conquests and settlements of

the white man, is a story of a geographic area of unparalleled natural resources and suitable temperate climate, which passes progressively from one stage of human activity to another, each of which offers a tremendously interesting panorama for the observer or student and great ethical considerations for the philosopher. Here we have in rapid succession a series of patterns, fitted together of many pieces, the whole of which can be understood only as we study the process of fitting together the pieces. The word "process" is what I especially desire to emphasize.¹⁰

In early 1934 an informal conference determined the general policies of the historical program and noted the increasing demands upon the division. Preparation for, and anticipation of, the Historic Sites Act prompted study of historic resources even before it was passed. (Even at this point Harpers Ferry was one of the many sites investigated for its suitability. In 1934 NPS historian Elbert Cox was assigned to write a report on the historic significance of the town of Harpers Ferry.¹¹) Over the next several years the Branch of Historic Sites argued for professional, thorough research work to secure the authenticity of the interpretive and developmental features of the historical program.¹² "We need to make this service much more dignified. It must satisfy not only the politician, but the people who really know when a bona fide historical program has been achieved."¹³ The Branch advised a course of action for parks that would come into being at Harpers Ferry, involving a concerted examination of pertinent documents to preclude poor restoration or archeological projects, as well as elements including a research historian, base maps, and files of information.¹⁴

Historical parks posed a different set of challenges to those at natural parks and as a result affected a new view on park development. While the policy of the NPS had been to conserve and to hold natural parklands, historical areas required a more proactive approach. Increased public use, tourist travel, and maintenance concerns in relation to interpretation forced the Service into the role of developer of long dormant areas.¹⁵ In

1936 the NPS and the Advisory Board adopted a standard for acquiring only new historical sites with established, indubitable significance in national history; this also kept the number of sites manageable. The acquired sites often looked very different from their historical appearance. A preservation policy needed to be developed yet, "A matter in which policy is furthest from crystallization is that of restoration."¹⁶ The Advisory Boards on National Parks, Historical Sites, Buildings and Monuments circulated its recommendations in 1937. While stating general approaches for proper documentation and for restoring as accurately and as faithfully as possible to the period chosen for interpretation, it concluded, "Better preserve than repair, better repair than restore, better restore than construct."¹⁷

Back in Washington there seems to have been ongoing confusion and duplication of efforts to institute a historic preserve at Harpers Ferry. In early 1936, less than a year after Randolph's unsuccessful first Harpers Ferry bill, NPS Director Arno B. Cammerer recommended to Secretary Ickes that he approve the proposed Harpers Ferry National Historic Site. Approval was contingent only on donation of land for the site and was based on the authority of the Historic Sites Act rather than any separate legislation particular to Harpers Ferry.¹⁸ The devastating 1936 flood struck Lower Town Harpers Ferry just when McDonald had succeeded in getting "high level government officials" not only interested in his project but committed to making a public gesture of support for it by coming to town for an organizational meeting. The flood postponed the meeting but for all those involved it seemed to open more possibilities for allowing federal acquisition. Dr. McDonald was certainly in communication with Congressman Randolph who called NPS Director Conrad Wirth to inform him that "high waters have demolished

many of the shacks which existed on land desired as a National Monument.” Historian Ronald F. Lee, working under the Assistant Director for Historic Sites and Buildings, was directed to meet with McDonald to discuss the new conditions at Harpers Ferry. “The WPA is apparently willing to do the work of cleaning up the present situation, and it is thought that the land can be purchased now that the buildings no longer exist.”¹⁹

Attempts continued in meetings and memos, fits and starts, to advance the Harpers Ferry cause, but the stumbling block to everyone’s efforts remained the problem of local land acquisition. In May 1936 word came from Assistant Director Wirth that “the next move on the possible development of the Harper’s Ferry National Historic Site is up to us. It is desired before long to work up a definite proposal to take to Congressman Jennings Randolph with the request that he marshal the efforts of local people behind the project.” In response, Historian Lee recommended that “the next thing necessary is to detail an historian for a week’s study of Harper’s Ferry on the ground, to study maps and make recommendations on the basis of which further mapping and surveying could be carried out....[and] when this has been completed we would be in a position to recommend boundary lines and indicate what lands the local people should attempt to purchase.”²⁰

Research by professional historians informed land acquisition plans and foretold the evolving interpretation of Harpers Ferry history. NPS officials in the 1930s focused on John Brown’s Raid and the Civil War to justify acquisition of the town for a historical and military park.²¹ Edward Steere proposed in 1936 four primary periods of historical interest in Harpers Ferry and recommended specific sites in correlation with the divisions. These periods divided into Harper’s “selling” to Washington of the arsenal

idea (1747-1794), a period of local development (1794-1861), the War of Secession (1861-65), and on to the 1930s.²² Junior Historian Charles Marshall was detailed to the site in October 1936 to conduct preliminary land title searches to help determine the viability of property acquisition. He visited repositories in Charles Town, Washington County, Loudoun County, and Leesburg, and interacted with local residents as an NPS representative during community meetings. Marshall's research work was hampered by poor indexing and incomplete deed recordkeeping, though locals filled in some blanks of modern ownership for specific properties. He was also placed in a delicate position of researching properties belonging to residents who did not support NPS presence and sometimes stopped before bringing too much attention to himself. The experience led Marshall to caution the NPS of the big job ahead.²³ The completed study positioned the NPS to recommend boundary lines in support of Harpers Ferry history and what lands the local people might purchase for donation.²⁴ Specific sites, such as the Arsenal site, Harper Stone Steps and Jefferson Rock, Harper House, and areas on Maryland Heights and Loudoun Heights, were identified in particular support of this history.²⁵

In May 1937 Associate Director Demaray approved a budget and preliminary plans for developing the site.

- \$18,000 for "restoration of historic house" [unspecified, probably Harper] which would serve as the "administrative headquarters" and "the main point of contact for visitors"
- \$10,000 for "demolition of approximately 12 buildings...repeatedly inundated by flood waters" and for improving the ground "for recreational purposes including construction of parking area"

- “\$1,800 for “preparation and erection of markers...necessary to make the area intelligible to visitors, and to supplement the guide service”
- \$35,000 for construction of a museum building “in keeping with structures of the area and period represented” and to install exhibits. “This area will require museum development in order to adequately interpret its important 18th and 19th century stories. This area is closely connected with other military and historical areas now under supervision of the Park Service and yet in none of them is to be found the particular stories represented which are so characterized in this area.”
- \$6,000 for “survey of property...Harpers Ferry will be designated a National Historic Site under the Act of Congress of August 21, 1935. The area is nationally famous as the site of John Brown’s raid and subsequent capture, for its association with the history of the colonial and revolutionary period, and the Civil War; and for its scenic excellence.”

But despite this rather detailed outline for the site, under project status Demaray noted “plans not begun,” lands “to be donated.”²⁶

In July 1937 Congressman Randolph asked for a meeting at Harpers Ferry to include NPS and local officials, his fellow congressmen from Virginia and Maryland and the Conservation Commissioners overseeing park lands in the three interested states. The meeting was held February 17, 1938 and also included a representative from the B&O Railroad, Superintendent Beckinbaugh from Antietam and members of the West Virginia state legislature “who pledged their support.” Acting Director Demaray followed up the meeting with a letter to West Virginia state conservation commissioner “pointing out that land would be necessary for establishment of the area.”²⁷

In September 1938 Region One historian Roy Edgar Appleman was dispatched to Harpers Ferry from Richmond to represent the NPS at another meeting, this one also “arranged through the efforts of Congressman Jennings Randolph who has been actively interested both in flood control work and the establishment of the National Historic Site.” Colonel Thomas from War Department’s Corps of Engineers had come to town to inform community leaders that \$164,000 had been appropriated for flood control work on the Shenandoah at Harpers Ferry. The money would be spent to build a levee, but the project was contingent on a \$4,000 contribution from the town for purchase of the levee site. Thomas also added a further caveat that expenditure of such a large amount would not be approved because it would be much cheaper to evacuate the flood plain area than to build a levee. Thomas volunteered that he was willing to recommend that his Division contribute \$30,000 (his estimate of 1936 flood damages) plus an amount town leaders determined necessary to buy out businesses, owners and residents “along both sides of Shenandoah Street from the bridge upstream to the limits of the town” with the expectation that the amount would be considerably less than \$164,000. He also cautioned, “it would be necessary to obtain a legal opinion” on the arrangement because “the evacuation clause of the Act... had never been exercised.” Despite Thomas’s cautions his proposal presented a possible avenue for the NPS to acquire the Shenandoah Street corridor, and Appleman, though “pressed,” refused to make any statement on the evaluation or value of the street for “Historic Site purposes.” He cited his lack of authority, the difficulty of placing dollar values on historic sites and, furthermore, he said, “I did not know of such a thing ever being done by the Government.” Ending his report on the meeting to the Supervisor of Historic Sites, Appleman wrote, “it was my

opinion that Colonel Thomas was very fair-minded and liberal in his views concerning flood control work.”²⁸

This creative acquisition funding option was apparently not pursued. Federal employees again returned to national and regional offices and town leaders were left to determine property values and contemplate the evacuation of residents and businesses. In October 1938 Acting Director Demaray informed Congressman Randolph that he was ready to move a CCC camp from “restoration and development work” on the C&O Canal at Carderock to Harpers Ferry “as soon as land matters at the Harpers Ferry site are culminated.”²⁹ About a year later the Supervisor of Recreation and Land Planning informed the Director that “the Service must mark time on the project until the local land acquisition program gets actively under way.” The Acting Director responded to an inquiry from Congressman Randolph on the status of the project, “if the local committee or the State of West Virginia has any information to report regarding land acquisition for the proposed national historic site, the National Park Service will be very glad to hear from them.”³⁰

Despite the NPS assumption that a historic site at Harpers Ferry would be authorized under the general 1935 Historic Sites Act, in 1940 Congressman Randolph again introduced a bill to establish Harpers Ferry as a National Historical Park. He asked for a \$40,000 appropriation (HR8788) but could not get support for this wartime funding. He submitted another bill in 1943 (HR1184) this time without a specification of funds but apparently had still not coordinated his renewed effort with the Department of the Interior. Secretary Ickes recommended against enactment of the bill because it duplicated the 1935 Historic Sites Act and did not provide funds necessary to acquire the

already designated site.³¹ Randolph tried again (HR3524) in 1943 with a version specifying, as NPS expected, that either the site itself or money to acquire the site would be donated to the federal government. The Secretary of the Interior also assured the Congressional Committee on Public Lands and the Bureau of the Budget that the Department would not request funds to administer the site “during the present war.” With these provisions the bill was passed June 30, 1944 and signed into law by President Franklin D. Roosevelt.³² Now, with the weight of a specific Congressional pronouncement behind him, Dr. McDonald could turn to the West Virginia state legislature for funding and to the NPS for guidance and support.

When Congressman Randolph’s legislation was finally passed in 1944, the NPS was prompted again to send representatives to survey the area and recommend boundaries for the proposed site. Regional Chief Historian Herbert Kahler and Director Allen recruited Gettysburg National Military Park (GNMP) Superintendent J. Walter Coleman and his staff to help develop an NPS position on Harpers Ferry’s historical significance.³³

What history should be commemorated at Harpers Ferry has long been a sensitive issue. The *Baltimore Sun* reported several years earlier that Randolph proposed to commemorate “the Harpers Ferry campaigns of the War Between the States and the great cause of human freedom.” The press at times referred to the proposed naming of the park as the “John Brown Military Park,” often creating an unfavorable image among southern heritage groups. In 1936 the *Shepherdstown Register* noted that, “controversy has developed in several sections over the proposition to establish a national park to honor the memory of John Brown.” The paper reported that, “The *Richmond Time-Dispatch*

points out that John Brown's attempt to start an insurrection was just as much armed rebellion against the United States as the attack on Fort Sumter was two years later."³⁴

Matthew Page Andrews of the SCV, and author of the inscription on the Hayward Shepherd Monument, protested the introduction of Randolph's 1943 bill. He wrote to the Congressman because he perceived his action as a "backdoor entrance into the original plan to honor John Brown and his ersatz brand of freedom."³⁵ Andrews continued by stating:

Such is the well-high universal ignorance of the true nature of this shrewdly stupid hypocrite that few realize he was a small-scale edition of a Trotsky or perhaps an awkward prototype of Schicklgruber, without either's gift for rabble-rousing.... Public opinion sometimes condones murder on a grand scale, but it should at least be impossible to make a hero out of a masquerader guilty of forgery and other felonies, just because he alleged he had in mind a noble purpose.³⁶

Andrews then remarked that a depoliticized monument that conjures the feeling of heroism would be more suitable at Harpers Ferry:

... that phrase about "human freedom" will be interpreted in its context as pointing to a war waged by one side with such a purpose in view and by the other in opposition thereto.... Such a "Monument" could well be set apart in memory of heroism on either side; or, as it should be, heroism on both sides. If this should be announced purport of the bill, the monument would rest on a solid foundation rather than the sands of variant opinions.³⁷

The UDC simultaneously protested the legislation to create a monument at Harpers Ferry. The president of the UDC wrote, "Now, by a different wording 'The Harpers Ferry National Monument,' you are again trying to accomplish the same thing in a new covering, but underneath is the same old skeleton."³⁸

The choice of the John Brown episode as a unique event in American history and as primary park theme, with Civil War events securing secondary interest, focused the

acquisition program. The argument for focusing on the John Brown story also grew by comparing the significance of Harpers Ferry as a Civil War site to historic events at established regional military parks. Gettysburg Superintendent J. Walter Coleman's essays about Harpers Ferry reflected his position at a park developed specifically for its wartime significance. He believed, from comparison with other Civil War battlefields in the area, that the surrender of Harpers Ferry in 1862 was "the only military event of major importance to take place in that town." He saw the Raid as,

of a type well calculated to succeed in the border warfare of Kansas, in which most of the participants were experienced, but, as we see it now, was a fantastic [fantasy] effort in the populous east, with the resources of the United States Army and protective agencies of well organized states at hand. Moreover, the slaves of that section, mainly house servants, were too docile and contented to respond. Geographic actors are therefore of primary importance in explaining this raid, and a visit to the locality is a prerequisite to complete understanding.³⁹

Coleman argued further that restoration of the 1859 scene was not practical because of extensive changes to the area after that period. The Regional Office relied on Superintendent Coleman's advice about which structures were of sufficient historic importance to justify their retention. McDonald submitted on behalf of the Harpers Ferry Historical Commission a list of significant properties that informed Coleman's recommendations.⁴⁰ Other buildings were retained as scrap.⁴¹ Later, the Regional Office requested, "the Branch of History prepare an interpretive statement that can be used as a guide in the ultimate and more exact determination of the taking likes as well as a basis for planning the future development."⁴² Such a perspective established the interpretive character of the park as a separate destination from other regional attractions, yet related by common National Park Service goals. In the 1940s, the parks espoused ideas of "freedom, democracy, and self rule that underlie the basic political philosophy of the

American people and our constitution.” Relationships between other historical parks and schools were established and the public was encouraged to use parks as forums for patriotism, with interpretation viewed as the vehicle for patriotic messages.⁴³ The parks were seen as places for espousing the traditional and inspirational values of great importance to the American people. A meaningful purpose for the NPS was thus stated as, “The study and interpretation of this group of values, and the definition of the contribution which each individual historic site makes to the total sum, is a major task for the Service.”⁴⁴

By the 1950s the NPS history division was developing policies for dealing with historic sites. In 1952, “The History Division supervised as coordinates the historical and archeological work involved in the selection, development, and interpretation of areas in the National Park System.” It was comprised of five branches: Preservation, Historical Investigations, Public Use, and Archeological Investigations. The division was involved in museum work, preservation and legal division cooperative agreements; conducted research, both documentary and archeological; and documented archeological sites in river basins with the Smithsonian Institution. It participated in park planning, area studies, interpretive sections of development outlines, park operations prospecti, and interpretive plans. The nation, moreover, looked to the History Division for national leadership to the preservation movement.⁴⁵ When the Division of Interpretation was established in February 1954, it included branches for History (Colonial, Revolutionary CW, Missouri River Basin, archeology), Naturalism (Geology, biology, interpretation), and Museum. This re-organization placed emphasis on interpretation and resulted in actions and programs to vitalize park services to visitors.⁴⁶ Together, these components

provided a basis for Harpers Ferry to develop as a national park into a place for interpreting national values.

As the transfer to NPS ownership neared Historian William C. Everhart, stationed at GNMP, was assigned to conduct further research to develop an interpretive statement and to support land acquisition plans and a base map. Most importantly, his research “would answer the very important question as to the exact period of history to be covered in our development and interpretive programs for the area.”⁴⁷ Everhart wrote in the introduction of his report,

While Harpers Ferry and John Brown have become by popular association almost a hyphenated expression, the historical significance of the town does not rest upon any single person, event, or activity. Yet, of the many factors contributing to Harpers Ferry’s unique fame, each has been determined by the location of the town geographically.⁴⁸

The report built upon the role of topography by emphasizing its draw to political and social notables. A “great men” approach based on the environmental theme recognized Harper’s vision in creating the grist mill and ferry service, Jefferson’s espousal of the beauty of the area, Washington’s contributions to local development, and Colonel Robert E. Lee’s and Stonewall Jackson’s struggle over Harpers Ferry as a tactical stronghold in the Civil War. Everhart also outlined transportation and industrial influences, particularly the C&O Canal, railroad lines, Virginus Island, and Hall’s Rifle Works. Correspondence with John Brown scholar Boyd B. Stutler and the B&O Railroad served the dual purpose of informing his study and establishing connections with invested interests outside the NPS.⁴⁹ The final historical base map layered historical maps atop the Land Acquisition Map to illustrate the connection between development and presentation.⁵⁰

Everhart, like Marshall in 1936, held a dual role as public relations manager and met with locals during his tenure at Harpers Ferry. Local ladies expressed to him their interest in obtaining relics for the monument park.⁵¹ Several local people attended a follow-up meeting in 1952. They decided to collect and retain relics until the park could accept them, though an official cooperative agreement was not possible at that time. Supt. Coleman believed that the meeting was a positive encounter with residents who were truly interested in the preservation of the town.⁵²

Town leaders supported achieving park status for the potential development benefits, but the process of actually turning over properties did not go smoothly. Residents remained in their homes while held by the state, but the NPS clearly indicated that they could not stay under federal government ownership.⁵³ Residents remained in limbo until the government decided on park boundaries and which historic elements and properties to take. Alice C. Murphy, for example, wrote in frustration to Representative Harley Staggers for advice on whether or not she should undertake maintenance to her home – an indication of when or if the government would evict her. But the NPS interpreted the questions in a different way, stating “It appears to us that the primary concern for us at this time is not so much the relationship of property improvement to the actual development program as to the property values connected with land acquisition.”⁵⁴

Legal presence in Harpers Ferry, similarly to historians’ work, mediated between federal establishment in the town and community interests. Morgan V. Martin, Legal Advisor to the monument, feared that forcing his presence on the residents of Harpers Ferry might result in unnecessary condemnation suits. He fielded many questions from residents about their future occupancy.⁵⁵ The NPS finally determined that residents could

remain as long as title remained with the State of West Virginia, which was gathering properties to be turned over to the government. Once turned over, however, “it [was] the desire of the Service to receive them unencumbered by occupancy or by agreements concerning future occupancy.”⁵⁶ Most property owners were open to selling, but wished to remain on the property during their lifetimes.⁵⁷

One of the houses that the NPS planned to demolish was a community favorite: the “Scottish Castle” on Bolivar Heights. The property was the site of the “most significant” Civil War engagement in Harpers Ferry, when on September 13-15 Union troops were saved from disaster by surrendering to the Confederates. Colonel Royal E. Whitman purchased the land from Nathan C. Brackett in 1889 and built a “castle” consisting of approximately twelve rooms, a tower, well and stable in the basement, with elaborate murals and painted frescoes. It was later sold to the Hallam and Gladman family. Helen Miriam Gladman owned the property in 1952 and fought to retain it or lifetime residency.⁵⁸ The park supported its condemnation suit against Gladman with historical data about Civil War activities.⁵⁹ Her disagreement with the government condemnation of her property joined the vocal protest of several other property owners, including the Murphy and the Marmion families. Gladman even appealed the condemnation case to the Supreme Court and wrote President Dwight Eisenhower for assistance in saving her home.⁶⁰ NPS internal correspondence suggested that they saw her as irritatingly persistent and irrational. Gladman’s campaign for the Scottish Castle failed and the government dealt with her further in court.

The condemnation hearings created friction between residents and the park when offers did not meet their expectations. A second set of hearings in December 1952 re-



Fig. 12: Old Castle on Bolivar Heights, April 9, 1956, demolished 1963. David Cruise, Conservation Commission of West Virginia (NHF-641, Harpers Ferry NHP).

estimated the value for several properties and resulted in higher offers for their owners, including Gladman's claim for the Castle. William F. and Mary Hyde Marmion turned down the initial offer of \$27,500 from the State Conservation Commission for properties. Re-estimation set the price to \$32,950 for areas including the Harper House, three nearby residences, four acres on Marmion Hill, a building and lot on Shenandoah Street, and two acres on the Shenandoah River.⁶¹ There was also confusion about the distinction between the United States and the states owning land, particularly for residents who wanted to stay in their homes as long as possible.⁶² Renters were also concerned about their homes.⁶³ The press portrayed the demolition program as removing fire perils to the historic town.⁶⁴ Clearly, the NPS and the community had a long way to go.

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² Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York: Schocken Books, 1976, 1989); John A. Jakle, *The Tourist: Travel in Twentieth-Century North America* (Lincoln, NE: Nebraska University Press, 1985).

³ Barry Mackintosh, *C&O Canal: The Making of a Park* (D.C.: National Park Service, 1991), 5-11.

⁴ Carol Carnett, "Legal Background of Archeological Resources Protection," USDOJ Technical Brief No. 11, June 1991, revised Sept. 1991.

⁵ Roy W. Reeves III, "The Realigned Program for Interagency Archeological Salvage: An Introduction," July 1975, DSC HP Team Box, NPS History Coll., HFC.

⁶ Tom Lewis, *Divided Highways: Building the Interstate Highways, Transforming American Life* (Viking Penguin, 1997, 1999), 49-50.

⁷ R.E. Appelman, Abstract, "Archeology in the National Park Service," to be presented at the meeting of the Society for American Archeology, New York, December 1936, 4, Folder "H22," Box, "Archeology," NPS History Coll., HFC.

⁸ Historical Assistant Herman Kahn, "Memorandum for Miss Schmidt," March 11, 1935, Folder "HFNHP 1935-1937," NPS HD Coll., HD/NPSDC.

⁹ National Parks Education Committee, "Proposed Statement of Objects," July 1918, Folder "K1810, Philosophy of Interpretation," Box History of Interpretation 1936-50, NPS History Coll., HFC.

¹⁰ Chatelain to Demaray, April 21, 1933, Folder "Policy," NPS HD Coll., HD/NPSDC.

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- ¹¹ Cox served (Aug. 16, 1934-May 16, 1939) as the first superintendent of Morristown National Historical Park, authorized March 2, 1933. *Historic Listing of National Park Service Officials* (D.C.: National Park Service, 1964, rev'd. 1991).
- ¹² Asst. Park Historian Elbert Cox to Chatelain, January 8, 1934, Memo "Conference of Mssrs. Cox, Palmer, Spaulding, and Venable at Fredericksburg," Sunday, January 7th, 1934, Folder "HFNHP," NPS HD Coll., HD/NPSDC.
- ¹³ Chatelain to Demaray and Cammerer, August 21, 1933, cover note to "A National Parks Historical and Educational Program," Folder "Policy," NPS HD Coll., HD/NPSDC.
- ¹⁴ "Research and Development Policies for Historic Sites," recommended by the Regional historians Conference, June 6-10, 1938, Folder "Policy," NPS HD Coll., HD/NPSDC.
- ¹⁵ R.E. Appleman, Abstract, "Archeology in the National Park Service," to be Presented at the meeting of the Society for American Archeology, New York, December 1936, 4, Folder "H22," Box, "Archeology," NPS History Coll., HFC.
- ¹⁶ Acting Asst. Director Branch Spaulding to the Director, October 17, 1936, Memo "Policy and Method to Be Followed in Historic Sites and Building Survey," Folder "Policy," NPS HD Coll., HD/NPSDC.
- ¹⁷ All Washington Officers and Field Officers, May 19, 1937, Folder "Policy," NPS HD Coll., HD/NPSDC.
- ¹⁸ NPS Director, "Memorandum for the Secretary," January 13, 1936, approved by Harold L. Ickes, January 16, 1936, File "HFNHP 1935-1937," NPS HD Coll., HD/NPSDC.
- ¹⁹ Acting Deputy Assistant Director H.E. Weatherwax, Memo to Mr. Lee, March 28, 1936, File "HFNHP 1935-1937," NPS HD Coll., HD/NPSDC.
- ²⁰ Ronald F. Lee, "Memo for Mr. Chatelain," May 28, 1936, File "HFNHP 1935-1937," NPS HD Coll., HD/NPSDC.
- ²¹ Historical Asst. Herman Kahn to Miss Schmidt, March 3, 1936, Folder "HFNHP 1935-37," NPS HD Coll., HD/NPSDC.
- ²² Edward Steere, "Reconnaissance of the Proposed Harpers Ferry National Historic Site," (Washington D.C.: USDOJ Department of History, 1936), HFR-440, CO/HAFE.
- ²³ Junior Historian Charles S. Marshall to Spaulding, Memo "Harpers Ferry National Historical Site," November 12, 1936, Folder "HFNHP 1935-37," NPS HD Coll., HD/NPSDC.
- ²⁴ Ronald F. Lee to Mr. Chatelain, May 28, 1936, Folder "HFNHP 1935-37," NPS HD Coll., HD/NPSDC.
- ²⁵ Acting Director Branch Spaulding to Director, Memo "Proposed HFNHS," November 2, 1936, Folder "HFNHP 1935-37," NPS HD Coll., HD/NPSDC.
- ²⁶ "Project Report for Planning of Federal Public Works, Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works," Report No. 3230-3234, May 25, 1937, Folder "Lands Harpers Ferry," Box 54, RG 79, NARA-MA (Ph).
- ²⁷ "Proposed Harpers Ferry National Historic Site," timeline, March 2, 1940, Folder "HFNHP 1938-1954," NPS HD Coll., HD/NPSDC.

²⁸ Roy Edgar Appleman, "Memorandum to the Acting Regional Director," September 8, 1938; Appleman, "Memorandum to the Supervisor of Historic Sites Through the Regional Director," September 19, 1938, File "HFNHP 1938-1954," NPS HD Coll., HD/NPSDC.

²⁹ Acting Director A.E. Demaray to Mr. Randolph, October 12, 1938, "HFNHP 1938-1954," NPS HD Coll., HD/NPSDC.

³⁰ Supervisor of Recreation and Land Planning, "Memorandum for the Director," October 23, 1939; J.R. White, Acting Director to Mr. Randolph, August 4, 1939, "HFNHP 1938-1954," NPS HD Coll., HD/NPSDC.

³¹ "Asks for \$40,000," *Spirit of Jefferson* (March 13, 1940) newspaper clipping, scrapbook, Jennings Randolph Collection, SIU; Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes to Chairman, Committee on the Public Lands Mr. Peterson, April 26, 1943, 600, Folder "Lands, Harpers Ferry," Box 54, RG79, NARA-MA (Ph).

³² Acting Secretary Abe Fortas of the Interior to Chairman, Committee on the Public Lands Mr. Peterson, February 25, 1944; Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes to Director, Bureau of the Budget Mr. Smith, June 27, 1944, 600, Folder "Lands, Harpers Ferry," Box 54, RG79, NARA-MA (Ph).

³³ Chief Historian Kahler to Superintendent, GNMP, October 17, 1944, Folder "H30," Admin Coll., BH/HAFE.

³⁴ Henry T. McDonald, "Harpers Ferry Land is Offered to U.S.," February 18, 1938; Harpers Ferry National Monument Establishment, vol. 2, 1934-1940; "John Brown's Raid," *Shepherdstown Register*, May 9, 1936, Newspaper file clipping, Harpers Ferry National Monument Establishment (2) 1934-1940. CO/HAFE.

³⁵ Matthew Page Andrews to Hon. Jennings Randolph, 1943, Reel 117, CO/HAFE.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Sally Lee Powell to Jennings Randolph, 1943, Reel 117, CO/HAFE.

³⁹ Superintendent Coleman to Regional Director, January 13, 1945, Folder "H30," Admin. Coll., BH/HAFE.

⁴⁰ Regional Director Allen to Superintendent, GNMP, Memo "Photographs," August 10, 1951, Folder "H30," Admin. Coll., BH/HAFE.

⁴¹ Regional Director Thomas J. Allen to Superintendent, Gettysburg, Memo "Proposed Harpers Ferry National Monument," June 27, 1951; Regional Director Thomas J. Allen to Superintendent, Gettysburg National Military Park, Memo "Photographs - Harpers Ferry National Monument Project," August 10, 1951, Folder "H30," Admin. Coll., BH/HAFE.

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- ⁴⁸ William C. Everhart, "Interpretive Statement for Harpers Ferry National Monument," March 1952, Folder "H30," Admin. Coll., BH/HF.
- ⁴⁹ Everhart to Boyd B. Stutler, December 11, 1951; Superintendent J. Walter Coleman to Managing Editor, *American Legion Magazine* Boyd B. Stutler, October 1, 1951; Everhart to Virginia T. Reilly, B&O Railroad Company, October 16, 1951, Folder "H30," Admin. Coll., BH/HAFE.
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- ⁵² Superintendent Coleman to Regional Director, Region One, Memo "Recent Meeting at Harper's [sic] Ferry," March 17, 1952; Acting Regional Director E.M. Lisle to Superintendent, Gettysburg, Memo "Recent Meeting at Harper's [sic] Ferry," March 21, 1952, Folder "H30," Admin. Coll., BH/HAFE.
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- ⁵⁴ Asst. Regional Director E.M. Lisle, Assistant Regional Director to Chief, Division of State Parks Kermit McKeever, September 10, 1951; Regional Chief of Land and Recreation Planning Allyn P. Bursley to Chief, Division of State Parks Kermit McKeever, October 31, 1951, Folder "H30," Admin. Coll., BH/HAFE.
- ⁵⁵ Legal Advisor-Harpers Ferry National Monument Morgan V. Martin to Dr. E.M. Lisle, NPS; J. Walter Coleman, Superintendent, Gettysburg to Regional Director, Region One, October 12, 1951, Folder "H30," Admin. Coll., BH/HAFE.
- ⁵⁶ Assistant Regional Director E.M. Lisle, to Superintendent, Gettysburg National Military Park, Memo "Occupancy of Houses - Harpers Ferry National Monument Project," October 19, 1951, Folder "H30," Admin. Coll., BH/HAFE.
- ⁵⁷ Regional Director, Region One to The Director, Memo "Land Acquisition, Harpers Ferry National Monument Project," November 19, 1951, Folder "H30," Admin. Coll., BH/HAFE.
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⁶⁰ Morgan V. Martin, Memo "Harpers Ferry National Monument," August 29, 1952; Helen M. Gladman to Conrad Wirth, February 26, 1953; Gladman to President Dwight Eisenhower, March 17, 1953, Folder "Harpers Ferry NM - Correspondence 1953," Box 405, RG 79, NARA-MA (Ph).

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⁶² Assistant Director Ronald F. Lee to Regional Director, Region One, Memo "Occupancy by Mrs. Mary Cooper of House in Harpers Ferry National Monument Project," May 6, 1953 Folder "Harpers Ferry NM - Correspondence 1953," Box 405, RG 79, NARA-MA (Ph).

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Chapter 4:

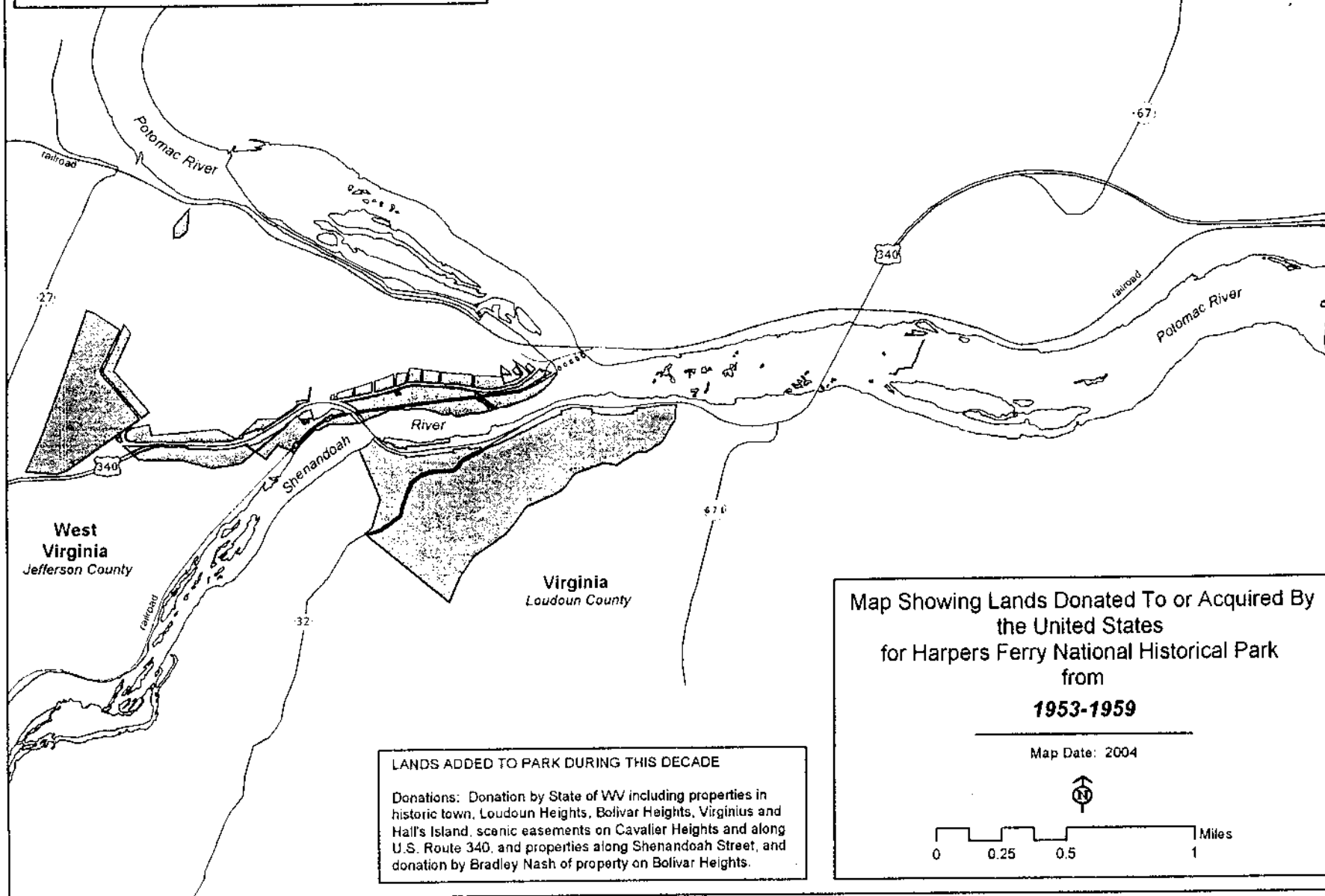
Early Monument Administration

On Thursday evening July 16, 1953, 250 people attended a dinner at the Camp Hill Methodist Church in Harpers Ferry. They came to watch Carl J. Johnson, Director of the West Virginia Conservation Commission, deliver a deed for 515 acres of Harpers Ferry property to Elbert Cox, Director of NPS Region One. Evidently a little leery of the expectations created by the ceremony, Cox cautioned the crowd after he accepted the deed that he still “could not say that bulldozers and carpenters would move into [the] monument area tomorrow to start work.”¹ After all, Cox had written a statement of significance for the site nineteen years earlier; he knew that government action did not necessarily or immediately follow its proclamations. The dinner was one in a series of ceremonial events (legislation signing, public meetings, land purchases and presentations) held to mark the beginnings of an official National Park Service presence at Harpers Ferry. In reality, the institution of federal oversight was a staggered, anticlimactic process. The official establishment date – May 13, 1955 – for Harpers Ferry National Monument passed unnoticed at the time. The date was determined in retrospect following an inquiry to the Regional office from Supt. Joseph R. Prentice in 1965. The determination was based on “the date satisfactory title was found to be vested in the United States to the first piece of property acquired for the area.”² As the Monument’s first on-site employee, Supervisory Park Ranger John T. Willett, remarked dryly after speaking to a local Chamber of Commerce group, “it seems that a few

This map and the following maps show fee and less than fee properties in Harpers Ferry NHP based on the NPS Master Deed Listing (MDL) maintained by the Washington Office, and official ownership maps maintained by the NCR Lands Resources Center. The properties are sorted by decade based on the "Date Recorded" field of the MDL which is the date each deed was recorded.

 Lands added to park in decade shown in map title

Maryland
Washington County



members were surprised to learn Harpers Ferry would not be transferred into a fully developed park over night.”³

The NPS announced in March 1952 that the future monument would be administered through Gettysburg National Military Park (GNMP) with J. Walter Coleman serving as “Cooperating Superintendent,” a role Coleman and GNMP already filled for Fort McHenry and Fort Necessity.⁴ Supt. Coleman’s role as a consultant in developing Harpers Ferry National Monument continued and GNMP would be its official link to NPS bureaucracy. Coleman accepted the additional responsibility but was unwilling to fund it. After attending the 1953 deed transfer celebration, he notified the regional office that he intended to ask for travel reimbursements because the allocation for his own park was “inadequate to meet fixed costs.”⁵ A month later Region One Director called on Antietam Supt. Harry Doust for additional assistance. “As you know, the National Park Service has responsibility for the protection of Federal property at HFNM Project. Funds to cover these responsibilities have not as yet been authorized or appropriated by the Congress.... In order to discharge this responsibility we should like to have you make periodic visits to the area, not only to see that the area is receiving protection, but also to give the Service some representation in the area.” Reimbursement for the 36-mile round trip visits would come from the “Regional Contingency Reserve.” Doust soon complied with the request and reported favorable contacts with Harpers Ferry Mayor Gilbert Perry and County Sheriff Shirley Hunt though there were no deputies available to cover the area. He had better luck with a local “detachment” of three state police troopers who promised to include at least one patrol of the area in their rounds each day.⁶

These stopgap efforts aimed to provide NPS coverage for property that was still quite problematic in status. Not only were no appropriated funds available to cover even minimal costs, the legality of federal ownership was as yet unsatisfactory and uncertainty still remained about the procedure and requirements for achieving Monument status. As late as the July 1953 dinner Regional Director Cox stated that the Monument could not be inaugurated until Maryland's properties across the Potomac were acquired and donated. At the same time in Washington, renewed planning efforts for the Monument were under way in the offices of the Chief Historian and the Eastern Office of Design and Construction, while for staff in the Office of Chief Counsel, the legal proprieties of West Virginia's deed arrangements remained unclear.⁷ In Harpers Ferry some residents were disappointed and impatient with the NPS's apparent inaction. Token patrols merely highlighted the lack of on-the-ground change. Bradley Nash, a relatively new resident who moved to town from Washington in 1950, had worked with Dr. McDonald and helped take up the Monument cause after McDonald's death. Then serving as Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy with a long career in politics and government, Nash was in a position to have some influence and knew whom to lobby. He wrote to Chief Historian Herbert Kahler and probably to other officials in March 1954 expressing concern that there was so little evidence of progress in Harpers Ferry. Perhaps it was a coincidence, for preparatory work was being done, but approximately two weeks after Nash's letter a U.S. Park Policeman from National Capitol Parks was assigned to resident duty to patrol both the town and the canal, and Elbert Cox was instructed to arrange for a Region One ranger to transfer to Harpers Ferry.⁸

NPS officials still felt that they had little grounds or means for taking responsibility for the “monument area.” For some months the ownership of the property was in a very grey area in which the state of West Virginia apparently considered its role of acquisition and transfer complete, but the federal government had not yet verified and accepted title. The gap between public assumptions based on news of the deed transfer in July 1953 and legal and fiscal constraints faced by NPS officials was again brought home when Supt. Coleman notified NPS headquarters that the town planned to cut off street lights in the monument area in May 1954. “If we do not have title to the property by that time and cannot furnish street lighting, there will doubtless be a great increase in vandalism.” Acting Director Thomas J. Allen could only advise that Coleman prevail upon Mayor Perry to extend the \$23 per month lighting contract on credit until an \$11,870 budget for “maintenance and protection of HFNM lands” (reduced by Congress from an initial \$14,000) was available July 1. Town officials refused leniency and refused to consider future returns from the site; they did not believe they could “rightfully light this area with the town’s funds as the area is tax exempt and no revenue is derived from it.” Park Police Officer Roland Fallin reported, “on May 18, the light bulbs were removed from all of the street lights located in the park area in the lower part of Harpers Ferry,” and as Coleman predicted, one of the buildings was vandalized though there was little damage.⁹

While conditions deteriorated and local pressure mounted, the NPS Director’s office worked to secure a “preliminary opinion” on the land title from the U.S. Attorney General for the NPS “to assume administrative jurisdiction” in mid-June 1954.¹⁰ It is not clear that requirements to satisfy the preliminary opinion were met, nevertheless, on June

15, 1954 the Monument's first NPS employee began work. John T. Willett transferred from Natchez Trace Parkway and was given the title Chief Supervisory Ranger. Willett was only a three-year NPS veteran. He had a master's degree in history from the University of Arkansas and was a Ph.D. candidate at American University. He had worked at an NPS museum lab in Washington and served at Fort Sumter and Kenesaw Mountain. He filed his first unvarnished report from Harpers Ferry to Director Wirth on July 1.

First impressions of the area which I had thought to be a "ghost town" were none too encouraging. It seemed exceedingly strange to see dirty children playing in the streets, drunks loafing on the sidewalks, filth in every crevice, buildings physically caving in, and two beer joints in full operation. Credit is herein tendered Officer Roland Fallin, National Capital Parks, for having brought some order out of this chaotic condition. Even though Mr. Fallin had no authority to remove the source of the trouble, namely, the two beer joints, nor the inebriates causing the trouble, his presence had noticeably reduced vandalism of government property at the time of my arrival.¹¹

Willett had "considerable difficulty" just finding housing for his family. He finally found an apartment in Ranson, West Virginia until Mayor Perry "secured" a house for them on Bolivar Heights. NPS often allowed on-site staff housing for convenience and security, but none of the Lower Town buildings were deemed habitable for service personnel. Within a few months, Willett was authorized to renovate an apartment in the "Linville Jones" building—installing a kitchen sink, a hot water heater and a bathroom—providing Lower Town "quarters" for himself, his wife, and daughter.¹²

When GNMP Supt. Coleman assumed oversight of the proposed Monument in 1952, he met with a "group of leading citizens" and won praise from the regional office for making "a forward stride in public relations....The Service can never have too many friends anywhere, but it is particularly important that good public relations be established

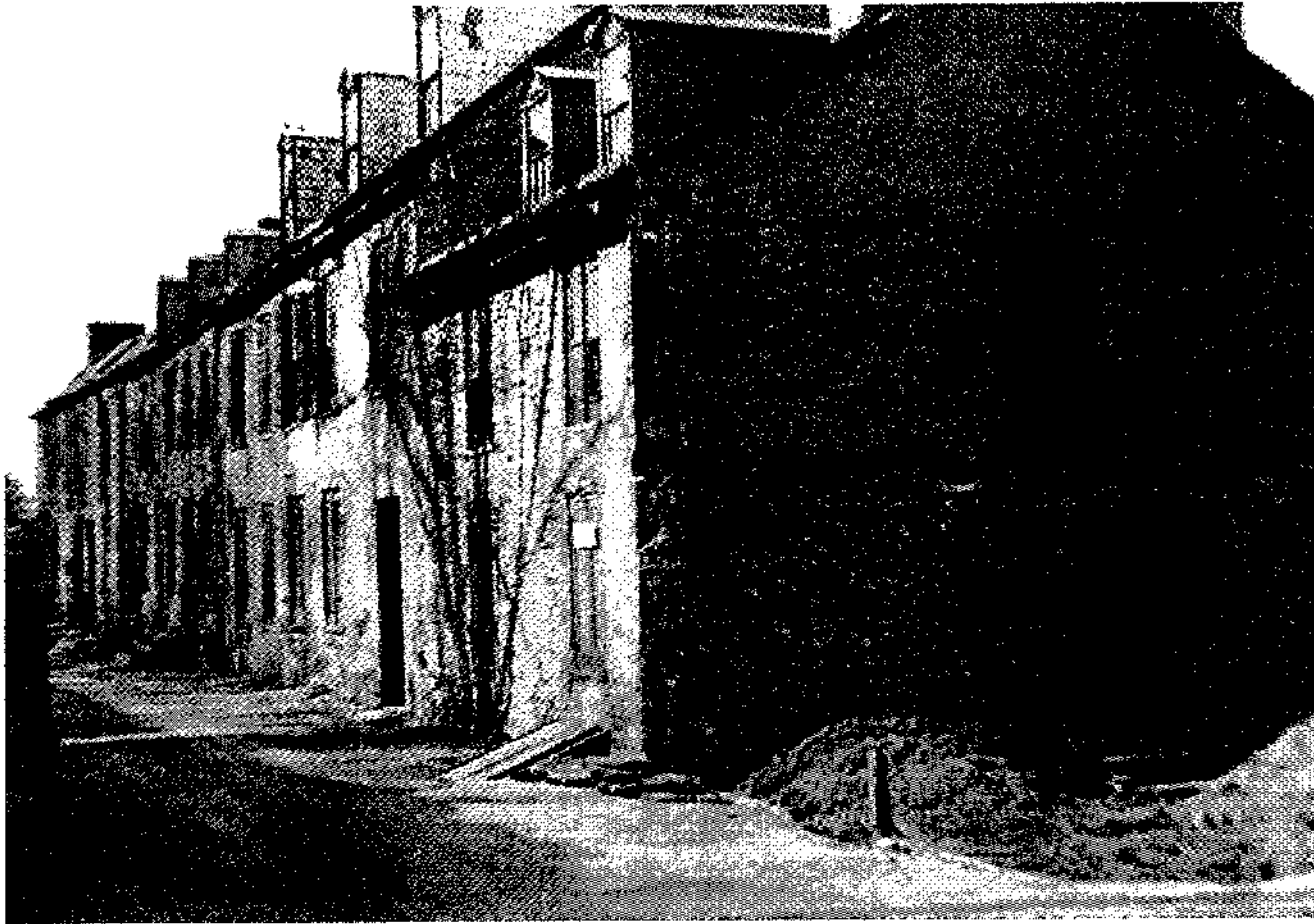


Fig. 13: Marmion Row and Harper House, 1955. Gift of Ames W. Williams 1979 (NHF-3845, Harpers Ferry NHP).



Fig. 14: High Street, Partly park and privately owned buildings, park buildings 12a, 13, 14, 15, and 16, 1955. Gift of Ames W. Williams 1979 (NHF 3860, Harpers Ferry NHP).

at new or projected areas.”¹³ Ranger Willett continued the effort to inform and participate in community activities. He spoke to local civic groups, joined the fire company and transferred his membership in the Lion’s Club, VFW, and the Masons to the local branches. On August 27, 1954, he drove his own car with a Harpers Ferry NM banner in the Firemen’s Parade, reporting, “the monument and the Lion’s Club float were combined.”¹⁴

If Ranger Willett was a little overwhelmed by conditions of his new post, he dug right in and soon had help, though perhaps not as substantial as he might have wished. For his first and primary task, to establish a “headquarters and public contact point” for the Monument, he had an allotment of \$275. He selected a building known as “the pay master’s house” (now known as Building 36, the Master Armorer’s House) and set to work with Supt. Doust, two men from the Antietam maintenance staff, and two hired laborers. Over about a week’s time they cleaned dirt and trash from the interior, stripped wallpaper, and painted first floor rooms for offices. “Bramble and weeds” were cleared from the front and back and an iron fence painted. Two local volunteers “cleaned the front walk and rear wall” and “the Harpers Ferry Fire Department proved a great help by washing down the outside of the building.” No money was left to replace the leaky roof, but loose slates were refastened, and Mayor Perry connected a new water main to the restrooms saving Willett a \$145 plumbing bill. The mayor proved to be “a most useful source of help and comfort,” Willett wrote. “Not only has he given freely of his time in helping make an adjustment such as introducing me to local dignitaries and locating a house, he has also given moral support to all problems which might necessarily involve joint efforts between the monument and the city.” Perry helped Willett design and set up

a 30-foot flagpole from 10-foot pipe sections welded together. “The first NPS standard was furlled to the breeze over HFNM on the 5th [August 1954].” An official headquarters sign completed the streetscape welcome area. Town councilman Charles Riley, a retired engineer on the B&O Railroad’s Capitol Limited, helped Willett put up the sign. Willett reported gratefully, and with some chagrin at his dependence on the kindness of strangers, that Riley “loaned his tools for almost every maintenance job done in the monument.”¹⁵ Willett expressed surprise at the number of visitors already prowling the town “from all sections of the country. Interpretive devices will be placed as soon as possible to accommodate this avalanche of tourists.”¹⁶

Three of the seventeen darkened streetlights were turned back on for cost-effective but “adequate protection” of the fledgling federal installation. To furnish his new office, Willett drove a borrowed truck to Morristown National Battlefield Park in New Jersey to pick up surplus desks that were refinished for him at Gettysburg. For several months Willett’s work was hampered as spending and hiring authorizations, routed through the finance office at GNMP, lagged behind his detail.¹⁷ His “duties as janitor, yard boy, and repair man” were relieved when he was finally able to hire Floyd Wilt, a local veteran, on a short-term appointment. They were equipped with a ½-ton Ford pick-up in October.¹⁸ Even as this work started, the NPS was still deciding on the shape of the park to come.

Beginning in the 1930s, statements of significance for the town emphasized its broad potential for teaching historical developments across the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. But for most of those involved there was a ranking of historical events within those choices and the Civil War was put at the top. The ongoing source of tension was

whether one felt the year 1859 and John Brown's raid should be the site's primary focus. Some favored focusing on the entire span of war years to avoid highlighting Brown, while others wanted to keep the historic focus broader across the century to avoid the attention Brown would receive as an element of the war. The repeated attempts to synopsise Harpers Ferry's value as a historic resource reflected the inefficiency inherent in political and bureaucratic processes, but it also merely pointed up the understandable difficulty in reducing Harpers Ferry history to a simplistic storyline. Most NPS sites were conceived as straightforward, single-purpose entities. The number of historic "themes" available at Harpers Ferry was unusual. As Willett and his staff and volunteers made progress on sprucing up the Lower Town in the summer of 1954, the NPS was making significant decisions on the interpretive themes. In September, Willett reported that the Region One Interpretive Division had selected John Brown's Raid in 1859 for primary interpretation and development with the 1862 period as secondary.¹⁹ The Regional Office decided that the controversial events begun by Brown imbued the town with national significance and "meaning to the average American." Civil War history became the secondary theme, as the battles there "were not of first-rank importance, not, for example, comparable to Antietam, Gettysburg, Vicksburg, and the like."²⁰ While restoration to a particular time period aligned with NPS trends at the time, the racial issues and messages of the John Brown story in context with the Civil Rights Movement in the United States positioned Harpers Ferry as something apart.

Immediate and future development work next required a definitive guide to the physical history of Harpers Ferry, and Willett was enlisted for it. The 1955 budget funded his research on the historical base map that Everhart began a few years earlier.²¹

Willett compiled it from documents such as an 1848 map prepared by Major John Symington, Superintendent of the works from 1844 to 1854 or S. Howell Brown maps from 1852 and 1869, also used by Marshall in his landholding survey in 1936. Symington's 1848 map, for Willett, altered the contemplated restoration and stabilization program by offering "conclusive proof that many of the brick structures on the river side of Shenandoah Street were not there in 1859, except for the headquarters [Building 36] building."²² The products of this work – Historical Base Maps for 1848 and 1869 and two Interpretive Plans for the General Development Plan and for the Old Section of Town – responded to foreseeable future focus on the Lower Town.²³

Willett's research gave some background information for maintenance activities, but building inspections anticipated the auspicious task facing the demolition and construction programs. All but three roofs leaked, leaving the interiors open to the elements. Many buildings verged on collapse and posed a safety hazard, had missing or loose brick, or slate that fell to the ground. Willett had "sufficient" information that fourteen of the fifty-five buildings stood between 1859 and 1865 and recommended removal of any buildings out of scope as soon as possible if the Regional Office Interpretive Division agreed.²⁴ For the early years of Monument development an assumed but informal "decision" of an 1865 cut-off date prevailed and guided decisions like building demolition. This approach must be considered within the context of the budgetary and manpower constraints squeezing progress.

Despite the overall "ghost town" look of the area, several buildings gave staff immediate impressions of historic value. The NPS, in addition to its first priorities at Harper House and Headquarters, prioritized the stabilization of Buildings 5, 7, 9, 10, 12,

15, 16, 38, 40, 44, and 45.²⁵ Some of these structures were of interest in themselves, while others received face renovations to protect the historic scene.²⁶ The natural landscape was also assessed and tidied to highlight better the historical points of the park. Tree-trimmed vistas, such as from Jefferson Rock to the Potomac River and Loudoun Heights or another on Bolivar Heights, framed significant historical views.²⁷ The overall impression left on the town by the work of Willett and his skeleton crew may have eased earlier concerns of inaction on the part of the NPS.

The potential for misunderstanding and resentment was inherent in all of the interactions of between federal officials and area residents. After one of his first meetings with interested citizens in March 1952, Supt. Coleman reported their willingness to provide information and artifacts, stating, "They take a great pride in the history of Harpers Ferry and they are most anxious to see it suitably interpreted."²⁸ Willett's community outreach and public relations roles also meant encouraging public interest in park development and the comfort with the chosen themes. Willett followed Coleman's lead in soliciting members of the community to contribute items towards a museum.²⁹ The Women's Club of Harpers Ferry-Bolivar began to collect furnishings specifically for Harper House. Taylor H. Beech, a collector of Civil War-era artifacts, deposited a voluminous collection of metal military items, as well as historic newspaper clippings, books and photographs. Beech began his collection in 1930 hoping that a park would grow at Harpers Ferry.³⁰ The B&O Railroad Public Relations and Advertising department opened its collection of photograph and historical documents for research purposes.³¹ Joe Jones, a town resident, acted as the unofficial park tour guide and sold local historian and future park ranger Charlotte Fairbairn's book, *Historic Harpers*

Ferry.³² But NPS and local ideas of what constituted valuable historic information and artifacts sometimes differed. NPS employees often focused on collecting for specific projects and tended to be dismissive of material that did not seem useful or “significant” in the prevailing interpretive framework. Locals later remembered cherished objects donated in good faith and valuable at the time for “local history” that were subsequently “lost” because they did not fit the NPS’s Civil War period of significance. Such experiences made families leery of cooperating with researchers decades later when the interpretive interests of the NPS broadened.³³

Access to the federal areas was perhaps the most highly charged source of resentment for local residents. Residents were perhaps unprepared for the loss of authority over and access to areas that had functioned as public space. Parking, street use and right-of-way ownership became an ongoing source of dispute and negotiation. Restricted access to the Shenandoah shoreline – a long-time site for fishing, swimming, picnicking, and camping—displeased both townspeople and visitors, and was one of the first federal actions to elicit protest. Perhaps hoping he carried some political weight, area residents enjoined Russell Twigg, president of the United Cement, Lime and Gypsum Workers’ local to draft a letter of complaint to Congressman Harley Staggers. He expressed residents’ dissatisfaction with the justifications given for closing the riverside—“safety” and “sanitation and morality.” Twigg eloquently summarized the frustration and conflicts of occupying the outside border of a federal inholding, “the people of Harpers Ferry are happy to share their town, with all of its history and natural scenic beauty, with all of the people of the United States, but they certainly do not expect to have it posted so that no one can use or enjoy it.”³⁴ The NPS Acting Director

acknowledged the symbolic importance of the dispute as well as the importance and difficulty of establishing a positive relationship with the local communities. He advised regional officials,

[. . . to use] great caution in the early days of administration of this new area. Restrictions should not be imposed unless they are absolutely necessary, and then only to the minimum required to solve the problem. From other areas, we have records of a long heritage of community antagonism which stems from what seemed at the time to be relatively simple law enforcement problems. We do not mean that we should be too lenient, but we should explore alternatives in solving community problems as far as we can reasonably do so.³⁵

For about one hundred Harpers Ferry residents, federal ownership meant not only getting used to restricted access but finding other homes. In March 1954 Supt. Coleman surveyed twenty-two households still occupying Lower Town buildings, eighteen of these were tenants, four were former owners. Coleman described the residents as “nearly all in a very low income bracket” living in minimal circumstances. None of the occupied buildings had central heating. Only six had full baths and five had no running water. Coleman spoke to all of the residents to inform them that they would have to leave when the federal government took formal possession of the property. “The attitude of all the people with whom we talked was friendly and reasonable. Despite their very unprepossessing appearance, they are probably for the most part decent folks,” he wrote and “they should be given a reasonable time to locate elsewhere.”³⁶ In 1951, during the process of property acquisition by the state of West Virginia, the NPS specified that property should be unoccupied before it was donated to the federal government. Acting NPS Director Thomas Allen sent the list of residents Coleman compiled to the West Virginia Department of Conservation and again requested that the state oversee their removal, but Willett was dismayed to find them still in residence when he arrived.³⁷

In his first monthly report Willett referred to the remaining residents as “squatters” taking advantage of the murky conditions of ownership transition and noted their removal as a top priority. While West Virginia authorities apparently wished to consider their role completed, the federal government had not officially accepted the property. So Willett reported that “after continuous prodding, State Purchasing Agent Morgan Martin finally drew up the twenty-two eviction notices” for the families and two more notices for the two taverns still in operation. Willett helpfully picked up the eviction papers in Martinsburg and delivered them to Jefferson County Sheriff Hunt who served them in mid July 1954.³⁸ The action attracted the attention of the *Washington Post-Times Herald* which published an article Willett called “in bad taste,” “erroneous in content,” and “potentially damaging to an infant area such as Harpers Ferry.” He believed the paper exaggerated the number of evictions, and amended his own characterization of the residents, many of whom he had found were not “squatters” but “long standing renters” in good standing.³⁹ By September 3, Willett noted with considerable relief that Willie Marmion, the last occupant of the town, was moving out.⁴⁰

The empty set of buildings enabled the NPS to proceed with its plans for them. In anticipation of the formidable maintenance needs of the park, the NPS described loosely a set of priorities that, over the years, have been translated into a series of monikers, beginning with building numbers and more recently “package.” Forester Bernard Campbell of the Richmond NPS office surveyed the park area in June 1954 and attributed the numbers to buildings still in use today.⁴¹ The assigned number correlated with Drawing No. NM-HF-1006, Status of Buildings, December 1952. The survey noted twenty-seven proposed historic structures, thirteen structures of undetermined

disposition, and fourteen structures for removal at a total of 103,299 square feet and an approximate value of \$196,190 on the basis of acquisition costs.⁴² The shorthand system for building identification preceded historical research on the buildings and over time remained the most consistent identification as research named and re-named them according to new information and to fashion.

The following spring, Willett and the NPS prepared to present their accomplishments at the Monument to government officials and dignitaries visiting in May. For a special day on the fourteenth, the NPS invited politicians, the public and reporters to tour Harpers Ferry and the B&O Railroad ran a special excursion train.⁴³ The press picked up on the event as evidence of eminent prosperity. "Citizens of this West Virginia town, whose prosperity has lain a-mouldering in the grave along with John Brown's body, showed today how they hope to resurrect the memory of both . . . Now the town's some 800 residents hope that their past will pay off in tourist dollars with a resurrection of John Brown's and the rest of its adventurous history."⁴⁴ Visitors saw how park staff had shaped up Harpers Ferry in keeping with a new interpretive statement scripted by Willett and the Regional Historians' office in 1955.⁴⁵ The statement focused on the town's significance as determined by historic figures including George Washington, the effects of location and transportation, and events such as John Brown's Raid and the Civil War.⁴⁶ Visitors also received a three-fold pamphlet prepared by Coleman, Willett and the Regional Office and multi-lithed by the Washington Office.⁴⁷ Interpretive markers and arrows directed visitors on a self-conducted, structured tour of Lower Town in keeping with the General Development Plan.⁴⁸ Wayside exhibits explained the panoramic view at Jefferson Rock, John Brown's capture of the town at the



Fig. 15: Shenandoah Street, May 22nd meeting, 1955. Abbie Rowe (HF-311, Harpers Ferry NHP).

original Fort site, and, with the several War Department metal markers, wartime activities on Bolivar Heights. Six panel exhibits in headquarters in the Master Armorer's House presented the statement of significance, the munitions industry, the John Brown Raid, as well as comparative photographs and maps of the town from the Civil War to the 1950s.⁴⁹ (During the creation of the Brown panels, and suggesting the ongoing issue of respect in race relations, Historian Frank Barnes requested that the Museum Lab change the panels under construction by capitalizing the N of Negro wherever it occurred in the typed list of his followers.⁵⁰) The NPS also contracted out three wooden entrance signs.⁵¹ Together, these elements showed that the NPS was moving Harpers Ferry from a derelict town to a recognized national monument, but it was unlikely that the visitors recognized the behind-the-scenes tension between basic maintenance needs and interpretive aspirations.

By the end of his first year's service at Harpers Ferry, Willett had a staff of one clerk/stenographer and one permanent and one temporary laborer.⁵² With the turn of the fiscal year July 1, 1955, the Monument's financial fortunes improved enough to support a superintendent, a historian, an additional ranger and a maintenance position. The increase was apparently initially planned with the understanding that Harpers Ferry and the C&O Canal from Seneca to Cumberland would be administered jointly. Instead, the C&O continued under National Capitol Parks until August 1957, and Harpers Ferry NM's status rose into officialdom with the assignment of its first superintendent.⁵³

Just a week before the new superintendent's arrival a summer flood reminded everyone how tentative was the progress and purchase on the riverside. In his last week at Harpers Ferry Willett was hosting regional engineer Edward Crouch for a triage inspection of the worst of the monument's leaking and sagging roofs. Crouch deemed

the roofs of the Wyatt Store (Building 43) and the Wager House too far gone even for temporary cover. The former was caved in and the latter he thought too weak “to risk accident to personnel” who might attempt stopgap repairs. Ironically, the engineer’s visit took place during a five-day rainstorm created by “Hurricane Diane.” Willett witnessed and became part of the local flood tradition/culture as he remained on duty through two rainy nights. He reported that the Shenandoah reached an official flood stage of eighteen feet early on the morning of August 19, and “the excitement created by this announcement brought most of the local people into the Monument area to view the rampaging rivers.” His observation suggests local residents’ continuing sense of ownership of federal grounds. The feeling of attachment by virtue of historic precedent, proximity and family roots, along with a presumption that NPS was merely a caretaker in trust, was revealed by the flood in this instance and by occasional events and reactions to NPS policies in subsequent years. Rising waters closed Potomac and Shenandoah streets for about twenty-four hours, Willett wrote, and “the rivers crested at 24 feet at 2 a.m. on the 20th.” The basement of the headquarters building was “filled with water,” but there was “no material damage to Government property.” He estimated it would take a twenty-six-foot flood stage to threaten buildings. His assessment and conscientious flood record reflected the general dread of the flooding that NPS staff knew was inevitable at Harpers Ferry. A slight tone of consternation was common in various NPS memo reports on the area, that not only had they accepted a townscape in an advanced state of deterioration, compromised in architectural purity and with a complex and unfocused historical significance, yet hanging over it all would always be the threat of natural disaster.⁵⁴ For Willet the problem was moot, his observations were made for the future reference of his

successors. After a few days of post-flood inspection and clean-up, he introduced the new superintendent to the area, then moved on to the quieter environs of Richmond to serve as a historian and roving substitute superintendent.

Edwin M. "Mac" Dale transferred from the chief ranger position at Blue Ridge Parkway and arrived for duty at Harpers Ferry on August 25, 1955. He walked into a site with administrative, safety, and interpretive functions in place but all on a very rudimentary level. Like Willett, Dale was overwhelmed by the primitive conditions of his new posting. He spent much of his time simply trying to establish and maintain basic functions while also trying to stave off the real potential for literal collapse of significant portions of the monument fabric. In January 1956 Assistant Regional Director George Palmer spent two days with Dale going over "the entire operation rather fully" in preparation for the main season of summer visitation. Dale asked for such basics as an approved statement of significance for press and visitor inquiries, a visitor orientation map, an official establishment date for the monument and advice on pigeon control. He was "concerned that visitor use of the Paymaster's House will do the construction harm before its restoration and particularly if parts of it are used for rest rooms." He suggested Building 38 as an alternative because it had a concrete floor and sewer line access, but Palmer felt the public would have "the most favorable reaction" to the "more impressive" Paymaster's House. Furthermore, he argued, the building had more adequate natural light, cross ventilation and an old cistern he thought could be converted into a septic tank in order to avoid request of a West Virginia permit to discharge sewage into the Shenandoah. Palmer also acknowledged the ongoing physical and interpretive problems presented by building deterioration and debris:

Superintendent Dale is making excellent progress at cleaning up the debris around old buildings, and for those with the windows removed, he is constructing wooden barriers of 2 x 2 material that will permit the visitor to view them. Other buildings with plate-glass windows will have very simple card displays with early photographs showing the wartime appearance of the building.⁵⁵

In April the regional architect and engineer paid a consulting visit and found the Paymaster's House wiring system "totally inadequate" and its first-floor framing "in a deteriorating condition." They recommended rewiring and reinforcing the first-floor joists, estimating that the temporary "comfort station" would cost about \$2,500. They lauded Supt. Dale for accomplishing "a great deal of work in spite of extremely adverse weather," but still cautioned "we have a long way to go to reach the ultimate in stabilization and cleanup" at Harpers Ferry.⁵⁶

The pre-eminence of and desire for maintenance is well-known but at the same time perhaps unacknowledged within the NPS. It is felt as an *internal* pressure to exhibit high standards of "housekeeping" and simultaneously as a sometimes real, sometimes perceived *external* pressure from the public to signal the upholding of public trust and the demonstration of tax dollars at work. In the last decades of the twentieth century the imperative sometimes came in conflict with mandates for historic accuracy and historic preservation. The reaction of NPS personnel to the initial appearance of Harpers Ferry must be considered in this context. And consider as well the context of the establishment of the Monument that, as we have seen was a result of public lobbying for the NPS to halt and reverse economic, physical and perceived social decay of Harpers Ferry's core.

Certainly Supt. Dale was eager to see and demonstrate progress in NPS stewardship of Harpers Ferry, and in January 1956 he submitted a list of six buildings, "following later with others," to the regional office that he wanted to have demolished by

offering them for public sale for their salvage value. "Removal of these buildings will be a step toward cleanup of the Area." He based the request on an October 1954 list of buildings recommended for "obliteration" because they were "in a very poor or unusable condition and in many instances are in danger of collapsing" and because they were built after 1865 and therefore were not considered historic for the purposes of the Monument.⁵⁷

Staff identified park needs of specific and broad natures and the 1956 Project Construction Programs lumped projects with similar actions together.⁵⁸ Projects were separated into "accounts" from the administrative budget for rehabilitation, as the Harper House Row, Downtown Section, Paymaster's House downtown, and Obliteration of Undesirable Structures, and Construct Parking Area and Install Signs and Markers in the Headquarters Area.⁵⁹ This approach became increasingly standardized and by 1957 the Acting Director stated, "We feel a growing need to set up the individual buildings to be rehabilitated at Harpers Ferry as individual construction projects, although continuing, for the sake of simplicity the practice of grouping them for program purposes."⁶⁰

As topics of historical interest shifted and preservation regulations were put in place, the removal of buildings that took place at Harpers Ferry over the next seven years became something of a hotpoint of recrimination in hindsight. But there was a longstanding and pervasive assumption that buildings would be removed. As early as 1937 NPS Associate Director Demaray approved a Federal Emergency Administration plan to raze "approximately 12 buildings located on a part of the proposed historic site." The buildings were considered beyond repair because they had been "repeatedly inundated by flood waters." Local advocates for the monument also assumed buildings would be torn down in the interest of overall renovation. In personal recommendations

for NPS action, Dr. McDonald noted two lower town blocks in which “no property . . . is worth saving.” McDonald’s Monument Commission held a property inspection with GNMP Supt. Coleman and Asst. Regional Director Lisle in August 1951 to identify unwanted buildings. They somehow hoped to reduce acquisition costs by allowing owners the option of removing buildings before sale to the state of West Virginia. The recommendations were approved and passed on to the state’s acquisition agent, but apparently no buildings were demolished prior to property transfer. The Regional Director’s memo approving the inspection team’s recommendations revealed a marked lack of concern to err on the side of caution and preservation. He apparently saw no risk in approving private removal of buildings, and, furthermore, was careful to reserve the right for future demolition of even those buildings marked for “retention.” He wrote, “Ultimate disposition of the structures transferred to us will depend on further study and determination by the Service as to the policy to be followed in the development and interpretation of the area.”⁶¹

Policy to guide development and interpretation in the NPS was traditionally, or at least ideally, outlined in a Master Plan drafted and approved for each site. In practice, it was not uncommon for sites to operate without formal Master Plans. They require funds, which are needless to say often unavailable, and staff, together with consistency of administration and circumstances over time. At Harpers Ferry there were good intentions. Various memos and reports with some summary of site significance and sketches for development were written each time there was an initiative to establish the monument. There were some conscientious attempts to adhere or at least refer to preceding assessments but there were also reasons—passage of time and shifting

conditions – to re-write them. And as the Harpers Ferry NM became a reality, lack of coordination and exigencies of need for immediate action meant that preliminary policy guidelines often fell by the wayside. In fact, over the first few years of monument administration, records suggest the establishment of a probably typical divergence between idealistic plans drafted by professionals at on the Regional level and in D.C. and the necessity for triage and real-world action in the field.

Remarkably, in 1952, a Master Plan Development Outline was drafted for the as yet non-existent Harpers Ferry NM by a team of recruits in an NPS “departmental management training program.” The plan received high marks from officials in the regional and national offices, and was occasionally cited as decisions were made in the Monument’s first years. But, though helpful, the 1952 work was considered a mock, unofficial exercise. In February 1954, just after Bradley Nash wrote to urge that the NPS take responsibility at Harpers Ferry, Chief Historian Herbert Kahler was asked to draw up a Master Plan budget. He submitted an estimate of \$25,000 to include the time of a lead consultant, an engineer, architect, landscape architect and historian for six months. In October Charles E. Peterson, architect with the Eastern Office of Design and Construction, wrote “we have orders to rush out a Master Plan for the [Harpers Ferry] area.”⁶² By the next spring, Ranger Willett signed a new draft of a Harpers Ferry Master Plan Development Outline that incorporated much of the proposals made by the trainees in 1952. But it appears not to have gone further in the review process. Like the earlier draft it was cited as a guide but was not completed.

Neither the 1952 nor 1955 master plan draft specified a time frame for Monument focus. But by favoring a visitor circulation pattern beginning on Bolivar Heights both

recommended emphasizing Civil War engagements waged in and around the town rather than highlighting the John Brown raid. Despite the establishment of NPS presence in the Lower Town in 1954, the 1955 Plan repeated the 1952 recommendation to adopt “Scheme I” – to locate the Monument’s headquarters, museum and visitor reception area on Bolivar Heights. Two reasons were given—recurring floods in Lower Town and the topographic opportunity the Heights provided for the visitor to appreciate the “full import of the military significance of Maryland, Loudoun, and Bolivar Heights,” as well as the area’s “scenic beauty.”⁶³ In a comment on the 1952 Master Plan, Regional Historian J. W. Holland registered his objection to locating a “reception Center” on Bolivar Heights and identified the choice of location as a de-emphasis of John Brown. “The [Lower] Town, after all, is the principal feature and visitors will be drawn to it.... Also, no matter what may be our policy as to soft-pedaling the John Brown Story it is that, and just that (I predict) which will attract 90% or more of the visitors to Harpers Ferry. We have all heard the story of John Brown and Harpers Ferry from our early youth—with various interpretations, North and South....”⁶⁴

In September 1954 Ranger Willett had reported that during a visit from Region One representatives, 1859 to 1862 had been “officially” selected “as the significant years for interpretive development.”⁶⁵ Only a few months later, however, the Regional Chief of Interpretation called for a “specific approved development plan and clear statements as to the Service’s policies” and urged that staffing plans include a historian of at least grade GS-7. He assumed that the monument’s development plans would necessarily be based on “an enormous amount” of historical research.⁶⁶ In June 1956 the regional architect and the chief of programs and plans control wrote “it is our understanding as of this date

that no decision has been made to relegate a period of restoration” so they proposed four periods of significance ranging from 1747 to 1956. They also recommended restoration of the exteriors but not reconstructions of historic facades, and mixed uses for the buildings for museums and interpretive spaces, but also offices and storage.⁶⁷

The continuing lack of clarity and confusion was at least partially addressed in 1957 during a Master Plan conference held at Harpers Ferry in February. Representatives from the national and regional offices met over two days and reached an agreement to formalize the decision to preserve the town only up to 1865. Supt. Dale and Assistant Regional Director George Palmer both registered objections to the agreement. They “argued for a later [cut-off] date on the basis that the town did not stop growing and was rebuilt during ten years following the war.” The Master Plan team clearly recognized that the research needs for Harpers Ferry extended beyond what its current staff could manage. The conferees also agreed to institute a “specialized research and interpretive planning program” to lay the groundwork for development plans.⁶⁸ Superintendent Dale argued that historical research needed to proceed on a priority basis so as to decide when to restore which buildings. He believed, further, that the park already had a sufficient framework of facts to satisfy the average visitor.⁶⁹

The 1956 Monument budget provided funds for a historian’s position.⁷⁰ Planning officials gratefully consulted historian William Everhart’s report on Harpers Ferry, but it was a historical survey, not a detailed building history.⁷¹ Nevertheless, his experience in the area made him an authority on Harpers Ferry history. In June 1955 Chief Historian Herbert Kahler solicited his comments on a Harpers Ferry brochure distributed by the B&O Railroad. Everhart had a low opinion of the information the company provided

prospective tourists. “The narrative of events in the folder is highly inaccurate and would almost require re-writing, rather than correction.” He recommended that Kahler advise the B&O to insert a statement about the NPS presence and plans, and Kahler also forwarded a more diplomatic version of Everhart’s review of the brochure’s contents.⁷² Everhart seemed an ideal candidate for the new historian’s position at the Monument, but he was detailed to a high-priority national seashore study.⁷³

Herbert Kissling was hired as the Monument’s historian in 1956 and was also in charge of visitor services. Months after the Master Plan conference, the Regional Director recommended that Kissling’s research concentrate on the physical appearance of the area at its time of greatest significance.⁷⁴ “In view of the large program of restoration ahead for Harpers Ferry,” the EODC assigned architect Archie Franzen “to go into residence there.” Franzen had just been hired and spent several weeks at Saratoga National Historical Park before moving to Harpers Ferry in August 1956. He and Kissling began to submit building reports on individual structures within several months. Architect Charles A. Peterson closely supervised Franzen from the EODC office in Philadelphia as he oversaw many buildings projects, including cleanup, drawing and measuring, and repair and stabilization.⁷⁵ A priority list devised in the fall of 1956 for FY58 specified Kissling and Franzen as responsible for historical work. The list, which specified buildings scattered across Lower Town and Marmion Hill represented preliminary assumptions about the significance of the buildings in the 1859 to 1862 scheme.⁷⁶

Several treatment options were underway and suggested that planning for Harpers Ferry was cogent enough to envision a future streetscape. Several buildings received

stabilization or other treatments in 1956.⁷⁷ The salvaging of Building 43 was rated “as one of the most urgent preservation projects at Harpers Ferry” and plans considered dismantling it into pieces to save the original woodwork, hardware, and architectural material.⁷⁸ Staff also salvaged interior details from Marmion Hall (Building 1-B), “architecturally the most pretentious house in the Park.”⁷⁹ Other buildings, such as Building 5 or Building 7, were proposed for exterior restoration to complement the Monument scene.⁸⁰ The wood-frame Burton Building (Building 14) was disassembled in 1956 and stored it with future plans for restoration. Alfred Burton’s granddaughter, Lenora Martin from Bolivar, lent historic photographs to the park for research purposes. She also offered for safekeeping several items from her grandfather’s shop, such as watch crystals, a bench, and other items relating to his business as a jeweler.⁸¹

Demolition of buildings also served the purpose of honing the visual and physical experience of modern visitors with relation to the 1859-1862 scheme. The act of “obliteration,” as various officials called the demolition work, helped focus the park prioritization on the uses of Harpers Ferry as an Arsenal or as destination for John Brown. Many buildings were slated for demolition early in federal administration of the town, with the first in 1954 and the last in 1963. Some of them were immediately identified as safety hazards, such as Building 4, which was demolished in 1954.⁸² Other buildings were stabilized circa 1955 to 1956, but demolished later with little historical investigation. Supt. Dale was urged in 1956 to get the appropriate forms together so demolitions could begin as soon as money was allotted.⁸³ “It was determined to be in the best interest of the Service to stabilize all downtown buildings in an effort to hold what we have until sufficient historical research is completed that will enable an intelligent

approach to the restoration of various buildings.”⁸⁴ Buildings 17, 19, 25, and 27, for example, were outside the scope of the park’s interpretation and were also considered maintenance and safety hazards.⁸⁵ Buildings on Bolivar Heights were subjected to the same criteria as lower town and several buildings were removed as “unsightly and dangerous.”⁸⁶

Construction after 1865 was another criteria for demolition though the policy was inconsistently applied in the face of severely deteriorated buildings and expensive reconstructions. Some out-of-scope buildings held their own architectural merits relative to other structures typical of Harpers Ferry, such as the Kaplon Building, a former department store and the only building in town with an elevator. It was demolished late in 1956 and in the process staff found under a corner stone an Old Testament (printed 1883) printed in Yiddish and three coins (a penny, nickel and dime minted 1899, 1891, and 1898).⁸⁷ The Catholic School, Building 47, was constructed in 1886 and demolished in 1957; but its lack of architectural merit was doubly damning. A local citizen alerted Franzen that the building was built in the 1880s and a stone formerly decorating the main entrance attested to its age; a scouting mission to the basement found the archstone.⁸⁸ Research into Building 2 revealed that several buildings had stood on the site since 1839. A building constructed after 1893 stood at the time of park takeover. Deemed non-historic, it was demolished in 1958, but historians recommended marking the historic outlines for the foundations and erecting trailside exhibits.⁸⁹ On the other hand, Building 13/Mrs. Stephenson’s shop, was demolished despite being within the interpretive scope time frame. Research determined its construction date of circa 1850 and its use

throughout the Civil War, but little historical evidence remained about the uses for the wooden shop.⁹⁰

The demolition served a primary purpose of prioritizing specific elements of the townscape to clarify the interpretive focus for visitors. Researchers identified the Large and Small Arsenal Buildings as the most historically valuable of all the buildings within the current park boundaries due to the John Brown events. To this end, the obliteration of Buildings 23, 24, and 26 cleared the view to the former arsenal buildings sites. Unlike at the other demolished buildings John Cotter conducted preliminary archeological investigations in Buildings 23 and 24. During the demolition of Building 23 in the spring of 1959, workers found a brick inside stamped 1870. The building was constructed from salvage bricks from the old Armory buildings and ten thousand of them were reserved for possible rebuilding of the Armory entrance gate.⁹¹ Although the demolition program was informed by a basic historic survey of the area, a much-more in-depth research program was needed to develop the area fully into a park.

The development outlined by the Master Plan, as well as upcoming centennials for John Brown's Raid in 1959 and the Civil War in 1962, required more research than the Monument's staff could manage.⁹² Historian Charles Snell was transferred from the Roosevelt-Vanderbilt Historic Sites in New York to conduct the research program.⁹³ In a 1992 interview Snell recalled that he was brought in by the regional office to help override Supt. Dale's objections to including John Brown as a focus of park development and interpretation. He attributed Dale's transfer to become superintendent of the C&O Canal in August 1957 to Dale's refusal to accept the attention the Brown raid would receive as a result of the decision to restore the town to represent the years 1859-1865. Snell reported

that Dale's successor, Supt. Frank Anderson, who arrived in January 1958, "did not hate John Brown and so we were able to proceed" Anderson, a native of New Jersey, was stationed at Yellowstone National Park for twenty-four years before being promoted to serve as Superintendent at Scott's Bluff National Monument in 1954.⁹⁴ Snell noted that little historical work took place under Dale because the Superintendent had been trained in the old-school "Ranger line," and he "didn't know what historians were for." Historian Kissling "was being used to clean the restrooms and he was not allowed to have a typewriter."⁹⁵ Financing for the research team came from capital funds and the team operated essentially as a separate and independent entity reporting to the Superintendent. The primary purpose involved informing the restoration and construction program with the physical history of Harpers Ferry, and to that end they sought information in local and regional resources such as courthouses, libraries, personal collections, and archives.⁹⁶

The research staff grew in the spring of 1958. Philip Smith and Arthur Sullivan were devoted to research alone, while Charlotte Fairbairn joined Kissling for interpretive ranger work in addition to research.⁹⁷ A few years earlier, Fairbairn had lobbied NPS officials for work as a historian, but was brushed off for not having the proper credentials despite her specialized knowledge of Harpers Ferry. Her presence is remarkable not only for her experience working on land acquisition with Mary Mish and as the first female ranger employed by the Monument, but also as one of the few female rangers Service-wide.

A larger team enabled the huge amount of gathering and processing of material to step up in pace. Snell envisioned historical research on an ambitious timeline extending through 1966 and his correspondence with the Regional Office streamlined the many

ideas for Harpers Ferry into a singular direction. Snell first planned to research towards restoration of the 1859 scene at Harpers Ferry to focus on the interpretation of John Brown's Raid. He rejected earlier proposals to interpret events across a broad time frame, arguing that periods of greatest relevance to local history did not rise to the level of significance needed for a national park. Immediate goals included production of an 1859 Historical Base Map and contributing towards the centennial celebration of Brown's Raid. The Raid, for Snell, was a major turning point in American, "and indeed world," history. The Civil War acted as a secondary theme growing from the John Brown conflict. The second leg of Snell's plan, 1960-1962, proposed research towards the one-hundredth anniversary of the Civil War at Harpers Ferry and an 1862 Historical Base Map. The third leg of research, 1963-1966, would involve final touches toward physical restoration, interpretive facilities, and a complete analysis of source material.⁹⁸

The historians' work created a new entity in the park – a reference library. In addition to the maps and reports furnished by the work, the team amassed copies of historical data from archives and repositories. They compiled microfilm, photographs and other research sources into an index card catalogue and a library system. This material documented the physical and historical evolution of Harpers Ferry through the Civil War through census records, War Department records, courthouse information, and business records.⁹⁹ The historians also undertook a major effort to enlist help from the public through letters. Contacts included historians, insurance policy companies and historical associations, as well as local residents. As early as 1958 historians and the curious public were supplied with lists of available resources, microfilm, and indices.¹⁰⁰

Local memory was another method for getting quick answers about the history of Harpers Ferry, though sometimes its delivery was tinged with residual resentment. Edythe Marmion Brosius and Willie Marmion, for example, detailed family history with Marmion Row and Building 43.¹⁰¹ Willie Marmion provided information about the history of Wager House and other buildings, such as their functions and impact of fires or Civil War soldiers on them. Family tradition remembered that Dr. Nicholas Marmion used the building as a hospital in the war.¹⁰² Drawing upon Edythe Marmion Brosius' memories of Harper Row, the NPS opted to name it the Marmion Hall over Wager House, to "serve the double purpose of providing a name with direct relationship to the period we are most concerned with and of satisfying surviving descendants of the family."¹⁰³ This pointed reference to friction between the park and the families it displaced suggested an effort, despite a national scope for relevance, to provide for personalized local relationships with the townscape.

Even after the research program was under way historian Kissling felt the need to emphasize its importance, likely speaking for the group's understanding of its huge responsibility. He stated,

Much remains to be done before the development and interpretation of this Monument may be considered satisfactorily accomplished. Both development and interpretation must be established on the same foundation—basic research. Until that basic research of the primary source materials is done, we cannot proceed with complete assurance that our program is up to the standards that people have the right to expect of the National Park Service.¹⁰⁴

Historical Building Reports provided background on ownership, structural development, and use of buildings and sites in Harpers Ferry and complemented a staff buildings survey for treatment options. They usually recommended restoring the exteriors to 1859-1862, installing a period appropriate furnished or window exhibit, and

establishing offices on the upper levels.¹⁰⁵ Snell also created base maps for Lower Town, the Civil War, Loudoun Heights and other major areas by comparing historical maps to determine which buildings stood where at a particular time.¹⁰⁶ Triangulation points re-established by request to the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey to determine the eleven points from 1863 and 1865 significant to the Civil War. These provided starting points for modern boundary marking and the identification of sites toward the Civil War base map.¹⁰⁷ The research process and production of management recommendations pointed to limitations of the 1859-1862 restoration scheme, already indicating a need to curate the remaining buildings' interpretive uses to present a "balanced" historical view. Snell wrote, for example, "Due to historical accident, in relation to buildings standing in 1859 and still standing in 1958, we would seem to be oversupplied with stores of a certain type, such as Clothing Stores, and rather short in other categories."¹⁰⁸ He advised restoring one example of each type – a clothing store, general store, saddle maker's shop, among others – to save on research time and avoid repetition. The research team also prepared for the upcoming centennials and contributed to the "story" elements of the park themes.¹⁰⁹ A baseline historical record fulfilled park procedural requirements towards developing its resources by codifying an interpretation of Harpers Ferry. The structural and interpretive plans thus attempted to fit the remaining townscape with a concept for the town as a historical, representative replica of mid-nineteenth century urbanism with events that affected national consciousness. Staff prepared window exhibits along Shenandoah and High streets from laminated prints, text, and sometimes artifacts. Supt. Anderson continued to accept donations of museum pieces relating to the town to supplement the window exhibits.¹¹⁰ Mementoes of park history also became part of the

collection, such as the fountain pen used by President Roosevelt in 1944 to sign the Harpers Ferry project into law.¹¹¹

Archeological studies of Harpers Ferry provided another primary source to inform park management. Mission 66 development planning raised the question of how, or if, archeology should be funded at the park. The debate over archeology at Harpers Ferry, however, resounded with the question of the place for archeology in National Parks as a whole. The NPS justified the adoption of a Branch of Archeology into its Division of Interpretation in 1958 by the “increasing size, scope and complexities” of work rising since World War II. Historical parks composed approximately one third of the parks with archeological values, not including salvage sites.¹¹² The inclusion of historical sites meant a shift in mindset from working on a site to recover specific data towards recovering all possible data to figure out the sequence of history on a site and enable reconstruction to tell the story.

Archeology in the NPS then frequently dealt in salvage operations, but Harpers Ferry could utilize archeology as a complementary research tool to historians’ work. The Regional Office doubted initially that archeology at the Monument would merit a full-time archeologist, but its reasoning reflected a salvage operations-type mentality. Doubters argued that “excavation” would amount to “clean-up operations” providing little “new or vital data” about the town or John Brown’s Raid. A trained archeologist on staff, from this perspective, was unnecessary.¹¹³ Supporters viewed archeology at Harpers Ferry as connected to larger NPS issues concerning responses to irretrievable resources. Archeologists offered “invaluable information unobtainable by any other means . . . No such area should be written off without careful study by the one person

professionally qualified to pass judgment – the archeologist.”¹¹⁴ The Regional Chief of Interpretation wrote, “We look to the archeologist to uncover and interpret physical evidence from the earth...[park officials] are... dependent upon the professional opinion of an archeologist at the beginning levels of studying, planning and developing parks, and no decision is more fundamental than deciding whether archeology should or should not be involved in park planning and development.”¹¹⁵ No one held much hope that intact subsurface resources remained at Harpers Ferry after all the floods, or that excavation would give insight for the development scheme of the park.

Regional Archeologist John Cotter and the Regional Office determined the initial list of archeology program priorities in line with park objectives in 1958. The first priority concerned replacing the John Brown Fort on its original foundations. The work required both acquisition of land from the B&O Railroad and removal of fourteen feet of fill; it was deferred until the transfer of land was complete. The remaining list, in descending order, consisted of Harper Garden, the Arsenal Lot, Hall Rifle Works, and Virginus Island. Cotter did not recommend Maryland Heights or Loudoun Heights because the ruins were obvious. The construction and demolition program also brought Cotter to Harpers Ferry to survey for the impact of the actions on subsurface remains.¹¹⁶

Excavation at the Arsenal site began in the summer of 1959 under the direction of Edward Larrabee, an archeologist contracted by the NPS and assisted by William McMillan Hershey. The demolition of Building 26 prepared the site for excavation.¹¹⁷ A press release set the stage:

Although their work at Harpers Ferry has barely commenced, it has drawn considerable attention from the thousands of visitors who pass through here each week. It isn't every day where one has the opportunity of watching archeologists at work. People are fascinated with their mysterious probings beneath the ground



Fig. 16: "Work in progress – 1960 excavation. Visitor interest was remarkable as the gun parts were uncovered." (HFR-662, Harpers Ferry NHP).

and their foreign methods of workmanship. Possibly to add a little color to the scene, Larrabee, who heads the archeological team, sports a handsome beard, the trade-mark of the bona fide archeologist.¹¹⁸

The excavations drew visitors and gave the park “just the right note [of] informative and curiosity-stimulating publicity.”¹¹⁹ The archeologists themselves believed that “a fundamental purpose of the project was to cooperate with the interpretive program of Harpers Ferry National Monument, both during excavation and in preparing suitable findings for exhibition to the interested public.”¹²⁰ Larrabee reported that the first and second seasons of work on the Arsenal grounds yielded significant information about the site. The archeologists located hoped-for features such as the two principal armory buildings, a brick and iron fence, and the 1859 grade of the arsenal.¹²¹ Throughout the excavation, Larrabee and Hershey interacted with the public and made the processes of archeological method into an interpretive tool.

Completion of the Arsenal work led to planning about interpretation of the historical site and the excavation itself. Stabilization of the site presented multiple problems.¹²² Proposals for presenting the Arsenal as a modern yard included outlining the Arsenal buildings with bricks, wayside exhibits, demolition of Building 26, as well as landscaping and installing fencing according to historical photographs.¹²³ One excavation unit in particular represented a crucial moment in the history of the Arsenal: its destruction in 1861. It contained a disorderly pile of melted metal, distorted musket parts and slag atop the Arsenal floor. This area was stabilized for visitors and, “even imperfectly displayed as it is, the rifle pit is one of the central attractions of the monument, as the most graphic evidence of Harpers Ferry’s importance during the Civil War and the action which took place there.”¹²⁴ Excavation at the Arsenal site thus

provided visitors with dramatic snapshots of history at Harpers Ferry as it widened the available media for telling the story of the town.

Archeologists next turned to an area little known about, Virginius Island. In 1959, the area was overgrown with vegetation and wild with critters. Little visible evidence remained of the massive nineteenth-century structures. Historians constructed preliminary research reports focusing on its industrial role in Harpers Ferry, but presumed that the foundations for Hall's Rifle Works and armory workers' houses were fully demolished.¹²⁵ They suggested preliminarily that the area might best be interpreted by waysides and a self-guided tour.¹²⁶

Larrabee's excavation team, Naturalist Orville Crowder, and Historian Snell scouted the underbrush for foundations late in August 1959. They found several foundations that correlated with measurements documented in historical research and, as a result, revised many assumptions about the area. Historian Snell excitedly reported that,

[T]he importance of Mr. Larrabee's find cannot be overstated. It means that what had previously been regarded as a minor unimportant wooded island contains all the potentials of a major historic exhibit provided that the island can be developed by means of a large scale archeological dig. . . Mr. Larrabee's dig indicates that the massive foundations of probably all the major buildings on this island, all one story deep and built 1844-1861, are still in place. . . The writer recommends the programming of funds to conduct a major dig on the Lower Hall Island as soon as possible for the purpose of furthering research and of developing a major interpretive exhibit on the Island.¹²⁷

Larrabee's excavation on Virginius Island during the summer of 1959 identified several key buildings, such as the Finishing Shop and the Machine and Finishing Shop. The foundations, ironically, were preserved under a layer of silt left by floods.¹²⁸ The

Regional office concurred with Cotter's recommendation of allocating \$10,000 towards interpretation and it was announced immediately to the public.¹²⁹

Research from Snell's team was also channeling into full-fledged museum developments. NPS officials had always earmarked the Harper House for special treatment and as proof that the town was historically more refined than suggested by its modern appearance. The Harper House and Garden was the first major furnished reconstruction effort at the park and local groups took interest. Members of the Potomac-Shenandoah Garden Club, a consortium of ladies' garden groups, participated in the enthusiastic, initial community meeting with Historian Everhart in 1952. Due to miscommunication from a former staff member, the Club anticipated restoring the garden as early as 1958 for their Historic House and Garden tour.¹³⁰ NPS procedural requirements, however, stalled their plans and angered the ladies.¹³¹ Further correspondence between the park and the Club suggested that the park upped the garden as a priority due to community pressure.¹³²

Research, archeology, and landscape analyses all aimed to fulfill the objective of making Harper House a historically accurate furnished exhibit. The severely dilapidated building required basic maintenance in 1954 and 1955 to address stabilization and safety concerns.¹³³ Further stabilization in 1958 and 1959 investigated its architectural fabric and revealed numerous alterations from changing uses for the building – such as a single family home, tavern, boarding house, and office – since its construction for Robert Harper between 1755 and 1781.¹³⁴ “Inasmuch as we are in the business of historic preservation and we cannot help being compared in this one phase of our work with Williamsburg, Cooperstown, and the various preservation societies, we should do

thorough restoration of this one building with architectural merit [Harper House].”¹³⁵ On par with these private organizations in the 1950s, the park desired the house to represent the upper-middle class lifestyle of Harpers Ferry through its associations with great men on national and local levels. Historical research, however, revealed that, while the Wager-Swaynes were notable in Harpers Ferry, they rented the building as a boarding house to laborers during the target period. This discovery shifted park expectations. Snell commented that, “Harper played an important role in the early history of the town [but] it can hardly be said that any national significance is to be attached to his name. During the period of significance. . . the structure was merely a residence of one of the many merchants of the town.” He recommended interior restoration to Wager occupation of 1831-1865 to connect the house to a family with an important role in the history of the town. He suggested that the building is not worth NPS manpower or funding to renovate or protect, but that cooperative agreements with local groups might undertake improvements recommended in future Furnishings Plans. Architect Franzen also advised restoration to the 1859 appearance rather than to 1800-1830. He argued that the later, more “pretentious” period required a more expensive restoration, including re-establishing a structural link between Harper House and Marmion Hall, and rarer and more costly furnishings.¹³⁶ The park also lacked sufficient evidence to base a furnishings plan on the living standards of a journalist and lawyer from the Wager-Swayne Family.¹³⁷ The struggle for interpreting the house became more delicate between interpreting what the park wanted the building to say about social stratification and standards for accuracy – expectations for it were falling apart.

Landscape and archeological investigations proved inconclusive. Archeologist Cotter found no evidence to support historic plantings, terracing, or paths, but assumed that the former owners terraced the area.¹³⁸ The decision about what to plant balanced local recollection of traditional plantings with pleasant aesthetics. William V. Marmion remembered the area planted with roses and vegetables but Snell, Cotter, and Supt. Anderson recommended roses alone. NPS staff suggested that the existing daylilies, lilac, vinca minor, iris and peonies descended from historic plantings.¹³⁹ Historical, archeological and landscape reviews of Harper House and Garden profoundly altered the preliminary plans for the site and required a more flexible interpretation than anticipated.

During this time, Superintendent Anderson sought Harpers Ferry NM membership in the Eastern National Parks and Monument Association (ENPMA), specifically to assist in selling films, slides, postcards and similar material at the park.¹⁴⁰ He argued that increased numbers of visitors and demand for informational material necessitated the development of an independent museum association to supply interpretive materials. Such materials, particularly a booklet for the John Brown Centennial, would aid the park and benefit visitors.¹⁴¹ The ENPMA approved a pictorial booklet for Harpers Ferry NM at its annual meeting, but funding it posed a problem.¹⁴² Kissling attempted to find local businesspeople to sell it, but they objected strongly to the sales program. The Association discontinued the bulk of its sales items after, "a thorough consideration of the relative merits of possible decreased service to our visitors as against our public relationship with our neighbors. Essentially the agreement is that items which neighbor businessmen will handle will not be stocked by our agency of the Eastern National Park and Monument Association."¹⁴³ The park decided to sell items that

pertained specifically to the area.¹⁴⁴ Involvement of the ENPMA related to tourism movements as part of an overall ethic for public support for national heritage.

The approaching centennial of John Brown's Raid so early in the park's administration set off a frenzy of work in preparation. A permanent museum had been proposed to develop the Raid as the single most important event in the history of Harpers Ferry, but a less ambitious temporary exhibit was realized for the centennial.¹⁴⁵ It was placed in Building 9 after much debate weighing the relative merits of the exhibit there (closer to the actual John Brown Fort site, more expensive to produce, and less authentic in the standing post-Civil War structure) versus another site (Building 45, cheaper but less authentic-feeling).¹⁴⁶ The museum opened in August 1959 and over 1,100 visitors viewed it the first weekend.¹⁴⁷ The process to make the exhibit, even though clearly public interest was high as seen in its immediate response, did not just reflect bureaucratic knots. It, additionally, proved the severity of the park budget situation that such strategizing was necessary for representing even the primary interpretive theme.

Preparation for the centennial underscored fears of Harpers Ferry as a place to celebrate John Brown. The Civil War Centennial Commission, represented by Executive Director Karl Betts, expressed serious misgivings about the observance of the Raid. The Commission asked the NPS to "soft-pedal" recognition of the event because it would upset Southerners and conservative Northerners. Betts "noted that the Raid came at a bad time in 1859 and that conditions today are such that it would be a bad time to celebrate it in 1959. Such a celebration might have the effect of antagonizing the entire South to the great damage of the proposed Civil War Centennial observances." The Commission did not mind the park acquiring and re-installing the Fort in Lower Town, as long as it did

not involve much fanfare.¹⁴⁸ Betts stated that the B & O Railroad was “not in sympathy with the concept of centennial commemoration at Harper’s [sic] Ferry for fear the South may again steal rolling stock and take it below the Mason-Dixon line” and hoped privately for a quiet event.¹⁴⁹ The Regional Office wanted to sidestep controversy by avoiding glorification of the raid, stating, “We share their apprehension that the John Brown episode may be a disturbing element in engendering a bipartisan feeling.” The Office agreed, in accordance with NPS policy on pageants and reenactments, to assist in the planning if a local group undertook the initiative for the observance.¹⁵⁰ In retrospect, the centennial can be read as much as an imposition of public views on who the park served as a celebration of John Brown. The NPS used the event to demonstrate its action on promises to the town and in fulfilling its mission to the public. Anti-John Brown groups growled, but local organizers took advantage of the opportunity to bring visitors to the area and into their businesses. Locals such as June Newcomer, President of the Harpers Ferry Area Foundation and Registrar of Storer College, took up the challenge. The Foundation was formed in 1957 as an organization for the area’s leading citizens and business people to promote the area through the monument.¹⁵¹ The records do not reveal what the Foundation thought about Brown, but in conjunction with the Harpers Ferry Centennial Commission it sponsored a weekend of activities in October. Interestingly, Historian Frank Barnes stressed involving local “colored citizens” in the event.¹⁵² No direct responses appeared in park memos, but Barnes repeated to his superior his proposal of asking Newcomer to approach blacks for participation and to include black performers.¹⁵³ John Brown as a symbolic issue cut deeply in the civil politics of the time.

The NPS and the press painted the preparations positively. The NPS tidied up the Lower Town as much as it could in a “facelifting program” complemented by a community support effort in the form of a beard-growing contest.¹⁵⁴ Both had varying degrees of aesthetic success. On the actual weekend, sixty-five thousand people visited Harpers Ferry for the celebration.¹⁵⁵ A particular highlight was a re-enactment of the attack on John Brown’s Fort by Forney’s Battalion of Marines dressed in 1859-style uniforms. Franzen designed the mock Fort for the re-enactment to take place on the Storer College tennis courts, and men from Charles Town built it. June Newcomer later remembered 9,000 people in attendance at this event alone, and 36,000 at a sham battle on Bolivar Heights. A historian’s luncheon offered a roundtable discussion; the participants portrayed Brown as a madman.¹⁵⁶ Other activities included a staging of a three-act historical drama of Brown’s life called “The Prophet,” tours, a “very successful” worship service in the Episcopal Church ruins, and concerts. The B&O Railroad evidently calmed whatever fears it may have had and ran a special excursion train.¹⁵⁷ Everyone who participated hailed the celebration as a success. The significance to Harpers Ferry of the Centennial Celebration of John Brown’s Raid laid not only in the date, but also as a point to reflect on how far the Monument had come in only a few years. The hard work of political and local figures, of the maintenance and historical operations, were on this day realized as making Harpers Ferry park a working reality.

¹ “Great Crowd Celebrates Deeds Transfer For Ferry Monument,” *The Jefferson Republican* (July 23, 1953); “National Monument at Harpers Ferry Enshrines Dream and Energy of Late Dr. H.T. McDonald,” *The Jefferson Republican* (June 25, 1953), newspaper clippings, Folder “HFNM Correspondence 1953,” Box 4, Ent. 405, RG 79, NARA-MA (Ph).

² Assistant Director for Specialized Services, Jackson E. Price to Regional Director, Northeast Region Memo “Establishment date, Harpers Ferry,” July 14, 1965; Regional Director Ronald F. Lee, Northeast Region to Superintendent, Harpers Ferry, Memo “Establishment Date,” July 21, 1965; Bill [Hebb] to

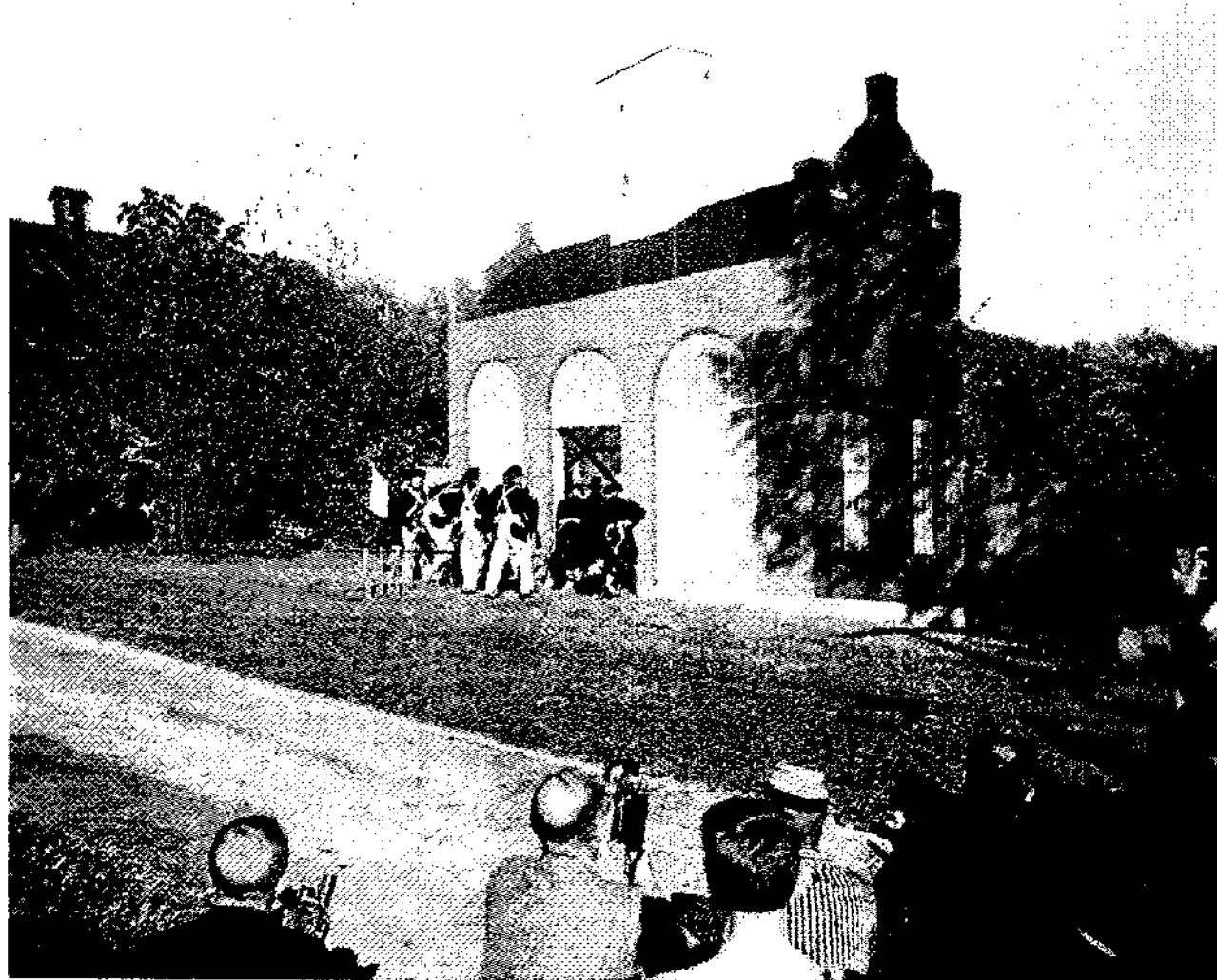


Fig. 17: John Brown Raid Centennial Celebration, Marines storming a mock fort, 1959 (NHF-1408, Harpers Ferry NHP).

Superintendent, Division Chiefs and Management Assistant, "Attached is important information regarding the official establishment date of the park," February 16, 1994, Chief of Int. Coll., BH/HAFE.

³ Supervisory Park Ranger John Willett to The Director, Memo "Monthly Narrative Report, Harpers Ferry NM," August 4, 1954, Folder "Harpers Ferry Correspondence. 1954," Box 4, Ent. 405, RG 79, NARA-MA (Ph).

⁴ "Gettysburg Will Be Headquarters For National Monument," March 27, 1952, newspaper clipping, HFNM vertical file, WCHS; J. Walter Coleman, Superintendent to G.C. McKown, *Martinsburg Journal*, August 7, 1952, Folder "H30," Admin. Coll., BH/HAFE.

⁵ Superintendent J. Walter Coleman to Regional Director, Region One, August 4, 1953, Memo "Harpers Ferry charges," Folder "HFNM Correspondence 1953," Box 4, Ent. 405, RG 79, NARA-MA (Ph).

⁶ Acting Regional Director, Region One, E.M. Lisle to Superintendent, Antietam National Battlefield Site, Memo "Protection for Harpers Ferry National Monument Project," September 10, 1953; Superintendent, Antietam National Battlefield Site, Harry W. Doust to Regional Director, Region One, September 30, 1953, Memo "Protection for Harpers Ferry National Monument Project," Folder "HFNM Correspondence 1953," Box 4, Ent. 405, RG 79, NARA-MA (Ph).

⁷ "Great Crowd Celebrates Deeds Transfer For Ferry Monument," *The Jefferson Republican* (July 23, 1953) newspaper clipping; Assistant Regional Director Daniel J. Tobin to The Director, Memo "Land Acquisition, West Virginia Portion, Harpers Ferry National Monument Project," November 16, 1953, Folder "HFNM Correspondence 1953," Box 4, Ent. 405, RG 79, NARA-MA (Ph).

⁸ Associate Superintendent, NCP, Harry T. Thompson to Director, Memo "Harpers Ferry," April 9, 1954; Chief Historian Herbert E. Kahler to Bradley D. Nash, April 13, 1954, Folder "HFNHP 1938-1954," NPS HD Coll., HD/NPSDC.

⁹ Superintendent J. Walter Coleman to Regional Director, Region One, Memo "Street Lights to be discontinued at Harpers Ferry," April 9, 1954; Acting Director to Regional Director, Region One, Memo "Street Lighting at Harpers Ferry National Monument," April 16, 1954; Acting Director Hillory A. Tolson to Regional Director, Region One, Memo "Report of Officer R.A. Fallin at Harper's Ferry National Monument," June 4, 1954; Pvt. Fallin to Chief, U.S. Park Police, "Weekly Report May 13-20," May 21, 1954, Folder "HFNM Correspondence 1954," Box 4, Ent. 405, RG 79, NARA-MA (Ph).

¹⁰ Acting Director Thomas J. Allen to Director of Conservation, State of West Virginia Carl Johnson, April 16, 1954, Folder "HFNM Correspondence 1954," Box 4, Ent. 405, RG 79, NARA-MA (Ph).

¹¹ "Harpers Ferry's Newest Residents," photo clipping from *The Jefferson Republican* (September 1954); "National Monument Program at Harpers Ferry Going Ahead: Supervising Ranger Now On Duty to Help Evolve Plans," clipping from *The Martinsburg Journal* (September 2, 1954), Folder "HFNM Correspondence 1954," Box 5, Ent. 405, RG 79, NARA-MA (Ph). Park Ranger John T. Willett, Harpers Ferry National Monument to The Director, Memo "Monthly Narrative Report," July 1, 1954, Folder "HFNM Correspondence 1954," Box 4, Ent. 405, RG 79, NARA-MA (Ph).

¹² Park Ranger John T. Willett to The Director, Memo "Monthly Narrative Report," July 1, 1954; Park Ranger John T. Willett to Director, Region One, "Monthly Narrative Report, HFNM, August 1954," September 3, 1954, Folder "HFNM Correspondence 1954," Box 5, Ent. 405, RG 79, NARA-MA (Ph).

¹³ Acting Regional Director to Superintendent Gettysburg National Military Park, "Recent meeting at Harper's Ferry," March 21, 1952, Folder "H30," Admin. Coll., BH/HAFE.

¹⁴ Park Ranger John T. Willett to Director Region One, "Monthly Narrative Report HFNM, August 1954," September 3, 1954; Park Ranger John T. Willett to Director, "Monthly Narrative Report, HFNM,

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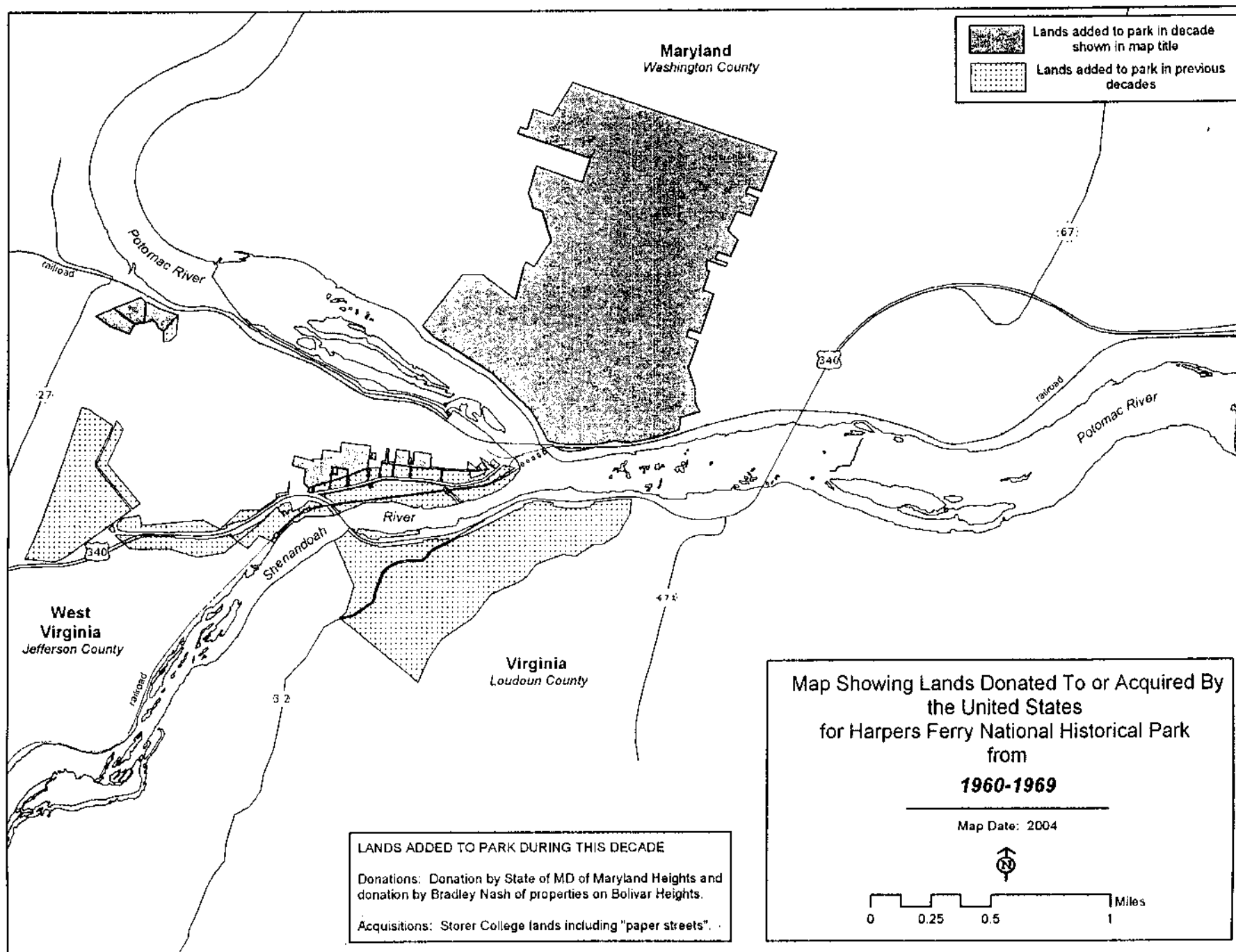
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Chapter 5:

Harpers Ferry Becomes A National Park

Despite the fanfare and overwhelming attendance at the 1859 Centennial, for Harpers Ferry NM employees, it was a hollow celebration. Though arguments had been made and policies shifted to push the John Brown raid to the center of the Monument's claim to national significance, the Monument held neither the original site of the siege at the U.S. armory engine house nor the iconic engine house – John Brown's "fort" — itself. Thus, figuratively incomplete, the Monument was literally incomplete as well. The Monument was legislatively authorized to encompass up to 1,500 acres, but it held only 400 acres in West Virginia and awaited a donation from Maryland that would nearly triple its size. The deed presentation made by Maryland authorities during the Centennial celebration was merely ceremonial. The state's land acquisition program was bogged down in searches of byzantine title histories of properties on Maryland Heights, and it could not venture a prediction for an actual final transfer date. NPS planners had been tantalized for several years with the possibility that the Storer College grounds and buildings would be added to the Monument. The property "offered alternate solutions for a number of long range problems," principally space constraints and the flood threat in the Lower Town area, but final disposition remained uncertain. No wonder the Harpers Ferry NM Master Plan team reluctantly summarized its efforts to establish guidance and momentum for the new installation as an exercise in frustration—"it was agreed that no fixed or complete development plan for Harpers Ferry can be determined at this time."¹ By the end of the 1960s all three of these uncertainties had been resolved.



In the spring of 1960 Assistant Regional Director George A. Palmer articulated NPS aspirations for its West Virginia installation, "I have to admit two weaknesses with reference to Harpers Ferry. First, it's my favorite Park in Region Five and secondly, I have a dream for it." He argued for careful development and use of cooperative associations because the planned Eastern Training School would make Harpers Ferry into a model park to place in a class with private parks such as Williamsburg, Cooperstown and Sturbridge Village. As such, it "must be the best administered and the best planned and the best developed of our Parks for it is here that many of the future National Park Service men will be trained and where many of our western men will have their first opportunity to see a historical Park."² Director Palmer urged patience and careful going at the Monument to fulfill the potential for a high caliber, NPS historic town. He believed the state of West Virginia, "grateful for anything that the NPS does," would support NPS efforts rather than exert pressure for rapid development.

The adjacent privately held portions of the town would be crucial in achieving this vision. From the beginning, NPS planners, knowing that there could be neither means nor justification for wholesale acquisition, assumed zoning laws would cover the adjoining area. Initial planning for the proposed area in 1936 recommended that a zoning law similar to that adopted in Charleston, South Carolina, be required "to protect the historic quarter of the town."³ Town leaders had hoped the park would provide for its economic revitalization and seemed to take inspiration from the sprucing up of the Lower Town. As the acquisition process proceeded Mayor Gilbert Perry guided visiting NPS staff around the town and seemed quite cooperative "in promoting the idea of protection for this historical area with zoning regulations." NPS "community planner," Irving C.

Root met with Perry in 1953 and gave him drafts for an “emergency” zoning ordinance that could be adopted while a longer public hearing process got under way. Drafts were provided for the Jefferson County Commissioners and the mayors and councils of both Bolivar and Harpers Ferry to consider. The temporary ordinance would apply to a two-mile area adjoining the Monument and would require a special permit for new construction, excepting agricultural buildings or single residences. It was primarily aimed “to prevent exploitation of this historic area with incongruous and inharmonious uses and structures such as billboards, beer parlors, and various types of ill-considered commercial encroachments.” Root also turned over a draft for consideration as the permanent ordinance, but he then left his government position, and there was no follow-up by either NPS or the town.⁴

The zoning issue was brought to public consideration in late 1960 after a 1959 West Virginia law outlined the establishment of local planning commissions. To the dismay of the NPS, the Harpers Ferry town council proposed a zoning ordinance without doing any advance work to inform residents or to coordinate a complementary long-range development plan with the state economic development agency. An erroneous report was published in a local newspaper that NPS approval would be required for building construction or alterations in the “tourist business zone.” Not surprisingly, the council then found “that the citizens are overwhelmingly opposed to planning and zoning” and abandoned the ordinance proposal. In the absence of a local planning initiative, Acting Regional Director Palmer wished the NPS could take the lead in area-wide planning, at the same time he recognized that direct action would “constitute an improper interference into the local affairs of Harpers Ferry.”⁵ For most NPS staff at this time consideration of

the course of development in the surrounding area was a futile luxury, and dealing with properties within Monument boundaries the consuming preoccupation.

During a management inspection in June 1960, the NPS regional chief of operations noted the changes effected since 1954. He stated, "I never visit Harpers Ferry but what I am amazed at is the transformation that has taken place here in what seems now like only a few short years. Restoration of the downtown section has virtually erased the scars of broken, crumbling, pigeon-infested chaos and disorder." At the same time, he added, it was still clearly apparent that a great deal of basic preservation work was required before they could lavish more attention on individual buildings to create the Williamsburg-like showcase that some envisioned. Visitors made "avid" use of park facilities and, "The use made of Shenandoah Street, particularly by visitors strolling up one side and down the other leisurely observing the window displays and reading the explanatory text, is a contagious experience; on the other hand, it serves as a connection to the recent past and on the other, it is sort of a living anachronism in the middle of 1960." The resulting inspection report recommended that Harpers Ferry NM be reclassified from "Group B" to "Group C" management status to reflect a more advanced organizational structure. He recommended three independent divisions—Interpretation, Ranger Activities and Maintenance and Operations—because, "The nature, volume and complexity of [the] area and visitor services now being provided convinced me that the Park warrants re-evaluation."⁶ The proposal was an early recognition of a paradox – that Harpers Ferry's complexity might over-rule its apparent lesser size and designation – that emerged over the course of the next decade and continued into the twenty-first century.

The regional office, however, rejected the proposed re-organization and upgraded management classification after the elimination of the Monument's research program precluded establishment of the prospective Interpretive Division.⁷ Funding for the special research team became threatened as its immediate workload decreased.⁸ The 1960 Management Report recommended re-shaping the Division of Interpretation to accommodate the program, but it was terminated by January 1961.⁹ Historians continued to finish up their reports until 1962, but the completion report stated that the program ended with 85% of its proposed projects. The team's contributions included 98 historical reports, nine base maps, and creation of a park reference library of historical material, photographs and the Henry T. McDonald papers.¹⁰ Historian Kissling remained on staff in his position as head of Visitor Services and continued to do historical reports.

By 1960, the progress of stabilization and repair enabled park staff to plan for the interpretive futures of the restored buildings. A Building Use Study (1960) recommended concentrating on Lower Town, with its historical events and themes, because it constituted the main area of visitor interest and provided a point of "initial adjustment from present-day life to the historic period of 1859-1865."¹¹ Staff envisioned visitors driving into the park from the highway and first seeing a former armory worker's dwelling, Building 48, which would set a "proper mood." As the only surviving example of its type, arguments for the imperativeness of restoration resulted in the conversion of Building 48 to staff quarters.¹² After parking, visitors would circulate through exhibits about the industrial theme in Buildings 45, 43, 36 and about John Brown in Building 9 and in the John Brown Fort (once installed in Lower Town). They would be encouraged to explore Virginus Island, Harper House, and outlying areas.

The Interpretive Prospectus for a Visitor Center in 1961 gathered together the ideas for exhibiting the themes of Harpers Ferry in the buildings and across the landscape; this document seemed to presage the Interpretive Prospectus for the park in 1965. The IP for a Visitor Center focused on Building 45 as an orientation point for visitors.¹³ Originally called the Wilson Building, it was renamed the Stagecoach Inn, supposedly for the engaging interpretive value that “should arouse the curiosity of the Park Visitor to the point where he may inquire further of the Harpers Ferry transportation story.”¹⁴ Located at the edge of Lower Town near the parking lot, its “attention arresting structure” and interior of “unusually refined [details] for Harpers Ferry” would offer an information desk, audio-visual theatres, exhibits, and introductory programs to the visitors.¹⁵

After the removal of visitor services operations from the Master Armorer’s House it could be devoted to the industrial theme, and the IP singled out several other sites. It recommended branch museums on specific themes, including Lockwood House for the Civil War and Building 9 for John Brown, as well as an exhibit about architecture for building 16 and on natural history in Building 15. Additionally, “[o]nce the flood situation [was] solved,” the park could also develop interpretive programs for the U.S. Rifle Works complex. The natural landscape would further support the Civil War theme through hiking tours through Maryland Heights and Bolivar Heights and maintenance of vista clearings to compromise between the denuded mountains of the Civil War and the natural landscape.¹⁶ The Regional Office agreed with the plan for branch museums for John Brown and the industrial themes, but found an indoor Civil War museum unnecessary and would consider a Natural History museum.¹⁷ The IP for the Visitor

Center, in effect, took the opportunity to document interpretive directions while emphasizing the best use of the park as a fabric of interconnecting themes.

The possibility of adding the Storer College complex to Harpers Ferry was recognized early in the park's history and solidified in the 1960s into a significant portion of operations. Following his arrival at Harpers Ferry in June 1954, Supervisory Ranger Willett kept the regional NPS office regularly alerted to developments at the new installation. In November he devoted a memo to the subject of Storer College. Located on "Camp Hill" above "Lower Town" Harpers Ferry, the College began as a Freedmen's Bureau school in 1865. With the donation of \$10,000 from John Storer, matching funds from the Free Baptist denomination and the transfer of former federal armory property and buildings, the school was chartered as Storer College in 1867.¹⁸ Willett wrote of credible rumors among local "notables" that the college would close and talk among the trustees about turning the property over to the Monument. Willett cited the editor of the *Jefferson Republican* as one of the sources for the speculation and referred NPS officials to one of the trustees if they wished to follow up on the information. Suggestions that the college would close followed the Brown vs. Board of Education Supreme Court decision against state-funded segregated education. West Virginia made up a \$20,000 deficit for the college each year, Willett reported, and it would now be "less attractive" because its students could attend "white colleges."¹⁹ Storer College alumni argued that the college closing needed not necessarily to follow from the Supreme Court decision and that the state used the decision perversely to narrow educational opportunities rather than increase and support them. The anticipation of the closing so soon after the decision does seem that some citizens and trustees were making plans for a funeral and distribution of an

estate rather in advance of the college's death. Willett later confirmed that the West Virginia legislature declined to make the usual appropriation, so with a \$100,000 debt and no state subsidy, the trustees voted to close the college at the end of the 1955 summer session.²⁰

Willett conscientiously reported the Storer rumors because he recognized their implications for Monument planning. The draft 1952 and 1955 master plans both favored locating park headquarters outside of the Lower Town area because of space constraints and flood danger. Although the plans proposed developing an alternative headquarters on Bolivar Heights, Willett observed that the college grounds "would be a wonderful place to center the park activities. There are enough buildings in good condition on the campus to serve the present and future project needs."²¹ While apparently some Storer trustees from the beginning favored "returning" the Storer property to the federal government, some efforts also sought to find a way to revive the school. The search for alternative sources of funding and administration continued over several years and the lack of upkeep to the property made the prospective cost of revival increasingly prohibitive.²² Bradley Nash, a local resident who lobbied the NPS to assume its responsibility for Harpers Ferry in the early 1950s, was also a Storer trustee. In 1957 he met with Director Conrad Wirth to discuss the possibility that the campus might be transferred to the NPS "without cost through the reversion of title to the United States." Wirth confirmed NPS interest in the property by asking for official sanction of negotiations from the Secretary of the Interior.²³ An NPS team met with the trustees and inspected the grounds and buildings in January 1958 and unanimously agreed that the property should be incorporated into the Monument.²⁴ Later in the year the trustees

considered an offer from the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church to make Storer part of its educational system but rejected the offer, apparently because it would have taken the school outside of its Baptist tradition.²⁵ Instead, in June 1959, Bradley Nash notified Director Wirth that the board of trustees was “willing to consider whatever proposition the Service may be able to make concerning the acquisition of the College buildings and grounds.”²⁶ While the NPS made appraisals and studied the logistics and legalities of the acquisition, the board of trustees worked out a compromise to uphold the stipulations of the college mission and charter. In April 1960 they voted to merge Storer into historically black Virginia Union College in Richmond to provide at least some symbolic continuity. Alderson-Broadus College in Phillipi, West Virginia, was also designated as an institutional “beneficiary” to satisfy Storer’s original charter within the state. Registrarial records would be maintained at Virginia Union and more locally at Shepherd College to provide for continued alumni access.²⁷

One of the last projects begun by the special research team prepared for the acquisition of Storer College. Research Historian Alfred Mongin was assigned to the project.²⁸ Mongin noted uneven interest among park staff in the interpretation and resources of Storer College, including its archival records. He surveyed them with the Registrar of Storer College June Newcomer and Architect Franzen, whom he later noted in the research report that, “[m]ore than any individual . . . recognized the archival value of the fast evaporating store of primary records of Storer College [. . .].”²⁹ The college retained a wealth of archival documentation, including a miscellany of papers and correspondence concerning budgets, fund raising, faculty and student activities, construction, and operating details of a college community, as well as books and

reference works appropriate for the park library. Mongin, perhaps due to a lack of overall park interest in addition to a lack of storage, recommended depositing the archive with West Virginia University.³⁰

Storer College had also compiled a museum collection of American Negro handicrafts that were dispersed with its other assets during the sale of the college. No further details of the contents of the collection can still be found, but the American Museum of Natural History in New York City contacted the park about it in 1964 on a tip from the Virginia Historical Society. The museum was searching for objects in preparation for an exhibit on African history. Prentice replied to the inquiry that reconstructing where the objects went after auction would be nearly impossible.³¹

At the same time the trustees made their decision for the educational disposition of the college, Senator Jennings Randolph came to the aid of the NPS to provide for the legal and fiscal disposition of the property. He introduced legislation, signed July 14, 1960, to allow the federal government to repurchase its former property. More than a year later the park saw “limited action” and “considerable difficulty” in carrying out the acquisition. Much of the delay had to do with legal complications of establishing title trails and identifying up to seven acres of privately held lots within the larger Storer property, which held up official property appraisals and purchase negotiations. Additionally, the NPS Chief of Lands reported, trustee Jesse W. Lewis was proving “rather difficult to deal with,” apparently because he was pressing for a higher price.³² Eventually the 1960 legislation proved inadequate to scale the legal hurdle inherited with the nineteenth-century title language, and the Storer property was acquired in August 1962 by “friendly condemnation proceedings.” The result was accompanied by a

\$205,000 payment to the Storer board of trustees, which was divided equally between Storer's two designate institutions.³³

An advisory group representing a wide cross-section of NPS personnel pronounced unanimous agreement that the Storer property should be incorporated into the system. For the Monument, it provided support for historic themes and a panoramic vantage point to interpret them, protected a prominent area from development "out of harmony with the atmosphere of the National Monument and the Harpers Ferry community," and provided a large area to locate administrative, maintenance and quarters facilities. It was also "adaptable to important uses of ... several NPS interests beyond the local level." Planners envisioned the former college buildings housing an eastern counterpart to the NPS training center established in 1957 at Yosemite. Additionally, Harpers Ferry NM had been used as the relocation office for the Director and for Region Five in a 1956 "Operation Alert Exercise," and the Storer campus would be designated as a permanent "'always ready' emergency relocation" facility.³⁴

Even as action was taken on the vision of what Harpers Ferry could be, the existing maintenance issues for the core park area threatened to overwhelm. Several buildings waiting for stabilization in the Lower Town were in dire shape and a wall of Building 43 collapsed on March 29, 1960 due to a series of overly moist seasonal conditions.³⁵ Architects had asked repeatedly for stabilization of the roof and building, but "a certain number of people who have a romantic attachment for ruins wanted to keep it as it looked two days ago."³⁶ The Historic Structures Report (1960) noted, after the collapse, that the building was no longer satisfactory as a ruin and that visitors would be apt to mistake its appearance for war damage.³⁷ The threat of imminent collapse in other

buildings forced the park to shift its priorities and limited funds from restoration and development projects to preservation.³⁸ Franzen requested and finally received a full structural evaluation of park buildings, the Episcopal Church ruins, the Stone Steps, inlet structures on Virginus Island, and walls on Maryland Heights.³⁹ The resulting work represented the beginning of a change in philosophy toward considering the fragility and longevity of park resources rather than their aesthetic qualities alone. Further, it afforded greater weight to the recommendations of the architect's office, empowering its authority on park structural care.

In addition to NPS stewardship, the care afforded to the structures became the interest of private groups. The NPS maintained the Episcopal Church as ruins due to insufficient evidence for, and as an inexpensive alternative to, complete restoration. The site also epitomized the aesthetic for romantic ruins.⁴⁰ The building became dilapidated under private ownership after its congregation moved to a new location atop Camp Hill in 1895. The NPS held that, "... it presents a picturesque and attractive picture of great interest to visitors, many of whom have commented quite favorably upon it."⁴¹ Not everyone agreed on the appropriateness of the treatment – particularly for a religious site – and in 1960 the Right Bishop of the Episcopalian Diocese of West Virginia argued that visitors would interpret the site as evidence of church negligence. He requested restoration of the church so that services might be held and "proper respect" given.⁴² Laypeople also contacted the park to offer interior furnishings toward restoration, but were refused.⁴³ The Diocese and the NPS compromised through joint collaboration on an interpretive wayside panel that placed responsibility for its condition on subsequent owners, not the Diocese.⁴⁴ Stabilization of the site was completed in August 1961.⁴⁵

The situation at the Harper House between the NPS and the Garden Club proved to be an ongoing source of contention. Despite reassurance from staff on progress on the furnishings and historical plans, the Club remained unconvinced and insisted on expedient action. The ladies complained to the Regional Office, which scolded the park,

We urge as prompt action as possible on this study in order that this long-postponed pet project of the Harpers Ferry ladies be not further delayed. Some of the oldest and best friends of this Monument and the National Park Service are among the members of the Harpers Ferry Women's Club and they will be greatly disappointed if we cannot offer them a definite plan which they can initiate this spring. An attractive flower garden will, of course, constitute a real asset to the area.⁴⁶

The Club wanted the house open, in part, to raise funds during its House and Garden Tour. In its place Architect Franzen produced an exhibit in Building 3 displaying architectural phases of reconstruction of Harper House that opened on April 23 and 24, 1960. Proceeds from the overall tour went toward furnishings.⁴⁷ In a meeting the following year, park staff presented the ladies with a preliminary furnishings plan but the Garden Council disapproved of it. They wanted greater freedom of selection in the period of refurbishing and, in particular, "expressed a keen dislike" for the plan to re-install a historically-accurate wallpaper. The paper was a highlight of Harper House, a mythological design of a black background and gold figures in a *Les Fêtes Grecques* pattern made by Dufour and Leroy in 1824.⁴⁸ Once the park men reassured the ladies of their professionalism and commitment to historical accuracy as evidenced by other NPS restorations, the meeting ended on a productive note.⁴⁹ Several years passed before action on refurbishing was taken, during which time the club collected items through locals' heirloom donations and from stores with the proceeds of the Historic House and Garden Tour. The ladies also complained to the park of its laxness and expressed great

frustration. Ultimately, the NPS refurnished the Harper House to a boarding house on the basis of sufficient evidence about the McGraw family, even though it did not live there from 1859-1865.⁵⁰

As the park explored its options for interpreting the history of Harper House and its context in Harpers Ferry, the NPS was also deciding on the role and potential of archeology to explore the subsurface story of the area. In the early 1960s, the NPS still concentrated its archeological efforts on the investigation of prehistoric Indian cultures but claimed primary responsibility for the development of historical archeology in the United States. It used archeology toward the “full and proper interpretation” of many of its parks, most notably to find specific points with historic resonance.⁵¹

Archeological work at Harpers Ferry, as at other NPS parks at the time, determined the location and layout of specific sites at a determinate period toward development of interpretive goals. The excavation of Virginus Island continued the summer of 1960 at the U.S. Rifle Works on Lower Hall Island in preparation for extensive future investigation.⁵² Archeologist Larrabee noted that perhaps the most important results, from an archeological viewpoint, related to the destruction of the U.S. Rifle Works between 1884 and 1887 and subsequent changes in the bed of Lake Quigley.⁵³ The 1961 excavations fulfilled the goals of establishing the shape and limits of the island and tying together the scattered finds,⁵⁴ but also signaled a shift in perception about the potential of the site as historical reports were revised to include new information. A tour of the island opened to the public in 1960.⁵⁵ The park printed locally the *Virginus Island Self-Guided History-Nature Trail* booklet and the Eastern National Parks and Monuments Association (ENPMA) supported a new printing in late 1961. The

“excellent” trail supported a successful environmental education program and ideas for a natural history museum nearby.⁵⁶

As Harpers Ferry NM employees worked to stabilize and develop Lower Town sites, they were kept apprized of discussions of the anticipated use of the Storer property and of the halting progress to acquire it. In February 1962 Supt. Prentice noted that the park would probably hold responsibility for the maintenance and protection of the grounds but “probably will have nothing to do with the running of the school.”⁵⁷ In his report outlining recommendations for adapting the Storer campus for NPS uses, Chief Architect John Cabot urged consideration of the larger context and of the implications for the adjacent Monument.

In considering facilities required for the Interpretive [Training] Center at Storer College, the total development and operation of the Monument is intricately involved. As the present time, there has been no general development, other than historic preservation, at Harpers Ferry and, as I understand it, there are no PCP's for future development. These programs have been awaiting a final decision on the acquisition and ultimate use of the Storer College property.⁵⁸

Finally the federal purchase option was filed in July and by September. Prentice announced that Russell K. Grater, a western region naturalist, had been appointed as the new school's administrator and would help decide the extent of the Monument's involvement with the facility. An administrative assistant and two instructors, a naturalist and an historian, joined the initial staff for a first three-week trial training session that opened March 25, 1963. Twenty men, primarily park naturalists, and two visiting students from Venezuela made up the first class. A regular schedule planned to begin in the fall would consist of nine-week spring and fall sessions, with special sessions for the Washington office interspersed.⁵⁹ The Monument maintenance crew was ready to work Saturday overtime to get the dormitory ready for the students, and Prentice asked for “all

personnel ...help to get the school off to a good start.” Grater planned to use the Monument as a source of field problems for the trainees, and their work would “help formulate a picture of Harpers Ferry.”⁶⁰

Conversion of the college grounds to Monument and training center use was just beginning when the first students arrived. Chief architect Cabot prefaced his recommendations for the work by noting that special consideration should be given to recognize the college history. “A strong feeling is present that in any projected development of the College property some physical memorial to Storer College must remain. It is one of the earliest of the Negro colleges, reported to be the first of its kind south of the Mason-Dixon line.”⁶¹ Anthony Hall, an administration and classroom building, was judged structurally sound and suggested as a suitable “remembrance” and “symbol” for the alumni.⁶² A room in the Lockwood House was designated for the Storer Alumni Association to consolidate college materials, and the Association was asked to participate in interpreting the history of the college. Bronze plaques were planned to describe the past as well as present use of the campus, including one at the entrance welcoming the visitor to “the former Storer College.”⁶³ The training center was dedicated April 17, 1964.⁶⁴

Despite the obligation for preservation, a number of Storer buildings were deemed too badly deteriorated to restore, and some suggestion existed in a 1962 preliminary General Development Plan to demolish Anthony Hall. The Plan was circulated for comments in June with the awareness that the Director’s office was “very anxious to have the school start this fall.” The unusually quick action was deemed possible by expediting

relatively minor remodeling work on the two buildings which all agreed should be retained--Cook Hall and Anthony Library. Supt. Prentice objected to the Plan.

The demolition of Anthony Hall may adversely effect our public relations with Storer College alumni. Also, many congressmen who favored the Service acquisition are of the impression that here was a ready-built College and that most of the cost was an investment in the buildings. Yet we are proposing to leave only a part of the foundations of one of the buildings of the College proper.⁶⁵

The Regional Director supported Prentice and further objected to the Plan's vision for giving the training center "a retreat-type, intimate atmosphere" by restricting access. "Our interpretive program needs to provide training in an atmosphere of public use and service."⁶⁶ These immediate issues were resolved August 20 in a meeting in Director Wirth's office.

Cook Hall and Anthony Library are to be remodeled and rehabilitated in time for the first training session [. . .]. Anthony Hall should be remodeled and rehabilitated for classroom and perhaps other training center needs as determined after further study. It may be possible to include Monument headquarters in this structure. Commitments by the Service during Congressional hearings indicate that this building will be used for the training center. The new building shown on the Master Plan is not envisioned [. . .]. The idea of seclusion for the training center is overstressed in the design analysis as Monument visitors will circulate along the trails to Jefferson Rock, etc.⁶⁷

The officially authorized plans placed the training center complex in a dynamic relationship with the Monument and its day-to-day visitor operations.

The centennial celebration of the Civil War presented Monument staff with another benchmark incentive for historical and scenic development. NPS historians region-wide, Harpers Ferry included, were preparing a survey of Civil War research needs.⁶⁸ Preparation, however, was also tinged with trial-and-error of the interpretive products to which the research would be applied in the historical parks. Despite the huge showing and elaborate staging of the battle of the First Manassas in 1961 the Regional

Office elected to dissuade future re-enactments due to the expense and involvement of the NPS, safety concerns, and damage brought by the events. It decided, instead, to allow commemorative events in a lower key such as a parade in Civil War uniform, lowering of flags, or demonstrations of artillery actions.⁶⁹ Exceptions would be made, if “inspirational and interpretive benefits are derived.”⁷⁰

At Harpers Ferry, work was being done for a long-term view of interpretation of the Civil War theme. Development of the outdoors storytelling concentrated on a trail on Bolivar Heights. In addition to historical research, archeological surveys by Archeologist Larrabee confirmed the history of military activity while excavation determined the layout of the breastworks and rifle trench. He recommended restoration of a short section of trench and vista clearings to give an impression of what soldiers saw in 1862.⁷¹

Mrs. Leeds K. Riely of the Jefferson County Civil War Centennial Committee and staff met in early 1961 to organize the activities. They agreed to feature a simulated arsenal burning and for appropriately uniformed re-enactors to play out the Confederate advance on Union retreat.⁷² The park celebrated the Centennial of the Civil War at Harpers Ferry in September 1962, though it was not quite finished with its plans for interpreting the theme. The day commemorated the burning of the arsenal by Union troops and the September 15, 1862 surrender of Federal troops and property to General Stonewall Jackson. Private funding sources such as the EPNMA, the John Brown’s Civil War Showcase, and the Hilltop House Hotel sponsored events including Harpers Ferry Day, a parade, flag ceremony, shooting competition at the John Brown’s Civil War Showcase and firing of a Civil War cannon.⁷³

Longtime Monument advocate Mary Mish was probably well aware of the changes taking place in Harpers Ferry, for she was responsible for some of them. She was a guest at "Harpers Ferry Day" on September 7, 1962 when Joseph Kaylor, Director of the Maryland Department of Forests and Parks presented the state's contribution to the Monument. Another ceremonial more than substantive event, Harpers Ferry Day was originally scheduled to commemorate the centennial of the 1862 Maryland campaign and to celebrate the land presentation and the dedication of the Monument's new visitor center in the Stagecoach Inn in building 45. As Supt. Prentice wryly observed to his regional director a month before the ceremony, "we are, of course, not much nearer to the completion of the Stagecoach Inn than we were last spring. There are no approved plans as yet. Presently, we have plenty of VIP's programmed for September 7 but no program. In the absence of any other suggestions we will dream up some innocuous ceremony which will suffice to fill the vacuum."⁷⁴

While the new visitor center was far from completion, the Maryland land acquisition project was also incomplete, but at least its lawyers were near the end of the tedious process of searching and obtaining title rights. The Washington County Historical Society sponsored the last case in Washington County court December 18, 1962, and the final deed was presented to the federal government in 1963. The Department of Justice finally declared the title clear for acceptance in March 1965.⁷⁵ The Storer College property was crucial in allowing the Monument to proceed in its development, and likewise, the Maryland Heights addition of 763 acres more than doubled its size and fulfilled the Monument's original mandate. Some question occasionally arose as to whether the Monument could be considered legally established

without ownership of the land within the approved Maryland boundaries. The Monument's official status was not held to this strict criteria, and it was considered established on May 13, 1955 when the West Virginia acreage was legally accepted.⁷⁶ But with the addition of both properties, the NPS asked for a formal recognition of its status and on May 29, 1963, received a Congressionally designated name change to Harpers Ferry National Historical Park to more accurately represent the site's evolution.⁷⁷

The benefits of the Storer campus acquisition for the park were often overshadowed by the installation of Washington office and service-wide facilities and the park's consequently increased caretaking responsibilities. Construction of an underground "relocation center" near Anthony Hall began in the summer of 1963. Officials clarified its purpose following inquiries from both Prentice and Grater. While it would be "satisfactory as a fallout shelter," it was "not primarily being provided for that reason. It is the equivalent of a Command Post or Relocation Center for the Director, his immediate staff and their families in case of an all-out alert or imminent danger." Plans formed to stock the facility with locked, though not classified, "duplicate files of general and individual park civil defense files," as well as "necessary emergency supplies and provide for radio communication." Prentice and Grater were granted permission to use the shelter for other "constructive uses" at their discretion so long as it was available in an emergency.⁷⁸

Portions of the campus grounds were also intended to be at the primary discretion of the park in order to relieve overcrowded and incompatible park operations in Lower Town by providing space for offices, staff quarters and a maintenance building.⁷⁹ Though there was some initial speculation that park administrative offices might be



Fig. 18: Lewis Nichols (recorder), Bradley Nash (guest), Walter Garrison (President, Town Council), Front row: Supt. Prentice, Senator Randolph, Mayor Gilbert Perry, early 1960s (NHF-3980, Harpers Ferry NHP).

located in Anthony Hall or Library, they remained scattered throughout the park until the late 1970s.⁸⁰ Three, 1,300 square foot, ranch-style homes were planned for employee quarters, but these were not primarily for park staff. The most dramatic and immediate change for the park was the construction of a new maintenance facility that allowed maintenance storage, parking and shopwork to be moved out of the downtown historic area. Bids for the three houses and for a concrete block “utility” or maintenance building measuring 40’ x 122’ with a 40’ x 100’ lumber shelter were opened in January 1964. The new building featured a full carpenter shop for custom work required for historic structures. It was located in an area to the southwest and “well-shielded” from the college buildings.⁸¹

When construction and rehab work on the campus got under way Edith Perry, wife of Harpers Ferry’s mayor, described the bustle of activity in a letter to her friend Mary Mish.

Have you heard of the progress the Park Service is making? At Storer, they have torn out the interior of Cooke Hall—the newest stone building—redesigning the layout of rooms. They are relaying all water pipe lines and sewerage. They are tearing down Brackett Hall now and soon begin tearing down Mosher Hall (just inside the gate). Saddest of all they have begun the tearing down process of The Castle [. . .]. We feel like a changing world over here.⁸²

The NPS had long identified a need to raze the so-called Pseudo-Scottish Castle to restore a historic vista from Bolivar Heights, but it was not demolished until 1963. The Castle was deemed unsuitable for offices or a visitor center and the constant break-ins from looters posed a security concern.⁸³ The community was sad to see the castle go: “During the Hallam’s residence, local residents were frequently entertained at ‘the Castle’ for summer fêtes and ice cream parties. It is this pleasant remembrance which induces a nostalgic interest in the fate of the castle.”⁸⁴ One former Harpers Ferry

resident, who wrote to the park about the building many years after the demolition, remembers sneaking in and seeing beautiful furniture, a wall bookshelf containing doll furniture, duck pin bowling alley, closet full of old hats, and a mural of angels and cherubs.⁸⁵ Salvaged materials from the building were later used to repair steps between High and Potomac Streets.⁸⁶

Just as in the case of the Castle and in Lower Town, upon acquiring the Storer buildings, the NPS confronted the problems of restoring them for interpretive and office spaces and in addressing public investment in the historical college – both personal and financial. Corina Higginson Rogers offered the NPS \$50,000 to restore one of the principal Federal Houses on the Storer College campus as a memorial to Thomas Wentworth Higginson, her ancestor and loyal supporter to John Brown.⁸⁷ Rogers agreed to the park's recommendation of Lockwood House, since lifetime tenants occupied the Morrell and Brackett Houses.⁸⁸ She stipulated that, "it is essential that the property be used for purposes that will bring a maximum number of visitors to it," and recommended a visitor center to take advantage of its views, history and public interest.⁸⁹ Staff ideas for Lockwood included a study center for black history, Headquarters for the Freedman's Bureau, office space, library and museum capacities, or historical museum for the story of post-Civil War Negro education.⁹⁰ Rogers' donations came in several installments, beginning in December 1962, and were frequently accompanied by admonitions for the slowness of the restoration process.⁹¹

Despite the donation, the park received external pressure not to prioritize the project too highly. The NPS sought matching grants to supplement Rogers' donation, which was insufficient for completing the exterior and interior restorations estimated at

\$222,500.⁹² The Regional Office, however, resisted further fundraising, “In our judgment, the Lockwood House does not seem as historically or architecturally important as, for instance, the buildings in Independence Square.”⁹³ Excavation around the periphery of the house and in the west lawn revealed few features. Contract Archeologist William Hershey noted that the artifacts, dating to the period of the school and boarding house, were “mostly junk.”⁹⁴ Architect Franzen, however, seemed to use the Historic Structures Report developed in 1963-64 to prove its importance. It proposed using the building to interpret the Civil War at Harpers Ferry (following earlier proposals for a branch museum) or to discuss the beginnings of Negro education. The latter would present the site as “a nucleus from which the Storer College plant grew.”⁹⁵ Additionally, “The history of this school’s operation spans almost the entire period from negro freedom to the Supreme Court decision on desegregation... [It] might behoove us to analyze the potential significance of this negro college and its effect on this minority group that represents more than 10% of our total population.”⁹⁶ Rogers expected timely progress, but the NPS could not decide on how to present it.

The problem, however, is this: whether to restore the house as of 1859, when it was the Paymaster’s House, or as of 1867 when it became Storer College and undoubtably major structural changes were made. The decision then really depends on what is to be the major interpretive theme for the building – Harpers Ferry 1859 or Negro Education after the Civil War.”⁹⁷

The final decision to interpret the house to 1867 rather than 1859 with the rest of the park reflected tugs toward broadening the interpretive scheme and incorporating the Storer College historical sites.

Acquiring the John Brown Fort itself was one of the incentives for acquiring the Storer grounds. Supt. Prentice later called it “the most important and historic building in

the Park.” In planning for the 1859 centennial Supt. Anderson submitted renewed pleas that efforts be made to move the fort in time for the event.⁹⁸ As the NPS had expressed in the planning process, the restoration of Lower Town to the 1859 period needed the John Brown Fort so as to bring a sense of historic authenticity and poignancy for visitors. In fact, various NPS officials as early as 1954 had written with some urgency that acquisition and removal of the Fort back to the Lower Town should be a first priority for the Monument. Great care was taken to initiate and maintain good relations with the B&O Railroad in hopes that the company might eventually agree to cede the original site of the “fort.” One possibility involved exchange of the former engine house site adjacent to Lower Town for C&O canal property near Cumberland.⁹⁹ The legislation of 1960 included language to allow the acquisition of the site through such an exchange, and the EODC prepared estimates in 1963 for removing the railroad fill to the amount of \$87,800 and restoring the John Brown Fort on the original location for \$62,500.¹⁰⁰

In an April 1962 survey of the newly acquired campus, WASO representatives anticipated the day-to-day problems the John Brown Fort might cause. Supt. Prentice argued that its location on the Storer campus confused visitors unaware of the Fort’s travels. He believed, further, that shifting it back to Lower Town would “remove the only important attraction from the Storer College Campus and thus drastically eliminate the hordes of visitors and their automobiles from this location.”¹⁰¹ The supervisor of the Mather Training Center shared Prentice’s frustration at the pace of progress. Writing to the Regional Director in 1965, he complained that planning and operations at the training center were “greatly hampered” by the location of the John Brown Fort on the campus. “Ever since I first came to Harpers Ferry, I have constantly heard the statement that ‘one

of these days the old John Brown Fort is going to be moved back into the Old Town'.... I would like to learn what is in the foreseeable future for the 'Fort.'"¹⁰² Historian Charlotte J. Fairbairn also reported that "visitor interest in the building's history is extremely high.... return of the historic relic to its original foundations near the Potomac will end an epic Odyssey and begin a new chapter in the story of John Brown's Fort."¹⁰³

But the Camp Hill location was its own attraction, and some members of the Storer community felt the John Brown Fort should stay on campus.¹⁰⁴ In 1913 McDonald and Storer College issued a pamphlet asking for donations for artifacts to create a well-stocked "relic" on the campus. McDonald also corresponded with descendants of John Brown for loans and donations of items to add to the museum. According to the files of the Storer College Trustees, donations came in small checks mostly from McDonald and friends of the college and slowly built a collection of artifacts and books. When the college sold its assets in 1960, the collection was auctioned off to pay debts and any items on loan were returned to their owners.¹⁰⁵ In the early 1960s, local concessionaires operated the Fort as a private souvenir shop.¹⁰⁶

During this period, another site associated with John Brown was brought to NPS attention—the Kennedy or John Brown farm across the Potomac in Washington County where Brown stayed while preparing for his raid. In early June 1965 a Hagerstown real estate agent notified both Mary Mish and Supt. Prentice that the "John Brown farm" was for sale. Continuing her vigilance on behalf of the park even after the Maryland Heights transfer was completed, Mish immediately telephoned Maryland Congressman Charles Mathias for help in acquiring the property for the Park. As she then notified Supt. Prentice, "the results you have seen in the newspapers: Mr. Mathias contacted Secretary

the Interior] Udall, urging that the John Brown Farm be made a part of the Harpers
ry NHP.”¹⁰⁷ For Mish this was a second chance and she was anxious to take
antage of it. The farm had been offered for sale in the 1950s while she was president
he Washington County Historical Society. She was unable to acquire it for the NPS
n because the Historical Society was over-committed at the time in negotiating the
ropriation for Maryland Heights and the purchase of the Hager House as well as two
roperties for Antietam NMP.¹⁰⁸ Instead, the African-American International
otherhood Paternal Order of Elks (IBPOEW) bought the 253-acre farm, calling it a
ational shrine.” They began converting it for use as a recreation and retreat center
ding several cottages and a meeting hall. In 1961 they wrote to their Maryland
agressman asking for NPS assistance in converting the original farmhouse into a
useum.¹⁰⁹ In 1963 they tried again, contacting Senators Brewster and Beall for help in
ving the farm recognized as a national historic site in time for the centennial of the
nancipation Proclamation. The NPS rejected the application on the grounds that the
PS Advisory Board did not include the farm in its recommended list of Civil War sites
d that the nearby park already included a John Brown museum and the John Brown
t.¹¹⁰ The Elks appealed the rejection citing President Kennedy’s support “of freedom
r all people and the end of segregation” and his organization’s conviction that the farm
ould be a focal point to the very principles of freedom,” but he was again politely
jected.¹¹¹

By 1965 the Elks decided to sell the property and through their agent again
ntacted the NPS. Supt. Prentice thanked Mish for ““getting the ball rolling”” through
olitical channels, but indicated that he hoped the house and several acres could be sold

separately “since we are not interested in the total 253 acres.” Mish had a broader view and replied that, to the contrary, she thought that “the entire 253 acres would be desirable” for future park needs and to secure the farm in its original form.¹¹² Both Supt. Prentice from below and Sec. Udall from above notified the Northeast Regional Office in Philadelphia that the property was suddenly available again. But despite the apparently obvious significance and relevance of the property to Harpers Ferry NHP, the NPS was unable to expedite the bureaucratic process. A study was ordered to evaluate the “suitability and feasibility” of annexing the property,¹¹³ but by the time it was completed in late October, the property had been sold for \$25,000.¹¹⁴ The study concluded that “the Kennedy Farmhouse associated with John Brown warrants preservation; but we feel it is not feasible to make the site part of Harpers Ferry NHP because of access problems, the distance of the farm from Harpers Ferry and the above average costs for protection and operation.”¹¹⁵

Though Supt. Prentice registered his support for a broader sanction of park priorities and interpretation, he was often stymied by demands of day-to-day operations or over-riding priorities of the regional and national offices. Progress at Harpers Ferry was apparent to those who had seen the Lower Town streetscapes in the early 1950s, but it was not always apparent to visitors or even to NPS staff impatient with the pace of development. In his “statement of objectives for 1963” Superintendent Prentice emphasized that the Storer and Maryland acquisitions “have thrown a considerable burden on the Park staff” not to mention its budget accounts across all functions-- interpretation, protection, maintenance and operations.¹¹⁶ By the mid-1960s, visitors to Harpers Ferry received a pamphlet and introduction to the park through an audio-visual

program, "What to See and Do." The reconstruction and development program enabled them to visit exhibits in a few buildings and peer at window displays along Shenandoah Street. Most visitors followed the self-guided walking tours led by minimalist signs and a brochure, and many attended guided tours in the summer around Virginus Island. The Heights areas, however, received fewer visitors despite established paths and few journeyed to the Appalachian Trail.¹¹⁷ One visitor, however, was so disappointed in her visit to the park, that she wrote to express her dismay describing a litter-strewn, "ragged" and "unkept" path to Jefferson Rock, or to "what we assumed was the rock. There was no marker to indicate that it was." Following a road sign to John Brown's Fort she found herself on a dead end road with no place to park or turn around. "Unless you can follow the example of the Rockfellow [sic] Foundation in their restoration of Williamsburg, Virginia and keep the scene at least presentable you should try to keep sight-seers away instead of handing out the fancy brochures." In a rather lengthy reply, Superintendent Prentice defended his post and revealed his frustrations with its inherent difficulties beginning with the impossibility of making personal contact with each person in the "continual press of visitors" when, in the open town setting there was no single entrance point and no way to control access. Despite a nine year NPS presence, "what you see is only the beginning... Two or three years were spent just cleaning up...we have not had the time to make all the careful checks necessary so that our next step will be in the right direction and that what we tell you is the correct information." In conclusion he wrote, Harpers Ferry "was a town for mechanics, not state officials. . . this will never be another Williamsburg—it never was."¹¹⁸

The ever-expanding interpretive and resources management duties at Harpers Ferry led to arguments for re-shaping the interpretive division. The interpretive division consisted of two permanent historians and a seasonal ranger-historian and ranger naturalist. By 1964 the park argued for upgrading the Supervising Historian position, "We believe that now is the time to recognize the importance of this division and provide for proper adjustment in grade commensurate with the scope and job importance."¹¹⁹ The 1965 Interpretive Prospectus reflected the major changes going on in NPS interpretation and at the park. Team-written by Wescoat Wolfe from the park, Frank Barnes (Northeast Office), and Wayne Bryant and Marc Sagan (Washington Office), it outlined both proposals for stepping up interpretation at the park and the staff positions necessary to support them. The park was only about a decade old, but, "the interpretive program today is felt to be less than adequate and a modernization of it will bring it up to date with present thinking, new interpretive techniques and visitor demands."¹²⁰ The park had operated primarily on the assumption that visitors came to see the historic town and from curiosity about John Brown. The IP, however, fleshed out eight themes and an interpretive plan using a variety of media techniques for each one; many of these ideas came to fruition. It indicated several main stops, with more signs, window exhibits and tours featuring greater depth and content. The (1) John Brown theme would be told in a film in Buildings 9 and 10 with displays of related objects from the park collection and a diorama. The Fort and points scattered across the Armory and Arsenal were significant for "necessary repetitive coverage." Telling about the (2) Civil War theme would concentrate on Bolivar Heights and signage on Loudoun and Maryland Heights and a tour sheet. The Master Armorer's House would present the (3) industry ("the lifeblood of

Harpers Ferry”) theme through panels and museum objects with additional interpretation on Virginius Island. The Point was identified as best for presenting the (4) transportation theme of railroads and waterpower. It would also site the (5) natural setting theme, in addition to Jefferson Rock and “in passing” on the three Heights. Interpretive shelters would present information that visitors could further experience on a tour. The (6) Life at Harpers Ferry theme was “an important sub-theme of the overall interpretation” and window displays in the buildings lining Shenandoah Street, as well as up High and Potomac streets were recommended. The (7) theme was the Decline of the Town, then discussed in a flood exhibit in Building 35. Planners recommended shelving the exhibit, installing flood markers on the exterior of the building, and incorporating the theme into a Virginius Island trail guide. Finally, it indicated that as a “minor theme” the (8) Negro Education theme would be limited to refurnishing one room of Lockwood House as a look-in exhibit and supplying an audio station. (Incidentally, this is the only theme where manpower is discussed, and it is to dissuade refurnishing more than a look-in exhibit in one room). Through audio stations, interpretive shelters, demonstrations, evening programs and conducted hikes, the new interpretive presentations would fill out earlier recommendations.¹²¹ To support all this interpretive work, the IP approved of upgrading the Supervising Historian position and recommended additional new positions to staff the open buildings and audiovisual programs.¹²² Intended as a plan for the next five to ten years, the IP anticipated that redesigning parking areas and the abolition of vehicular traffic in Lower Town would affect interpretation. Also, “since the threat of flood limits stifles all interpretive planning, a professional study of the possibility of future floods should be made.”¹²³

Concurrent to fielding recommendations for expanding its repertoire, the interpretive division was busy with several ongoing projects. The move of the Visitors Center to the Stagecoach Inn by 1964 enabled the park to focus on the industrial theme in the Master Armorer's House. The new focus addressed the role played by the armory, arsenal and rifle works in a range of media including wall exhibits, demonstrations, tours and signs and tied together multiple park themes in one place.¹²⁴ Installation of the exhibits, however, had to wait until 1969 for completion of an exterior restoration and reconstruction of the interior with historic restoration of the first floor.¹²⁵

The Interpretive Division continued to manage the restoration of Harper House and the complicated public relations associated with it and other projects. The Shenandoah-Potomac Garden Council in 1964 expressed great frustration with how the park handled its donations, but the situation as a whole continued to illustrate issues of community relations, collections management, interpretive planning, and a small staff stretched to accommodate many projects. The Council did not trust the park to act expeditiously and went "over [park] heads to request an audience with the Regional Office." The Council requested a formal Loan Agreement with the park to insure that items purchased or donated would stay in Harper House or otherwise return to the club. It further demanded that the house remain open and staffed with the NPS assuming full and complete liability for the furnishings.¹²⁶ The resulting Memorandum of Agreement mitigated the positions of the park and the Council. It established, most significantly, that all donated items became property of the NPS and would generally stay in Harper House.¹²⁷ The process set a precedent at Harpers Ferry by establishing boundaries for public involvement in park projects and the authority of park staff over them.

While the Council wanted a historical house setting to decorate, the park needed it to present a substantive statement about social customs and stratification. NPS staff, moreover, disagreed with the club over the monetary and interpretive values for the donated objects. Already the park was aware of the effects of uncontrolled collecting. The park slowed its acquisition until the preparation of permanent John Brown exhibits as, "The Museum study collection is already burdened with objects of questionable value in the Park, many of them having no exhibit value and little historic importance."¹²⁸ With such sensitivity to incoming objects, Asst. Regional Director J. Carlisle Crouch advised Supt. Prentice to ask the ladies to add floor coverings and window drapes to the furnishings on hand, "These should go far to alleviate some of the rather bleak look that now prevails on the interior. The furnishings are admittedly not 'quality;' on the other hand, neither was the McGraw family, whose known furnishings were adopted as the basis of this Furnishings Plan; neither, perhaps, was the town itself."¹²⁹ Harper House, however, still required basic protection but posed a security problem beyond what its current staff could manage. The Regional Office and the superintendent downplayed local concern over security despite Architect Franzen's and others' suggestions for installing a curator's apartment.¹³⁰ Finally, Harper House opened to the public in 1965 and the Council staffed it at least one day per week.¹³¹

Public donations of money were also accompanied by expectations. When the restoration of Lockwood House finally began in November 1965 to the 1867 structure, it was after the Regional Office urged the park to act after concern that Mrs. Rogers might read the lag as an unpardonable delay. Balancing park interests in interpreting the site and Mrs. Rogers' desire to see progress before her death, a planning team designed a

temporary exhibit to interpret the site during restoration.¹³² Ultimately, Rogers' donation funded research, a new roof and the removal of the upper two floors.¹³³ A dedicatory plaque on Lockwood House was installed in 1967 after much disagreement and discussion between the NPS and Mrs. Rogers over its wording.¹³⁴

Harper House and Lockwood House exemplified the problems concerning historic structures and the NPS re-assessed its approaches. As the Asst. Director wrote:

Experience with the Harper House, the Schuyler House [at Saratoga National Historical Park] and several others indicates that the Service might re-examine the policies and practices involved. We appreciate the economy of having someone else acquire the historic furnishings and the advantages of involving local groups in the work of the Park. On the other hand, to what extent are the savings in furnish costs offset by the staff time required in giving continual advice and guidance? To what extent are the good public relations of cooperating with local groups counteracted by the misunderstandings that seem endemic to these arrangements? Can the Service afford or overcome the lower standards of interpretation that often result when amateur groups take over the operation of Service historic houses?¹³⁵

The park and Museum Branch agreed that re-evaluation of the policy was necessary to maintain interpretive standards. The NPS decreed that it should not automatically refurnish buildings and should liven up its interpretation. It found that a huge amount of restoration was going on, "Everyone is in the act now," and that it was important to realize how a sense of authenticity in these spaces could be achieved, as by including smells and excluding NPS uniforms.¹³⁶ The Service had three primary ways of using its historic structures: restoration of structures significant to a historic scene and adapting the interior for a non-interpretive use, use of the interior for visitors services function, and refurnishing and exhibiting a building. Interpretive design began to think experimentally, as in terms of historic buildings as stage settings with dramatic action to personalize interpretation.¹³⁷

The successes of the park development programs were received well by the public. At least one visitor approved of the park restoration, stating in 1966, "If this article seems to recommend a tour of Harpers Ferry National Historical Park in unreserved terms, it was meant to. It's refreshing to see tax dollars being spent by the government in such a worthwhile and constructive fashion."¹³⁸ Park work and increased numbers of visitors to Harpers Ferry also inspired the creation of privately-owned museums outside the park throughout the 1960s such as the John Brown Wax Museum on High Street and the Civil War Showcase at the site of the modern day KOA Campground. The park recommended the museums to visitors as further attractions.¹³⁹ The Wax Museum, for example, was reviewed favorably: "So well-staged has the whole exhibit been, that if it isn't living history, in the making, it is then its first cousin."¹⁴⁰ Another museum located fifty feet from the park property, whose owners operated other commercial establishments, as well, displayed a range of objects associated with Harpers Ferry and John Brown.¹⁴¹ The "Civil War Showcase" opened as a privately-owned series of eight attractions located adjacently to the Bolivar Heights section. These sites, as did shops up the hill, capitalized on the economic revitalization brought by visitors to the park.

Archeological work continued to contribute to the telling of the Harpers Ferry story. Archeological surveys in the Arsenal yard area in 1964 and 1965 found the water-based macadam roadway for Shenandoah Street and information about the location and structure of the arsenal fence foundations.¹⁴² In the fall of 1965, Supt. Prentice, Franzen, and the archeologist removed the street paving atop the general area of the Old Superintendent's Office, then located in the middle of Shenandoah Street, in an attempt

to locate the original street elevations in preparation for their restoration. They found arsenal walls, but did not excavate any building foundations or basements due to post-Civil War construction.¹⁴³

The passing of the 1966 National Historic Preservation Act led to research toward classifying Harpers Ferry structures as appropriate for legislative protections. The NPS pushed for defining new and existing parks as meeting criteria of suitability and feasibility to get them registered as National Historic Landmarks.¹⁴⁴ Historical structures classification work began in 1965 and were submitted in 1966.¹⁴⁵ A considerable amount of research was required to support restoration projects, store front window displays for the target period, ecological studies of Virginus Island and Maryland Heights, and economic studies of the area in 1936.¹⁴⁶ The Deputy Director also announced plans to assess the long-range, mission-oriented research needs by individual parks and Harpers Ferry NHP responded by producing several Research Study Proposals that demonstrate interpretive priorities for the John Brown Fort, Arsenal area, Building 43, Virginus Island, among others.¹⁴⁷

Discussions about what to do with structures on the Storer property often referred to the need to base decisions on policy precedent in the absence of a master plan or of delayed decisions while waiting for one. The lack of a comprehensive plan, the multiple intra-agency interests and pressure to make immediate use of the property meant that some decisions were made relatively hastily, others were avoided, and the Park, though gaining in long-term and symbolic benefits had to deal with day-to-day care-taking demands of the expansion. The stress was most obviously felt in the maintenance division. Early in 1967 the regional maintenance chief paid an inspection visit to address

a budget deficit in the division. He attributed the problem in part to “the heavy additional workload imposed by the Mather Center for which the Park has not been adequately staffed and funded.” But the pressure also exposed a lack of organization and systematic procedures, despite the more efficient consolidation of activities in the new, carefully laid out maintenance building. “The maintenance operation is conducted without benefit of any formal program or calendar. The results are quite inevitable; daily operations become spur-of-the-moment, almost emergency in nature.” The park’s chief of maintenance, who was relatively new to the position, had found “no past records” on which to base operations and did not have access to service-wide reference material intended to provide guidance for individual maintenance programs. Housekeeping of the new maintenance facility itself needed to be systematized, and excess materials and tools divested. The regional chief found the staff “very cooperative” and fully aware of the need for change, and he left confident that improved communication, inclusion of the maintenance chief in park programming decisions and an “overall planned program” would bring improvement to an “understandably complicate[d]” park operation.¹⁴⁸

The Job Corps program filled a gap between the staff of the park and projects that required a large amount of manpower, such as archeology and restoration. The program provided opportunities for men aged sixteen through twenty with low levels of education to gain work experience in conservation. The U.S. Office of Economic Opportunity proposed construction of a Job Corps facility on Bolivar Heights. The town of Bolivar vocally opposed the facility because it feared the possible effects of “juvenile delinquents” on the area. Townspeople felt that government actions made them powerless to affect the decisions in process and wanted more opportunities to input

formally their opinions. The standoff ended in 1966 when Sam Michaels of Zoar, West Virginia donated land to the government for the facility; he stipulated that it go for a game preserve and animal exhibit upon his death. The action, which relieved Bolivar and Harpers Ferry residents, led to similar debate in Zoar.¹⁴⁹ The Job Corps Center opened in 1966.¹⁵⁰

If archeological discovery of Virginius Island provided a boon to historical interpretation of industrial history in Harpers Ferry, its maintenance concerns proved a burden. The stabilization and archeology required on the Island justified bringing the Jobs Corps to Harpers Ferry for the first-ever archeological project by the Corps in the NPS.¹⁵¹ As the first person to supervise an archeological program using Job Corps labor, Job Corps Supervisor and Archeologist David Hannah gained an intimate understanding of its advantages and difficulties. Regional Archeologist John Cotter supervised him from the Regional Office. Work project proposals for July 1966 included landscape maintenance and restoration along the Patowmack Canal and Virginius Island, and nature trail construction on Maryland Heights.¹⁵² Another proposal, Hall Island Rifle Works and Water Raceways Restoration, vexed Supt. Prentice with its accentuation on excavation as opposed to work aboveground in the others. Rather than undertake excavation, Prentice argued that the archeologist's "prime duty in the furtherance of these projects is to record evidence when uncovered in this work and to prevent historical evidence from being lost or destroyed through the stabilization and restoration."¹⁵³ It is unclear, then, how Prentice came to agree with Director Robert Chandler of the Job Corps and Hannah on excavating at all, though they agreed to investigate the industrial complex at the center of Virginius Island to prevent damaging the Hall Rifle Works.¹⁵⁴

The work in the summer of 1966 uncovered buildings, such as the cotton fabric factory at Building 6, and raceways. Artifacts included bricks (proposed for future use in stabilization repairs), industrial machinery, medicine bottles and glassware, but overall few features or artifacts were uncovered.¹⁵⁵ Work shifted from excavation to stabilization in the fall of 1967.

Few at the park apparently recognized the importance or potential of Virginius Island. Dick Ping Hsu, who assisted Hannah that summer and much later became a NPS Regional Archeologist, and John Cotter exchanged extremely candid letters about the significant problems surrounding the project. He stated, "there seemed to me to be several different ideas on the importance of the site, archaeologically and historicly [sic]. Except for Andy Hutchinson, the protective ranger, I don't think that anyone else connected with the daily project looked upon [the] Virginius Island complex as being anything more valuable than just a training project or a nice secluded natural spot."¹⁵⁶ Cotter brought in Louis Caywood, then stationed in Arizona, to give guidance.¹⁵⁷ He reported sympathetically, "A brief resume of Mr. Hannah's work from the beginning of activities as the Center reveals some of his problems. In view of these difficulties it would appear that he has done his archaeological work well and the responsibility and work should be at a higher grade."¹⁵⁸ Responding to Cotter's criticism in 1967, Hannah responded that his comments were "predicated upon the misconception that I am employed solely as a full time archeological consultant to the Harpers Ferry Job Corps Center." He went on to describe his frustrated position,

During two digging seasons, at one time or another, well over 100 men have been used. If these Corpsmen had been able to meet the qualifications of the type of field crew normally used on an archeological dig, they would not be Corpsmen. Each must be oriented in matters so basic as to be a revelation to those who do not

live daily with the culturally deprived. Also, as a general rule, as soon as these Corpsmen show any ability or responsibility in their attempts to acquire usable skills, they are removed from the dig and transferred to training programs where they will acquire an employable job skill.

Hannah thus found it impossible to meet Cotter's standards and fulfill his other obligations, concluding, "It is becoming increasingly apparent that a scientific archeological project such as you conceive does not fit in with the Jobs Corps concept. It would come as no surprise to me if this particular project was phased out of our Harpers Ferry Job Corps Center Work Program."¹⁵⁹

The period was not all grey. Interpretation was one of Hannah's personal interests, as it had been with Larrabee and Hershey, and Cotter suggested that it was one of Hannah's strengths. He encouraged the Corpsmen to discuss the excavation with the public and reported that, "in the language of the Corpsmen, [they interpreted the site by] 'telling it like it is.'"¹⁶⁰ Job Corps also contributed to the interpretative development of Bolivar Heights, following initial plans from 1964 proposing a series of interpretive structures and exhibits of infantry and artillery defense works reconstructed to their appearance during Federal occupation.¹⁶¹ The project was for the time phased out at Harpers Ferry and Hannah left for another post.¹⁶² By 1969, however, development programs exceeded the ability of the park to conduct archeological surveys ahead of them. Archeologist Cotter argued that the park desperately needed a resident archeologist and, once Hannah moved on, Architect Franzen supervised surveys around Lockwood House that year prior to the laying of utility lines.¹⁶³

By the late 1960s, contemporary thematic issues such as environmentalism and ethnicity coupled with interpretive pushes and national interests. The NPS implemented its own environmental education program in 1968. Parks presented concepts from the

National Environmental Education Development Program (NEED) as applied to their Environmental Study Areas. Interpretive programs and school-based education initiatives encouraged growth of the theme.¹⁶⁴ The Regional Interpretation and Resources Management division suggested injecting environmental awareness into tours, for example, by contrasting the clean past to the polluted present.¹⁶⁵ The park itself undertook a study into the social and economic history of Virginus Island to prepare an Environmental Study Program for local schools to advance understanding of “man versus nature.”¹⁶⁶ The emphasis on environment, then, laid not only in the interpretation of natural issues, but in creating a sense of historical environment rooted in issues.

Lockwood House planning responded to interest in black history at Harpers Ferry. The Regional Office prioritized research into the furnishing of Lockwood House in 1968. The Research Study Proposal proposed investigation into the furnishings of the front two rooms in 1867, the first year of Storer College. Viewed from the outside, the rooms would interpret the house as the first home and classroom for Nathan Cook Brackett, his family, faculty, and first pupils. The design suggested “the difficulties and struggles which these pioneer teachers and their pupils faced during the early years of Storer College. Negro history is of increasing interest to Americans today and the story of the Lockwood House speaks of an early attempt for racial co-operation to improve the lot of American Negroes.”¹⁶⁷ The structural restoration was completed in 1969 at a cost of \$119,364.47.¹⁶⁸ The park installed the furnished classroom and kitchen exhibit and audio station in 1971 through a donation by the ENPMA.¹⁶⁹ This work suggested a conceptual shift toward recognition of the significance of Harpers Ferry black history to park interpretation.



Fig. 20: Mather Training Center 1968 (NHF-3131, Harpers Ferry NHP).

Though Harpers Ferry had a series of master plan drafts, they were never completed through a final approval level. Instead administrators (usually) referred to working drafts until circumstances or new initiatives made them obsolete. The “master plan conference” in 1957 was prompted by the Mission 66 initiative for sweeping overhaul and improvement across the system. Mission 66 was particularly targeted to older parks suffering from neglect and sharp increases in visitation.¹⁷⁰ Harpers Ferry proved to be at too early a stage of development to take full advantage of the program. Large new visitor centers came to represent the initiative’s goal of dramatic modernization. Mission 66 supported the founding of Mather Training Center and its sister center, Albright, which the NPS moved from Yosemite to a new facility at the Grand Canyon. Harpers Ferry secured a new visitor center—the renovated and converted Building 45/Stagecoach Inn – and other on-going construction, three houses for employee quarters (located adjacent to the training center on a street named for Director Hartzog), and a “Mission 66 Edition” draft master plan. This plan was distinguished from others by its proclamation that the Monument’s goal would be to create the “effect” of an 1859-1865 “town in war,” an injunction that remained in effect despite shifts toward broader interpretive themes.

Common to the series of master plan drafts was the priority recommendation to acquire both the John Brown fort and its original site. The Storer acquisition brought the fort into NPS possession but there was little progress in negotiations with the B&O railroad for its riverside property. Park and training center staff favored moving the fort to the “arsenal yard” near the site, but they were over-ruled by regional officers reluctant to move the building to yet another temporary location.¹⁷¹ Finally, in early 1968, plans to



Fig. 19: John Brown Fort crossing intersection in Lower Town, 1968 (NHF-3152, Harpers Ferry NHP).

move the Fort were approved when its location on the Storer campus obstructed construction plans developed in the Washington office. A Washington firm won the moving contract for \$22,872 and accomplished the feat in an all-day operation that brought crowds of observers.¹⁷²

Research was conducted throughout the 1960s to help justify and prepare for the eventual acquisition of the B&O railroad land¹⁷³ and lay the groundwork for the fort's relocation in Lower Town. Historians developed more historical base maps and detailed the movements of raiders and events leading up to Brown's capture. The material served as the basis for interpretive literature and visual material for an audio-visual program.¹⁷⁴ The contingency plan for interpreting the John Brown Fort in the so-called Arsenal Yard proposed recreating "the hours of terror while this small band of unguarded prisoners huddled there, overhearing the exchange of fire but too frightened to slip out of the room" through an audio station in the watchman's office.¹⁷⁵ The exterior restoration of buildings 9, 10, 11, and 12 would be necessary to support the Fort in the context of a historical scene.¹⁷⁶ Moving the Fort thus corresponded with and justified moves for restoration and new trends in interpretation that would be undertaken in the next decade.

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⁹ Regional Chief of Operations J. Carlisle Crouch to Regional Director, Memo "Management Inspection Report of HFNH," August 18, 1960; Regional Director Lee to Superintendent, Memo "Annual management inspection," January 30, 1961; Regional Administrative Officer John J. Bachensky to Regional Director, Memo "Management Inspection," December 12, 1960, Folder "HFNH 1956-64," Ent. 414, RG 79, NARA-MA (Ph).

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¹² Charles W. Snell, "Historic Building Report, Part I and II Bldg. No. 48, An Armorer's Dwelling House, Lot No. 2, Shenandoah Street, HFNH," October 31, 1958, revised December 30, 1958, Folder "Building #48," Franzen Coll., BH/HAFE.

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⁷⁸ Mather Center Supervisor Russell K. Grater to Director, Memo "Construction of Proposed Fall-Out Shelter, Mather Center Grounds," June 14, 1963 and Assistant Director for Design and Construction A. Clark Stratton to Supervisor Mather Center, Memo "Relocation Center Entrance," June 19, 1963, Box 17 or Box 39 NARA-MA (Ph); Acting Regional Director George A. Palmer to Director, Memo "Emergency Operations—Relocation Center—Harpers Ferry," January 28, 1964; Associate Director A.C. Stratton to Northeast Region, Regional Director, Memo "Emergency Operations—Relocation Center—Harpers Ferry," February 7, 1964; and Acting Regional Director George A. Palmer to Superintendent Harpers Ferry, Memo "Emergency Operations—Relocation Center—Harpers Ferry," February 19, 1964, Folder "Harpers Ferry 1957-1964," Box 10, Ent. 414, RG 79, NARA-MA (Ph).

⁷⁹ Superintendent Joseph R. Prentice to Regional Director Northeast Region, Memo "Statement of Objectives for 1963," December 7, 1962, Folder "HF 1955-1962," Box 19, Ent. 411, RG 79, NARA-MA (Ph).

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⁸¹ Press Release, December 3, 1963; Superintendent Joseph R. Prentice to Regional Director Northeast Region, Memo "Commercial Industrial Activities," June 28, 1963, attachment "Justification for Commercial Industrial Activity;" Superintendent Joseph R. Prentice to Chief EODC, Memo "Layout of Carpenter Shop Equipment, Utility Bldg. Harpers Ferry," July 2, 1964, Folder "HF 1957-1965," Box 39, RG 79-68-0636, NARA-MA (Ph). Access to the maintenance building was proposed to be via Union Street or Filmore Street. John B. Cabot, "Report Prepared for the Training Committee, Advanced Study Center, Storer College," April 27, 1962, 8. Folder "HF 1957-1965," Box 39, RG 79-68-0636, NARA-MA (Ph). Director Wirth suggested access from Filmore Street. Chief Master Plan Coordination John A. Reshoff to Assistant Director Stratton, Memo "Meeting on Training Center and Restoration of Buildings, Harpers Ferry," August 21, 1962, Folder "HF 1963," Box 63, RG 79-68-0636, NARA-MA (Ph).

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⁸⁸ Acting Director Hillory A. Tolson to Corina Rogers, August 24, 1962; Architect George L. Howe to Chief, Division of History and Archeology Herbert E. Kahler, September 18, 1962, Folder "Lockwood House, H30," BH/HAFE.

⁸⁹ Attorney Sturgis Warner to Acting Director Tolson, October 16, 1962, Folder "Lockwood House, H30," BH/HAFE; Corina Rogers to Asst. Director Jackson Price, December 26, 1962, Folder "HFNHP 1961-62," NPS HD Coll., HD/NPSDC.

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⁹¹ Director Daniel B. Beard to Rogers, December 28, 1962, Folder "HFNHP 1961-62," NPS HD Coll., HD/NPSDC.

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- ⁹² Regional Director to Director, Memo "Agreement Concerning the Proposed Restoration of the Lockwood House at HF," November 9, 1962, Folder "Building #56," Franzen Coll., BH/HAFE.
- ⁹³ Regional Director Conrad Wirth to Regional Director Northeast Region, Memo "Restoration Lockwood House," December 10, 1962, Folder "Lockwood House, H30," BH/HAFE.
- ⁹⁴ William D. Hershey, "Archeological Survey of the Lockwood House (Paymaster's House), HF, WV," 1963, Submitted May 1964, HFR-669, CO/HAFE.
- ⁹⁵ Archie W. Franzen, "Historic Structures Report Part II on The Paymaster's Quarters, Sometimes Called the Lockwood House (Building #56), Architectural Data Section," September 1963, 6, Folder "Building #56," Franzen Coll., BH/HAFE; Staff Historian Joseph P. Cullen to Chief, Division of Historical Studies, Memo "Restoration of Paymaster's House," December 16, 1964, Folder "HFNHP 1963-67, NPS HD, HD/NPSDC.
- ⁹⁶ Supt Prentice, "Historic Structures Report, Part I, Administrative Data Section, Building No. 59, Anthony Hall, HFNM," February 20, 1963, Folder "Building #59," Franzen Coll., BH/HAFE.
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- ⁹⁸ Superintendent Frank H. Anderson to Regional Director, Memo "Urgency of B&O Land Exchange," December 16, 1958, Folder "HFNHP Land Exchange 1957-1967," Box 26, Ent. 413, RG 79, NARA-MA (Ph).
- ⁹⁹ Superintendent C&O Canal Edwin M. Dale to Regional Director, Memo "Package Master Plan—Harpers Ferry," May 12, 1964 and Acting Regional Director George A. Palmer to Superintendent C&O Canal, Memo "Harpers Ferry Master Plan," July 14, 1964, Folder "Harpers Ferry 1963," Box 63, RG 79-68-0636, NARA-MA (Ph).
- ¹⁰⁰ Regional Chief Program Coordination M.B. Christenson to Chief EODC, Memo "Project Construction Proposals—Harpers Ferry," October 29, 1963, Folder "Harpers Ferry 1963," Box 63, RG 79-68-0636, NARA-MA- (Ph).
- ¹⁰¹ Superintendent Prentice to Regional Director, Region Five, Memo "John Brown's Fort (Fire Engine House)," May 3, 1962, Folder "HF Correspondence 1955-62," Box 19, Ent. 411, RG 79, NARA-MA (Ph).
- ¹⁰² Supervisor Russell K. Grater to Regional Director, Memo "The 'John Brown Fort,'" January 8, 1965 and Regional Director Ronald F. Lee to Supervisor Mather Training Center, Memo "'John Brown Fort,'" February 8, 1965, Folder "HFNHS 1961-1965," Box 8, Ent. 413, RG 79, NARA-MA (Ph).
- ¹⁰³ Charlotte J. Fairbairn, "John Brown's Fort (Armory Engine and Guard House), Historic Structures Report Part I, Historical Data Section," August 15, 1961, 45, HFR-202, CO/HAFE.
- ¹⁰⁴ Architect A.W. Franzen, Memo, Folder "HFNHP 1959," NPS HD Coll., HD/NPSDC.
- ¹⁰⁵ Fairbairn, "John Brown's Fort," 45.
- ¹⁰⁶ Superintendent Prentice to Director, Memo "Report on Possessory Rights," August 2, 1962, Folder "HF Storer College 1958-63, Box 37, Ent. 413, RG 79, NARA-MA (Ph).
- ¹⁰⁷ Mary V. Mish to Mr. Joseph R. Prentice, June 18, 1965, Mish Coll., WCHS.
- ¹⁰⁸ Mrs. Frank W. Mish, Jr. to The Hon. Charles McC. Mathias, Jr., June 18, 1965, Mish Coll., WCHS.

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- ¹⁰⁹ Kunkel forwarded the request to Secretary Udall. John C. Kunkel, M.C. to the Honorable Stewart L. Udall, Secretary of the Interior, December 15, 1961, Folder "HFNHP 1961-62," NPS HD Coll., HD/NPSDC.
- ¹¹⁰ Director to Hon. Daniel B. Brewster, February 6, 1963 and Director to Hon. J. Glenn Beall, February 14, 1963, Folder "HFNHP 1963-67," NPS HD Coll., HD/NPSDC.
- ¹¹¹ Charles McClane, Grand Commissioner of Public Relations to Jackson E. Price, March 5, 1963; Acting Assistant Director Lawrence F. Cook to McClane, March 13, 1963, Folder "HFNHP 1963-67," NPS HD Coll., HD/NPSDC.
- ¹¹² Superintendent Joseph R. Prentice to Mrs. Frank W. Mish, Jr., June 29, 1965; Mrs. Frank W. Mish Jr., to Superintendent Joseph R. Prentice, July 13, 1965, Mish Coll., WCHS; Superintendent Joseph R. Prentice to Regional Director Northeast, Memo "The Kennedy Farmhouse (John Brown Farm)," July 7, 1965, Folder "HF 1963-1965," Box 37, Ent. 413, RG 79 NARA-MA (Ph).
- ¹¹³ Acting Assistant Director C. Gordon Fredine to Hon. Charles McC. Mathias, Jr., June 27, 1965, Mish Coll., WCHS.
- ¹¹⁴ The real estate agent informed Congressman Mathias that he had at least three interested buyers and asked if the government could option the property until the study was completed, but no such action was authorized. Robert E. Dudley to Congressman Charles M. Mathias, Jr., July 7, 1965; Chelster L. Brooks, Chief Division of National Park System Studies to Mrs. Frank W. Mish, Jr., October 8, 1965; Charles McC. Mathias to The Honorable Stewart L. Udall, October 19, 1965, Mish Coll., WCHS.
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- ¹¹⁶ Superintendent Joseph R. Prentice to Regional Director, Memo "Statement of objectives for 1963," December 7, 1962, Folder "HFNHS 1955-1962," Box 19, Ent. 411, RG 79, NARA-MA (Ph).
- ¹¹⁷ Joseph R. Prentice to Regional Director, Northeast Region, Memo "New Master Armorer's Quarters, Daingerfield House, Building No. 36," November 3, 1964, Folder "EODC 1964," Franzen Coll., BH/HAFE.
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¹²⁹ Superintendent Joseph R. Prentice to Regional Director, Memo "Harper House Manning," January 25, 1965, Folder "A44," Admin. Coll., BH/HAFE.

¹³⁰ Superintendent Joseph R. Prentice to Regional Director, Memo "Cooperative Agreement Between the Department of Interior and the Shenandoah-Potomac Garden Council," August 28, 1964, Folder "D66 1984" in Folder "H30," Admin. Coll., BH/HAFE.

¹³¹ Acting Regional Director to Superintendent, Memo "Cooperative Agreement, Harper House," December 17, 1964, Folder "A44," Admin. Coll., BH/HAFE.

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¹⁵⁶ Dick Ping Hsu to Cotter, April 10, 1967, Folder "HFNHP 1963-67," NPS HD Coll., HD/NPSDC.

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Chapter 6:

The Park Changes Course

Unlike most property annexations sought purely to protect or enhance the integrity of a park, from the beginning the NPS Washington Office viewed the Storer property with a proprietary interest. While the initial and stated interest was in establishing an in-house training facility, there was clearly a sense both in Washington and at the park that the national office saw more potential in the site and held discretionary authority for its development. When two representatives from the Washington office, historian William C. Everhart and architect John Cabot, made an inspection visit to the campus in April 1962, Supt. Prentice and architect Archie Franzen escorted them. Discussion during the visit centered on the condition of the buildings and the prospective use of those deemed viable. Both Prentice and Franzen reported the tour in “for-your-information” memos to their respective superiors at the regional office and at the Eastern Office of Design and Construction (EODC). As Franzen wrote, “no specific purpose was stated for their visit other than that they wished to become acquainted with the facilities and their condition.” Although everyone affirmed the priority of providing housing for park and school staff and students, the visitors betrayed an additional objective of scouting for additional uses when they noted that the NPS audio-visual lab might be moved from Washington to one of the buildings.¹

Establishment of Mather Training Center (MTC) and of the park maintenance facility dominated the immediate development of the campus, but the idea of relocating the Washington facilities was revived after 1964 when George B. Hartzog was appointed

NPS Director. Hartzog had been superintendent of the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial (JNEM), and he selected William C. Everhart, the former historian there, as his Assistant Director for Interpretation to head a newly organized Division of Interpretation and Visitor Services. Everhart came to the NPS during a period of expansion and Mission 66 upgrading, and he embraced his new assignment as an opportunity to raise the level of interpretative exhibits in parks across the country. He implemented a Service-wide study of interpretive methods that came to affect Harpers Ferry greatly. The study concluded that newer media techniques – such as audio-visual presentations, demonstrations and publications, along with exhibits of artifacts, artwork and photographs – would better support ranger interactions and the visitor experience. Mission 66 initiatives promoted the idea of visitor centers and increased the attention given to exhibits. Everhart wanted to replace the flat, “book-on-the-wall” style characteristic of National Park Service exhibits and apply the highest standards of the “civilian,” commercial design world. Everhart attributed his conversion to modern design to his posting at JNEM when he visited the Detroit office of architect Eero Saarinen and witnessed the design process for the Gateway Arch. He proposed invigorating NPS interpretive services with people and ideas from the mid-century modern design movement.²

Offices that were reorganized under Everhart’s new division included publications located at Main Interior and in the regions, a fledgling audio-visual department which merely recorded slide programs submitted by parks, a “Western Museum Lab” in San Francisco and its eastern counterpart located in a World War II “tempo” building still on the Washington mall. As a prerequisite for professionalizing

these functions as interpretive media, he returned to his idea of using part of the Storer campus, this time as a place to centralize all elements of interpretive design. The location solved several problems. It allowed Everhart to bypass a long wait for space controlled by the Government Services Administration (GSA) in Washington and ask for a new building, and it put the facility in the congressional territory of likely supporters senators Jennings Randolph and Robert Byrd. Somewhat to his surprise, the \$1,000,000 proposal perceived by some as “grandiose” and unnecessary was approved in the Director’s office and even increased to \$1,250,000. The first appropriation was made in 1966.³

Determined to house the new division in a building that represented the mission to bring good design to the NPS, Everhart selected an outside architect who would be free of government restrictions and conventions. Construction plans provided the impetus for the long-delayed move of the John Brown fort back to the Lower Town, clearing a site with a prominent view of the Shenandoah yet secluded behind the remaining college buildings. Groundbreaking began in April 1968 and the new Interpretive Design Center (IDC) or Harpers Ferry Center (HFC) was completed in December 1969. Everhart continued to skirt confining GSA selections in furnishing the building, and the incoming staff volunteered their time to paint the interior before moving into the space in January 1970. In keeping with the tenets of modernist design the building made no attempt to imitate the historic styles of the nearby buildings, which were themselves from different periods and styles. It, instead, made the professed concessions of using red brick and a series of archways on the river side to reference the architecture of the Harpers Ferry armory buildings; the new building was given a lower, more unobtrusive profile by putting one level below ground but kept open on the river side; and a concrete plaza in



Fig. 20: Rep. Harley O. Staggers, Sen. Jennings Randolph, William C. Everhart, Secretary Stewart L. Udall, and Sen. Robert C. Byrd view Interpretive Design Center model, September 21, 1967 (Harpers Ferry Center).

the front was intended to create an integrating space and reach out to the other buildings. To Everhart's satisfaction, architectural critics gave the building favorable reviews and it was featured in a cover story in the American Institute of Architects *AIA Journal*.⁴ Not everyone was pleased, however, and those with a different interpretation of how a building should blend in to its surroundings or who preferred a more historic style did not view it so favorably.⁵

The impact of the Interpretive Design Center (IDC) on the Harpers Ferry scene was significantly more than just architectural, and the acquisition of the Storer property seemed to bring Harpers Ferry to the attention of service-wide planners in Washington. Much of the rationale for locating it at Harpers Ferry came from an idealistic vision of the IDC as a natural partner to its neighbors, Mather Training Center and Harpers Ferry NHP. The vision held that, through this triad of institutions, NPS employees from across the country would learn about the benefits of new design ideas and services during training visits and the park could become a test and demonstration showcase. The campus apparently became perceived not primarily as a historic entity but as bonus space and fair game for development that, since the IDC represented an incursion into the park from the directorate level, preempted both the park and the regional affiliation. In recognition of that more active involvement and the ambition for the relationship of the new installation with the park, the administration of Harpers Ferry NHP and MTC were moved from their regional affiliation to fall under the IDC, or Harpers Ferry Center (HFC), a title representing a broader function.⁶

During the process of constructing the Interpretive Design Center and planning its relationship with other entities in Harpers Ferry, work continued to develop and apply the

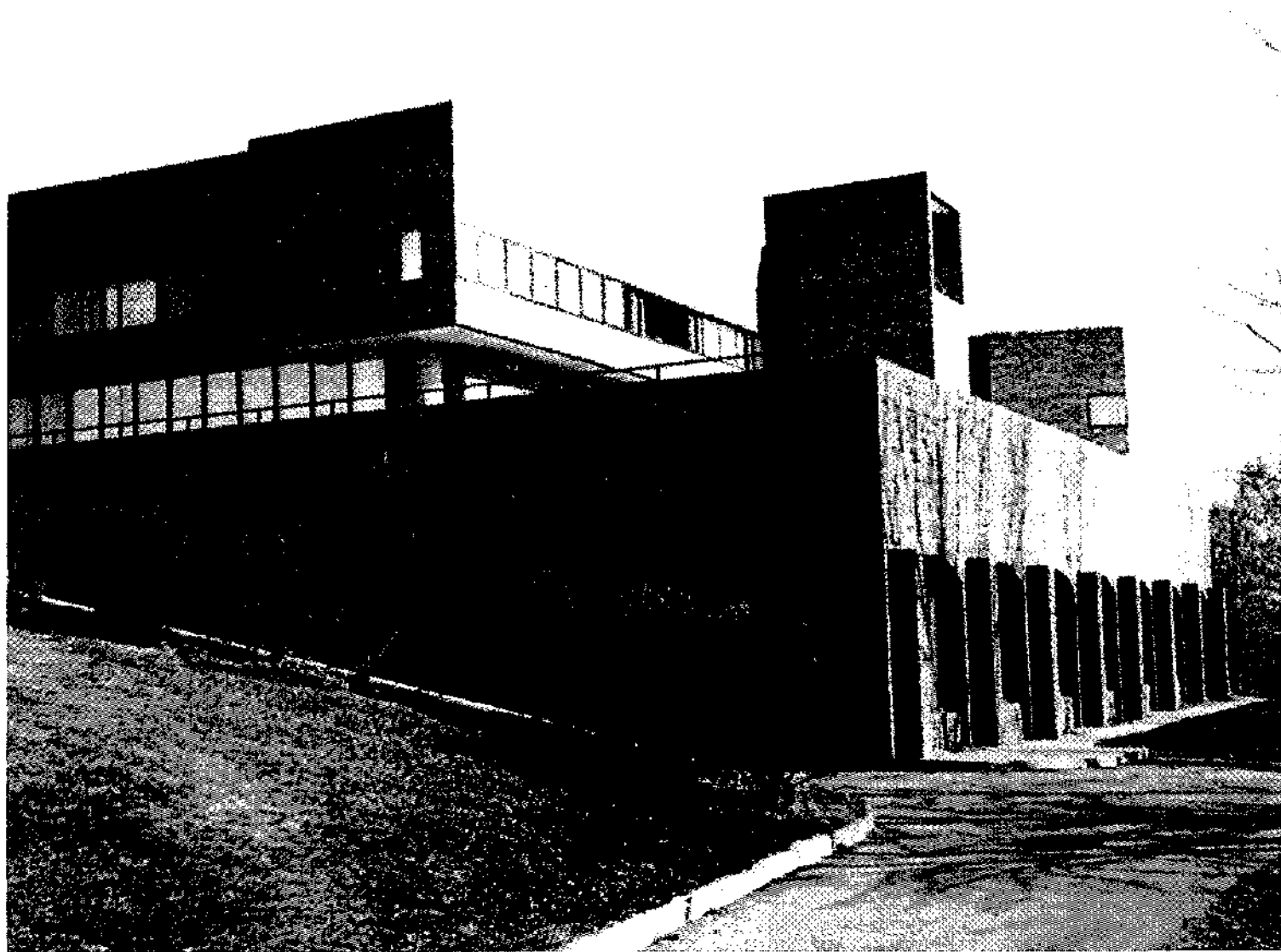


Fig. 21: Interpretive Design Center, 1974. Edwin A. Fitzpatrick (NHF-3471, Harpers Ferry NHP).

ideas that gave rise to it. Everhart and Director Hartzog wanted to revolutionize how the National Parks presented their resources in interpretive media and content. They and other creative thinkers on their staff prompted a re-evaluation of methodology for NPS interpretation by the late 1960s with the effect of new methods and themes. Living interpretation, for example, had become fashionable by the mid-1960s, particularly in historical parks that could support living farms. The Director asked all parks to participate in the experiment with the medium in 1967, but to a grumbling reception.⁷ Critics expressed concern that emphasis on living interpretation compromised public service, made the media gimmicky and paramount to facts, and distracted visitors from the real message.⁸ Living interpretation would soon take hold at Harpers Ferry NHP, but it was one of several approaches demonstrating a heightened awareness of interpretive media. In response to the “book on a wall” criticism of exhibits, Harpers Ferry Center advocated engaging visitors in discussion about the social issues represented through expressive media techniques. The designers moved away from wall-hung, text-heavy presentations with photographs and other two-dimensional media or a few artifacts. They, instead, created exhibits on walls and in the floor space, with original art and untraditional or thought-provoking content.⁹

The redesign of parks’ media occurred simultaneously with the re-evaluation of what historical themes they interpreted. Preliminary studies toward a new thematic framework in 1970 sought “gaps” in the collection of sites representing a fair American history.¹⁰ Director Hartzog directed a task force,

to conduct an analysis of the present system indicating the prime thematic representation for each area. This will indicate what should be included in a balanced representation of our natural and historical heritage and then what voids

should be filled. Further, they will also consider the relevancy of many new types of areas and these which have been proposed.¹¹

A new framework for historical interpretation was released in 1972 and identified each park with one theme which reflected the NPS view on the primary significance of each park to the overall park system. Harpers Ferry NHP was assigned to the theme "Political and Military Affairs."¹² It would later be placed under the themes "Social and Humanitarian Movements" and "Abolitionism."¹³ The "gaps" addressed by the expansion reflected the changing social conditions of the country and arguments for better representation for a plurality of cultural perspectives.

Harpers Ferry Center's first and preoccupying mission was to bring together interpretive media professionals and persuade parks to take advantage of their services. While the adjacent park was rather peripheral to those broad goals, at the same time it had a role to play. HFC and MTC brought it to a higher level of visibility, and in the view of HFC leaders, the park had a long way to go to become a showcase demonstration site. The 1952 draft master plan pointed out a potential conflict between using or protecting the park's historic fabric.

Shall the buildings remain untenanted and the resulting scene be lifeless and empty, or shall certain structures be rented and put to a use consistent with the objectives of the Service for this area? What particular historical values are associated with the buildings in this downtown section? It seems that some way should be found to place this downtown area into the overall interpretive program so that it will become an active part of the program, rather than a blank display of wall and windows which would do little to portray the significance of the buildings to the town.¹⁴

The HFC leaders felt or perceived that the park had fallen into the latter trap, presenting "blank displays" and a "lifeless" past. It seemed stuck in a conservative "preserve and maintain" holding pattern, and they felt visitors left Lower Town with an

impression of pigeons, plywood, and chicken wire.¹⁵ The park was a prime candidate for interpretive modernization. The John Brown Raid story, for example, offered a medium for testing the potential for the new approach. Interpretive planning ran concurrently to structural renovations on the John Brown Museum and new silk-screened exhibits replaced the shabby panels inside and in the windows in 1970.¹⁶ In 1972, HFC designers began to develop an exhibit for the John Brown Museum that aligned with their objective to create experimental approaches in exhibit interpretation. It presented the moral and social dilemma posed by the Raid by asking visitors if the end justified the means.¹⁷ The significance of this change in approach, as put into perspective by historian Barry Mackintosh in his 1986 book about the history of National Park Service interpretation, was in the tendency of the NPS to create sites to honor particular figures rather than to recognize controversy or criticism or to provoke debate.¹⁸ At Harpers Ferry, the national significance of John Brown was painted more positively at first and balanced later as seen in the HFC designs with larger questions of context and dilemma. As the system of delivery changed for presenting this primary theme then told at the park it reflected larger issues concerning a multiplicity of interpretations of history and the role of the park in facilitating the public's relationship with national heritage.

Everhart believed the key to revitalizing NPS interpretive media was to recruit the right people, and to bring life to the streets of Lower Town in Harpers Ferry, he brought in a new superintendent with a reputation for promoting a dramatic sense of history. Martin Conway came to Harpers Ferry from Petersburg National Battlefield in August 1972.¹⁹ He certainly enlivened the park but by the end of his tenure left widespread concern that he had taken the park to the opposite extreme, endangering historic

resources and accuracy in the pursuit of historic atmosphere. Conway believed in the power of living interpretation and his vision coincided with a service-wide report headed by Everhart that Director Hartzog ordered in 1972. It was distributed in March and June 1973 to address widespread concern within the NPS over the vitality of its interpretive programs.²⁰ Morale sat then at “a low point for recent decades” and the NPS was increasingly establishing policies and standards for interpretation of its natural and historical resources.²¹ Everhart’s evaluation used staff questionnaires and in-house and external reviews to conclude that the high standards for NPS interpretation were not being met. He found that increased emphasis on law enforcement and NPS re-structuring in the 1960s and early 1970s had compromised interpretive programs by substantially reducing the number of professional interpretive positions, installing people without strong interpretive qualifications in charge of them, or by removing non-professional duties of interpreters and rangers to park aids and technicians. The report attributed the low morale and quality of NPS interpretation to budgetary constraints, a lack of trained interpreters, and a low prioritization within the Service for it.²² Conway, then, entered his position at a time when interpretation was under great pressure to perform, both literally and figuratively.

Supt. Conway set about “enlivening” Harpers Ferry by restoring its “historic environment” with greater emphasis on interpretation and living history. He also wanted to banish modern trappings such as cars, signs, and trash bins from Lower Town.²³ Conway hired a staff with backgrounds ranging from interpretation to theatre to biology to inaugurate the living history program in the divisions of military and industrial arts, visitor services, and domestic arts. Park technicians scoured the area for furniture and

objects to develop exhibits in several buildings in the Lower Town loosely developed around creating a historic-looking atmosphere not necessarily based on the researched facts.²⁴ Public information statements characterized the living history program as giving visitors insight on the past and present by stating that, “surrounded, as we are today, by a complicated world, technology, specialization, and a detachment from our cultural heritage and our natural world, how can we provide average people with a means of ‘becoming aware of where they are.’” Or, “Creative interpretation is much like good newspaper reporting. There is always a good story; all you have to do is find it.”²⁵ The park already had offered a few living history programs under Supt. Davis, but hit its stride with the support of Conway.

Harper House interpretation led the trend. It already had a kitchen with working stove for living history interpretation by 1970, and by 1971 Supt. Davis identified its purpose as for visitors to “gain a more personal feeling for the life and times of 1859.”²⁶ In 1973 its program became more defined as the park technician in charge of domestic arts wrote in an evaluation, “The purpose of the living history program at the Harper House is to give the visitor an experience in the domestic life of an average family living in the mid-1800’s. This is to be accomplished through sight, sound, taste, smell, and participation.”²⁷ Costumed interpreters performed domestic tasks and gardened. They and took inspiration for their roles to evoke women’s strength of character during the Civil War from historical figures such as Sarah Ann Mather or Harriet Beecher Stowe. The interpreters prepared a midday meal for living history staff so onlookers could glimpse “another era” and demonstrated a range of “typical” domestic activities.²⁸ The interpreters of Harper House found that the living history staff behaved in their roles

“more naturally” in the surroundings and visitors responded very favorably to the “realism.”²⁹ The public loved the program and its sensory approach to learning about the past.³⁰

Living history became integrated with other interpretive media and staffed exhibits began at several locations around the park.³¹ The life Supt. Conway envisioned was installed throughout the Lower Town in a tavern with barkeep and armory workers, a Dry Goods Store and its storekeeper, gun assembling and disassembling demonstrations at the Master Armorer’s House, a military recruiting office, an apothecary and pharmacist, chickens in a coop, corralled horses and more.³² The 1859 blacksmith shop contributed dramatic sights, sounds, and smells that presumably enabled visitors to experience something like the historic industries of the area.³³ A dry goods store was installed in 1973 to interpret changes in consumer goods that occurred during the 1850s because of the rise of industrialization and improvements in transportation networks.³⁴ These programs all took on a “show and tell” approach presented usually in the third person by rangers and seasonal employees, using Lower Town as a stage set for an improvisational drama to discuss the Harpers Ferry of the past.³⁵ Indeed, even today current and past employees at the park fondly describe the living history experience and recall well the perks that included pastries and sweets from the Confectionery. They, too, seemed as enthralled as the visitors with the experience of walking through the park – the sound and grime of the Blacksmith Shop, or the visual array of items in the General Store, or the energy throughout the Lower Town.³⁶

Several new programs supported the living history program while supplying additional, complementary functions to the park’s operations. The Harpers Ferry

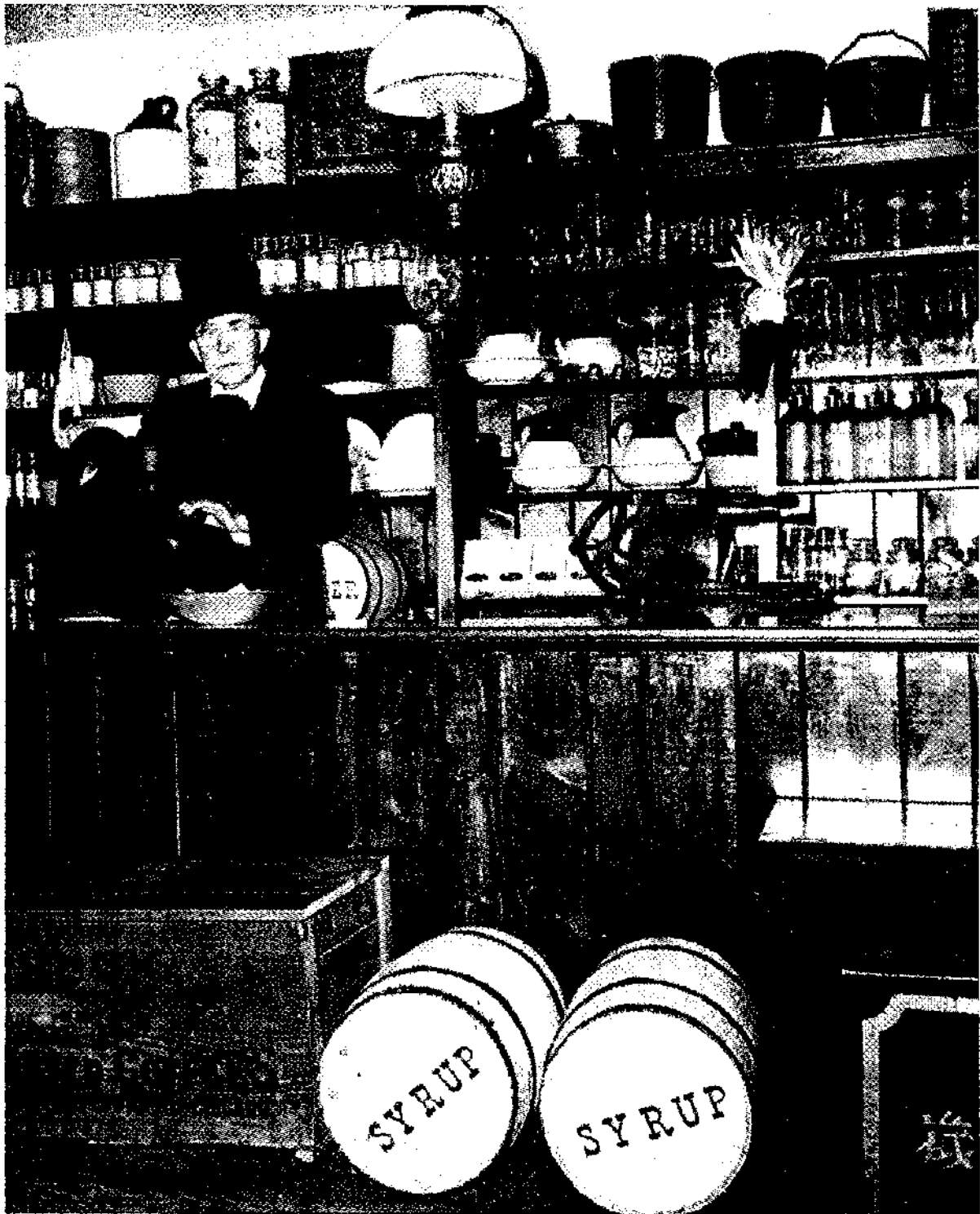


Fig. 22: Interior of Building 35 – Dry Goods Store, Park Aid Jesse Engle during “Olde Tyme Christmas” 1973.



Fig. 23: Blacksmith Shop, Interior of shop (Building 43) with Blacksmith Arnold Schofield and apprentice working on iron work, 1975. Edwin Fitzpatrick. (NHF-3554, Harpers Ferry NHP).

Historical Association (HFHA) is an enduring remnant of the original organization plan for Harpers Ferry Center and the park. "Cooperating associations," nonprofit corporations dedicated to assisting parks usually with aspects of interpretation and collection and administration of funds, were established almost coterminously with the first parks and were specifically authorized in the 1935 Historic Sites Act.³⁷ Harpers Ferry had long used one of the larger organizations, the Eastern National Parks and Monument Association (ENPMA), to produce and provide for the sale of interpretive publications.³⁸ In 1958 Supt. Anderson petitioned the regional director for permission to affiliate with ENPMA. Citing his previous experience with an independent association at Scott's Bluff National Monument, Anderson felt establishing the Monument's own association would require time and resources he did not have, while ENPMA could produce a booklet, slides, and postcards in time for the John Brown Raid Centennial.³⁹

By 1970 HFC directors had the luxury of creating a locally controlled association to provide a more flexible service arm and a means of bringing modern impetus to the park. NPS Director Hartzog designated the Historical Association in November 1970 at the request of HFC assistant director Doug Hubbard. It was incorporated in West Virginia in January 1971, and directors and officers consisting of park and center managers and town officials were appointed. The first meeting was held in April. Bradley Nash served as the first president, with William Everhart as executive secretary.⁴⁰ As its first and primary assignment the HFHA opened a "model" bookstore at the corner of High and Shenandoah streets. As a main visitor contact point, the store was self-consciously designed by an HFC architect to improve the public face of the park. By selling service-wide publications the store was also intended to showcase the

NPS for general visitors and cater to NPS “in-house customers” working with Harpers Ferry Center or students visiting the Mather Training Center. Reflecting the contemporary popularity of film as an interpretive media and the ambitions for HFC audio-visual services, the HFHA also emphasized NPS film rental, sales and distribution. The HFHA donated a portion of its sales to interpretive programs or in small parcels to support other park needs.⁴¹ When the administrative hierarchy shifted to the National Capital Region in 1974, the HFHA became more focused on the park, and the bookstore eventually abandoned its service-wide selection.⁴²

Local merchants objected to the sale of ENPMA materials when they were introduced in 1959, prompting Supt. Anderson to adopt an explicit policy of noncompetition.⁴³ Likewise, merchants opposed the Historical Association bookstore on the grounds that its direct relationship with the park created unfair competition for their businesses. Controversy over the bookstore fed the mayoral platforms in 1971 and magnified an ongoing call for increased cooperation and communication between the town and the park.⁴⁴ Two mayoral candidates who campaigned from the merchants’ perspective, Neal L. Gouell and Dixie Kilham, argued that election of their competitor Bradley Nash would create a conflict of interest between his involvement in HFHA operations and his ability to govern for local businesses.⁴⁵ Nash won the election.⁴⁶ In an attempt to ease the tension afterwards, the local merchants association invited the HFHA to join, though it elected instead to maintain a close relationship.⁴⁷ The Bookstore subsequently decided not to offer items also sold by commercial stores.⁴⁸ Although the HFHA concerned community members as a competitor, other programs newly underway

sought to mesh community and park interests through special events or youth employment.

Memoranda from the park describe its efforts to be a “reasonable partner” with the town, despite the competition perceived by the townspeople as purposeful or even malevolent. Coordination of the Olde Tyme Christmas Event first held in 1970 helped maintain the NPS promise of helping the town’s economic situation. Through staffed exhibits and decorated exteriors and interiors in nineteenth-century style, the park staged events concerning the political and social condition of the town surrounding Christmas 1860 or 1864, the last holiday before and at the end of the Civil War. One newspaper published an unattributed article describing the scope of the event as: “Not an advertising gimmick, not a selling extravaganza, the three nights will simply be a time of sharing in an old-fashioned yuletide. While articles may be purchased if desired, it will be an extremely ‘soft sell,’ for each merchant considers himself a host rather than a storekeeper.”⁴⁹ In the coming years, as *The Community Voice* newsletter stated, “The continued growth of the Olde Tyme Christmas event is tangible proof of the potential of tourism in our area. The financial income to our community provides needed funds for businesses to survive, grow, employ more persons, make improvements to property, establish a sound fiscal basis for income for town government and public facilities.”⁵⁰ The event continues to the present as a draw for holiday shoppers interested in traditional Christmas activities, but the NPS was also acting on its promise of financial benefits to the surrounding area in other ways.

The Youth Conservation Corps provided another significant contributing program to park operations and initially drew on local youth. Harpers Ferry Center began to

participate in the Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) or the Young Adult Conservation Corps (YACC) program in 1971 after Public Law 91-373 enacted a three-year pilot program. Staffers came to the park through a partnership between the NPS and the Jefferson County Board of Education in which the town agreed to seek out participants and the park agreed to provide work to support them.⁵¹ (By the 1980s, the system changed so that participants were chosen randomly from a pool of applicants.⁵²) The YCC program served a broad purpose of using parklands to teach skills in conservation and other park operations and for instilling a sense of stewardship in young people for the resources. It employed local students for a few months at a time, though ultimately several future Harpers Ferry NHP employees got their start in the National Park Service through the YCC. The first summer offered employment opportunities for twenty youths in maintenance, conservation, and interpretation.⁵³ Supt. Davis in 1971 proposed expanding the program to fifty-three youths at a time.⁵⁴ Over the next few years, approximately a dozen participants per summer undertook projects such as cleaning and cataloguing metal artifacts, making Civil War uniforms, painting and erecting fences on Bolivar Heights, and landscape clearing.⁵⁵ Planners envisioned a living history program of eighty-nine regiment members selected from the YCC and volunteer program outfitted in uniforms made by YCC personnel in the park tailor shop.⁵⁶ Projects extended across the park to include trail construction on Maryland Heights with the Potomac-Appalachian Trail Commission, in the sewing and blacksmith shops, as well as preservation and landscaping projects on Virginus Island.⁵⁷ They participated in field trips, lectures, and other activities presented by park staff or their leaders to instill the conservation concepts that were a primary educational goal of the YCC. Staffers also rotated through

construction of a base camp on Maryland Heights. As policies and priorities shifted, the camp was seen as a fire hazard and impediment to the historic scene and was dismantled in the 1980s. Supt. Conway looked forward to a year-round program by mid-decade, but the NPS cut YCC funding for the 1977 summer in half. Supt. Conway objected that maintaining previous funding levels was necessary to fulfill this plan and calculated that the park could use thirty-two youths year-round.⁵⁸ Alumni of the program's early years described it as a vivid and unique experience that gave them formative work and social opportunities.⁵⁹ The YCC fulfilled several goals – economic, educational, local – but it also encouraged the HFC conception of the park as a testing ground and showcase, an idea enacted through other programs, as well.

In 1972, Harpers Ferry Center conceived of the park as a place to begin a tailor shop to supply period-style clothing to NPS living history departments service-wide.⁶⁰ The tailor shop employed approximately five people at the beginning. Some of the employees had training in fashion design or sewing and found the work to meld modern and past industries; indeed, the industrial theme partly justified the installation of the shop in the Lower Town. The process of creating the garments required research and tailoring skills to make the period-specific costumes as authentic as possible. Employees, who were predominantly female, undertook research at the Smithsonian and with private dealers to make the patterns and they sewed with historically appropriate fabrics. They created a catalogue of items available for sale, but parks also ordered specific designs. The tailor shop supported the interpretive program at the park and produced clothing for specific events and summer employees, particularly for Civil War-themed programs. Additionally, the seamstresses themselves became an exhibit and people could watch

them work to learn something about the construction of garments. (Observant young visitors might point out that people in the past did not have sewing machines.) Although their positions primarily involved producing clothes, the employees of the tailor shop gave talks at schools and occasionally worked in the visitor center or with specific interpretation programs.⁶¹ By 1973 the Youth Conservation Corps became involved. By 1974, it employed six fulltime machine operators and eighteen contract workers.⁶² The shop seemed to show the park as an extension of the workshops on the hill at the Interpretive Design Center.

Another program begun in the early part of the Conway administration was a Horse Mounted Unit at Harpers Ferry in 1973. The horses – Morgans and thoroughbreds – were sheltered in a “rustic-type facility” built new for them. Rangers used the horses to patrol, particularly on weekends.⁶³ Horse-drawn carriages replaced fossil fuel vehicles for everyday tasks around the park and to support objectives toward environmental awareness, conservation, and living history authenticity programs. The public enjoyed the horses and, “Besides,” as Supt. Conway commented, “a sharp, confident and well-trained park ranger mounted on a well-groomed horse is one of the best sights in the world. They lend color, style, and dignity to any scene, and especially in our great National Park System.”⁶⁴ While the YCC program and the HFHA continue to the present time, the park eliminated the tailor shop and the mounted ranger experiments by the end of the decade.⁶⁵

As the park developed and practiced its living history program the interpretation of National Park Service parks was shifting in other ways. The need, in particular, was growing within the NPS for increasing the attention paid to black history in its parks. In

the early decades of collecting sites for the NPS, historians recommended what they considered representative of events or themes of national significance, but moreover they reflected the social and political climate influencing who controlled American history at that time. Since the 1950s members of the Harpers Ferry NHP staff had discussed the representation of black history in Harpers Ferry through the interpretation and preservation of Storer College as significant not only for alumni, but as an important part of the history of the area. These ideas saw minimal fruition because John Brown's own story predominated at the park. Yet, as the interpretation of history is not static but slowly evolving, so is the National Park Service, and in the 1970s a public struggling with civil rights and the "Me" Generation demanded better representation of cultural diversity from federal institutions.⁶⁶ William Everhart's 1973 report, for example, called for greater sensitivity in interpretation. The director of the Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation Robert Utley stated the same year that,

In our new awareness of minority and ethnic roles in our history, we must rigorously guard against exaggerating them in an effort to atone for past neglect. With minorities taking on ever more political clout and not always restrained by an objective view of their own past, we shall often face powerful pressures that could produce distorted interpretation.⁶⁷

The NPS and the National Register of Historic Places reshaped the scope of their collection of sites to acknowledge the representation of diversity, particularly through additions of sites associated with black history.

The Kennedy Farm serves as a useful example of this shift. As we have already seen, in the previous decade the Farm was dismissed as not significant enough to warrant admission to the park administration. The NPS Chief of the Division of Historical Studies wrote in 1965 that, "In the circumstances, it would appear that the Kennedy Farm

is certainly as historically significant as the Fire Engine House [John Brown's Fort], and its addition to the park would seem to be desirable for an effective interpretive program."⁶⁸ In 1973 the National Register of Historic Places re-evaluated the site as part of a resurvey of sites falling in the 1830-1860 period.⁶⁹ This time, reviewers held the strong opinion that the farm played a consequential role in the John Brown Raid and should be recognized. Although the Farm did not become part of Harpers Ferry NHP, it was dedicated as a National Historic Landmark on October 19, 1974, with an audience in attendance consisting of scholars of John Brown and black history, members of the Congressional Black Caucus, and supporters from the public and the park.⁷⁰

At Harpers Ferry NHP itself, revision of the Furnishings Plan for Lockwood House continued into 1974 and focused on the black education theme rather than the Civil War. By then, the exterior and interior of the two west rooms were restored, as was written in the furnishing plan, "as they looked when the Paymaster of the Armory occupied the building before 1861. This means that the schoolroom setting is very different from what it actually was in 1867-69, when the scars of war were still very much in evidence." Since little evidence existed to inform interior furnishings, the report proposed compiling an exhibit on the basis of other sites.⁷¹ The plan intended for the room to show a busy kitchen for seven adults and one child on the morning of ironing day but, "The furnishings and arrangement now in the kitchen do not convey the crowded conditions that must have existed in 1868."⁷² The exhibit proceeded slowly through 1975 as the park acquired and edited its display of objects to enact the furnishings plan.

The interpretation program received mixed reviews from the public and the NPS. HFC director Everhart, for example, applauded Supt. Conway and his "hip" staff for their

creative accomplishments in interpretation.⁷³ Former historian for the park Charles Snell was less enthused. He revisited Harpers Ferry in 1973 from the Denver Service Center to complete "19th Century Business in the Lower Town," a historical study about the 1840-1890 period, and he reacted negatively to the changes.⁷⁴ As part of a Service-wide effort he was also assisting in the nomination application for park buildings to the National Register of Historic Places. Already established as an authority on Harpers Ferry from his assignment heading the Monument research program in the late 1950s, Snell wrote a memo to the director of the Denver Service Center testifying to the "destruction of the historic scene in Harpers Ferry National Historical Park" and that a series of "physical changes" made since Conway's arrival "if continued, will seriously impair the historical integrity of the Park and undo much of the good work that has been accomplished there." He cited in particular the installation of inaccurate fencing, streetlights and plantings and anachronistic refurbishing of historic buildings.⁷⁵ Harold L. Peterson, the curator at the regional office, noted glaring inaccuracies in the furnished exhibits and further indicated the complete historical inaccuracy of locating a blacksmith shop in Building 43. Despite these inconsistencies, Peterson wrote to Everhart that Supt. Conway and his staff had at least "got something started."⁷⁶ The Superintendent answered every point in Peterson's memo in defense of his vision for park interpretation. He acknowledged that the General Store was "in need of considerable refinement." As for the apothecary shop, he justified the disharmony between its 1875 style and the rest of the town in a way that suggested the ongoing discussion at the park of interpreting Harpers Ferry to a narrow or broad time frame. Supt. Conway wrote, "However, in interpreting the town of Harpers Ferry how is it possible to have an arbitrary 'cut off' date of 1859 or 1865 since the town was a child

of the entire 19th century... any so-called 'cut-off' date is just too neat, and tidy and probably wrong."⁷⁷

Visitors reacted strongly to the interpretive programs and the "look" of the park, as well. Many of them responded favorably to the sensory park exhibits, but not everyone approved. One visitor, identified only as "Old Timer" in a letter to the *Washington Star*, preferred the park before it became in the writer's words "a pure ersatz tourist trap." As the letter described,

I was given a tour of the town and nearby area. It appears that many of the natives and outsiders long resident in the region are less than happy about the 'restoration' inflicted upon this historic spot by a National Park Service that seems to have no knowledge of proper architecture prior to the Civil War – nor does it object to building structures we can only describe as "Harpers Ferry-modern."⁷⁸

For the most part, however, critics of park operations focused on the misuse or abuse of cultural resources. They took issue in particular with the freedoms given to interpretive media in creating an enjoyable experience for visitors as opposed to one as historically accurate as possible given the researched evidence of the time.

Everhart's plan for a natural alliance of park, training center, and design center proved idealistic. The differing orientations, purposes, and operations of the facilities made the reorganized administrative hierarchy impracticable.⁷⁹ In March 1974 Harpers Ferry NHP was transferred to the National Capital Region (NCR) and the administrative chain was reversed, flowing through the park to the Interpretive Design Center/Harpers Ferry Center and Mather Training Center, excepting operations and content functions. In anticipation of the shift, Supt. Conway petitioned the NCR director to continue fiscal support for the park. Conway cited the mandate from the national director's office and from IDC directors that brought him to Harpers Ferry NHP and authorized him to bring

“action” and energetic change to the park. But he also distanced himself from his original sponsors and stressed that providing maintenance and protection for MTC and HFC and their expanding programs was an increasing burden for the park.⁸⁰ Within a year, in characteristically dramatic fashion, Conway wrote to alert the NCR director of an approaching “crisis” caused by the “unplanned expansion” of the IDC into a former commercial building and the Shipley School. He went so far as to suggest that both MTC and IDC be moved to other locations.⁸¹ While Everhart and his assistant director Marc Sagan might have expected that Conway would be an ally and a partner in innovation, the degree of their miscalculation and of the divergence in philosophy was symbolically demonstrated in Conway’s derision of the modern IDC building as such an intrusive structure that an attempt had been made to screen it with ivy.⁸²

Further administrative reorganization took place at the park level. In 1975 a management review recommended that the superintendent “separate the functional responsibilities of the current Division of Interpretation, Recreation, and Resource Management and establish two distinct manageable organization entities; Division of Protection and Resource Management; Division of Interpretation and Visitor Services.”⁸³ The superintendent was advised to consult with the Regional Office for assistance in determining the scope and responsibilities for the departments to insure greater and more appropriate protection of significant resources. Although Regional Director Manus Fish approved this preliminary recommendation, he later changed his mind “apparently based on the personnel problem which exists at the park,” and would not agree to split interpretation and ranger activities into two branches. (The meeting notes did not define the personnel problem.)⁸⁴ The reorganization was later approved, but while the

Protection Division took on responsibility for natural resources, historic resources remained unassigned until an Operations Evaluation in 1977.⁸⁵

Despite considerable disagreement, how to achieve the goal of creating or recreating a historic scene has been an aspiration of NPS staff since establishment of the Monument. This manifested in the 1970s in two primary ways: acquisition of land toward reorganizing the traffic flow of visitors and major “package” programs to restore the historic buildings. These actions reflected ongoing dialogue about the shape, appearance, and interpretation of the park resources. Undertaking them brought to bear a central friction of the period: that concerning a superintendent’s idealized role as the primary steward of irreplaceable cultural artifacts in National Parks versus Supt. Conway’s distinctive perspective on change at the park.

Reorganization of the flow of visitors responded to a universal point of agreement that the presence of the automobile not only marred the scene but also threatened the park’s integrity by the volume and wear of traffic. This view was evident in the tacit NPS approval of the 1945 bridge relocation that resulted in removing Route 340 through-traffic from the town. Particularly, the lack of parking in the confining Lower Town area was a concern from the beginning of the Monument. Initially, a series of small parking lots, often on demolished building lots, were provided “to relieve some of the congestion.”⁸⁶ As early as 1965 NPS planners suggested solving the problem by providing a shuttle bus service from visitor reception centers along the main highway east or west of the historic town.⁸⁷ In 1972 senators Randolph and Byrd sponsored legislation to raise the park acreage limit from 1,530 to 2,346.35 and to acquire land to create a single park entrance and parking area outside the historic area.⁸⁸ Legislation (P.L. 93-



Fig. 24: Parking lot, 1960s (NHF-2396, Harpers Ferry NHP).

466) was finally approved October 24, 1974 setting the acreage limit at 2,000 and allotting \$1.3 million for acquisition, \$8.69 million for development. In addition to the potential parking area on Cavalier Heights, the proposed acquisition also included two Jefferson County Board of Education properties—Grand View and Shipley schools—which the park was already renting and using for overflow storage and HFC exhibit preparation. (The development figure was raised to \$12.385 million November 10, 1978 by P.L. 95-625.)

Harpers Ferry NHP administration of the 1970s built its approach to the historic structures upon the debate over the presentation of a narrow or broad time frame. It also grew from the building management system of demolition and restoration of the 1950s and the grouping of buildings into “packages” for recommendations from the 1960s for stabilization and renovation.⁸⁹ In 1956 the Acting Chief of the Eastern Office of Design and Construction (EODC) in Philadelphia, the NPS service center for planning projects in eastern region parks, wrote to Supt. Dale. “In view of the large program of restoration ahead for Harpers Ferry, we have selected a man to go into residence there for the preparation of the plans.”⁹⁰ Architectural restoration at the Monument indeed proved to be a large program and architect A.W. “Archie” Franzen remained on the staff at the park for the remainder of his more than thirty-year career. By the 1970s the EODC had been reorganized and consolidated as part of the Denver Service Center (DSC, established November 15, 1971), and the DSC worked with the park in planning and executing the “package” program as it evolved over the succeeding decades.⁹¹

Interpretation still concentrated on the John Brown theme as the primary story and the prioritization of package programs on the Lower Town reflected this emphasis. Since

the 1950s the strip of buildings closest to the original location of the Engine House along the northeast end of Shenandoah Street had been earmarked as significant to restore the historical streetscape scene of the Raid.⁹² The plans to restore these buildings and John Brown's Fort (now placed on the so-called Armory Yard) became known as Packages 110 and 113, respectively, in the early 1970s.⁹³ At the same time, the NPS identified a set of buildings scattered across the Lower Town as Package 115. The combined effect of the three contiguous building programs was that portions of the Lower Town both resembled and were a construction site. The streetscape included a trailer at the end of Shenandoah Street, torn up sidewalk, scaffolding, and buildings in various states of disarray as more projects were added through the early 1990s.⁹⁴ HFC designers created an exhibit for the John Brown Museum itself in 1972, but a study team of park rangers also planned for the interpretive post-construction uses for Package 110 buildings. The theatricality of the living history program was favored over accuracy so that while the interiors were kept to the 1850s, the plan "stretched" the historic uses of the structures to illustrate nineteenth-century life, and curated them so as not to duplicate types of businesses.⁹⁵ These decisions all anticipated the final scope of the 1978 Development Concept Plan and, while made in the context of its development, were made without a final policy to guide them.

The decision to restore Package 110 to the 1859-1865 period instead of the late nineteenth century constituted the most expensive alternative but maintained the traditional interpretation at the park of the John Brown theme. As the acting regional director explained in 1975,

Retention of the late 19th century fabric would be a more laudable objective if that fabric were of a quality or rarity to give it significance. If the setting and

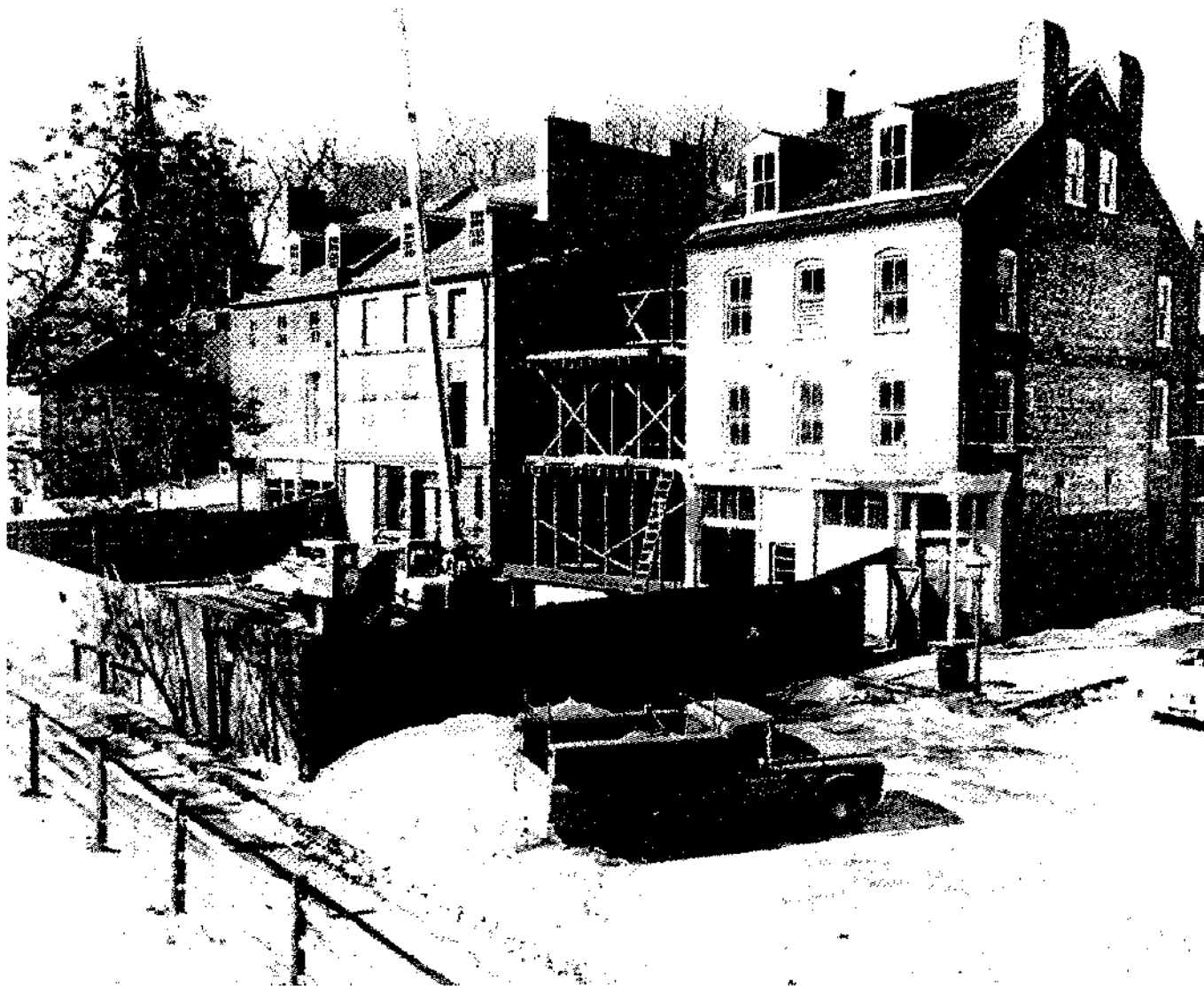


Fig. 25: Unseld Building under restoration, Buildings 9 (on right), 11 and 12 on left, 1976. Martin
Gentry (NLE 2727, Homers Ferry, MD)

interpretation at Harpers Ferry stray too far from pre-Civil War authenticity, the park message is no more unique there than it could be at any of the other towns along the Potomac.⁹⁶

The continued conception of Harpers Ferry NHP as a John Brown park meant that the buildings could not stand on their own merit within a larger historical context, as the park found in submitting Buildings 9 through 12 for its List of Classified Structures. The regional office denied their designation of First Order of Significance and judged them only as elements of a scene. As a result, the office could not recommend the extensive level of treatment proposed by the renovation plans or recommend adaptive reuse.⁹⁷ In 1976, however, the regional office changed its mind and approved the project by stating it would have no adverse effect as the most dramatic changes to the structures would involve demolition of portions of Building 10. This understanding between the park administration, Washington offices, and the public later became very significant as the plans for the project changed dramatically and without review.⁹⁸

On a basic level, Package 115 buildings differed from those of Package 110 due to their distance from (and perhaps their proportional contribution to) the John Brown scene. But they seemed, as well, to reflect the larger friction of how to interpret and maintain the variety of buildings at the park. Supt. Conway justified the work on Package 115 as both contributing to the interpretive program and arresting further deterioration of the buildings. He wrote in 1973 that, “these buildings need rehabilitation in order to achieve the 1859 historic environment planned for the Park, in addition the making possible a more authentic Living History program.”⁹⁹ Building 3, for example, tested the line between subjective aestheticism – as seen earlier in the “ruins” kept by the park – and the “park scene” of the 1970s. Snell recommended demolishing Building 3 in

his historical report because it was built in 1893 and, he argued, it posed an impediment to interpretation of High Street.¹⁰⁰ Conway argued similarly during the planning for Package 115 in 1975 that,

In my judgment, this building is neither architecturally sound nor esthetically pleasing. It is totally lacking in charm and character and is neither bold [n]or exciting. It distracts considerably from the historic scene especially from the lovely Harper House and the Stone Steps. I recommend therefore, that the building be removed from the Park Scene.¹⁰¹

Apparently he had argued the point before, because in 1973 the Regional Office expressed concern about Conway's willingness to demolish the building without referring to the Master Plan and without having a List of Classified Structures.¹⁰² Despite the deteriorating condition of Building 3 and a lack of conformity to the narrow interpretive period a DSC historical architect disagreed with the superintendent, stating, "the historic character of Harpers Ferry was that of a thriving industrial center; every building lost takes away that urban character. We have already done too much to present the town falsely as a rural crossroads."¹⁰³ The building remained in place and was modified to hold exhibits, but in retrospect the debate between the superintendent and the regional office so early in his tenure seemed a harbinger of future disagreement over cultural resources.

Over the course of history at Harpers Ferry NHP, each administration has approached differently the care and preservation of park resources. Often, despite legislative protections and established procedural requirements to minimize destructive actions, superintendents gave particularly uneven support for archeological resources. Excavation work in the park in the late 1950s and early 1960s proved the naysayers wrong and showed that significant subsurface resources remained at Harpers Ferry.

Salvage and research work by NPS archeologists and contract archeologists added substantial data to the history of the area and to the interpretive abilities of the park. Despite experimentation in the 1960s with Job Corps labor, excavation continued to prove the significant role that archeology could play. Despite this, it continued to be an undervalued research and interpretive tool. The work surrounding the package programs would demonstrate a continued lack of consideration for archeological resources.

Harpers Ferry NHP package programs brought historic preservation specialists, architects, and archeologists to the area. In the late 1960s, public archeologists became increasingly dissatisfied with the way salvage archeology was carried out in the United States. The field of cultural resources management (CRM) grew in response and provided a systemic plan for protecting and managing archeological resources. In the early 1970s the NPS Interagency Archeological Salvage Program (IASP) arm handled interagency programs and several field offices were established across the country. National parks contracted these offices, such as the Denver Service Center (DSC), to provide historic preservation specialists and archeologists for their cultural resources projects in keeping with legislative mandates.¹⁰⁴ The Archeological and Historic Preservation Act of 1974 greatly expanded the authority, responsibilities, and funding of the IASP by assigning the oversight and coordination of United States public archeology to the Secretary of the Interior. It also authorized federal agencies to fund excavations, surveys, research, and publication.¹⁰⁵ The establishment of the DSC brought NPS cultural resources management specialists to Harpers Ferry to act as an informal division of archeology at the park.

At the same time, the parks engaged in cooperative agreements with colleges and universities to satisfy the legislative mandates and educational mission of the NPS. In 1973 and 1974 at the beginning of Package 110 development, archeologist William M. Gardner and a field crew conducted excavations at Harpers Ferry NHP through a cooperative agreement with Catholic University. The work aimed to inform construction and future interpretation. The results were promising – outbuildings, walkways, alleys, a privy, and more – and Gardner in his report concluded that social relationships might be inferred from the finds.¹⁰⁶ Soon after, the DSC Architectural Team planning a course of action on the structures realized that the excavation and its interpretive objective did not satisfy procedural clearance requirements specific to Package 110. In 1975 the team recommended further, immediate archeological work to preclude destruction of possible resources by the construction work.¹⁰⁷ Until completed, no planning drawings, construction, or maintenance (which was immediately necessary) could begin lest it adversely affect or destroy archeological evidence in the area.¹⁰⁸ Supt. Conway, however, believed that further work was unnecessary considering that it had previously “proven to be an archeologist’s nightmare” due to commercial alterations over a century. He argued that the buildings’ structural fabric would provide enough clues to inform the architects’ planning. DSC archeologists conducted surveys in conjunction with the restoration of Lower Town in early spring and tested for the historic sidewalk grade of Buildings 9 and 10 and around basement entries and window areas.¹⁰⁹ It satisfied Section 106 of the Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and perhaps Conway, as well, since the archeologists determined that conclusive evidence about the evolution of the area seemed unattainable.

Denver Service Center archeologists were frustrated repeatedly as they encountered short notification of development projects at Harpers Ferry and resistance to archeology throughout the Package 110 process. At the same time, a sewer line was planned to link Harpers Ferry and Bolivar by running through the Lower Town. The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and the Environmental Protection Agency approved the project on the basis that it would not disturb prehistoric resources, but a DSC archeologist stationed at Harpers Ferry angrily wrote,

It took two minutes to spot buildings in the immediate vicinity of the pipe line in 1835 from one of Charles Snell's maps. The Historic Base Map does not show the stables and privy, both of which are rather important in reconstructing the daily life of nineteenth century people. There is no telling what other buildings may have been around before 1835 or after 1859. The role of archeology today is not to find remains of human activity in one given year, but to reconstruct *cultural process*.¹¹⁰

DSC archeologists faced a last-minute project with no allocation of funding for survey in the \$7 million budget and had little support from park administration. The 1976 excavation associated with the sewer line project uncovered evidence in the vicinity of Building 8 of a formerly adjacent structure, now reduced to a basement containing two fireplaces, wood and mortar floor remains, and traces of a partition wall that had some importance in the restoration of Building 8. The principal investigator proposed alternatives in order to minimize the impact to the area, particularly with regard to local lore that it was the site of Robert Harper's original house.¹¹¹ Overall, however, archeological survey for the sewer line concluded that its construction would not adversely impact park structures.

Archeological resources outside the package program area were also in danger. In the summer of 1976, Youth Conservation Corps staffers informed archeologists of

uncovering artifacts in the wall and in the surrounding ground during their work to rebuild the canal wall between Virginus Island and the mainland. No Section 106 clearance was obtained and the staffers conducted the work without proper supervision. As trainees to NPS preservation, the staffers were simply not qualified to undertake unsupervised work on historic resources. The Washington regional office was called on to intervene and to allow proper survey before the project continued the following summer.¹¹² In the spring of 1977 the sum of incidents at the park were described to,

demonstrate[d] either a lack of regard for, or ignorance of National Park Service historic preservation policies and procedures. Employees in a National Historical Park should have more sensitivity to the physical resources than has been demonstrated at Harpers Ferry. As you know, very little of that park has not been tampered with. If many more incidents such as these two occur, no original fabric will be left.¹¹³

Early in March 1977, project reported another problematic incident to the chief of the DSC Historic Preservation Team. A contractor for the construction of the sewage treatment plant associated with the sewage line disturbed the upper courses of a stone wall along the shoulder of the Harpers Ferry, Charles Town, and Smithfield Turnpike, which historically ran parallel to the western section of the Potowmack Company's Shenandoah Canal. The chief of the DSC/HPT asked Supt. Conway to direct the contractors to stop work until a consultation could take place and his analysis of the project found several different ways that it would seriously impact historical resources and lambasted the federal and state agencies involved, stating,

The only rational explanation that I can develop is that the EPA [Environmental Protection Agency] was interested solely in developing a sewage treatment system without regard to its impact upon cultural resources, and that the "Environmental Impact Appraisal" made no attempt to address the problem of those impacts. The National Park Service acquiesced to the determination of no effect by ignoring the Park's pre-Civil War resources and the potential for impact upon known and putative structures in the Lower Town.

After describing as difficult the dynamics between Mayor Nash, the contractors, and the NPS liaison with the contractors, he continued,

Finally, I must comment upon the Park management's obvious lack of a sensitive concern for the area's total historic and archeological resources. Concern[s] are concentrated upon those associated with the 1859-65 period, and those associated [with] earlier and later eras are sometimes ignored. While less dramatic than the Civil War period events, [those] of industrial and social are equally significant. I may be unfair, but I sensed an ignorance of legal compliance implications, especially as they affect the non-Civil War era. While there is interest in interpretation and "living history," the fabric of the historic structures has suffered, in spite of the presence for more than twenty years of a resident historical architect and the existence of the significant body of historic data assembled under Charles Snell's direction during the late 1950s and early 1960s.¹¹⁴

Supt. Conway considered it important to respond. But while angrily defending his approach, Conway also regrettably substantiated the DSC's concerns about his knowledge about proper procedural review. The primary problem was that the federal and state agencies and the superintendent let the project go ahead at all. The environmental impact appraisal completely sidetracked the issue of impacts to historical structures and lacked an awareness of the steps to evaluate the effects of the project on the resources at even the earliest stages. Conway wrote that, "the level of construction," at the time the work halted, "consisted of clearing brush and trees with no excavation having taken place. The so-called canal wall was... readily visible for more than 100 years to anyone with normal eyesight." The involvement of federal agencies and federal money in the project triggered federal laws protecting cultural resources, but Conway's questions betrayed his lack of knowledge of these procedures. He asked, "are we within our rights to make decisions upon an archeological discovery such as the canal wall along Shenandoah Street, on land that belongs to the State of West Virginia? And if so, are we

then obligated to monitor the entire Harpers Ferry-Bolivar sewer project over the next two years and at what cost?" Supt. Conway's response blamed archeologists working in the Lower Town the previous year for not locating the wall, but the site fell out-of-scope for their work. For the superintendent, rather than excavate on areas such as Virginius Island or to survey, appropriations to the park for cultural resources were better spent on the "immediate needs of management... to preserve those existing pre-Civil War ruins" that his opponents claimed the park did not care about enough.¹¹⁵ Interestingly, this memo also suggested that the historical architects working for the DSC had subsumed Archie Franzen's role at the park, although no explanation was given.

During the summer of 1977, the YCC project on the building and canal ruins was moderated by a plan limiting the youths' involvement with historic structures and archeological resources and promising professional supervision.¹¹⁶ The YCC participated in ruins stabilization of Virginius Island in close cooperation with DSC archeologists and maintenance supervisors.¹¹⁷ In the fall of 1977, the DSC archeologist assigned to Harpers Ferry stressed the need to have a fulltime archeologist or compliance manager to supervise the stabilization of Virginius Island, with a leading reason being Supt. Conway's attitude for moving projects forward over procedural requirements.¹¹⁸ Overall, the salvage archeology in the Lower Town undertaken by DSC archeologists contributed significantly to the immediate plans of the restoration architect.¹¹⁹ But in a more lasting sense the problems encountered by archeologists at Harpers Ferry NHP in the 1970s reflected a larger issue throughout the NPS of the understanding of archeology and cultural resources management in parks and their role in the maintenance and interpretation of them.

In 1976 Paul Lee took over as Chief of Interpretation from a series of acting chiefs and was hired, in part, to bring order to the interpretive operations.¹²⁰ The 1977 Interpretive Prospectus indicated some future directions for park interpretation. It, reflecting ongoing shifts toward interpreting the entire nineteenth century, argued for integrating themes of the setting and of industry together to discuss the socio-economic impact of business on the town. As such,

The techniques used in interpreting the themes to the public will involve more than simply imparting factual information. Most activities will also strive to stimulate the formation of values and behavior patterns toward active visitor participation in the maintenance, protection and preservation of the park and other of our historic and natural areas. In other words, the interpretive program should be an integral part of the park's management objectives.¹²¹

These ideas described the theory surrounding relevance in National Parks. The living history program at Harpers Ferry NHP promoted history as timely and relevant, but attention to heritage and black history in particular acknowledged national interest in ethnicity.

Harpers Ferry was among six areas in the 1970s noted by the NPS for a primary association with black history. Beginning in 1926, Dr. Carter Godwin Woodson declared February to be Negro History Month because it included the birthdays of Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln. President Gerald Ford renamed the day Black History Month during America's Bicentennial celebration in 1976.¹²² In determining a course of approach for addressing the theme, chief of the NPS cultural resources management division wrote,

[It] should be understood that we will not attempt to 'reinterpret' our parks to stress black roles. Our primary interpretive mission is not to tell the history of blacks or any other ethnic group, but to convey the historical significance of parks in accordance with their established purposes. To unduly emphasize peripheral black roles in parks created for unrelated purposes would constitute the very

ethnic bias we are pledged to eliminate and would be patronizing to blacks themselves.¹²³

The NPS focused its Bicentennial Celebration funds on parks with direct associations to the American Revolution, and for these particular parks the celebration prompted extra funding in anticipation of increased numbers of visitors and a renovation of properties to the highest standard of maintenance. The NPS also wanted to emphasize its interpretive program concerning heritage. Each park prepared its own action plan and participated in an appropriate way to present a “massive history lesson” to enkindle in the American people a new “Spirit of ’76.”¹²⁴

The Bicentennial Celebration at Harpers Ferry included programs to support the demand for interpretation of Storer College and black history. Indeed, a visitor survey in 1976 concluded that John Brown’s Raid constituted the most well-known and best-remembered theme.¹²⁵ Responding to a Regional Office memo about upcoming events of a “sensitive nature” the park identified its Bicentennial program “Heritage Days: The Black Perspective” as its only event with possible political impact.¹²⁶ The public information officer described it as, a “celebration of the contributions to our culture by the millions of Black Americans who gave their muscle, intellect, and spirit to the building of a great nation.”¹²⁷ Speakers, artists, and exhibits contracted by the Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History, Inc., the group begun by Dr. Woodson and qualified by previous work in enriching activities in minority studies, underscored the contributions of black Americans to national culture.¹²⁸ The summer of 1976 event included political and historian speakers including Benjamin Quarles, U.S. Representative of New York Shirley Chisholm, Georgia legislator Julian Bond, and civil rights advocate and NAACP director Roy Wilkins. The public in attendance greeted it

enthusiastically.¹²⁹ The final report characterized the event as, “the most important historical gathering in this nation since the pace making Second Niagara Movement which was held also in Harpers Ferry.”¹³⁰ Despite public enthusiasm, the Heritage Days program proved impractical for the park because it drained interpretive funding and disrupted the seasonal training and interpretive programs. The following year, hosting the program was discouraged for these reasons, but the park also assumed that it would not draw as significant a crowd without a Bicentennial-scale national event.¹³¹

Interest continued to establish Harpers Ferry as a study center for black history. Park staff and the Regional Office agreed on increased interpretation of Storer College with oral history interviews to begin as soon as possible.¹³² In 1978, the park and the NAACP seriously considered implementing a Multi-Culture Studies program at Harpers Ferry to focus on black history in the tri-state area and particularly with regards to Storer College. Ideas to support the program included a library/archives, education programs, interpretive development, and facilities for housing participants and carrying out activities.¹³³ In 1979, the advantages and failings of the black history program were reviewed and weighed in the Black Perspective program. The review concluded that the Black Perspective heritage program produced little tangible result for the park other than promises for increased cooperation and involvement.¹³⁴

It is important to interject here the role of the Harpers Ferry Historical Association at this period. The role of the HFHA was developing in relation to its perceived position as competitor to local businesses and as an association whose mission was by definition cooperative, and thus subject to the political influence of the park. The HFHA produced two strips of postcards in 1975 using living history scenes. Local

businessman Dixie Kilham objected at the time on behalf of the merchants who felt the cards competed with their businesses and infringed on their rights, and he purchased the cards wholesale from the park. A few were sold to other vendors, such as the Harpers Ferry Caverns, the Iron Horse Restaurant, and the Molly Rebel Gift Shop.¹³⁵ The sales program provided support in 1976 for the Bicentennial Program Black Heritage Days, the environmental council, and the Environmental Awareness for Handicapped Children programs.¹³⁶ In 1977, the HFHA decided to look into a second printing of the post cards, though Supt. Conway objected for fear of again jeopardizing community relations.¹³⁷ That year, an Operations Evaluation advised the superintendent to resign as Executive Secretary to the Historical Association and to appoint the Chief of Interpretation to the position. "It is an awkward and really unworkable situation particularly in light of the Solicitor's strong position that Service employees should play a smaller role in operating affairs."¹³⁸ The appointment of the chief of interpretation to the position provided a direct, automatic link between the administration of the Interpretive Division and the funding provided by the association to interpretive programs.¹³⁹ Since profits from the media sold by the HFHA supported events at the park, it was deemed appropriate to create a Publications Sales Policy to hone the items sold. In 1978, the association also agreed to look into publishing and offering items better related to park themes, particularly concerning Storer College and industrial development, and for children. A complete rewrite of the Virginius Trail guide was underway for future sale, as well.¹⁴⁰

The enabling legislation of 1974 to expand the park initiated a planning process for a course of action for the development. An "Assessment of Alternatives" / Development Concept Plan (DCP) prepared by the National Capital Team of the Denver

Service Center was released for review in fall 1978. In-house NPS readers were in general highly critical of the document and some were dismayed that it had been submitted to the public.¹⁴¹ Indeed, a series of workshops and forums enabled the public to express its opinions about future directions for the park. Participants in the first forum in March 1977 supported the removal of traffic from the Lower Town, but expressed concern at increasing the park acreage. The Harpers Ferry town council, instead, supported an alternative to place a parking garage in the Lower Town. The public strongly supported strong personal services at the park, but handicapped persons worried about the “conspicuous” lack of planning for them.¹⁴²

NPS reviewers believed the Assessment/DCP revealed a lack of genuine planning and genuine consideration of alternatives. Objections centered on the role of the service centers (MTC and IDC/HFC) and interpretations of preservation. Reviewers criticized as an unexamined assumption the proposal that the service centers should expand on site and noted that the centers’ priorities seemed to overshadow the park’s responsibility to protect overall resources. There was also alarm over proposals to acquire about fifty additional Harpers Ferry buildings, including the High Street business district and Hilltop House, to protect the scene beyond the lower town area. Reviewers and local commentators advised that local residents shared this objective and that it could be achieved by “cooperative planning with the town for the protection of the town scene largely by the private sector, rather than through acquisition.” Alternatives dealing with the parking problem included proposals to build a parking garage in the Shenandoah cliff side or to acquire and move the train station and pave the site for parking. These were roundly rejected as being “in violation” of NPS policy because of their irreversible

impact on historic resources. In summary, reviewers urged that the larger issues of policy and development be examined, but recommended an immediate need to refocus on the original rationale for the 1974 legislation that would create a satellite parking facility with shuttle bus access to Lower Town.¹⁴³

As for the support of the community for more acquisition, the Assessment/DCP presented a simplified picture of local opinion. Another community meeting in the fall of 1978 reinforced longstanding concerns about taxpayer money being wasted and how necessary park growth was.¹⁴⁴ During the creation of the Assessment of Alternatives, work was underway to bring the surrounding town up to historic district status. The park itself was administratively listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1966 with Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER) documentation from 1956 through 1961 as a lead-in and additional sites placed on it as the park expanded geographically and philosophically. By the 1976 and 1978 nomination form, categories included not only the Lower Town and the Arsenal areas but business and transportation districts, the Hayward Shepard Monument, cemeteries, streets and sidewalks.¹⁴⁵ Opinion was uneven over the prospect of districting. Dixie Kilham requested delaying the Harpers Ferry application for historic districting until review of the Development Concept Plan for possible conflicts.¹⁴⁶ Bradley Nash argued that town officials did not properly inform or consult residents and property owners of the Harpers Ferry Corporation, a merchants association for the town businesses surrounding the park, before applying to declare the area a historic district. He requested delay, as well, until property owners felt better informed.¹⁴⁷ Overall, as written for a Martinsburg newspaper, "The effect most questioned was: Would a committee or

commission be created to dictate what an individual property owner could or could not do with his property?"¹⁴⁸ The 1980 version of the DCP chose to present the version of the discussion suiting the park best, stating, "The community is aware of the historical significance of the properties outside the boundaries of the park and has indicated its willingness to protect these resources as well as those of Lower Town. The designation of the town as an historic district was recently approved."¹⁴⁹

The recommendations of the DCP affected every element of park operations by proposing solutions to broad problems. The interpretive division, with its range of duties involving structures, themes and visitors services, was significantly impacted.¹⁵⁰ The chief of interpretation encouraged the staff to attend the public meetings and contribute their perspectives concerning the key issues affecting interpretation. These issues included traffic in Lower Town, restoration and uses of buildings, access to remote areas (such as Maryland Heights, the C&O Canal and Virginus Island), and improving interpretation of the themes of industrial history, Storer College, and natural history. The point was further emphasized, "Much of the future of the park lies in the decisions resulting from this hearing... much is at stake."¹⁵¹ As partner to interpretive operations, the Historical Association was advised to take an active role in the interpretive planning process.¹⁵²

In October 1978 Martin Conway submitted comments on the "Assessment"/DCP largely in agreement with other critical NPS reviewers. But many of the problems pointed out in reviews of the study were similar to criticisms already circulating on the regional level over his understanding of cultural resources and preservation procedures. The dramatic changes he instituted certainly brought the park to life for visitors, but by

1977 his administration also came under scrutiny for fiscal improprieties and sexual harassment, as well as for disregard of preservation policies. He was transferred out of the park in October 1977 and was officially “reassigned” from his post as superintendent to a position as special assistant to the mid-Atlantic regional director September 25, 1978.¹⁵³ Following an appeals process his suspension was upheld in June 1979.¹⁵⁴ Conway’s unorthodox pursuit of a historic scenic “effect” at the expense of historic accuracy certainly attracted attention to the park, and it was a catalyst for a period of re-evaluation of park direction. The “Assessment of Alternatives” likewise brought the park critical scrutiny and a continuation of that process.

Following the “Assessment of Alternatives”/DCP review, in November 1978 Harpers Ferry NHP Acting Superintendent Rock Comstock invited representatives from the director’s and the regional office to convene at the park to set “a new course for orderly preservation, resource management, and interpretation.” The central decision guiding the redirection was the retraction of the goal of restoring the town to the 1859-65 period. This guiding time-frame decision from the late 1950s was cited as the culprit for the “poorly conceived assessment of alternatives” and the park’s diversion from modern NPS planning and preservation policies. Discussions of the decision to broaden drastically the interpretive window for the park acknowledged the unapproved, wholesale “reconstruction” of buildings to represent the prescribed Civil War period. It was a problematic issue, to the say the least, that reviewers of the 1978 “Assessment” alluded to when they complained that it paid little attention to the preservation and use of existing structures.¹⁵⁵

During the “Assessment”/DCP review process, problems continued with regard to Package 110. While Conway had been already transferred from his position, the situation punctuated with an exclamation point the lessons of his administration with regards to cultural resources. Although the NPS and the public knew about the demolition of parts of Building 10, demolition to Buildings 8 and 9 in 1978 came as a surprise and drew fire. The public directed outrage at the park because the actions were taken without prior notification and consisted of major violations of NPS policies. The NPS itself felt that the severe intervention was unnecessary and contradicted more recent philosophies for preserving historic fabrics. The DSC chief historical architect reported,

This action came as a surprise to officials in these responsible NPS organizations and has caused considerable public outrage since the action was taken without prior knowledge, review or information and appears to be in violation of NPS policy. It is now generally felt that this severe intervention was unnecessary to preserve the basic qualities of Harpers Ferry and the reconstruction of these buildings was in contradiction to current philosophies for preservation of the historic fabric of historic buildings and the ambience of historic sites.¹⁵⁶

An Operations Evaluation of the park begun in October 1977 and submitted in June 1978 overlapped with the Assessment/DCP review process and pointed out similar concerns. The evaluation report noted that with the exception of the museum collection, there was no organizational responsibility for historic resource management and that the commitment to living history diverted staff resources and compromised historic accuracy and historic resources. Members of the evaluation team felt the horses used for occasional ranger patrols were “out of proportion and possibly hazardous” on congested Lower Town streets and found it “difficult to determine just how the horse mounted unit was justified and established at Harpers Ferry.” The report recommended that Lower Town patrols be discontinued immediately and steps taken to phase out the unit. The

sewing shop, often touted by Supt. Conway as a centerpiece of his initiatives, was found to be operating at a considerable deficit and needed reorganization and improved interpretation. Observations of park maintenance suggested that the measures taken in the late 1960s to establish systematic procedures had not been effective. Criticisms that living history emphasized appearance over content seemed to apply to maintenance practices as well. One of the evaluation team members frankly described general maintenance of the historic buildings as “very grim” and recommended “less grass-mowing time and equipment.” The team’s report noted, “what restoration work is accomplished tends to be poor and cosmetic. Mather Training Center sends its students from the ‘Historic Buildings Maintenance’ course to the lower town for its examples of poor maintenance.” They urged a concerted effort through training and recruitment to develop a maintenance division with an expertise and sensitivity commensurate with the park’s historic properties.¹⁵⁷

NPS historic architects advised the park to redefine studies under existing development packages, “specifically reorienting them to enumerate the characteristics and limitations of the buildings so that management can determine the suitability and feasibility of the restoration to an earlier appearance and the practical aspects of the adaptive uses of the interior” and “The historic events cross a broad spectrum of time, and to freeze the town to one period, only makes the interpretation of the others more difficult.”¹⁵⁸ Regional and park staff advocated a broader preservation policy. Regional historians believed that it would be impossible to recreate 1859 and that the “real significance of Harpers Ferry lay in its survival as a historic town and in its associative historic values.” The outcome involved decisions oriented towards preservation of

existing buildings with a minimum amount of restoration to earlier periods and drafting of the Interpretive Prospectus to reflect this concept and a one hundred year scope. These decisions required redefinition of development packages towards weighing restoration to an earlier appearance, preservation, and the practical aspects of adaptive reuse. The Regional Office approved of the conclusions and directions determined by the meeting, stating that the best advice at the time of restoration on Buildings 9 through 12 called for reconstruction.¹⁵⁹ It acknowledged that the new approach for interpreting a longer historical period would require more historical studies, but overall would cost less than the previous commitment to restoration. The park received praise for its attempts to “turn around an unfortunate set of circumstances that resulted in inappropriate and costly preservation treatments for structures and poorly conceived DCP alternatives.”¹⁶⁰

Park staff proceeded to develop their programs according to the new guidelines and conduct day-to-day operations throughout this period of outside scrutiny and administrative uncertainty. After Supt. Conway's transfer in October 1977, the regional office detailed a series of five temporary acting superintendents to the park--including Ronald Wrye, Hugh Muller, Rock Comstock, Brien Varnado and J.D. Young--and park division chiefs such as Dwight Stinson, Rock Comstock and Paul Lee, frequently filled the position as well.¹⁶¹ When the investigation of Supt. Conway was completed, John Reynolds, a planner at DSC, was designated to succeed him as superintendent in September 1978. He visited the park and met with department heads, but did not take up the post as scheduled on September 24, presumably because Conway's case was appealed.¹⁶² Donald W. Campbell was appointed to the position at the conclusion of the appeal process in July 1979. One of his first priorities was to complete an updated

Development Concept Plan that would guide future operations and reflect program measures his new staff already had under way. The revised policy of a broad interpretive range combined with conservative preservation treatments was made official in a March 1980 publication.¹⁶³

The opening of the Interpretive Design Center in 1970 initiated a series of changes at Harpers Ferry NHP from bureaucratic structure to details of the visitor experience. Some of the changes were unintentional, but many were already being reversed by the end of the decade. Nevertheless, the decade constituted a shift in course for the park. It was followed by a period of systematic fulfillment of the redefined mandates despite (or perhaps with the encouragement of) the challenges of natural disasters and encroaching development.

¹ Superintendent Joseph R. Prentice to Regional Director, Memo "Survey of Storer College Buildings by Cabot and Everhart of WASO," April 27, 1962, Folder "HFNHP Storer College 1958-1963," Box 37, Ent. 413, RG 79, NARA-MA (Ph); Architect Franzen to Mr. Robert E. Smith, Memo "Survey of Storer College Buildings," April 30, 1962, Folder "HFNHP Storer College," NPS HD Coll., HD/NPSDC.

² Sarah Allaback, "Introduction, 'The Origins of Mission 66,'" in *Mission 66 Visitor Centers: The History of a Building Type*, (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Interior, 2000) online; Barry Mackintosh, "Chapter 3, 'Museums, Visitor Centers, and the New Look'" in *Interpretation in the National Park Service* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Interior, 1986) online. William C. Everhart interview.

³ William C. Everhart interview. Robert Grogg and David Nathanson, "Duty Station, Harpers Ferry, NPS Courier (May 1990), 39; William C. Everhart, "The Origins of the Interpretive Design Center, With Comments On The Progress of Interpretation, 1964-1970," no date, HAFE Box 1 of 4, NPS History Coll., HFC.

⁴ Robert E. Kohler, *ALA Journal* (January 1971) Vol. 55, No. 1, 18-25.

⁵ William C. Everhart interview; Robert Grogg and David Nathanson, "Duty Station, Harpers Ferry," *NPS Courier* (May 1990), 39; William C. Everhart, "The Origins of the Interpretive Design Center, With Comments On The Progress of Interpretation, 1964-1970," no date, HAFE Box 1 of 4, NPS History Coll., HFC; Sarah Allaback, "Introduction, 'Modern Architecture in the Parks' and 'A New Style,'" in *Mission 66 Visitor Centers: The History of a Building Type*, (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Interior, 2000) online.

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⁷ Acting Asst. Director Leslie P[Annhergh], Operations to All Regional Directors, Memo "Experimenting with period dress for interpretive demonstrations in selected parks," April 27, 1967; Asst. Director, Interpretation William Everhart to All Regional Directors, Memo "Period dress for interpretive demonstrations," October 6, 1967, Folder "Living History," NPS History Coll., HFC.

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⁹ Marc Sagan interview

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¹¹ Director Hartzog to Frank Masland, January 6, 1970, Folder "NP System History," NPS History Coll., HFC.

¹² "Part One of the National Park System Plan History," USDO, 1972, Folder "NP System History," NPS History Coll., HFC.

¹³ Ronald Lee, *Family Tree*, 1972, NPS HD, HD/NPSDC.

¹⁴ "Interpretation," 17 of 23 in "Master Plan Development Outline, Harpers Ferry National Monument," December 1952, Hebb Coll., BH/HAFE.

¹⁵ Marc Sagan interview.

¹⁶ Superintendent Davis to Director, HFC, Memo "Annual Information and Interpretive Services Report," January 19, 1970, Folder "K2621," Admin. Coll., BH/HAFE; Chief, Interpretive Planning Group Marc Sagan to Director, HFC, Memo "Interpretive renovation of the John Brown Museum," April 21, 1970, HFR-442, CO/HAFE.

¹⁷ Joseph Rockwell, Robert Johnsson, Carl Degen and Blair Hubbard, "Design directive for the John Brown Museum," September 14, 1972, Folder "K1817," Admin. Coll., BH/HAFE.

¹⁸ Mackintosh, *Interpretation*, Ch 2.

¹⁹ Marc Sagan interview.

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²⁴ Deborah (Mehrkam) Piscitelli interview.

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- ²⁹ Debbie K. Mehrkam to Chief Ranger, Memo "Evaluation and Recommendations for the Harper House Interpretive Program," November 5, 1973, Folder "Activity schedules 1976 and earlier, Chief of Int. files, BH/HAFE.
- ³⁰ Deborah Piscitelli Interview.
- ³¹ "Living History Program Comes to Harpers Ferry," *The Skyline* (May 1973), Scrapbook Coll., CO/HAFE.
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- ³⁶ Dennis Frye interview, Deborah Piscitelli interview, Bill Hebb interview.
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- ³⁸ Roy E. Appleman to Editor, *National Geographic Magazine* (April 1, 1957), Folder HFNHP 1957," NPS HD Coll., HD/NPSDC; Herbert E. Kahler to Mr. James W. Holland, Executive Secretary, ENPMA, March 24, 1959, Folder HFNHP 1958-1959, NPS HD Coll., HD/NPSDC; "Harpers Ferry Historical Association: A Perspective," 1996, HFHA.
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⁶⁷ Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation Robert Utley to Associate Director, Professional Services, April 16, 1973, Folder "HAFE 1973-Present," NPS HD Coll., HD/NPSDC.

⁶⁸ Chief, Division of Historical Studies Robert M. Utley to Chief, National Park System Studies, Memo "Feasibility-suitability study of the Kennedy farm," November 8, 1965, Folder "HAFE 1963-67," NPS History Division Coll., HD/NPSDC.

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⁷⁰ Remarks of Superintendent Martin R. Conway, "Dedication of Kennedy Farmhouse as National Historical Landmark," October 19, 1974; Program, "Kennedy Farm Dedication as a National Historic Landmark," October 19, 1974, PR, BH/HAFE.

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⁷² Edward R. Flanagan, "Status Report on Furnishings, The Paymaster's House (Lockwood House)," HFC, September 1975, 14-18, HFR-176, CO/HAFE.

⁷³ HFC Director Everhart to Superintendent Conway, Memo "The Impossible Dream," May 22, 1973, PR, BH/HAFE.

⁷⁴ Historian Snell to Manager, HPT, DSC, Memo "MOA – HAFE Pkg. 131 – Harpers Ferry Lower Town Sidewalks, revised to 19th Century business in the lower town," February 14, 1973, Folder "H2215," Admin. Coll., BH/HAFE.

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⁷⁶ Harold L. Peterson to Assistant Director William C. Everhart, Memo "Living History at HAFE," December 26, 1973, Folder "HFNHP 1973-Present," NPS HD Coll., HD/NPSDC.

⁷⁷ Superintendent to Everhart, Memo "Living history at HAFE," January 2, 1974, NPS HD Coll., HD/NPSDC.

⁷⁸ Old Timer, "Bah! Humbug!," *Washington Star-News* (April 24, 1974), Folder "HFNHP 1973-," NPS HD Coll., HD/NPSDC.

⁷⁹ The inter-relation of the park and the centers was touted in official statements as mutually beneficial, but actual operations were more complicated and at times problematic. A preliminary version of the 1978 Assessment of Alternatives reported, "the park functions well as a model to exemplify NPS training, planning, and interpretation." One reviewer found this statement "difficult, if not impossible to support. Further, the continual competition, and the attendant animosity, among the three units does nothing to enhance the employee morale and esprit de corps necessary for good visitor relations and services." (Glennie Murray Wall, review comments Task Directive, November 11, 1977, Folder "HFNHP 1973-Present," NPS HD Coll., HD/NPSDC.) Another anonymous reviewer registered his opinion of the real situation in the margin of his draft writing "horse manure" next to a paragraph describing the theoretical benefits of the relationship. (Annotated review draft, 1977, Folder "HFNHP 1973-Present," NPS HD Coll., HD/NPSDC.)

⁸⁰ Superintendent Martin R. Conway to Director, National Capital Parks, Memo "Justification for Fiscal Increase," February 26, 1974, HAFE Box 1 of 4, NPS History Coll., HFC.

⁸¹ Superintendent Martin R. Conway to Director, National Capital Parks, Memo "Harpers Ferry Planning," February 18, 1974, HAFE Box 1 of 4, NPS History Coll., HFC.

⁸² Martin Conway to Rock [Comstock], "Comments on the Assessment of Alternatives," October 19, 1978, Unfiled folders in box on basement floor, Admin. Coll., BH/HAFE.

⁸³ Recommendation Form, July 31, 1975, Folder "HF," NPS History Coll., HFC.

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⁸⁵ Rock Comstock, "HF - Operations Evaluation," [1977], Folder "HF," NPS History Coll., HFC.

⁸⁶ Superintendent Edwin A. Dale to Regional Director, Region Five, Memo "Temporary Parking Facility," March 22, 1957, Folder "HFNHS 1955-1962," Box 20, Ent. 411, RG 79, NARA-MA (Ph).

⁸⁷ Chief, Potomac Task Force John W. Bright to Assistant Director, Design and Construction, Memo "Parkways in the Harpers Ferry Area," November 24, 1965, Folder "HFNHP 1963-1967," NPS HD Coll., HD/NPSDC.

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⁹⁰ Acting Chief EODC Robert P. White to Superintendent HFNH, Memo "Franzen Assignment to Harpers Ferry," July 19, 1954, Folder "HFNHP 1956," NPS HD Coll., HD/NPSDC.

⁹¹ Peter F. Dessauer was detailed to the park from the DSC in 1992. Dessauer, "The Architectural Program of Harpers Ferry NHP," *CRM Bulletin* (1996) Vol. 19, No. 5, 7-10.

⁹² Research Study Proposal, "HAFE-H-8, Research on Buildings 9, 10, 11 and 12," Prepared by Walter T. Bruce, January 23, 1968, Folder "H22," Admin. Coll., BH/HAFE.

⁹³ Task Directive, "Package No. 113, Restoration of John Brown's Fort, HFNHP," November 1974, DSC, Folder "H30, 1962-1979," Admin. Coll., BH/HAFE.

⁹⁴ Dennis Frye Interview; Photograph collection, CO/HAFE

⁹⁵ Park Technician Neal Randell to Superintendent, Memo "Interpretive prospectus for Buildings Number 8, 9, 10, (10A), 11, 11A, 12, and 12 A (restored)," February 4, 1975, Folder "K1817," Admin. Coll., BH/HAFE.

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¹⁰² Assistant Director, Park Historic Preservation Robert M. Utley to Assistant Director, Interpretation, Memo "Removal of Building No. 3," December 21, 1973, Folder "HFNHP 1973-," NPS HD Coll., HD/NPSDC.

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¹³⁶ "The Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Harpers Ferry Historical Association." 1976, HFHA.

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¹⁴⁷ Bradley Nash, et al to Historic Preservation Office Director Clarence E. Moran, March 31, 1979, Folder "HFNHP 1973-present," NPS HD Coll., HD/NPSDC.

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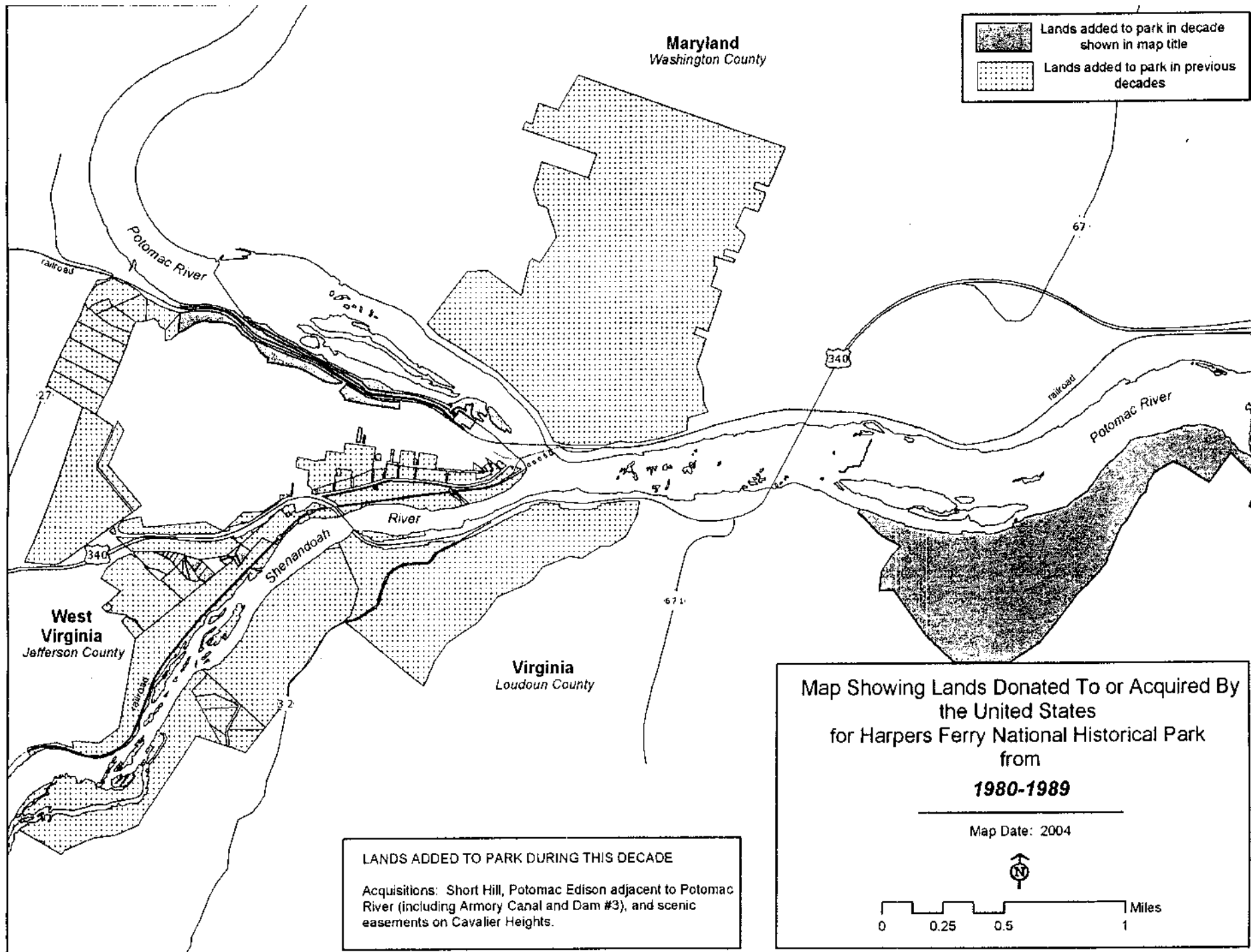
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Chapter 7:

Expanding the View and Completing the Park

By the time the effort to establish Harpers Ferry NM reached the point of actually acquiring land, the originally proposed boundaries had to be redrawn to skirt increased property values and housing development on Bolivar Heights.¹ Certainly preservation was at the center of Monument founders' mission and intentions, but merely establishing the Monument seemed such an achievement and the resources to do so were so limited that paring borders was just one of the measures taken to achieve the goal. This decision may now seem an unfortunate compromise and lost opportunity, but establishing a national monument at Harpers Ferry was an ambitious conceptual and political vision in itself. The Monument was formed with a necessarily more conservative physical vision. While planners wished to include the "scenic and historic panorama," they recommended not the entire area that could potentially be considered historic, but properties considered representatively essential for inclusion in a central monument core.²

Even beginning with this original, limited scope to allow staff to build up an effective, responsible operation within limited means, more than twenty years later concern and debate remained on how to care for the core Monument property. Although what constitutes responsible management remains a focus of healthy debate among interested parties, preservation practice was codified through legislation and bureaucratic professionalization over this period. Likewise, even during the most controversial period of the 1970s the process of inventory, assessment, and preservation treatment begun in the 1950s continued so that a sense of consolidation or maturation of the Harpers Ferry



property was gradually achieved. Concepts and contexts for preservation also evolved becoming “broader,” so that the vision for park preservation broadened beyond park borders. Meaningful preservation of the Harpers Ferry core came to be viewed as more urgently dependent on preservation of the surrounding area.³ At the same time, the means for broadening the park vision came more within reach as the West Virginia senatorial delegation gained congressional power. Jennings Randolph was a long time Harpers Ferry supporter through the park’s founding years as a Congressman and through its first decades as a Senator until his retirement in 1985. Beginning in the 1980s numerous capital improvements came about through the support of Senator Robert C. Byrd. The senator provided \$2-\$3 million annually for restoration and preservation of park natural and cultural resources⁴ Preservation practice at Harpers Ferry has evolved dramatically since site recommendations were made in the 1930s and building alterations began in 1954. Goals and visions of the site’s early planners have come full-circle and are clearly evident in the park at the end of the twentieth century.

In the 1890s summer visitors retreating to Harpers Ferry expected that the area would attract future resort and residential development, but shifts in the country’s leisure patterns discouraged resort development. The national post-World War II housing boom was manifested locally in the residential construction on Bolivar Heights that caused a shift in the Monument boundary. By the late 1970s and early 1980s the potential and pressure for development around the park became more acute. Regional Director Manus Fish registered NPS opposition to the proposed “Rattling Springs” development of a four-story hotel and townhouses along the Potomac River with the Jefferson County Planning Commission. The development overlapped 9.35 acres included in the park’s 1974

authorized boundary expansion. Condemnation proceedings to acquire the property were filed in 1979 after negotiations to purchase it “reached an impasse.”⁵ Plans for the development eventually collapsed so that the park escaped this first threat of development within the “viewshed.”

Just a few years after the park’s acreage ceiling was raised in 1974 primarily to accommodate an off-site parking facility, the park went back to its congressional delegation to request another expansion to annex the “Short Hill Mountain” property on Loudoun Heights. Legislation approving the measure was passed March 5, 1980. The acquisition brought 370 acres of historic and scenic overlook lands under park protection, and it was especially notable for finally bringing the park into the state of Virginia. Dr. McDonald had originally promoted the Monument as a tri-state project but soon sacrificed any Virginia portion to concentrate on a more easily justified core area in the two states where a park featuring John Brown had at least marginal chances of political success.⁶

The refocus of the Development Concept Plan (DCP) in the late 1970s and the dedication of park staff working under a series of five Acting Superintendents began the process of putting the park’s internal house in order.⁷ In July 1979 Donald Campbell was assigned as permanent superintendent. His training as a landscape architect and experience working as a park planner in the northwest influenced the park’s style and direction over the succeeding decades. Campbell’s background dovetailed with the impetus for circumspect preservation of natural and cultural resources according to federal and NPS guidelines and with the gradually increasing urgency for a broader vision of preservation of the park scene. The course of the 1980s saw the conceptual

changes codified in the DCP addressed in the administrative treatment of cultural resources as a progression of planning of park policy to defining the protections necessary to implement its scope. Although the DCP established a statement of purpose for park resources and amalgamated many ideas that had been ruminating for some time, the implementation process proved difficult both internally and in relation to larger issues facing the NPS.

As the park developed the DCP, the NPS was experiencing severe budget problems that led to reorganization in the early 1980s, the effects of which would be felt well throughout subsequent reorganizations into the 1990s. The NPS chief of interpretation and visitor services urged the regional chiefs to prove to the administration the value of interpretation as a management tool to gain support. He wrote, "Budget reductions, manpower reductions, travel reductions, central office reductions, energy shortages (and increased cost), inflationary increases attached to everything we do, visitation changes, new programs to implement, special initiatives to carry out, etc. Business as usual is no longer a viable option."⁸ Further, President Ronald Reagan's "new federalism" policies and decentralization of government created an expectation that government agencies would develop serious dialogue with the public and address changes in visitor demographics brought by the aging baby boomer generation. This audience was seen as expecting higher standards for education and as having greater interest in outdoor recreation and intellectual growth. NPS Director Russell E. Dickinson considered the parks "'human designed ecosystems,' special creations of our society" and "As resources, they represent the physical, intellectual, and even spiritual bases from which this nation's strength, continuity, and pride of purpose have been fashioned."⁹

Stress throughout the NPS on interpretation may have made all the more important the Harpers Ferry DCP and its partner the 1980 Interpretive Prospectus (IP). The NPS was acutely aware of the severe loss of historic fabric in the Lower Town of buildings through demolition in the 1950s and 1960s to restore the authenticity of the mid-nineteenth century streetscape. Many of these buildings would have been protected by preservation law a decade later and in the coming decades by a need for them in order to stage the expanding interpretive uses for Harpers Ferry. The DCP and the IP enacted thematic expansion at Harpers Ferry to include the entirety of the nineteenth century that particularly affected the themes of industry, Storer College, and post-war community rejuvenation efforts.¹⁰ The 1980 IP acted as a media plan for implementing the expanded vision for the park and laid out exhibit plans for many of the buildings undergoing package program maintenance. Preservation philosophy by then preferred to stabilize rather than conduct invasive restoration on structures. The IP acknowledged earlier “curation” of buildings in Lower Town and re-conceptualized the area as a sort of museum-within-a-museum. Interpretive plans prioritized (in most distinct contrast to exhibit installation of the 1970s) well-researched, authentic, and accurate building exhibits on the inside and outside. Buildings not meeting the criteria were deemed more appropriate for generalized, thematic exhibits.

The coming decades enacted the progression detailed in the 1980 IP, but budgetary problems slowed or halted NPS programs. Programming for the public as a whole decreased, but a NPS prerogative to implement programs for “special populations” enabled interpretation to progress to a degree by thinking creatively and differently about its audiences. Harpers Ferry NHP produced and implemented its plans while meeting

NPS thrusts by placing special emphasis on environmental or energy information and special populations, particularly minorities, senior citizens, the handicapped disabled, and children. As of 1979 the funding levels for Harpers Ferry provided only for fully staffed exhibits in the summer and on weekends, bypassing school groups in the spring and fall.¹¹ In a jointly promotional, fundraising, and development project the interpretive division developed a catalogue of twenty-three, theme-based education programs for grade school students in 1980 for school groups.¹² Other work, particularly in the planning process for the post-DCP development of scopes for the package programs, sought to enable handicapped visitors better access around the park. Renovation plans for the buildings included assistance for handicapped visitors, including handrails, ramps and wheelchair-suitable sidewalks. The trail around Bolivar Heights was noted as suitable for handicapped visitors because it was relatively short and flat as compared to the Maryland Heights trail and had a parking lot adjacent to it. These kinds of plans balanced the construction of functional structural elements to assist disabled visitors with a discreet design to retain the historic look of the streetscape.

Sensitivity to appearance and a generally romantic aesthetic was an endemic founding value of the Service that was sometimes overshadowed by meager budgets or utilitarian pragmatics. Despite its primary mission as a historic park, the natural scenery at Harpers Ferry was a dominant presence with aspirations for the built environment forming an easy aesthetic complement in either a Colonial Williamsburg mode or that of a shabby chic artist colony complete with churchyard and island ruins.¹³ While neither of these visions was realized, eventually a signature NPS style--order, cleanliness, scrubbed brick and stone, non-commercial earth-tone signage, mown grass and graceful

landscaping--was imposed.¹⁴ Both Supt. Prentice's defensive claim for the historic reality of a gritty industrial work town¹⁵ and Conway's unabashed pursuit of an ahistoric, dramatic "effect" were stylistic anomalies. The worm fences installed along the fields of Schoolhouse Ridge after NPS acquisition were inaccurate historically but a widely understood landscape "sign" for history, battlefield, and NPS presence and diligent care.

The first NPS representatives at Harpers Ferry NM, who described it as a trash-filled, partially abandoned "slum," were likely particularly overwhelmed by their posting because it seemed so far from the ideal. But once an NPS beachhead was established, fresh paint, iron railings and directional signs soon spread out from headquarters. Then there were concerns for "vista cutting," cutting brush so that visitors could appreciate a clear view from Jefferson Rock and Bolivar Heights.¹⁶ It was a task maintenance employees sometimes had trouble keeping up with. In 1955 Ranger Willett wrote to the Regional Director for confirmation to deny Dixie D. Kilham, owner of the Hilltop Hotel, permission to put up a billboard on scenic easement land at Union Street and U.S. 340. He wrote, "I have heard that all of the other local hotels and tourist courts have attempted to locate their advertisements along this stretch of highway. If we grant this permission, I am sure it would open the way for an unlimited amount of abuse." Regional Director Tobin advised Willett to take a "firm stand on this at the start as it will ease our problem as the years go by."¹⁷ In December 1959 Supt. Anderson alerted the regional office that an adjacent landowner was clearing trees and establishing a junkyard close to the monument boundary, but in this case Anderson could only remind the property owner to stay within his property line.¹⁸ By the 1960s after the arrival of Supt. Prentice, more attention was given to eliminating already existing "intrusions"—elements of the scene

that were anachronistic or unnatural – to the extent possible. His staff compiled a list of smaller scale problems on park property that they could do something about, such as unnecessary signs, oil tanks, light meters and telephone lines, that could be removed or camouflaged.¹⁹ As part of the conversion of Storer College grounds, overhead power lines were re-routed underground.²⁰ In 1963 and again in 1972, the park worked with Potomac Appalachian Trail Club volunteers in an attempt to paint out a 40' x 40' advertising sign above the B&O tunnel at Maryland Heights.²¹ In the 1970s Supt. Conway openly described the commercial enterprises bordering the park in Lower Town as having a negative impact on the time-capsule scene he wanted to create, and he expressed regret that the area was not included in the original Monument donation.²² The 1978 draft DCP recommended that the NPS seek to have the park boundary expanded to encompass the area and to substitute more tasteful exhibits and concessions.²³

Despite appearances, no park is an island, in time or in space. Even rural natural parks have interwoven ties with bordering lands and communities. Certainly Harpers Ferry NHP, which began as an enclave within the town and gradually leapfrogged around to encompass it, might anticipate a complex relationship with its neighbors. The heart of the park in Lower Town was so contiguous with the adjacent municipality that visitors often could not distinguish park from town and the interconnections here were quite literal. In July 1954 Harpers Ferry Mayor Gilbert Perry, among other helpful gestures in matters necessarily involving “joint efforts between the monument and the city,” connected the Monument’s headquarters building to the town water system.²⁴ Before long the initial mutual goodwill gave way to a more complicated relationship. The Monument presence invited the attention of agents of state and federal health agencies to

the standard local practices of using untreated water and individual septic tanks, many of which drained into the Shenandoah or Potomac.²⁵ Residents expected that the Monument and its “many thousands of visitors” would have a significant impact on their admittedly small-scale local infrastructure and further, felt it was reasonable to assume that the federal government might help underwrite such things as centralized sewage disposal or an upgraded water system. Rather naively, the NPS took the official position that its development would be limited “within the confines of the Monument area....if a municipal or community sewage system were to be developed, we would wish to participate as a subscriber in the same manner and on the same basis as private users.”²⁶ Without federal aid, individual septic tank use – typical of many small towns -- continued into the 1970s. Plans for a joint Harpers Ferry-Bolivar sewage system were begun by 1974. The park expressed concern over the ecological impacts of the system,²⁷ but granted use of park land to construct the facility, with the provision that work could be stopped at any time to mitigate impacts to resources.²⁸ After much deliberation over the degree of federal responsibility in the project, the NPS also consented to contribute sixty percent of construction costs.²⁹ There were additional negotiations with the newly created Public Service District over the procedures and impact of sewer line excavation. The “massive” project extending through Bolivar, Harpers Ferry and park streets aggravated an already serious traffic problem for “visitors and natives” as work progressed through the summer of 1978.³⁰ Connections to all park properties were made in January 1979, although contractual details of the new service were far from complete.³¹ The most intransigent and contentious issue arose over the Public Service District’s plan to bill the park at a rate four times that of individual homeowners. The

dispute represented the local perception of the park's relative symbolic weight in the community versus the park's insistence on abiding by a more literal measure in this case. Negotiations over the billing rate stretched over four years, held up the project and eventually were conducted through legal counsel for both sides.³² When Supt. Campbell arrived, he found negotiations deadlocked and after several attempts, was finally able to move the parties to accept a resolution in March 1980.³³

Immediate changes under Supt. Campbell's tenure seemed to send the message of a new administrative agenda that contrasted in particular to Conway's priorities and management style. The blacksmith shop, considered part of a significant element in the Conway interpretive living history quiver, was re-evaluated in 1979 and the 1980 IP called for its elimination.³⁴ Park rangers disagreed, however, and argued that the blacksmith shop provided an effective demonstration and learning tool offering a sensory experience for visitors of the shift from artesian to industrial manufacturing of weaponry at Harpers Ferry.³⁵ A new shop was eventually installed in 1991 in Building 84, the former horse stables.³⁶ Other areas also underwent review. After audits and surveys of customer satisfaction, the tailor shop was deemed ineffective both financially and in its interpretive value by 1978. It closed that July, but its final demise came in July 1982 with the termination of the last remaining position.³⁷ The park also pursued altering aesthetic problems, such as replacing the quasi-historical wooden fence around Arsenal Square with a metal one by acquiring the original gates from Mrs. William A. Murphy, whose father permitted the NPS to photograph them twenty-two years earlier.³⁸ The ghosts and legends "Night Tours" program was also reconsidered because its tremendous popularity proved a burden to security and compromised the overall messages of the

park.³⁹ Park staff advised downplaying the tour and re-assessing it in the next interpretive review, and a park volunteer subsequently took it up on a private basis after hours.⁴⁰ These kinds of changes suggested a kind of thorough evaluation – and soul searching – to learn from and remedy past missteps.

Such cosmetic and operational changes aligned with the recent policy decisions for the park, but the DCP and IP also responded to a call for more effective use of NPS resources overall, particularly outlying lands and collections.⁴¹ The lands would be addressed in cultural resources surveys that would continue into the 1990s. Longstanding collections management problems were addressed in response to a Service-wide evaluation after an inventory in 1981 totaled up \$2.9 million in missing items.⁴² Indeed, the earliest leaders and superintendents at Harpers Ferry NHP had liberally accepted donations from the public for the collection. This situation was quickly realized to be problematic, but was not seriously addressed until the park's response to the NPS call for action with a plan for reassessing curatorial operations with funding spread through fiscal year 1983.⁴³ The HFC Division of Museum Services and museum specialists from the Washington Office assisted the staff in comparing catalogue records with the furnishings, archeological artifacts, and architectural material stored and exhibited in the park.⁴⁴ A review of curatorial operations in December 1981 identified significant areas for improvement including collections management and storage, security, undocumented restoration of historical artifacts, use of original artifacts as interpretive props, staff ignoring proper procedures for moving objects, and poor communication with the curator.⁴⁵ Amidst the hodgepodge of historic artifacts and reproductions, staff noted over a thousand missing catalogued objects and identified uncatalogued ones, marked out-of-

scope items for de-accessioning and cleared them from storage spaces, and uncovered potential exhibit materials.⁴⁶ Preliminary results of the accountability program informed a 1982 Scope of Collections Statement, which detailed appropriate and inappropriate acquisitions for the John Brown Raid, Industry, Civil War, and Black Education themes.⁴⁷

The accountability project affected the management and use of collections for the future. It, in particular, raised questions about the thought behind the exhibits and the research and planning put into them. It directly resulted in increased emphasis on furnishing plans to increase the accuracy of exhibits. While furnishing plans already existed for the Harper and the Lockwood houses, nine other exhibits created in the 1970s did not and museum operations changed to establish a better fit of exhibits to the interpretive scheme through policy development.⁴⁸ Furnishings and smaller objects constituted the bulk of the collection. The unprocessed archeological collection was a particular problem and undocumented artifacts were subsequently re-buried. In 1983 the park initiated a program to deal with the artifacts from the excavations of the past twenty years that resulted in a manageable type collection suitable for display and a study collection for internal use.⁴⁹ Finally, the museum division had a true sense of direction and new tools for management, particularly computer database systems for cataloguing and collections management. Most of the collections acquired before 1987 were re-catalogued according to NPS standardization procedures for the National Catalog of museum resources. A survey of the Harpers Ferry NHP collection in the early 1990s attributed the cause of missing artifacts on the improper implementation of the computerized ANCS collections management system.⁵⁰ But problems persisted and

technological management was not foolproof. In 1993, for example, a survey revealed that only 85,000 records existed in the database out of the 150,000 assigned catalog numbers.⁵¹ Over the next several years appropriations to the park included base increases to purchase software.⁵² Now, with an established order and awareness of the practical needs of space and security, the park seemed better prepared to assess its museum resources for exhibits and interpretive programs.

The historical architecture collection from Harpers Ferry structures provides a particular example. In the process of maintaining its historic structures over several decades, park staff had taken out architectural details and kept the bulk together as a study collection and the rest scattered across the park. In the early 1990s the collection was stored in Lower Town buildings until package programs on them evicted it. By that time, it consisted of 856 small and large pieces.⁵³ A plan was made to transfer the collection to the Museum and Archeology Resource Center, the National Capital Region collections storage facility. Memoranda suggested that discussion took place to edit the collection before it was transferred to what is now called the Museum Resource Center (MRCE) and concern remained over the possible loss of original fabric in the process of readying and cleaning it for storage, particularly because they consisted of unique, irreplaceable fabric representative of all that was lost already at Harpers Ferry.⁵⁴ But the museum resource facility itself needed more space and the Fish and Wildlife property near Harpers Ferry NHP was at first considered for it. The region planned toward a major multipurpose storage space at Harpers Ferry for NCR architectural, curatorial, and archeological items in 1992 to expand MARS. Plans for the facility reflected a broad need for space and the wish lists of several agencies, particularly the Washington

Regional office, Harpers Ferry Center, and MARS itself.⁵⁵ For Harpers Ferry NHP, it offered an opportunity to shift collections from the less-than-satisfactory storage⁵⁶ and house awkwardly shaped items such as the architectural collections. The project fell through when the new Congress entered office, and the park continues to have problems with environment and space for its collections. Nevertheless, soon after, the park received affirmation of its museum management when the American Association of Museums (AAM) granted it accreditation for five years in response to the broad management and use of its resources.⁵⁷ It was an achievement and testament, since “Accreditation certifies that a museum operates according to standards set forth by the museum profession, manages its collections responsibly and provides quality service to the public.”⁵⁸ The AAM re-accredited Harpers Ferry NHP for a ten-year period in 2001, again affirming the park’s commitment to quality.⁵⁹

As the collections were evaluated for usefulness, the ongoing work on the curated collection of buildings in the “package programs” prepared the structures at Harpers Ferry for exhibits in keeping with the broadening ideas for preservation and interpretation. Several of these exhibits provide useful examples of the use of park resources and how the shape of interpretation had changed in terms of media and thematic representation. The 1980 IP set aside Building 38 for an exhibit that would present the structure as a deconstructed shell to discuss the methods typically used to present historic structures.⁶⁰ As plans developed, the Harpers Ferry Center design for Building 38 proposed using the building itself to illustrate the process of researching physical histories of old structures, including architectural, archival, and archeological methods. It would also discuss a current dilemma to the NPS: stabilization versus

restoration.⁶¹ The concept of interpreting an unrestored building in this way was new and if it proved popular other historical parks might model their own exhibits on it.⁶² The associate director of cultural resources management and Charles Snell both disagreed with the approach to Building 38, as they did with the IP as a whole. As shown by the preservation treatment and exhibit for Building 38, the IP represented a fundamental break with the planning of the early park years. Snell had recently submitted updated historical reports for Harpers Ferry and his reaction to the plans belied a professional commitment to the early scope for interpretation. They argued that the 1980 IP conflicted with the defining interpretive stance for the park and that it logically necessitated resurrecting the buildings obliterated in the 1950s and 1960s at a huge expense.⁶³ But the chief of the NCT/DSC Branch of Cultural Resources, responded, “The guideline offered by [the 1980 IP] ... seems quite in line with emerging historic preservation philosophy, which prefers preservation of structures as they have evolved. Attempts to restore buildings to a particular point in time seem to have gone out of fashion.”⁶⁴

The changes moving through Harpers Ferry NHP were brought by the re-examination by internal and exterior forces concerning operative policy underway since the park began. An HFC redesign of the John Brown exhibits in the early 1980s centered on Brown, his motivations and the aftermath, and examined his aides through biographical sketches. It included graphics, “original art,” photographs, maps, reproduction and original artifacts (such as armory doors, a pike, books about Brown and Civil War artifacts), as well as contemporary reactions by Vincent Benet and Frederick Douglass.⁶⁵ The exhibits, which opened in October 1982, attempted “to tell facts” about

Brown so viewers could decide for themselves about the Raid.⁶⁶ Within two years, NPS regional historians would identify this and other experimental exhibits as significant problems. A review of Lower Town by the regional historians in the early 1980s provides a useful review of what the area looked like at the time. Criticizing the Lower Town as “dead,” a regional historian bemoaned the silk-screened, theatrical media that drew “attention to itself instead of the very meager offering of artifacts on display. . . . Stagey exhibitry which calls attention to itself, which tries to be ‘artistic’ should be examined carefully and discarded in favor of unobtrusive displays where the artifacts, the enlarged photos, the prints, the lithographs are the real stars to successfully compete for public attention.”⁶⁷ At the same time, the park was left with few primary resources in Lower Town for its four themes and those remaining were not easily accessible.⁶⁸ The review committee’s comments indicated a disharmonic aesthetic between HFC and regional staff for these particular exhibits, but in the same tour the historians favorably remembered furnished exhibits at Master Armorer’s House, the dry goods store, and for Storer College. The review committee disparagingly reviewed other HFC-designed exhibits in the Lower Town and showed that the experimental design was not universally admired in the NPS. Whereas HFC had been idealistically positioned to make the park a showcase for its designs, as the administrative relationship softened between the two entities over the next decades it became a productive, creative collaboration. The continued attention to the exhibits representing the John Brown theme suggested that it remained paramount at Harpers Ferry despite internal and public groups’ call for increased representation of the other rich themes of the area.

The issue of representation was taken up in the 1982 release of *History and Prehistory in the NPS and the National Historic Landmarks Program* that cancelled the 1972 NPS thematic framework and in the process “reveal[ed] a System richly representative of our cultural heritage.”⁶⁹ The General Authorities Act of 1976 gave the NPS greater opportunity to shape its own growth, with the effect that interpretation as outlined in the National Parks System Plan was “an important tool for evaluating new park proposals and determining which areas warrant priority consideration” and a preliminary review of themes fed the 1982 report. The plan listed several themes for Harpers Ferry, including the civil rights movement, abolitionism, specialized education, commercial-industrial history, domestic architecture, industry and manufacturing, commerce and industry, the rise of sectionalism 1849-60, and the Civil War. Notably, it identified the area as among only a few NPS sites significantly associated with black history.⁷⁰

The park had long remained undecided about what to do with its black history resources. Archie Franzen and regional representatives had recommended including the local African American population and alumni of Storer College in the planning process, but this approach was not taken up until the 1970s with the Heritage Days Bicentennial Celebration. Interestingly, the celebration highlighted black history as the primary contribution of Harpers Ferry to the bicentennial celebrations despite the theme being relatively unused at the park in the normal course of activities. The park continued to encompass the recommendations of a 1978 Howard University study of African American history in national parks. In 1985 the park was called on to show how it had responded to the recommendations of the study through greater visibility of the theme, to

which it cited expanded bookstore offerings, integration of the theme into interpretation and research programs, and consultation with Storer College alumnae. Specific programs included a self-guided tour of the campus, education programs, and the restoration of Freewill Baptist Church.⁷¹ A few years prior, a park technician and a volunteer began developing an exhibit about Storer College through the stories of its alumni to supplement the exhibit in Lockwood House. Intended initially as a temporary “seed” exhibit, it aimed to convey the roles of Storer and its students within nationally significant social movements.⁷² Park technicians met with alumni to discuss their memories of the college and town and in the process fulfilled a goal made long before of an oral history project.⁷³ The alumni recalled a mythicization of Harpers Ferry as an integrated place because of the story of John Brown and the very presence of the College but were cautioned from spending much time away from campus for their own safety.⁷⁴ Artifacts such as yearbooks, banners, photographs, and trophies created a personalized, historical arc from the beginnings of the College to its closing; the HFC assisted with the exhibit design.⁷⁵ The dedication in June 1982 took place during the Storer College Alumni Meeting.⁷⁶ The exhibit documented a participatory approach to exhibits that would take place in other buildings while using its cultural and human resources to protect a significant element of Harpers Ferry history hitherto left dormant.

The protection of cultural resources at Harpers Ferry had never been easy or straightforward and public opinions as to ideal park actions differed from its actual financial and staffing abilities. In the fall of 1983, the park drew public criticism for undertaking stabilization of Virginius Island canal walls without following proper procedural review; it believed that previous work at the site sufficiently fulfilled these

requirements. The work was phased with efforts concentrating on the Jennings Randolph Bridge and sought to repair work to less historic portions by Youth Conservation Corps staffers in 1974.⁷⁷ But despite missteps of internal treatment for resources, public demands on the federal lands were an ongoing challenge, as well, and recreational use of Virginian Island inflicted its own damage.

Public appreciation and use of Harpers Ferry's landscape had a long history. Since Thomas Jefferson's famous pronouncement on the view from what became known as "Jefferson Rock," visitors have appreciated Harpers Ferry for its natural beauty as much as for its history. NPS presence, while preserving the natural environment for enjoyment in the long term, was often experienced as an obstacle for those drawn to the area for natural recreation. Restrictions on swimming, picnicking, hunting, and fishing first impacted area residents who took public access to river and mountain lands for granted. Local protest and limited staff made enforcement difficult. Supt. Prentice instructed his staff to enforce a "no swimming" policy that excepted local children with parental permission.⁷⁸ Historic parks, which encompass landscapes having the appearance of open, public spaces, often face the problem of restricting visitors, even those whose primary interest is to explore history.⁷⁹ Visitors who do not share that primary interest were given some variation of the vaguely pejorative term "recreationalists." Harpers Ferry was not designated as a "natural" park and did not have ranger staff to serve exclusively as nature guides or guardians. Recreationalists with access to wide areas of the park made it difficult to maintain an environment of public safety. Park staff trained for river and cliff-side rescues, and there were efforts to educate boaters and get Maryland Heights climbers to register.⁸⁰ Recreational visitors were also

problematic because with unmonitored access they proved a demonstrable threat to natural and especially cultural resources. Even as early as a Historic Structures Report for Maryland Heights in 1964 that documented Civil War foundations and other landmarks recommended increased protection of the area.⁸¹ Virginius Island was particularly vulnerable. In fact, the HFHA bookstore discontinued the sale of books and items that might encourage inappropriate recreational activities, such as shoreline camping.⁸²

Damage to Virginius Island through recreational activities prompted proposals in 1984 to ease stress on cultural resources and facilities: “Easy access to the river from the parking area has continued to draw recreationists to Harpers Ferry. Many recreationers are indifferent to the preservation of the historic area. There are visitors who view the Historic ruins as building materials for their own personal do-it-yourself projects. Others use the ruins to set up their hibachi’s”⁸³ In addition to being physically damaging to resources, recreationists were viewed as intrusions to the historic scene. Intrusions on the Lower Town and riverside scene were alleviated by providing smaller scale parking areas farther upstream and by the removal of the downtown river front parking area. The park’s Annual Report for 1989 noted that after “a portion of the park was closed to recreational use of floatation devices (tubes) and redirected out of the historical area...to preserve the valuable resources of Virginius Island. . . A sense of dignity was restored to the town.”⁸⁴ While recreationalist activities could be discouraged, monitored, and policed, it was difficult to measure the impacts to the resources because systematic surveys had yet to be completed. While a review committee early in 1984 agreed that the DSC’s work in 1983 on Virginius Island had been “a horrible mistake,” it allowed that

the lack of a resident archeologist hampered the park's abilities to process CRM procedural requirements.⁸⁵

When the DSC reassigned its resident archeologist at Harpers Ferry away from the park in 1980, cultural resource management duties related to Section 106 and "XXX" paperwork fell to interpretive staff. In the spring of 1984, the superintendent established the Division of Interpretation and Cultural Resources Management. A new position was designated by the title of Cultural Resources Management Specialist to assist the chief of interpretation in the administrative management of Preservation Restoration Improvement Programs (PRIP) and other duties.⁸⁶ The regional office also urged greater awareness park-wide of cultural resource management duties and encouraged the employees to take advantage of nearby Williamsport Preservation Training Center programs. Staff were told to take as a first priority the completion of Historic Structure Preservation Guides and tying them and the Historic Preservation team into the Maintenance Management System.⁸⁷

And just in time. On November 6, 1985 a flood cresting at 33 feet caused significant damage to the Lower Town and as an image describes the overwhelming task of cultural resources protection under NPS policy and ideals. A temporary visitor center, bookstore, and audio-visual theatre were opened to service the public in the short term, and the affected exhibits and buildings were repaired or replaced in time for the summer season.⁸⁸ Symbolic of a longstanding theme of underestimating the multi-layered cultural wealth of Harpers Ferry, the force of the 1985 flood peeled back asphalt in a Lower Town handicapped visitor parking lot to reveal historical features presumed destroyed.⁸⁹ These features, now opened in the post-DCP interpretive era, were indicative of the wider

scope of historical resources in the town. By the end of the decade, increased emphasis nationally on cultural resources management overlapped with this policy to establish a future course for protective management.

The National Capital Region parks had benefited in recent years from hiring a regional archeologist in 1980. The position had been vacant since 1967 and marked a re-establishment of the Regional Archeology Program. As Regional Director Manus Fish explained, "With no Regional advocate for archeology during this critical twelve year period after passage of the 1966 National Historic Preservation Act, there were no coordinated efforts to identify and evaluate archeological site, protect and interpret them, or to properly curate archeological collections."⁹⁰ At Harpers Ferry, the seventy-seven structures listed on the list of classified structures by 1981 included few sites on Maryland Heights and Loudoun Heights. These outlying areas were left to recreationalist damage from treasure seekers' holes and campfire or tent circles made from historic fort walls. Several years later, the Harpers Ferry NHP Resources Management Plan summarized the effect, "With no inventory of the mountain in existence, cultural resources are disappearing and being severely altered without record of their former appearance."⁹¹ The prioritization given to the documentation of archeological resources would provide management tools for protection and enforcement of preservation laws, but also enriched the interpretive uses for these outlying areas.

A team of archeologists operated under cooperative agreements with the University of Maryland and American University to survey first the Maryland Heights area. Several members of the team had worked with other DSC archeologists at Harpers Ferry intermittently since 1979 on projects on Cavalier Heights and Virginus Island.⁹²

The survey took three years to complete, beginning in November 1984 and ending in July 1988, and broke history into industrial, domestic, and military stages that would become tools for the protection and interpretation of the Heights. More than seventy-eight features were recorded, including several nineteenth-century domestic sites and stone house foundations, cellar depressions, and stone walls.⁹³ The February 1987 revision of the List of Classified Structures emphasized their significance by including all of the resources in Category A – structures that must be preserved and maintained.

The National Capital Region submitted a Regional Cultural Resource Summary and Action Plan in the spring of 1987 to provide an overview of regional cultural resources, indicate the needs of those resources, and outline an action program for the region's resource management objectives and activities.⁹⁴ Harpers Ferry NHP provided its own Resource Management Plan (RMP) in 1987 that combined cultural and natural resources management into one plan. Although considered primarily a historical park, natural resources management posed its own challenges for preserving and enhancing the landscape. The natural resource division had already taken steps to restore historic plantings and remove exotics planted in the 1970s, but the plan noted diverse vegetation and some rarities due to the many ecosystems at work. The strategy for natural resources was similarly complex to the historic preservation at work. It involved controlling diseases and infestations; improving environmental quality; suppressing wildfires; managing natural vegetation, wildlife and other natural resources; research requirements and surveys to inform the work; as well as monitoring. Although a "branch museum" had been considered in the 1950s and in the 1965 Interpretive Prospectus to highlight the environmental theme of the park, an exhibit to its effect was not installed until the early

1990s. It aimed to educate the public about the park's resources and add to its knowledge about the historical and cultural resources through plants, animals, and geology.⁹⁵ The 1994 Resources Management Plan (RMP) provided further planning for the protection of park cultural and natural resources.⁹⁶ These landscape plans provided a direction for management of the park area itself, but a different set of skills were needed to manage the landscape cooperatively with local residents.

The park's conscientiousness toward the historical and natural landscape was always tempered by the real needs of the park's and surrounding town's infrastructure development. The development of the Harpers Ferry water system though not as contentious as that of the sewer system showed the park taking a similar stance of wanting to be treated as an ordinary customer but marshalling resources and influence far beyond ordinary means. In 1962, the NPS regional office commissioned a consultant from the Public Health Service to do an assessment of the town water system and Monument usage. The report found that Monument water consumption constituted only three percent of the total, a finding sharply contradicting some residents' belief that Monument water use put "a heavy demand" on the system. The report did confirm that the town's collection tank and pump system were in need of repairs, and it also predicted that following construction of a new comfort station and opening of Mather Training Center, NPS use would increase to twelve percent. Consequently, in addition to its standard meter rates, the Monument agreed to pay a \$3,000 connection fee that would be used to make recommended repairs.⁹⁷ Even with the improvements, the system was still problematic because it was spring- and stream-fed and subject to bacterial contamination. With the support of Senator Randolph, Mayor Perry applied for a federal grant and loan

to fund construction of a modern water treatment facility in 1964. Resulting rate hikes prompted protests from Bolivar, which the system also served, and an appeal from Supt. Prentice for a reduction of the charge for Storer College water hydrants.⁹⁸ Town plans to expand and renovate the water system in 1984 became tangled in park plans to limit or close access to Shenandoah Street. In a preliminary arrangement the park would contribute twenty-three percent of the total \$1.5 million cost, and in exchange for allowing the treatment plant to be built on park land near Elk Run, the town was to cede its conflicting jurisdictional claims to Shenandoah Street.⁹⁹ Town officials preferred that the prospective plant site be a donation from the park and absent that park concession, in 1985 they decided to build the facility adjacent to the old plant.¹⁰⁰ Authority over Shenandoah Street continued to be contested through at least 1992.¹⁰¹

The first NPS staff at the Monument were grateful to find a functioning water system for public service but also for fire protection. In 1954 the Friendship Volunteer Fire Company of Bolivar and Harpers Ferry solicited a \$100 donation from the Monument, an amount subsequently paid yearly through a purchase order. The chief ranger became a volunteer member and the maintenance crew was designated as an on-call volunteer force. By 1962 the local company's equipment had been upgraded from two "old antique pumpers" to five more modern trucks, and the fire chief asked Supt. Prentice to increase his annual donation to \$500. Prentice in turn justified the increase to his regional director as an inexpensive fee for manpower and equipment exceeding "anything a normal Park of this size would be able to support."¹⁰² The park continues to rely on the local company for fire protection services, sometimes to the dismay of park protection officers leery of granting non-professional access to park property.¹⁰³

Questions of jurisdictional authority for law enforcement could be especially complicated and telling of perspective. Park rangers had different levels of authority in each state jurisdiction. They were more limited in West Virginia because in addition to their federal commission they needed to be deputized by the county sheriff and because magistrates were not permitted to hear federal misdemeanor cases.¹⁰⁴ In 1974, Supt. Conway asked Mayor Bradley Nash to grant rangers ticketing authority on Harpers Ferry streets. The request perhaps betrayed his frustration over the lack of control of the full streetscape as well as over Lower Town parking congestion.¹⁰⁵ Mayor Nash, though a longtime advocate for the park, also believed the park presence should benefit the town. In the late 1970s he began lobbying Senator Byrd for a federal subsidy to establish a town police department on the grounds that the park was responsible for attracting nearly one million tourists through town streets and neighborhoods. Senator Byrd obliged and an initial grant was made in December 1978 to create a joint Bolivar-Harpers Ferry department. The grant was directed to be administered through the park, and Chief Ranger Dwight Stinson was assigned to give a six-week training course for the new force.¹⁰⁶ These examples of apparent town-park cooperation soon became ironic, at least from the park's point of view, as overlapping and conflicting agendas emerged. Because of the town claim to Lower Town streets the new officers included park territory in their patrols. Supt. Campbell tried to limit the confusion by issuing a policy of "maintaining strict autonomy" between the ranger division and the municipal force, but by 1982 he ordered town patrols to stop at park boundaries.¹⁰⁷ Full federal authority to protect the park came with efforts to set up a "collateral" system within West Virginia to give park

law enforcement officers a full range of citation authority. The system was finally enacted by 1985.¹⁰⁸

Complaints that the park superintendent and staff were not involved enough in the community to be sympathetic to its perspective were not uncommon and added to a history of sometimes contentious park-town relations. Park staff inherited this legacy as the NPS became more self-aware of how it might be perceived by its neighbors and became more sophisticated and conscientious in cultivating positive community relationships. The issue of how to manage intrusions often overlapped with community relations, especially in the 1980s and 1990s when ambitions for preserving the park broadened in the face of encroaching development. As planning and then construction of the Cavalier Heights parking facility progressed through the 1980s, tensions surfaced over the coming change.¹⁰⁹ In 1987 a service-wide fee collection policy was initiated with a collection station on Shenandoah Street. The temporary inconvenience before a pass system for non-visitors was fully worked out elicited some hint of local sensitivity about access. One local resident was so upset by the restriction of having to wait in line that he irately pulled up the fee schedule sign.¹¹⁰

The redrafted DCP of 1980 called for the Cavalier Heights property to be used to create overflow parking, a new park entrance and an access road to eliminate the dangerous entrance intersection at U.S. 340 and Shenandoah Street. The access road would be closed during peak season and visitors taken to Lower Town by bus.¹¹¹ NPS planners would have preferred to close the Lower Town completely to traffic and thus rid the park of its most overbearing and longstanding intrusion. And over the next decade the project became more far reaching. The elongated bottle-necked parking area

extending between the B&O Railroad tracks and the Shenandoah banks was replaced in the plans by grass and riverside plantings, and the seasonal bus system was made year-round. Construction of the new entrance and access road began in April 1986. Within a few weeks the town council considered an ordinance designed to block construction and asked for more information on the project.¹¹² After additional assurances and an agreement to connect the access road to Shenandoah Street, construction continued.¹¹³ The new road and entrance with a stoplight on U.S. 340 were opened in FY1987.¹¹⁴

DSC archeologists led several archeological surveys between 1972 and 1987 along the proposed transportation route from Cavalier Heights into Lower Town. They concluded that, despite evidence of prehistoric and historic material, the sites were not intact or significant enough to outweigh progress of the transportation system.¹¹⁵ On the other hand, the survey – to which the Cavalier family donated its collection of stone tools – unexpectedly revealed prehistoric activity.¹¹⁶ Historical sites were found along the proposed route for the transportation system, but some were deemed as functionally marginal (and redundant) in terms of the National Register status of the park.¹¹⁷ At the Armory House in Lower Town, for example, a DSC archeologist concluded,

The intact archeological resources at the House No. 11 site are significant both by virtue of their potential for elucidating the lifeways of an Armory-dependent household and, more legalistically, because of their direct association with a site already included in the nomination of the park's historic district to the National Register of Historic Places. Consequently, and to the extent possible, the resources need to be protected from unnecessary disruption. So the question arises: does provision of a new visitor shelter justify the further disruption of resources at this site?¹¹⁸

The approach of the Denver Service Center archeologists in retrospect may seem at odds with the shifting focus of interpretation at the park toward local lifeways and the blanket policy of preservation of historical material. DSC recommendations would be

challenged by park archeologists, who disagreed with the DSC over the adequacy of monitoring as mitigation in May 1989 during surveys of the Lower Town bus parking lot. The park archeologist took over the project and reported on it with a contribution from the original DSC archeologist.¹¹⁹ Work on the bus turnaround lot began in the winter of 1988 and 1989 and first removed the asphalt blacktop laid in 1957. The report recalled, “When the Park Service acquired the lots along the river, ruins were evident of several of the structure in the east half of the parking lot area and an early to mid-twentieth century dump apparently occupied much of the west half. The present parking lot was constructed in the late 1950s with standing ruins bulldozed and the entire area graded.”¹²⁰ Trenches excavated along the north and south edges of the bus lot unexpectedly revealed armory workers’ dwelling sites and mid-nineteenth century domestic artifacts, as well as brick and stone debris from possible foundations. Earlier surveys preceding the lot, later determined to be insufficient, concluded that construction would minimally impact the area on the basis of one survey unit opened inside the lot and others located around it. These finds indicated a lack of adequate archeological mitigation on the project.¹²¹ The discovery of the armory workers’ houses, however, did not halt the plan for the bus turnaround lot.

As the administration dealt with public unhappiness with the Cavalier Heights project, it was also battling encroachments on the viewshed and boundaries. When Potomac Edison in 1983 upgraded its power lines crossing Loudoun Heights, park staff negotiated with the company to abandon proposals to increase pole heights and add flashing aviation lights to span the Potomac.¹²² In 1987 staff members learned of plans to bring cable television service to the community by adding a microwave dish and/or tower

to the town water tank on Bolivar Heights. Alarm increased when the proposal was clarified as a 100-foot tower and that the company had successfully built a 160-foot tower on the Antietam battlefield.¹²³ The town would receive a three percent cut of profits plus several hundred dollars per year in rent for the spot. Over the next year a citizen's group organized to oppose the tower and argued that its proposed placement would degrade the spot where 12,000 Union troops surrendered to Stonewall Jackson. Jim Chilton, a Bolivar Heights resident, said that the towers would rise twice as high as the water towers already present and that a better way of getting it must exist if residents wanted cable service, considering a "groundswell of opposition" to it.¹²⁴ The town council and the company were persuaded to redesign the technology to a more unobtrusive height.¹²⁵ By 1989 the town council agreed to approve a permanent height restriction on town property and an agreement between Frederick Cable and Harpers Ferry NHP halted the construction of a tower on Bolivar Heights that would exceed the tree line.¹²⁶ The near miss of this intrusion and the likelihood that the threat could reappear on private property served as fuel for the subsequent campaign to win support for boundary expansions to guarantee control of the skyline.¹²⁷

At the end of the 1990s, private companies were still trying to place towers to serve the community's demands for cellular service. In fact, as use and demand for cellular phone coverage rose in the 1990s the park again narrowly averted a proposal to build a cell phone tower in 1998. The NPS asked the Federal Communications Commission to issue in 1997 an emergency order to halt construction by U.S. Cellular of a 260-foot-high communications tower with blinking airplane warning lights on the site of Stonewall Jackson's 1862 siege. The NPS and the park (as did public interest groups

such as the Friends of Harpers Ferry National Historical Park and the Association for the Preservation of Civil War Sites) became involved due to a lack of environmental compliance sufficient to mitigate adverse effects of the tower on the area.¹²⁸ U.S. Cellular flew balloons to test the impact of the tower on view sheds and by testing lower towers on different sites, such as atop a water tank in Bolivar.¹²⁹ U.S. Cellular agreed to place communications towers on Bolivar Heights next to Harpers Ferry's water tank rather than in the middle of a battlefield, beside the Cliffside Inn. Placing the tower on higher ground allowed the company to get a better signal with a lower tower (65 foot) than the 260-foot structure originally planned. The plan was contingent on working out a lease agreement with the town of Harpers Ferry.¹³⁰

About the same time park staff learned about plans for the first cable TV tower, they were also informed of a literal intrusion across park land on Bolivar Heights. A longtime adjacent property holder had just sold to a developer who immediately began clearing for a waterline 1,200 feet across park land to the town water tanks intending to supply a 180-home development. The property owner justified the work by disputing the park's claim to a 3-acre parcel. The challenge to federal claim arose from a discrepancy in the title chain that was overlooked when the state of West Virginia made its original donation for the Monument in 1953. The developer resurrected a claim first brought to the park's attention by the previous owner, Robert A. Hockensmith, in 1967. A title company resolved the dispute in the park's favor in 1970. The park was able to stop the preliminary development work by threat of injunction. The developer did not seek an alternate route for the waterline and eventually went bankrupt, allowing the Civil War

Trust to purchase the adjacent 56-acre property on Schoolhouse Ridge. It was donated to the park in 1998.¹³¹

The continual threat of visual impairment to the historical scene by towers and developments lent urgency to expanding the park boundaries. The issue concerned not only the sites themselves, but the effect of encroaching development on parkland and the experience of it. The earlier Short Hill acquisition in Virginia was important not only for the addition but because it was achieved through an alliance with a private conservation group. The Nature Conservancy acquired the property first then sold it to the park in 1981. The strategy was a local example of a national trend in which interest groups organized in response to increasing development of rural and battlefield lands. By increasing public awareness, fundraising and pooling resources, they brought public and political pressure to bear in favor of preservation, offered landowners alternatives to selling to developers or aided public entities with less flexible acquisition procedures. Through the 1980s the park moved toward a more comprehensive formal effort to preserve its scenic context, launching a boundary study published in early 1990. As part of the overall process (and a more general effort to build community relations), park staff took opportunities to educate area residents and visitors about the historic nature of lands around the park.¹³² Jefferson County officials, once opposed to recognizing open agricultural properties as having any special historical value, eventually supported park ownership.¹³³ The tower and development threats of 1987 mobilized support for expanding park boundaries and resulted in Congressional authorization of the “special boundary study” in September 1988. The study identified 1,700 acres of adjacent lands deemed necessary to preserve in order to maintain the integrity of the existing park.¹³⁴

Local political interests such as the Virginia state historic preservation officer and the mayor of Bolivar supported the move to expand the boundaries.¹³⁵ Private citizens wrote letters to express the significance of learning about history on the place it occurred and how it was a transformative experience affecting in them a reverence for time and history.¹³⁶ Civil War re-enactors wrote letters to each other in newsletters and to political constituents to describe how upset they were at developers taking over the land.¹³⁷ But other citizens rallied for development of the property and aligned it with the historic struggle between park and local interests. Dixie Kilham, ever-outspoken about merchant interests, endorsed Governor Rockefeller's move for county growth stating,

General Miles surrendered without a fight. Today the CAMPBELL-FRYE strategy is the same. "Using" no-growth activists and Civil War buffs they are playing the same game. Our county must not throw up our hands and surrender. We can't let history repeat itself. This time a defeat would be permanent. Our county and State, not the National Park Service, must remain the deciding influence over our destiny.¹³⁸

A workshop for public discourse in March 1990 brought together those for and against acquisition of Schoolhouse Ridge.¹³⁹ Over the summer and fall of 1990, when Senator Byrd stalled the boundary expansion, advocates for preservation from the NPCA, the Civil War Trust, the Save the Battlefield Coalition, the Association for the Preservation of Civil War Sites and other groups continued a letter-writing campaign to him to save Harpers Ferry's battlefield from developers.¹⁴⁰ At one point, a battlefields advocate wrote threateningly to the senator, "I should point out again that we as a political force ousted one of the key antagonists to the preservation issue from the County Commission this past election. We were able to do this because a majority of your constituents in this county believe in preserving our heritage."¹⁴¹ Community members who participated in the public meeting and helped form the Boundary Study demanded

that Senator Byrd release it and allocate funds to permit acquisition of the land. They believed that he had failed his constituents and stood together for the cause.¹⁴²

The debate over expanding the boundaries of Harpers Ferry NHP took place within a national context of debate between preservation advocates and private sector developers over land use. In conjunction with allies of the parks, the NPS offered events to demonstrate public support in a time of fiscal crisis. During the March for Parks program, first begun in 1990 and repeated annually in March, thousands of people walked scenic NPS routes to raise money for greater awareness of Americans' national, state, and local parks. Half of the proceeds went to local citizen groups' involvement in parks, as toward Earth Day programs at Harpers Ferry.¹⁴³ Other battlefields experienced similar issues to those at Schoolhouse Ridge and in the fall of 1990 the Secretary of the Interior unveiled the American Battlefield Initiative, which focused on Civil War sites. The momentum was further seen in celebration of the 75th Anniversary of the NPS in 1991 that aimed "to enhance public awareness of the National Park Service and its mission and broaden its constituencies, and to spark a renewed pride in the Service among our own employees and inspire a rededication to its purpose."¹⁴⁴ Harpers Ferry NHP held programs in support of the anniversary, but its own situation clearly mirrored the issues facing the NPS as a whole.¹⁴⁵ As public and political support continued for battlefield preservation the park benefited through further additions to the park boundary.

Following the Nature Conservancy's work on the Virginia side, the Conservation Fund, teamed with the Friends of Harpers Ferry NHP, purchased and donated the "Spur Battery" area on Maryland Heights in 1992. Union soldiers used the twenty-three acres on Maryland Heights to defend Harpers Ferry in 1864 and visible earthworks evidenced

its Civil War history. Bordered on three sides by the park, it was privately owned.¹⁴⁶ In the same year the Civil War Trust helped forestall development in the center of the battlefield on Schoolhouse Ridge just west of Bolivar Heights.¹⁴⁷ While conservation groups came to the park's aid in facilitating acquisitions, they also often critiqued NPS planning for allowing for options for scenic easements rather than outright federal ownership and for being too conservative in the proposed reach of park boundaries.¹⁴⁸

Interpretive events at the park correlated with increased coverage of the Civil War theme in the protection of the historic scene. In 1989, the park celebrated the 125th anniversary of General Philip Sheridan's Civil War campaign of August 1864 with the first "Harpers Ferry: Soldier's City 1864" program. Additionally, the event was notable for featuring over three hundred volunteer re-enactors and living history staff. Sheridan's campaign sought to destroy confederate forces under General Jubal Early. Supt. Coleman in the 1950s had snubbed it as a minor campaign and a relatively small success in the scale of events during the Civil War. This attitude prevailed in the region until park staff began to question such an interpretation and emphasized the role of Sheridan's campaign and other Civil War stories to increase its perceived significance.

Much of the interpretive development at Harpers Ferry in the early 1990s negotiated the broadening of preservation policy in terms of the effect on interpretation and the necessity of maximizing the use and protection of park resources for the greatest economy and public benefit. The emphasis of the interpretive division had changed from the 1970s living history interpretation to offering talks, tours, and evening programs in the Lower Town and at Cavalier Heights. Interpretive work increasingly targeted the "special population" of school age visitors and the expanded visitor season largely

reflected this emphasis.¹⁴⁹ By 1986, private funding had become a major management objective and supplements came from a Needs Catalog and a donation box; as well as volunteer power from individuals, schools, public groups, the West Virginia Department of Corrections, and the NAACP.¹⁵⁰ The park benefited in particular from the Harpers Ferry Historical Association's assistance in providing donations to supplement its budget through video sales, post cards, and other bookshop items. The budget crunch of the early 1980s paralyzed interpretive expansion and special activities in particular faced a funding gap, but the HFHA provided important additional funding for new programs such as Election Day in 1979, in addition to dedications for the restored buildings, and scout projects on Maryland Heights; it also donated books.¹⁵¹

Funds came into the park in other ways, as well. When the NPS instituted a fee system at Harpers Ferry NHP, it meant tens of thousands of additional dollars for the interpretation division budget in the next several years. The additional funds hired fee collectors and increased the number of permanent, full-time employees by one-third first in 1989 and again in 1991. Some of these employees primarily staffed the Cavalier Heights visitor station, but the growth in staff also responded to an extension of the visitor season from summer alone to spring through fall. The Ranger Futures program was first discussed in the early 1990s and sought to upgrade those positions with descriptions having to do with interpretive responsibilities. By 1992, major staff changes and upgrades of existing positions enabled staffed exhibits to expand from summer only to April through October. The rangers hired to staff the Cavalier Heights station frequently did not fall under this program due to the visitor services focus of their positions.¹⁵²

The professionalization of the interpretive ranger coincided with new management tools including management reports and projects that enabled an intensive period of narrative development in the late 1980s and early 1990s. In preparation for “Package 116” development, a cooperative agreement with the University of Maryland brought in a special research team of historians to update the historical reports completed up through the 1950s.¹⁵³ The NPS had first charged William Everhart with a preliminary report of Harpers Ferry in the 1930s and then installed “chief of party” Charles Snell and a team of historians at Harpers Ferry in the 1950s and early 1960s to develop a building-by-building historical survey. Gathering historical data in local and regional repositories the team had compiled a sizable index card file that lives today in the park’s curatorial office as both artifact of an earlier era and still-useable source of information. The research team’s work informed the demolition and maintenance program to restore the town to its mid-nineteenth century appearance and the results also informed the modest exhibits prepared for the structures. After the team left the park research work fell on an informal basis to those rangers developing interpretive programs or exhibits until the late 1980s when new research needs were identified.

The approach to history had changed significantly in the thirty years since Snell was at the park and when the new research team began in 1989. The new team, building on previous historical work and the expanded interpretive scope of the park to the entire nineteenth century, specifically aimed to thread through a social history perspective into the Historic Building Reports for Package 116, a series of buildings located at the middle of Shenandoah Street on both sides. The historians created a computerized database from material of an expanded thematic scope that was culled from federal census surveys, local

newspapers, chains of title to buildings, and other sources. They built on the traditional themes of the park by investigating black history and women's history and edited the 1950s reports for accuracy.¹⁵⁴ Archeologists working on Package 116 had similar research goals, particularly to discern how the landscape reflected consumer behavior, health and hygiene, and social relations in the nineteenth century.¹⁵⁵ New teams of HABS/HAER students again measured buildings slated for work across the park for this package and others. Interestingly, Package 116 work also raised the problem that the even the park's expanded interpretive scope wasn't expansive enough. In 1989, archeologists working in the backyards of Buildings 32 to 36 found prehistoric material (including lithics, ceramics, fire hearths, and post holes) dating from the Early to Late Woodland periods, circa 1200 to 500 BC.¹⁵⁶ This evidence for prehistoric life, in conjunction with evidence found during the Cavalier Heights transportation system surveys, proved that interpretation of the area could expand even further.

The process of maintaining Package 116 responded to contemporary thinking about preservation in the NPS. The overall approach to Package 116 in terms of its historical architecture was to preserve and stabilize cultural resources with a minimum of actual restoration.¹⁵⁷ National Capital Region staff concurred with the historic structures report to restore the structures to their appearance in the 1890s. But the question was always what to do with the structures afterwards and how to align contemporary views on authenticity – with aims not to confuse or fool the visitor – with fashioning a presentation that would provide the maximum interpretive value. The regional office, as an architect for the DSC Eastern Team reported, “established that the historical significance of a structure determines what rehabilitative use can go into the structure; the use does not

determine the treatment of the structure.”¹⁵⁸ Building 40, renovated as part of Package 115, illustrated one solution to the problem. Evidence for the store came solely from an advertisement for Frankel Brothers and Co., a clothing store there from 1858-1860. The historical furnishings were circumstantially reconstructed from newspaper advertisements placed in other large and small cities. To ease concern that the public wouldn’t understand the historically anachronistic design of 1890s shell to late 1850s furnishings, structural barriers were included to evoke a feeling of peering in to a theater stage.¹⁵⁹ But the development and review process for the package revived the tension between the lack of original fabric, the buildings’ actual historic uses, and the park’s interpretive goals of the modern day. As the chief of cultural resources in the NPS National Capital Region office responded to preliminary plans in 1992 for Buildings 34 and 35,

We spend large amounts of money and time preparing detailed histories of the buildings in Lower Town, and then develop refurnishing schemes unrelated to those histories. In essence, we are creating a scene that never existed. [W]e can never re-create 1860’s Harpers Ferry... But with the buildings dating from one period and the interiors being furnished to another and, by and large, not even relating to the building, the result distorts the history of the town.”¹⁶⁰

The NCR office argued throughout the planning process for rethinking the interpretive approach of refurnishing spaces to appearances they never had and the use of comparative methods to construct the exhibits when little primary or direct evidence remained on original furnishings.¹⁶¹ This view was negotiated in the planning process by those involved locally: HFC planners, park administration, and interpretive staff.

Narrative development dealt not only with the Civil War, always at least the theme of secondary importance to park history, but to the stories of African Americans and women in Harpers Ferry. The research team’s investigations also addressed broad themes for the park and park technicians and exhibit developers put the collected data to

use. The “Black Voices” exhibit, which opened in February 1992, enabled visitors to learn about the circumstances faced by the black community within a context of nationally significant events. As such, it was hoped that visitors would leave with a new understanding of African Americans as put this way: “Slavery, indeed looks most absurd when it is viewed honestly through the people who were involved in it. In these ways, ‘Black Voices from Harpers Ferry’ attempts to avoid the emotional baggage and misinformation often associated with black history.”¹⁶² When further developed, the exhibit “presented a story with real human interest that was little known or interpreted before this project began.”¹⁶³ The opening of “Black Voices” met enthusiasm from the African American community.¹⁶⁴ The press announced:

The Harpers Ferry National Historical Park intends to become a leader in the presentation of African-American history as public education. Black Voices from Harpers Ferry is the cornerstone. The park is integrating African-American history into its entire interpretive program. The new database is being used for educational outreach, programs, special events, temporary exhibits, tours, and other permanent exhibits. This effort is also being used as a model for setting up African-American history programs in other historic units.¹⁶⁵

The participation of Harpers Ferry NHP in the Historic Black Colleges and Universities program – a National Capital Region initiative -- drew students from the one hundred historically black schools in the region for research projects, special studies, and as seasonal staff.¹⁶⁶ The research and development of Package 116 applied contemporary thinking of the NPS toward cultural resources, but it also joined the disruptions to management coming from several directions.

The “package” programs disrupted interpretation at the park in more ways than just the historic scene. Staff lost space for inclement weather tours, park meetings, park and volunteer training, temporary exhibits, work projects, program construction

materials, receptions, and other activities. The closing and relocation of some of the exhibits, such as the dry goods store and the provost office, had particular impact on the ability of interpretation and education staff to interpret the history of the town.¹⁶⁷ The closing of buildings associated with Package 116 pushed interpretive activities into available spaces across the street.¹⁶⁸ Despite the perhaps discombobulating appearance of construction work and disorientation of moving amongst the buildings, visitors could choose from several tours that took place with significantly greater frequency and better represented the themes of the park in contrast to tours in the 1970s and earlier.¹⁶⁹ In addition to presentations about John Brown, they could learn about “Stonewall’s Brilliant Victory,” “Wetlands: A Living Waterbed,” “Stories of Camp Hill,” “Harpers Ferry: A Place in History,” “It’s War,” “Guns of Harpers Ferry,” and several others.¹⁷⁰ More celebrations than before took place year-round that linked with events happening nationwide, as well. The Earth Day Celebration at Harpers Ferry linked the natural environment theme at the park to activities nationwide and also provided another opportunity to partner with organizations such as the Audubon Society and local environmental groups. This program also continued NPS initiatives Service-wide for the natural environment theme which first began with the environmental movement of the 1970s.¹⁷¹ Others, such as the annual Fourth of July celebrations were popular and complicated to produce. Visitors in 2000, for example, were treated to re-enactors of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln, blues music, living history volunteer encampments of the 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Regiment, activities on Bolivar Heights with the Frederick Ladies Relief Society, and more, culminating in a fireworks display.¹⁷² These kinds of “big” events provided a draw to the park that focused its staff



Fig. 26: Streetscape, Package 110, 1990s (Harpers Ferry NHP).

and resources on specific days or weekends, but the everyday activities provided a larger picture of making use of the park to a range of audiences.

The park aimed for educational use of its resources for local audiences as uses for resources and for private funding through grants. The expanded interpretive season from April to October overlapped once more with the school year. In 1991, the park shifted its education programs from one hour, on-site reserved tours for school groups to including off-site programs for local students in the tri-state area. Private funds granted to the park enabled the number of programs to double, for employment of new staff (particularly an education specialist), and for the establishment of a partners-in-education program with the Jefferson County School Board for training sessions for local teachers. Several different programs on- and off-site attested to a flexible education program. The Ranger in the Classroom Program, begun in the 1990-91 school year, brought information to local students via ranger visits to schools. During their visits, rangers talked about what they do and discussed local history to coincide with the curricular requirements for second- and fifth- graders.¹⁷³ The John Brown Study Guide – a classroom-based outreach program – was first developed in conjunction with the HFHA and then added to an educational videopack devised by HFC, HFHA, and the park for junior and senior high school students.¹⁷⁴ Development of the Junior Ranger Program under the National Parks as Classrooms umbrella aimed to engage visitors aged thirteen and under during their park visit and to foster an ethic for stewardship.¹⁷⁵ But education did not only encompass school-aged learners, as shown throughout the park's history of volunteer involvement. Further, in 1992 the Elderhostel program was first offered at Harpers Ferry as a lifelong learning opportunity for senior citizens. It was also the first Elderhostel

program ever offered in conjunction with a cooperating association.¹⁷⁶ These kinds of programs demonstrated the NPS priority of using parks as educational media and the applications of the guiding themes at Harpers Ferry.

An Artist in Residence program was first approved in 1978 and had an artist that summer. The program was resumed in earnest in the spring of 1998 through the Volunteers In Parks.¹⁷⁷ The renewed program was supported by the NPS and the Harpers Ferry Historical Association and it funded a succession of up to six artists per year. Artists of many media were accepted, including writers, painters, performers and videographers, and the park provided studio space and a stipend with the expectation of the artist providing some kind of programming for the visiting public or for school outreach and donate one piece of work. Modeled on programs at other National Parks, support came from the NPS, the surrounding communities and the Historical Association.¹⁷⁸ Artists in residence spend a month at Harpers Ferry using the resources as inspiration for their work. The park maintains a studio and residence and gallery for the artists. They are expected to lead workshops in their specialty either as park-based programming or with schools. Exhibit space provided is for their work. The landscape and history of Harpers Ferry has inspired the artists to create wood sculptures, photomontages, music, and theatre productions.¹⁷⁹

Several specific programs grew from the Civil War and other themes. The School House Ridge Elementary Education program built from the Stonewall's Greatest Victory program first offered in the late 1980s through a partnership between Harpers Ferry NHP, Jefferson County Schools, and the Historical Association with the Potomac Area Teachers using National Education Resources for Students (PARTNERS) program. Its

content looked at the impact of the war on slaves, soldiers, and families, as well as the events surrounding Stonewall. In 1993, PARTNERS received a boost when Harpers Ferry NHP, Antietam NB, C&O Canal NHP and Monocacy NB received a three-year grant of \$175,000 from the National Parks Foundation through the Pew Challenge Grant to implement cooperatively a teacher's guide and training program with Shepherd College and local school districts.¹⁸⁰ Implementation involved a four phase process over three years of evaluation of existing curriculum programs, development of a draft educator's guide and analysis of activities, testing and perfecting of guide on a larger scale, and a final guide with teacher workshops to disseminate the methodology of producing the guide.¹⁸¹ In 1995 the National Parks Foundation gave the Harpers Ferry Historical Association a grant through the Parks as Classrooms program. The HFHA provided the funding to the park for the School House Ridge education program to produce a study guide and to expand the number from one to five on-site activity days for fifth graders.¹⁸² Local papers described students' reactions to the program: "They told us all about what actually happened," "They made it more believable." Or, "I like it better here. You get to see what they really looked like, instead of just reading it out of a history book."¹⁸³ In 1998, the School House Ridge Guide received first place in the curriculum-based or project category of the Cooperating Association Excellence in Interpretation contest.¹⁸⁴

Education programs were also built from black history exhibits installed in the Lower Town buildings. By 1990, research into African-American life in the town had yielded information on age, occupation, and families of slaves and their owners but few suitable locations existed in Lower Town for housing a furnished reconstruction that also

met criteria for historical accuracy.¹⁸⁵ The “Personal Battlefields” exhibit opened in Building 37 to honor Black History Month in February 1991 with plans to incorporate it into a larger exhibit on black history in the following year. “Personal Battlefields” presented the history of free and slave blacks in Harpers Ferry, specifically through the story of Thomas Spriggs. A family album kept by his descendants, who continued to live in the area, was the starting point for the exhibit.¹⁸⁶ In 1991 the park won, along with C&O Canal NHP, the Potomac Heritage Award for excellence in African-American interpretation and historical research program.¹⁸⁷ A mobile exhibit created in conjunction with the Personal Battlefields exhibit focused, “on the experience of numerous African Americans in their daily struggle for equality and dignity...This multi-sensory, tabletop exhibit explores stories and details of the African-American experience at Harpers Ferry from the earliest days of slavery to freedom.” The prototype was loaned to two schools in Washington County for Black History Month, February 1992, and teachers praised it.¹⁸⁸

Women’s history was becoming an increasingly represented element in interpretation. Staff noted, “There is the longstanding resentment on the part of women volunteers and interpreters that the male oriented exhibits in this park provide nineteenth century skills and activities where the women exhibits do not. The message that we are sending to our present day employees and volunteers is that yes the 19th century was a man’s world and still is.”¹⁸⁹ The inspiration taken by the interpreters of Harper House in the 1970s from locally and nationally known women was realized more specifically by the 1990s through particular female figures who lived in the area during the Civil War and its aftermath. By 1989 living history interpreters were pushing ahead to integrate

women's perspectives into programs and in celebration of Women's History Month.¹⁹⁰ For example, "In the Shadows: 19th Century Women of Harpers Ferry" was a park-produced, temporary exhibit focusing on women who contributed to the four major themes of the park. Life-size, black cloth silhouettes of women suggested the paucity of images and awareness of local women in the nineteenth century. Slides of local women, reproductions of working class and upper class clothing, and composite tin-type photo reproductions accompanied the silhouettes.¹⁹¹

In the last 240 years at Harpers Ferry, women have labored as pioneers, wives, mothers, healers, teachers, slaves, shop and hotel keepers, mantua makers, and charity workers. Over shadowed in a male world, the story of their contributions and work is often neglected. These stories reflect the many different roles that Harpers Ferry women will take in the Industrial Revolution, John Brown's Raid, and the American Civil War.¹⁹²

Research into Mary Roeder, Catherine Wager, Nicholas Marmion's daughter Annie, Sarah Gilbert, and others showed that women held property, sought divorces, and conducted businesses. By the end of the 1990s, several programs were underway to increase visitors' awareness of women's contributions to our national heritage. Students from Hood College (now co-educational, but historically a women's college), investigated Mrs. Cornelia Stipes' boarding house. Female staff members interpreted domestic roles in Roeder's Store, and furnishing the basement with a wood-burning stove and other items was underway there. The programs focused on how site-specific themes relate to nationally significant issues and the particular historical challenges presented to women at Harpers Ferry.¹⁹³ The programs injected women's perspectives on the events that happened in Harpers Ferry as in the educational/interpretive program, "The Battle of Harpers Ferry as a Woman Saw It: A Living History Activity for 4th Grade," which used

a story reported to the *New York Evening Post* and props as catalysts for students to understand what it was like to be a woman caught in the 1862 crossfire.¹⁹⁴ These kinds of programs received the kind of community-building feeling and positive reinforcement between the park and the local area that other projects – such as infrastructure, development, or controversial topics – rarely did.

For park staff the opening of the Cavalier Heights “transportation system” represented their biggest accomplishment, and for both staff and residents, it was the most dramatic symbolic change and physical change to the landscape since the Monument’s inception. The “transportation system” and visitor center was opened in June 1990.¹⁹⁵ The institution of shuttle bus service via the Shenandoah Street access road coupled with the virtual elimination of parking in Lower Town perhaps represented, for both the park and local residents, the culmination of federal control of the town. From the NPS perspective, the design was still a compromise with town residents in continuing to allow through-traffic, but nevertheless, the new system was seen by merchants and residents as a drastic move restricting trade and liberty: i.e. the ability to drive and park cars. In keeping Shenandoah Street open to the main road, the park acceded to local feeling and the recognition that the park was part of a living community, but the recognition sometimes seemed grudging and resentment at presiding over a still-imperfect scene lingering. Just a few years after the system opened there were still park complaints that bordering merchants drew traffic into Lower Town that visitors were dismayed to see after being asked to leave their own cars on the Heights.¹⁹⁶

Merchants, in particular, continued to argue for parking in Lower Town and against what they felt were unfair restrictions on the use of Shenandoah Street. The



Fig. 27: Cavalier Heights Visitor Center, bus station (Binder 13, Harpers Ferry NHP).

situation reached a full boil during the Old Tyme Christmas Celebration in 1991. Several local merchants protested the denial of a permit to run a holiday trolley through Lower Town by confronting NPS officers on Shenandoah Street. One of the merchants, Jack Stipanovic, was issued citations by the officers. The ugly scene initially generated a great deal of negative press for the park, but more balanced articles appeared after the media realized that the confrontation was staged partly for their benefit. A local resident stated, "We're the citizens, these are our properties. We pay our taxes. The federal lands are our lands."¹⁹⁷ The park returned: "Merchants have attempted to raise a cosmic explosion of unfounded allegations against the government and park superintendent to justify their position of wanting control over federal lands to build a parking area for their businesses and to draw more automobile traffic into the historical park."¹⁹⁸ Concerned residents focused on the superintendent as representing all that was wrong with NPS philosophy and practice on preservation, relating to communities, and administration in general, and proceeded to form a citizens' group to oust him.¹⁹⁹ Local disagreement with park control over the streets became a situation with national implications when Stipanovic took his case to court. The case tested the ability of federal parks to administer lands within their boundaries and, if found in his favor, threatened to set a legal precedent that would affect management of national park and forest lands.²⁰⁰ The issue divided the town and the merchants' relationship with the park and created camps of advocates for and against preservation of lands. The National Parks Association charged that the Stipanovic case evidenced a department-wide weakening of NPS authority over park management due to growing sympathy for private exploitation of public resources.²⁰¹ The case dissolved, but as the Old Tyme Christmas Celebration of 1992 approached, the issues concerning streets

had not settled and the Mayor voiced disagreement with the park over closing Shenandoah Street.²⁰²

Though the Heyward Shepherd monument was not specified in deed transfers, apparently as a rather stolid stone marker there was no initial question but that it was a permanent structure that conveyed along with the building to the federal government. In fact, it was later surveyed for the park's List of Classified Structures. But it was treated as movable in the early 1970s when it was removed to maintenance area storage to make way for Package 110 construction work. Its absence did attract the attention of its original sponsors, and the Sons of Confederate Veterans was eager to have it returned to its spot when the site was completed by 1979. The NAACP, which had objected to the monument's placement in 1931, took the opportunity to register its opposition to the monument's return. In the early 1980s newly arrived Supt. Campbell along with NPS representatives from the regional and national offices met repeatedly with both groups in an attempt to mediate a solution without success. The NPS finally replaced the monument in 1981, but following rumors of possible vandalism, the stone was encased in plywood and remained so for fourteen more years. It was uncovered June 9, 1995, this time without prior publicity, and continues to elicit debate.²⁰³

Local residents also resented NPS influence over road improvements near the park. The West Virginia Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, and the NPS planned in the early 1990s concerning the Route 340 bridge. Structural renovation to the bridge, which was constructed in 1949, provided an opportunity to redesign its scope. The park and the DOI favored an alternative for erecting another two-lane bridge downriver to minimize its impact on the cultural

landscape and to provide safe passage for Appalachian Trail hikers.²⁰⁴ The NPS position further pointed out that construction of the four-lane bridge or guiding traffic through Lower Town negated the reasons for, expense and effort put into the Cavalier Heights Visitor Station.²⁰⁵ Part of the community, however, wanted a four-lane bridge in response to increased population growth in the area. To the frustration of locals, a Memorandum of Understanding (1991) between government agencies permitted only two-lane renovation of the bridge. Members of the Shenandoah Bridge Committee argued that population increases and already poor traffic conditions made the two-lane option short-sighted and dangerous. The process, moreover, left them feeling un-included and that the community consultation process was only lip service.²⁰⁶ The state bowed to the NPS and constructed a two-lane bridge downriver of the old one but the park and county agreed that a four-lane bypass around the park was a good idea for the future to handle the major traffic flow into Jefferson County.²⁰⁷

The ongoing disagreement over public rights to land continued in other ways, as well, particularly in the right to develop land. Stewardship of the Harpers Ferry watergap and viewshed became a defining theme of Superintendent Campbell's tenure. Partnerships such as that with the Appalachian Trail were crucial to the park's defensive and offensive strategies. Preservation and maintenance of the natural landscape also affected one of the park partners, the Appalachian Trail. The Appalachian Trail was designated a national scenic trail by the National Trails System Act in 1968 and extends along the Appalachian Mountain chain in the eastern United States. Over five miles of the trail lie within the boundaries of Harpers Ferry NHP and in 1981 the NPS completed a *Comprehensive Plan* to establish the framework of a cooperative management system.

In conjunction with Memoranda of Understanding, the public, park, and private agencies cooperatively manage the trail by pooling volunteers, protection functions, and resources management.²⁰⁸ The effort in the park and with its neighbors attempted to maintain a look consistent with the historic view. A Memoranda of Understanding in place between Harpers Ferry NHP and the Appalachian Trail (AT), however, did not mean that things were executed to the satisfaction of both sides. Occasional differences arose over the conflicting objectives of maintaining a historic scene and meeting hikers' needs. The Trail could not be maintained through Harpers Ferry NHP and C&O Canal NHP as it was on the rest of the length. The Trail Conference found that hikers had problems finding trail blazes through the park and proposed solutions. After the 1996 flood, the AT Conference expressed frustration that the park dictated how it should mark the trail within the boundaries and found it complacent in installing blazes. A major concern was the safety of hikers.²⁰⁹ Increasing demographic pressures in the surrounding area appeared not only in the form of land sales and real estate development but also as modern intrusions on the skyline.

Some of these intrusions might be avoided by the planning reports designed to survey and plan for the protection of park narratives. The development of a *Cultural Landscape Report for Lower Town* provided a scope for future management plans by documenting historic resources, their existing conditions, the development of appropriate design recommendations for preservation and enhancement. To do so, the project reviewed previous historical and archeological work into the landscape and consolidated key cultural landscape components to determine the type and concentration of resources remaining in Lower Town. It identified nine distinct cultural landscape character areas --

The Hillside, Arsenal Yard, Harper Yard/Garden, The Wager Reservation, The Streetscape, backyards, the Point, the Railroad Yard, and Hamilton Street Area -- and corresponding management zones for preservation treatment. This information, as a framework for design development, was then applied to three design alternatives for approaching the cultural landscape that were presented to the park, regional office, and DSC.²¹⁰

Other reports for cultural areas were also undertaken at this time. The Loudoun Heights cultural resources survey, which began after the Maryland Heights survey, was completed in 1992. Significantly, archeological survey found among the industrial, domestic, and military sites some of the best-preserved Civil War encampments in the NPS system. The study reported that all terrain vehicles, vegetation, and looters posed particular dangers to the resources.²¹¹ *A Cultural Landscape Report for Virginus Island* in 1993 served the purpose of compiling historical information towards interpretation and stabilization. The CLR divided the island into five management zones and stated its preference for a Design Alternative to be “Reading the Landscape” to emphasize reading signs of change on the island through preservation and enhancement.²¹² The study called the area an archeological and natural preserve, and excavation ran concurrently. Stabilization work of ruins on Virginus Island began late in 1993 and completed in the following summer as Package 123.²¹³ Priorities for the maintenance included clearance of threatening vegetation, emergency treatment of threatened ruins, reconstruction of the Tunnel Vault keystone, repairs to the Cotton Mill masonry and preservation of turbine machinery.²¹⁴ The list of structures for inclusion in the project demonstrates the remarkable evolution in conceptualizing the site from the 1950s by naming the

Cotton/Flour Mill Ruins, Cotton Mill Ruins, Water Intake tunnels, head gates and dam remnant, flour mill ruins, pulp mill and boiler house, Lake Quigley Wall, dwelling ruins, and Shenandoah Canal wall.²¹⁵

Harpers Ferry NHP indeed marked the differences wrought from the landscape in 1994 when it celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of NPS management of the park area. The celebration was co-chaired by Bradley Nash and Scot Faulkner. The events were reminiscent of the centennials of John Brown's Raid in 1959 and the Civil War in 1962 and consisted of a Family Day, fireworks, a nineteenth-century circus, the Wildcat Regimental Band, Recognition Day, History Day with re-enactors of famous political figures such as George Washington and Frederick Douglass, and Founders Day to celebrate the park birthday, a block party-style celebration for Community Day, as well as presentation of "the Anvil."²¹⁶ The celebration of John Brown's Raid beforehand spurred an acquisition campaign of significant items. One of the items was the bell for the Engine House that Brown's raiders used to call slaves to the resistance effort; afterwards it became known as "John Brown's Bell." A division of soldiers from Marlborough, Massachusetts claimed the bell as a Civil War trophy and carried it home. A concerned citizen notified the park in 1955 of the bell's location, but the park could not pursue it until establishment of a museum program.²¹⁷ The park waited until the late 1980s to attempt an acquisition. The ensuing disagreement between the park and the citizens of Marlborough was characterized by a reporter as, "A century later, it's still North vs. South."²¹⁸ Ultimately, the town of Marlborough prevailed. The other major item was John Brown's *Bible*, which was pursued as the centerpiece for the new John Brown Museum. Supt. Campbell stated in a memo that, "The *bible* will become the

centerpiece of a new John Brown exhibit in Lower Town Harpers Ferry. The *Bible* will epitomize Brown's belief that he was called by God to end slavery, and will be the primary component of an exhibit discussing the 'law of God' vs. 'The law of man.'"²¹⁹ The park offered \$150,000 for the bible. The funding split between the federal government, the Harpers Ferry Historical Association, and the National Park Service Foundation.²²⁰ The bible was incorporated into the design by the Interpretive Design Center for the new John Brown exhibit. The new exhibit was themed "John Brown within the context of his times," and expanded the traditional, text-based approach concentrating on the thirty-six hours of the raid to include players other than Brown and his men, as well as to evoke in the viewer a sense of the emotional qualities."²²¹ It used traditional techniques as well as newer interactive technological media to engage the visitor in the learning experience.

The NPS has seen several trends in media from the early parks' book-on-a-wall exhibits to audio stations to original art. In the 1960s the revolutionary vision of NPS interpretive planners was channeled into the HFC/IDC to break new ground in design for national parks. By the 1990s the idea of experimental media had evolved toward technology. Exhibit plans using this new medium called it a dynamic and interactive means for visitors to learn about history, but in practice the systems encountered significant maintenance problems. Technology was integrated into several exhibits in the Lower Town along with more traditional media.²²² Building 33 was the first structure visitors would come to if they followed the sidewalk from the bus dropoff point from Cavalier Heights and identified as a place to offer visitors a foundation for their park experience. Designed to encompass the broad themes of Harpers Ferry, the exhibit

design traced the history of Harpers Ferry through a combination of static panels of factual information with interactive stations, in addition to a light-up model of the town.²²³ The exhibit sought, in the absence of much of the physical history, to establish a sense of place in visitors by recreating the idea of the town.²²⁴ Off-site, the internet gave visitors “another” park and twenty-four hour access to information. In the summer of 1995, the Harpers Ferry NHP webpage entered cyberspace. It was a cooperative effort between volunteers, park staff, and the HFHA publications manager.²²⁵ The initial site introduced the history of the area, gave a virtual park experience through maps and tours, stories from archives, images, and provided educators with information.²²⁶ The National Association for Interpretation (1996) and the Association of Partners for Public Lands (1998) recognized the site with awards of excellence. A redesign of the site improved it with revised site navigation, a comprehensive site index, streaming video, video files, photographs, and other information. A more formal review process is now underway to update the site, in keeping with a larger trend in national parks towards using the internet to reach the public.²²⁷

At the anniversary celebration and at other times, the park was used as a commemorative space. Although the NPS cautioned parks from allowing events of a peripheral nature to their central goals to take place on park land, Harpers Ferry NHP would occasionally permit the public to stage events. In 1979, the International Committee Against Racism and the Progressive Labor Party organized a march on Harpers Ferry in conjunction with the 120th anniversary of John Brown’s anti-slavery raid.²²⁸ The group rallied against the Ku Klux Klan and for socialism.²²⁹ The march was permitted to allow the group to exercise its first amendment right. Eight hundred

marchers participated and corps of police stood ready for a potentially disastrous conflict that never appeared. Other, less politically charged events in later decades built on milestones in the park's history or were permitted because the organization had historical roots in Harpers Ferry and was related to the park's mission. In 1994 the park and the West Virginia chapter of the NAACP conjointly celebrated their fiftieth anniversaries with an exhibit celebrating the Niagara Movement.²³⁰ A local reporter covered it, stating, "In a time when civil rights leaders often fear to 'air dirty laundry' by disagreeing publicly, the exhibit's depiction of internecine struggle underscores the importance of the past's perspective in understanding the present."²³¹ Two years later, the ninetieth anniversary of the founding of the Movement itself was recognized.²³²

If the anniversary of the park represented the forward movement of improvement at Harpers Ferry, the severe weather of the 1995-1996 season proved that the preoccupation of early planners with the threat of flood was warranted and that the natural world still held sway. On January 20-21, 1996 two feet of melting snow from a blizzard earlier in the month caused the river to swell once again and flood the Lower Town to approximately 25 feet. And on September 8, 1996 heavy rainfall from Hurricane Fran combined with the snowmelt to flood it once again to 29.8 feet.²³³

Several of the closed exhibits in historic structures in the Lower Town opened by the end of January 1996, although those along Hamilton Street, Virginius Island, the John Brown museum, Industry museum, and Frankel's Readymade Clothing Store remained closed.²³⁴

It was a disheartening experience for staff, since they had just finished cleaning up the muck and debris from area and were back to normal operations when the second flood struck and they had to do it all over again. The flood water infiltrating the resources



Fig. 28: Aerial view of Lower Town during 1995-96 season of floods (Harpers Ferry NHP).



Fig. 29: Flood cleanup, Blacksmith Shop during flood 1995-96. Architect's Office, Harpers Ferry HP.

impacted them systemically, and plans aimed to address the preservation of archeologically sensitive building spaces or to change historic wood materials to more permanent, stable materials to retard further erosion. Every facet of the Lower Town required attention, including the waysides, landscaping, and trails, and cleanup involved the removal of much rotting material.²³⁵ The recovery project following the storms of 1996 provided training opportunities, as well, and the Williamsport Preservation Training Center became involved on stabilization projects on roofs along the Lower Town.²³⁶ To mark the moment, a new flood marker exhibit was requested.²³⁷

The policies and approaches for archeological resources at Harpers Ferry NHP were built over decades and continue to evolve. An exploratory flavor pervaded the earliest survey work around the park. This work significantly informed the historical development of the area and enhanced interpretation. Experiments in labor programs and contracting agencies yielded mixed results and complicated outcomes as to the appropriateness of trainees working on irreplaceable archeological resources. Stabilization and maintenance programs across the park invoked the protections handled by preservation laws. Park administrators responded differently over time to the legislative mandates and the ongoing call for increased awareness of the rapidity with which Harpers Ferry's historic fabrics were deteriorating. But nationally a groundswell of support, as compared to the 1950s, had sprung by the public and by professionals for the awareness and use of cultural resources.

After completion of the "package-type" renovation projects in the park, archeologists' role shifted to concentrate more heavily on investigating disturbed resources and monitoring smaller projects. "Section 106" (from the National Historic

Preservation Act) and “ARPA” (shortened from the Archaeological Resources Protection Act) had already become buzzwords in memoranda and planning documents for the process of surveying ahead of maintenance projects. The archeological surveys of the Heights areas provided a baseline for documenting the damaging effects of looters or recreationalists. In theory, they also provided a basis for prosecution but in practice it was difficult to properly police outlying areas of the park to deter illegal activity. Impacts or outright destruction, however, were not uncommon and archeologists took on the documentation and paperwork process of the investigations. Frequently, park staff on their regular patrol duties, or even taking a walk, notified the archeologists of the disturbed areas. In 1991 a historic domestic site on Maryland Heights was actually bulldozed. Several stone features were damaged or destroyed by bulldozing and tree removal activities.²³⁸ Impacts by looters occurred across the park. At a former trash dump for Storer College, archeologists found the surface ground turned over with a spade. Artifacts were scattered across the scene and two piles of bottles were found to the side. The ceramics, glassware, and other items suggested an association with Storer College buildings in the late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries.²³⁹ A year later, an area near this site and associated with it was also disturbed.²⁴⁰ Civil War artifact looters using metal detectors were an anathema across the NPS, and Harpers Ferry NHP proved no exception. An archeologist reported one hundred twenty-two disturbances at the scene of an ARPA violation case on Bolivar Heights in 1995. The site lost any artifacts that were taken, data such as their orientation and location, and the disruption of earth that aggravates natural soil erosion.²⁴¹ Cases such as these provided an idea of the extent of and scope for archeological protections and the role of staff in responding to them.

Park archeologists monitored maintenance projects in Harpers Ferry constantly,²⁴² but by 1995, they were being lent to other National Capital Region parks through funds of the Cultural Resource Preservation Program. A project at Manassas National Battlefield, for example, presented the opportunity to investigate how free African Americans operated within a larger context that considered consumer behavior, health and nutrition, and the impact on the changing landscape.²⁴³ At George Washington Memorial Park in Great Falls, Virginia the archeologists partnered with the park to map and document associated canal features. The survey was in conjunction with a preservation/stabilization project on the Patowmack Canal performed by the Historic Preservation Training Center.²⁴⁴

Archeological practices were only part of the ways cultural resources management had developed at Harpers Ferry and in 1999 the park formed a compliance committee to address its National Environmental Protection Act (1969) and Section 106 needs. The park directive aimed to insure compliance with federal, state, and local laws and regulations for those undertakings that might impact natural and cultural resources within the park. The compliance committee consisted of representatives from the various invested park divisions: archeology, museum, natural resources, historic architecture and landscape, maintenance, interpretation, as well as representatives from HFC and Mather Training Center. The directive established a plan and documentation system for reviewing projects with possible impacts to the park's natural and cultural environment so that: "This Directive applies to all park operations, contract work, Harpers Ferry Center, Appalachian National Scenic Trail and Mather Training Center operations, and all other operations whose undertakings may have an impact on the park's natural and/or cultural resources."²⁴⁵

Although policy and planning had codified a direction for management, as we have seen the locals never let the NPS forget its basic promise of bringing economic stimulus to the town. Harpers Ferry NHP assisted the town Merchants Association with developing a Main Streets program application in 2000 and continues to participate with an official representative from the park. A local newspaper wrote, “Harpers Ferry is in desperate need of revitalization and the National Trust or Historic Preservation’s Main Street program is a comprehensive, incremental, self-help process for revitalizing historic towns.”²⁴⁶ The Main Street West Virginia program operates through the National Main Street Center, part of the National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP). It guides towns towards economic and physical revitalization by capitalizing on historical and community-based resources. The Center does not fund the changes, but assists towns towards planning and fundraising.²⁴⁷ The NTHP awarded the town of Harpers Ferry with Main Street status in March 2001 on the basis of its architecture, history warranting preservation and benefit to business owners from Main Street services. The report also cited National Park Service support, its relationship with locals and its sizable tourist draw as factors contributing to the award.²⁴⁸ In 2001 the merchants received a boon as the Lower Town as a set for the movie *Gods and Generals*. Although some business owners complained of losing 85 to 100 percent of their normal profits during filming, the deal was sweetened with the idea that the exposure of Harpers Ferry in a major film could draw tourists.²⁴⁹ The management of this filming was informed by the park’s 1983 experience with the filming of *Puddin’ Head Wilson*, based on a story by Mark Twain. The filming offered the town an income of approximately \$800,000, but the park and the regional office expressed reservations and only reluctantly agreed.²⁵⁰ The park relented

to Senator Byrd's request after modifying the agreement to decrease the proposed substantial modification of several historical buildings.²⁵¹ As the chief of interpretation wrote to the superintendent,

The questions boil down to this "was the production of a film completely unrelated to the park's national significance worth the inconveniences, threats to the resources and extensive staff time? Did this serve the interest of management efficiency? Should National Historical Parks with clearly defined themes be used as stage sets for unrelated film productions, simply because the architecture or historic scene fits the general time period of the script?"²⁵²

It set a precedent at the park by requiring significant alteration to the scene and by having nothing to do with the town's historical significance.

For the most part, the contentious relationship between the park and its community and concessioners was not understood by the visiting public. During the fiscal year of 1999 the park sought visitor feedback and increased dialogue amongst park interpreters through get-togethers called "coffee chats." Visitors' notes in a comments book indicated largely positive responses to the park from new and repeat visits. Comments included, "We visited Harpers Ferry 25 years ago. The rangers were great then, but the changes we see now are a vast improvement." Or, "Harpers Ferry is a credit to the Park Service and a lesson to the rest of the world as to how to preserve a nation's heritage." The few criticisms complained about cars in lower town, the inadequacy of the visitor center for children, and inadequate maps and signage.²⁵³

By the end of the 1990s, planning documents first developed decades before had become integrated into park management and were updated accordingly. The Harpers Ferry list of sites on the National Register of Historic Places was revised circa 1999 to reflect the new historical contexts developed for the park within its boundaries since the 1981 update finalized by Charles Snell. In contrast to the thematic planning documents

of the 1950s, the National Register listing included properties relating to African American schools/black education; rail-related resources/transportation; farms, residential, community resources/ community development; industrial resources/ industrial; military sites/military themes.²⁵⁴ In 2001, the state historic preservation officer submitted National Register nominations for several more sites: the Nash Farm, School House Ridge, Niswarner Tract, Tattersal Property, Shipley School, Grand View School, the Hydroelectric Power Plant, the Maryland Heights-Spur Battery, the Bollman Bridge Piers, and the Storer college historic district.²⁵⁵ The 1999 Scope of Collections Statement updated earlier policies with the six themes active at the park: John Brown's Raid, Industrial History, the Civil War, African-American History, Transportation History, and Natural History.²⁵⁶ And in 2001 the park's first Long-Range Comprehensive Interpretive Plan was under development to identify a vision the park's interpretive program for the next five to ten years. Its main goal aligned with the park Strategic Plan to increase "people's understanding and appreciation of the significances of Harpers Ferry National Historical Park."²⁵⁷ Interpretation, media, cultural and natural resources management, maintenance and preservation have changed in scope and approach over the years, but two elements to the NPS presence in Harpers Ferry have remained constant: the relationship with the local population and the acquisition of land.

Grandview and Shipley Schools, formerly the community's segregated public school buildings, were smaller scale acquisitions finalized in 1993. The park rented the buildings from the Jefferson County school board in the mid 1970s for storage and overflow space for HFC. Their use and condition were viewed as problematic from the beginning of the arrangement.²⁵⁸ Critics of the 1978 DCP objected to the expansion of

HFC. Park staff believed the buildings added to already overburdened maintenance and protection responsibilities. Funds were not made available for renovation of the rental properties, and their condition deteriorated. Complaints soon appeared about work and safety conditions for employees and environmental and security hazards to equipment and artifacts. While NPS traditionalists in the 1970s viewed the schools as unattractive, non-historic buildings incompatible with the park mission,²⁵⁹ local residents saw them as important representatives of their history. Many favored park acquisition with the expectation that this would insure their care and survival. The lack of substantive improvements in the years succeeding purchase of the buildings dismayed long-term residents and for some was merely another confirmation of their perception of the park's arrogance and cavalier attitude toward the town.²⁶⁰ But these acquisitions of specific places were less common than the acreage typically pursued.

Pieces of the outlying puzzle were gradually acquired, including the Maryland "spur battery" and the 56-acre parcel that gave the park a foothold on Schoolhouse Ridge. Congress directed the park in 2000 to conduct extensive educational outreach on the Civil War and African American history themes and to explain options for amending the park boundaries to preserve this history.²⁶¹ In July 2000 Senator Byrd reversed a plan to build a firearms training center for the U.S. Customs Service on 327 acres owned by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on the southern end of Schoolhouse Ridge (encompassing the area of "Jackson's right flank"). Instead the land was transferred to NPS with a 60-acre non-impacting subsection set aside under U.S. Customs jurisdiction for its proposed facility. Despite these gains, in 2001 the Civil War Trust still listed Harpers Ferry in the top ten of "America's most endangered battlefields."²⁶²

Unprotected properties were outlined in detail in the January 2002 “Options to Amend the Park Boundary,” compiled as part of a mandated informational outreach program in preparation for potential expansion. Among the remaining key pieces still open for private development were the northern extension of Schoolhouse Ridge (“Jackson’s left flank”) and the Murphy farm on Bolivar Heights.²⁶³ The Murphy farm was the site of important events in the 1862 battle and was also the site, from 1895-1909, of the “John Brown Fort” which was visited by attendees of the 1906 Niagara Conference, a predecessor to the NAACP. The park had been interested in the farm for many years, and in fact, William A. Murphy offered to sell it to the NPS in 1978, but the park had no funds or authorization at the time.²⁶⁴ In the absence of an NPS offer for the 99-acre farm, development plans finally proceeded in 1999 until October 2002 when the Trust for Public Land, with the assistance of the Harpers Ferry Conservancy coalition, a broad based coalition of national groups, federal and state agencies all working to save the Murphy Farm from development, interceded, bought the farm and transferred it to the park on December 31, 2002.²⁶⁵ In 2002 the NPS and the park invited the public to attend a community presentation called “The Maryland Campaign, the Niagara Movement and Options to Amend the Park’s Boundary.” Four meetings in March aimed to educate the public on the reasons for expanding the boundaries to protect these elements.²⁶⁶

Much of the park’s efforts to protect its integrity focused on external boundaries beyond the dreams of Monument founders. But the momentum for consolidation also revived the sporadically pursued objective at the center of the park, the U.S. armory site, near the point of the Potomac and Shenandoah confluence. The NPS had been careful to inform the longtime and powerful landowner of plans for federal recognition of the town.



Fig. 30: John Brown Fort and Lower Town, 1990s (Binder 13, HAFE sheet 11, Harpers Ferry NHP).

In 1936 Director Arno Cammerer wrote to the General Counsel of the B&O Railroad to suggest a meeting “to go over the plans for the proposed Harpers Ferry National Historic Site.”²⁶⁷ In 1950 when establishment of an NPS installation seemed closer to reality, Assistant Director Conrad Wirth again wrote to B&O officials informing them that West Virginia was beginning to acquire land for the “proposed Harpers Ferry National Monument.” Noting that the company had a long history of promoting the area’s historic and natural scenery, he broached a partnership in this joint interest. Specifically, he complimented the B&O for preserving and marking “the site of the arsenal associated with John Brown” and, on behalf of future Monument personnel, asked “permission to direct visitors to the spot.” Wirth’s solicitous concern for the arsenal site was exposed as covetousness as he proceeded to ask that the company inform the NPS “long in advance” should it “plan at some future date to dispose of or alter the site.”²⁶⁸ The B&O agreed to “cooperate” with the NPS “interpretive program” including allowing public access to the site and assured Wirth that no changes to its adjacent mainline tracks were planned.²⁶⁹

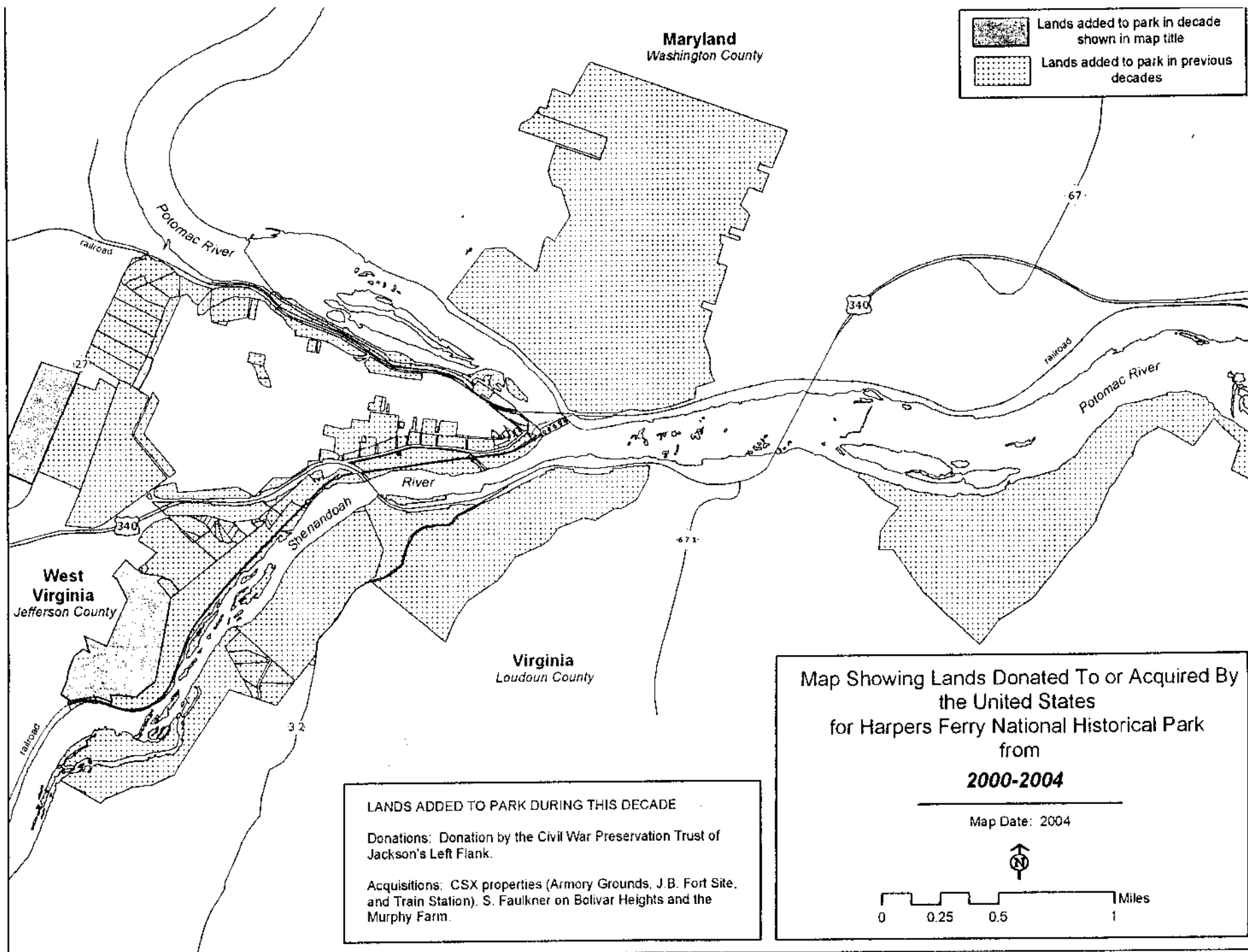
By 1957 the site was on the Harpers Ferry NM Master Plan priority “wish list”²⁷⁰ and NPS officials were considering a plan to acquire the property through a land exchange.²⁷¹ The B&O was open to the idea and asked for specific demarcation of the requested area. An NPS civil engineer surveyed the site in November 1958 and plans were prepared in January 1959, raising Superintendent Anderson’s hopes that it might be acquired in time for the 1959 Centennial.²⁷² The railroad was interested in C&O Canal property near Cumberland, and these coincidental interests seemed to provide a means for NPS to acquire the otherwise expensive and controversial fort site without having to request a Congressional appropriation. Nevertheless, the apparently convenient situation

caused the first delay in the negotiations. Associate Director Scoyen instructed regional officers in May 1959 that he “was reluctant to proceed at this time” since an exchange might complicate the establishment of C&O Canal NHP then under Congressional consideration.²⁷³ The 1960 legislation providing for the addition of Storer College included authorization for the exchange of NPS land for the fort site, but in December 1961 there was confusion over the status of the negotiations. Monument staff strongly recommended that the requested parcel be considerably expanded though still totaling less than 2.7 acres.²⁷⁴ By 1963, although approximately seventy-four acres near Cumberland was being offered for less than three acres at Harpers Ferry, the B&O objected that the values of the tracts were unequal and asked for additional monetary payment or concessions such as allowing the company to replace the wooden trestle at Harpers Ferry with dirt fill.²⁷⁵ C&O Superintendent (and former HFNM Supt.) Dale objected to C&O lands being “raided” for the benefit of Harpers Ferry.²⁷⁶ Negotiations stalled, and even though Superintendent Prentice and Northeast Regional Director Garrison urged the Director to pursue legislation for an outright purchase, advising that Senator Randolph “would be glad to do this,” this alternative was apparently not pursued.²⁷⁷ Two deeds were drafted in 1969 but “never executed,” and in 1982 the NPS lands office corresponded with the B&O’s successor, Chessie System Railroads, still without result.²⁷⁸

Momentum from boundary studies and private and public advocacy, including Senator Byrd’s, for fulfilling the park’s mandate finally brought earnest negotiations in the late 1990s. An agreement based on the original exchange plan was reached and the exchange effected in September 2001. The park received six acres from the CSX

Corporation including the arsenal site, the train station/depot, and portions of the former armory grounds. The station, although still functioning as a local commuter stop, was deteriorated. In 1999 it was listed as one of the nation's top ten most endangered historic train stations. Following its acquisition, rumors and fears circulated that the station might be closed and that it would not be maintained and operated in the local interest. In response, the park granted the town of Harpers Ferry a long-term lease of part of the building and arranged for its continued operation as a functioning station on MARC and Amtrak routes.²⁷⁹ A \$320,000 grant was secured to begin restoration of the building.²⁸⁰

Harpers Ferry NM/NHP operated for nearly fifty years without title to the arsenal site, the core property critical to its physical and symbolic integrity. That it was able to do so is testimony to the legitimizing authority of the NPS and to the mythic power of the Harpers Ferry story. When the NPS took custody of the surrounding property it became custodian and contributing author, almost continually revising and reshaping its official version. Yet the style and expression of the story told here has also been shaped by prior and external NPS practices and policies and by the national society's redefinition of its history. The Harpers Ferry story was also expressed implicitly in shifting priorities for park development--from the endorsed avenues and methods for research to landscape maintenance, preservation programs, and land planning. It has been colored by the contrasting identity and aesthetic of the NPS to surrounding local communities and interest groups. Amidst the continual remaking of park narratives, of buildings, traffic patterns, even of its natural resources, obtaining the original arsenal site remained a constant ambition of NPS staff from the founding of the monument. Its acquisition represented the close of a chapter in the long process of consolidation of NPS oversight



and recreation of the townscape, and provides an appropriate opportunity for review and reflection on the origins and evolution of NPS stewardship of Harpers Ferry.

¹ Committee reviewing boundaries, Harpers Ferry National Monument Project to Regional Director, Memo "Proposed boundaries, land acquisition," May 24, 1950; Assistant Director Wirth to Director, Memo "Revised Boundaries; Harpers Ferry National Monument Project," July 18, 1950, Folder "H30," Admin. Coll., BH/HAFE; Service trainees, "Master Plan Development Outline, HFNMP," December 1952, page 3 of 9, Hebb Coll., BH/HAFE; Acting Director A.E. Demaray to The Secretary, Memo "Revised Boundaries for Harpers Ferry National Monument Project, West Virginia and Maryland," September 25, 1950, Folder "HFNHP 1938-1954," NPS HD Coll., HD/NPSDC.

² Acting Assistant Director Branch Spalding, "Memorandum for the Director: Re: Proposed Harper's Ferry National Historic Site," October 2, 1936, Folder "HFNHP 1935-1937," NPS HD Coll., HD/NPSDC.

³ Superintendent Donald W. Campbell to Charles Estes, Appropriations Committee, June 8, 1989, 3-4, Folder "A26," Admin. Coll., BH/HAFE.

⁴ Jennings Randolph was the long-standing senior Senator having begun service in November 1958 following a special election. Senator Robert Byrd was elected in 1958 and began his first term in 1959. Randolph was chairman of the Committee on Public Works (1965-1978) and was a member of the successor Committee on the Environment and Public Works (1977-1980). He did not stand for re-election and completed his last term January 3, 1985. He died in May 1998. Senator Byrd was a member of the Appropriations Committee beginning in 1959 and served twice as chair. He was Senate majority leader (1977-1980 and 1987-1988), Senate minority leader (1981-1986) and president pro tempore (1989-1994 and June 2001-December 2002). Term histories and biographies at www.senate.gov. Correspondence with Dr. Robert Florian, Randolph biographer with access to Jennings Randolph papers, Salem International University, Salem, WV, August 2002.

⁵ Regional Director Manus J. Fish Jr. to Robert Beckett, Director of Planning, c. 1979, Admin. Coll., BH/HAFE; "Annual Report for Harpers Ferry Park 1979," Folder "A7227," Admin. Coll., BH/HAFE.

⁶ See examples of McDonald's Monument Project letterhead and early promotional letters. McDonald Coll., CO/HAFE.

⁷ John Reynolds, a planner at DSC, was designated to succeed Martin Conway as superintendent. On September 13, 1978 he visited the park and met with department heads, but did not take up the post as scheduled on September 24. Acting Superintendent Dwight E. Stinson to Regional Director, Memo "Weekly Report to the Regional Director, August 27-September 3, 1978," September 6, 1978; Acting Superintendent Paul R. Lee II to Regional Director, "Weekly Report to the Regional Director, Sept. 3-Sept. 10, 1978," September 14, 1978; Acting Superintendent Rock L. Comstock, Jr. to Regional Director, Memo "Weekly Report to the Regional Director, Sept. 10-Sept. 17, 1978," September 20, 1978, Chrono. Book September 1, 1978-May 31, 1979, MH/HAFE.

⁸ Chief, Division of Interpretation and Visitor Services Dave Dame to All Regional Chiefs, I&VS, Memo "Ivory Towers Notes," February 20, 1980, Unfiled pages, NPS History Coll., HFC.

⁹ Director Russell E. Dickinson, "The Role and Responsibility of Interpretation in the 1980s," attached to Dickenson, "Introduction," "History and Prehistory in the NPS and the National Historic Landmarks Program," History Division, NPS 1982, Folder "NP System Plan History," NPS HD Coll., NPS/DC.

¹⁰ HFNHP, "Interpretive Prospectus 1980", 3.

¹¹ Acting Chief of Interpretation John Fiedor, "Annual Statement for Interpretation, FY83," 37, Chief of Int. Coll., BH/HAFE.

¹² "Annual Statement for Interpretation and Visitors Services FY 1982," Folder "Statement of Interpretation 1982;" Fiedor, "Annual Statement FY83," 20, Chief of Int. Coll., BH/HAFE.

¹³ Assistant Regional Director George A. Palmer to Regional Director, Memo "Historic Structures Report, Part I, Marmion Hall, Building 1-B, HFNM" February 4, 1959, Folder "HFNHP 1959," NPS HD Coll., HD/NPSDC; Fritz [Frederick Gutheim] to Pete [Charles E. Peterson, supervising architect, EODC, Philadelphia], April 25, 1954, and subsequent shorter letters, Folder "HFNHP 1938-1954," NPS HD Coll., HD/NPSDC.

¹⁴ Ethan Carr, *Wilderness By Design: Landscape Architecture and the National Park Service* (University of Nebraska Press, 1998).

¹⁵ Superintendent Joseph R. Prentice to Mrs. Pat Cosgray, August 23, 1963, Folder "HFNHP," Box 7 Ent. 414B, RG 79, NARA-MA (Ph).

¹⁶ Park Ranger John T. Willett to Director, Memo "Monthly Narrative Report, HFNM, Sept. 1954," October 4, 1954, Folder "HAFE Correspondence 1954," Box 5, Ent. 405, RG 79, NARA-MA (Ph).

¹⁷ Supervisory Park Ranger John T. Willett to Regional Director Region Five, Memo "Request to Locate Signs on Lands Held under Senic [sic] Easement," July 14, 1955; Regional Director Daniel J. Tobin to Supervisory Park Ranger Willett, Memo "Location of Signs on Lands under Scenic Easement," July 19, 1955, Folder "HFNM Correspondence 1955," pt. 2, Box 5, RG 79, NARA-MA (Ph).

¹⁸ Superintendent Frank H. Anderson to Regional Director Region Five, Memo "National Monument Boundaries," December 17, 1959, Folder "L1417," Admin. Coll., BH/HAFE.

¹⁹ "Superintendent's Staff Meeting," January 15, 1963; "Superintendent's Staff Meeting," January 29, 1962, Folder "Staff Meetings 1962," Franzen Coll., BH/HAFE.

²⁰ Superintendent Joseph R. Prentice to Regional Director Northeast Region, Memo "Elimination of Power Line from Mather Center Grounds," November 25, 1964, Folder "HF 1960," Box 17, Ent. 415, RG 79, NARA-MA (Ph).

²¹ Various letters 1972, Folder "A22," Admin. Coll., BH/HAFE; Paula M. Strain, *The Blue Hills of Maryland: History Along the Appalachian Trail on South Mountain and the Catocins* (Vienna, VA: 1993), 57-59.

²² Newspaper clipping "Old Harpers Ferry of Yesteryear Troubled Tourist Attraction Today," *Sarasota Herald-Tribune* (January 23, 1977) enclosure in, S. Herbert Evison to Robert Utley, January 24, 1977, Folder "—Present," NPS HD Coll., HD/NPSDC.

²³ Chief, Office of Park Planning and Environmental Quality to Regional Director National Capital Region, Memo "HFNHP DCP Assessment of Alternatives," December 21, 1978, Box on floor, Admin. Coll., BH/HAFE.

²⁴ Park Ranger John T. Willett to The Director, Memo "Monthly Narrative Report, HFNH, June 1954," July 1, 1954 and Supervisory Park Ranger John T. Willett to The Director, Memo "Monthly Narrative Report, HFNH, July 1954," August 4, 1954, Folder "HF Correspondence," Box 4, Ent. 415, RG 79, NARA-MA (Ph).

²⁵ Regional Director Daniel J. Tobin to Director, Memo "Sanitary Survey of HFNH," January 4, 1957, with attached "Survey," Folder "HF," Box 37, Ent. 414B, RG 79, NARA-MA (Ph).

²⁶ Harley O. Staggars to Mr. Conrad L. Wirth, Director, March 1, 1956 and reply Acting Director E.T. Scoyen to Hon. Harley O. Staggars, March 1, 1956, Folder "HF," Box 41, Ent. 414B, RG 79, NARA-MA (Ph).

²⁷ Associate Director, Park System Management John E. Cook to Bradley Nash June 18, 1974, Franzen Coll. BH/HAFE.

²⁸ Director, National Capital Parks to Mayor Bradley Nash, (Date illegible) 1977, Folder "Harpers Ferry-Bolivar Sewage System," Franzen Coll., BH/HAFE.

²⁹ Sewer system correspondence, 1977; Folder "L 3031," Admin. Coll., BH/HAFE.

³⁰ Acting Superintendent Ronald N. Wrye to Regional Director National Capital Region, Memo "Weekly Report to the Regional Director, December 4-10, 1977," December 9, 1977; Acting Superintendent Ronald N. Wrye to Regional Director National Capital Region, Memo "Weekly Report to the Regional Director, January 30-February 3, 1978," February 3, 1978; Acting Superintendent Hugh Bell Muller to Regional Director National Capital Regions, Memo "Weekly Report to the Regional Director June 18-25, 1978," June 27, 1978, Chrono. file December 2, 1977-August 31, 1978, MH/HAFE.

³¹ Acting Superintendent Rock L. Comstock, Jr. to Regional Director National Capital Region, Memo "Weekly Report to the Regional Director January 7-14, 1979," January 18, 1979, Chrono. file September [ill.], 1978-May 31, 1979, MH/HAFE.

³² Acting Superintendent, HAFE James D. Young to Associate Director, WASO, Memo "Harpers Ferry/Bolivar Public Service District - NPS Water Treatment Rate Dispute," June 5, 1979; Gary R. Catson, Assistant to the Secretary and Director of Congressional and Legislative Affairs to Senator Robert C. Byrd June 13, 1979; General Counsel Harpers Ferry-Bolivar Public Service District Peter L. Chakmanian to Senator Robert C. Byrd, May 25, 1979; Nancy C. Garret, Associate Director to Senator Byrd, June 12, 1979; Denis P. Galvin, Manager to Public Service Board, Harpers Ferry-Bolivar Public Services District, June 19, 1979, Folder "Harpers Ferry-Bolivar Sewage System," Dessauer Coll., BH/HAFE.

³³ Superintendent Donald W. Campbell to Regional Director National Capital Region, Memo "Weekly Report to the Regional Director," August 17, 1979 and "Weekly Report," December 12, 1979, Chrono. file June 1-December 31, 1979; "Annual Report for Harpers Ferry Park," 1979, Folder "A7227," Admin. Coll., BH/HAFE; Superintendent Donald W. Campbell to Regional Director National Capital Region, Memo "Weekly Report to the Regional Director," March 18, 1980, Chrono. file January 1, 1980-July 31, 1980, MH/HAFE.

³⁴ HAFENHP, "Interpretive Prospectus," 1980, 22.

³⁵ Paul Smith and Dennis Frye, "A proposal for the relocation of the Harpers Ferry Forge," January 25, 1980; Paul Lee, Paul Smith, Dennis Frye to Superintendent, Memo "Relocation of Blacksmith Shop to Bldg. 33-A," December 3, 1984, Folder "Blacksmith Shop Relocation," Chief of Int. Coll., BH/HAFE.

³⁶ Chief of Interpretation Paul Lee to Linda Finn, Interpretive Planning, HFC, Memo "Interpretive Plan, HFNHP," February 7, 1980; Lee to Campbell, Memo "Use of Building 33-A," March 20, 1986; Paul H. Smith to Lee, Memo "Blacksmith Shop Exhibit," June 5, 1986; Living History Staff to Superintendent and

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³⁷ Chief of Interpretation Paul Lee to Regional Director, NCR, Memo "Harpers Ferry Sewing Shop," May 1, 1978, Folder "Tailor Shop," Chief of Int. Coll., BH/HAFE.

³⁸ Superintendent to Paul Goldner, NCR, Memo "106 Clearance: fence project," July 27, 1979; Folder "Armory/Arsenal," Chief of Int. Coll., BH/HAFE; Superintendent to Mrs. William A Murphy, September 10, 1980, Folder "H30 1983," Admin. Coll., BH/HAFE.

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Chiefs of Interpretation Collection. Chief of Interpretation Paul Lee II and Dennis Frye files, 2 filing cabinets and additional boxes. Interpretive division planning records, exhibit plans, administrative correspondence and records. Brackett House basement.

Dessauer Collection. Architect's working files, historic structure reports, compliance records, maintenance records, correspondence, contracts, maps. Peter Dessauer's office, Brackett House.

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Mary V. Mish Papers. Washington County Historical Society, Hagerstown, Maryland.

Jennings Randolph Papers. 600 cartons. Scrapbooks and correspondence spanning Randolph's career as a Congressman (1932-1946), American Airlines executive (1947-58) and Senator (1959-1984). Uncataloged. Salem International University, Salem, West Virginia.

Harley O. Staggers Papers. 1949-1980. 63 ft. and 36 vols. West Virginia and Regional History Collection, West Virginia University Libraries, Morgantown, WV.

Interviews

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Taped Interviews

Gayleen Boyd, July 24, 2002
Donald W. Campbell, April 11, 2003
William C. Everhart, January 13, 2003
Dennis Frye, March 27, 2003
Carroll Harder, July 9, 2002
Thurmond W. "Bill" Hebb, February 13, 2003
Jay Mauzy, July 26, 2002
June Newcomer, October 10, 2002
Deborah Piscitelli, July 9, 2002
John and Cari Young Ravenhorst, May 29, 2003
Marc Sagan, November 6, 2002
Harvey Sorenson, November 21, 2002
Hilda Staubs, January 10, 2003
Michael D. Watson, April 7, 2003
Linda Gail Williams, July 26, 2002

Email interview

Paul R. Lee II, Fall, 2002

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Appendix A

Authorizing Legislation

Public Law (P.L.) 78-386 (Approved June 30, 1944) To provide for the establishment of the Harpers Ferry National Monument through donations, not to exceed 1,500 acres.

P.L. 86-655 (Approved July 14, 1960) To authorize the acquisition of certain lands (Storer College and John Brown "fort" site) for addition to Harpers Ferry National Monument not to exceed 1,530 acres.

P.L. 88-33 (Approved May 29, 1963) To change the name of Harpers Ferry National Monument to Harpers Ferry National Historical Park.

P.L. 93-466 (Approved October 24, 1974) To amend the Act of June 30, 1944 to allow additions to the park not to exceed 2,000 acres and to provide for a parking and shuttle transportation system.

P.L. 95-625 Sec. 101 (14) (Approved November 10, 1978) National Parks and Recreation Act of 1978 Authorized additional appropriations for HFNHP.

P.L. 96-199 Sec. 108 (Approved March 5, 1980) To raise acreage limit to 2,475 to allow for the addition of the Short Hill Mountain tract in Virginia.

P.L. 99-192 (Approved December 19, 1985) To designate the new walkway addition to the B&O Potomac river bridge as the "Goodloe E. Byron Memorial Pedestrian Walkway."

P.L. 101-109 (Approved October 6, 1989) To raise acreage limit to 2,505 to allow for the donation of the 27-acre Bradley and Ruth Nash farm.

P.L. 106-246 (Approved July 13, 2000) To provide for administration of Department of the Interior lands (School House Ridge) under the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service by the National Park Service and for a lease-type arrangement with the U.S. Customs Service of the Department of the Treasury for use of a portion of the lands for a firearms training facility.

Appendix B
Major Land Acquisitions

- 1953 400 acres in West Virginia deeded to U.S., deed cleared by U.S. May 13, 1955 for Monument establishment date
- 1963 30 acres Storer College and 763 acres on Maryland Heights
- 1974 Cavalier Heights for parking area
- 1981 370 acres Short Hill tract, Virginia
- 1992 56 acres of School House Ridge and “Spur Battery” on Maryland Heights
- 1993 Shipley and Grandview Schools
- 2000 Management responsibility for 267 acres U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, School House Ridge (“Jackson’s right flank”)
- 2001 B&O/CSX Train Station and John Brown “fort” site
- 2002 Murphy farm

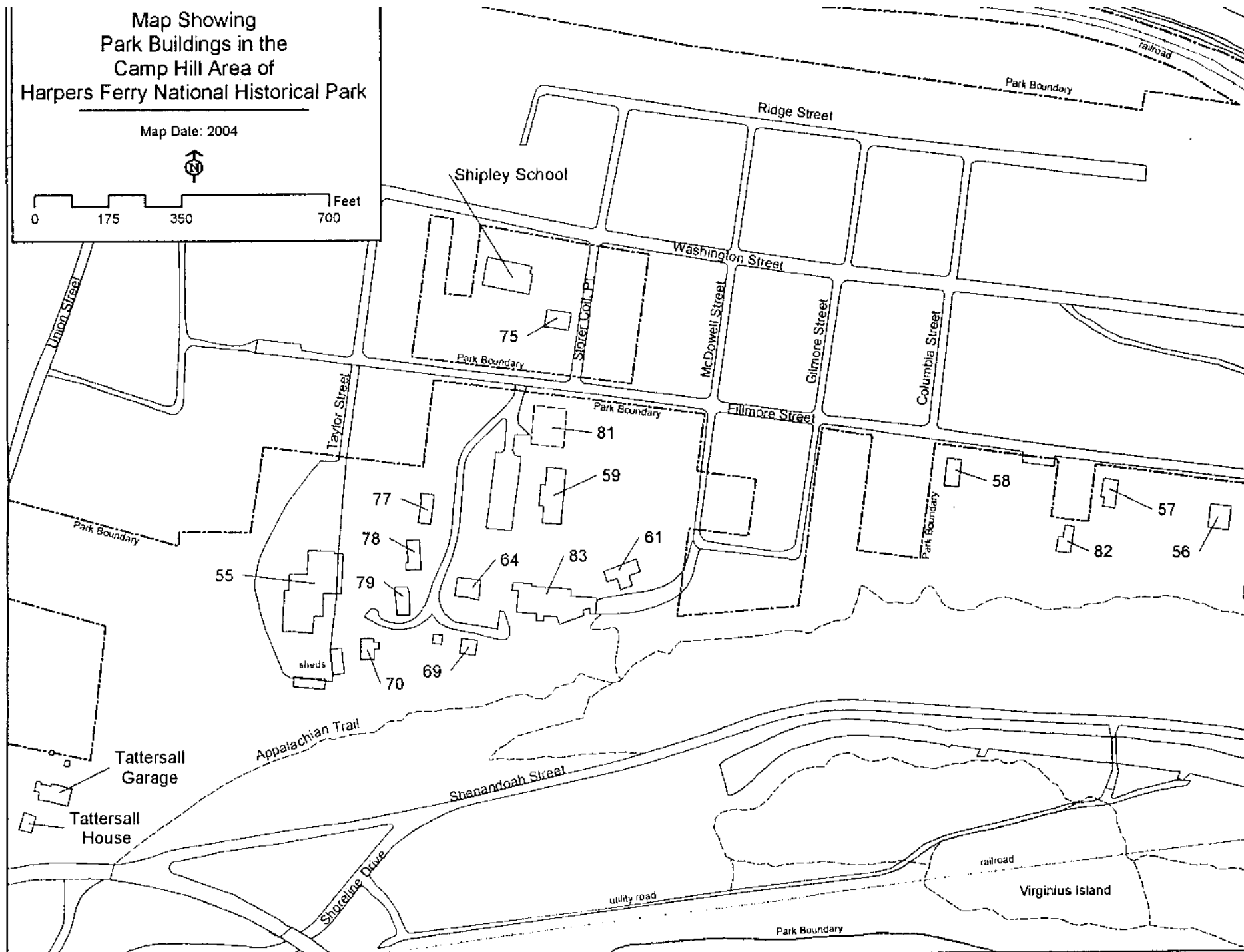
Appendix C
Harpers Ferry National Historical Park Buildings
Inventory by Building Number and Building Maps

Map Showing
Park Buildings in the
Camp Hill Area of
Harpers Ferry National Historical Park

Map Date: 2004



0 175 350 700 Feet



Park Buildings in the Outlying Areas of Harpers Ferry National Historical Park

Map Date: 2004



0 900 1,800 3,600 Feet

Hockensmith house
and outbuildings

Nash Farm
buildings

Grandview
School

Potomac
Edison
Hydroelectric
Plant

SEE CAMP HILL MAP

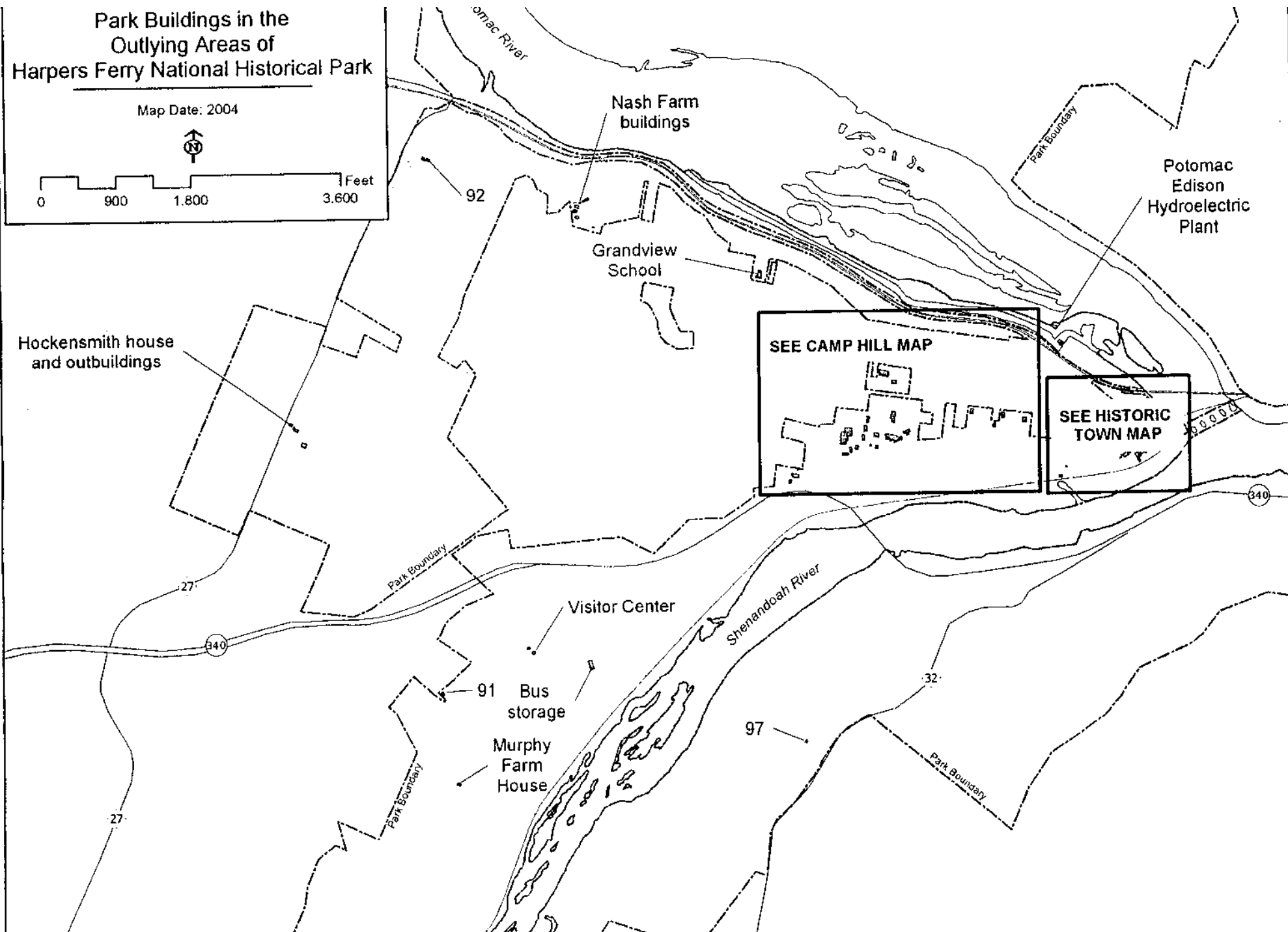
SEE HISTORIC
TOWN MAP

Visitor Center

Bus
storage

Murphy
Farm
House

Shenandoah River

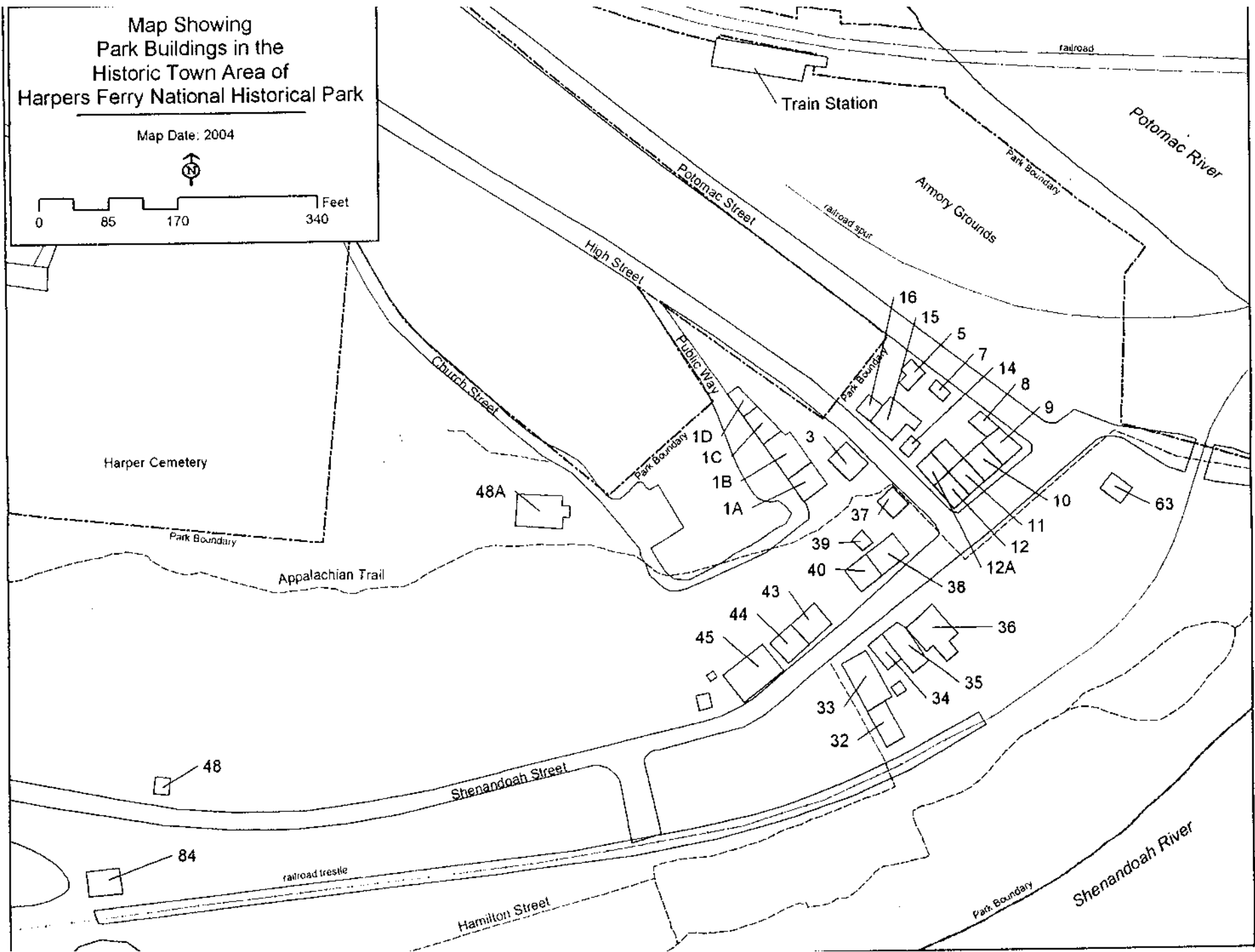


Map Showing
Park Buildings in the
Historic Town Area of
Harpers Ferry National Historical Park

Map Date: 2004



0 85 170 340 Feet



BUILDING INVENTORY

Harpers Ferry National Historical Park

April 2004

This list does not include ruins and other structures that are not considered intact buildings.

BUILDING NUMBER	BUILDING NAME	LCS-ID	# of Floors including Basement
1A	Harper House	00549	4
1B	Marmion Hall	00548	4
1C	2nd Marmion Tenant House	00558	4
1D	1st Marmion Tenant House	45433	4
3	Nichols/Williams Bldg.	00614	3
5	Roeder Store	00546	2
7	White Hall Tavern	00621	2
8	Wager Annex	00564	4
9	Wager Bldg.	00565	5
10	Unsold Bldg.	00619	4
11	Anderson Bldg.	00622	4
11A	Anderson Annex	00623	3
12	Stephenson Bldg.	00566	4
12A	Stephenson Outbuilding	00567	3
14	Burton Jewelry Shop	00563	1
15	Downey House	00612	3
16	Roeder House	00545	3
16A	Roeder Annex	45479	2
32	Icehouse	00561	2
33	Ranger Station	03867	3
34	Old Master Armorer's House	00557	4
34A	Smokehouse	00562	2
35	Old Master Armorer's House	45408	4
36	New Master Armorer's House	00550	3
37	Reilly Bldg.	00554	2
38	Tearney Bldg.	00608	2
39	Transformer Bldg.	00609	1
40	Richards Bldg.	00553	3
43	McCabe-Marmion Bldg.	00552	3
43A	Cooling Tower	45405	1
44	Coons Bldg.	00551	3
45	Stage Coach Inn	00556	3
45A	Outhouse	00560	1
45B	Garage		1
48	Armorer's Dwelling	00587	2
55	Maintenance Bldg.		1
56	Lockwood House	00555	3
57	Brackett House	00586	3
58	Morrell House	00584	3
59	Wirth Hall - Mather Training Center	00576	3
61	Cook Hall	45400	3
63	John Brown's Fort	00607	1
64	Anthony Library	17237	3

44	69	Bird-Brady House	45481	3
45	69A	Garage (next to Bird-Brady House)		1
46	70	Garrett House (Quarters 70)		2
47	70A	Garrett House Shed		1
48	75	Curtis Freewill Baptist Church	03870	2
49	77	Quarters 77		1
50	78	Quarters 78		1
51	79	Quarters 79		1
52	81	Relocation Center	45403	1
53	82	Jackson House		3
54	83	Interpretive Design Center		3
55	84	Blacksmith Shop		1
56	91	Ballenger House		2
57	92	Pearce House		2
58	92A	Pearce House Garage		1
59	93	Maintenance Shed		1
60	97	Sherwood House		2
61	Shipley School	Shipley School	45403	3
62	Grandview School	Grandview School	45503	2
63	Power Plant	Rolling Mill (former PE hydropower plant)	45494	2
64	Visitor Center	Visitor Center		1
65	Restrooms	VC Restrooms		1
66	Kiosk	Kiosk (fee collection)		1
67	Bus Storage	Bus Maintenance		1
68	Tattersall House	Tattersall House		1
69	Tattersall Garage	Tattersall Garage		1
70	Nash Little House	Nash Little House		2
71	Nash Main House	Nash Main House		1
72	Nash Barn	Nash Barn		2
73	Nash Guest House	Nash Guest House (Randolph House)		2
74	Hockensmith House	Hockensmith House		2
75	Hockensmith Garage/Shed	Hockensmith Garage/Shed		1
76	Hockensmith Apple Processing Building	Hockensmith Apple Processing Building		2
77	Murphy Farm House	Murphy Farm House	# Not assigned	1
78	Train Station	Train Station	# Not assigned	1

174

Appendix D
Harpers Ferry National Monument/Park
National Park Service Regional Affiliation

1944: Region I, Richmond, VA

July 1955: Region V, Philadelphia, PA

1962: Region V renamed Northeast Region, Richmond, VA

March 16, 1970: Harpers Ferry Center

March 16, 1974: National Capital Parks, Washington, D.C.

October 1976: National Capital Parks renamed National Capital Region

Appendix E
Harpers Ferry Superintendents and Dates of Service

Harpers Ferry National Monument
(authorized June 30, 1944)

J. Walter Coleman, Superintendent of Gettysburg National Military Park named
Coordinating Superintendent for HFNM —1952

John T. Willet, Supervisory Park Ranger, first on site, June 1954—August 1955

Harpers Ferry National Monument Superintendents
(established May 13, 1955)

Edwin M. Dale August 25, 1955—August 10, 1957

Frank H. Anderson January 26, 1958—March 26, 1962

Joseph R. Prentice December 3, 1961—March 25, 1962 (Acting Superintendent)
March 26, 1962—1963

Harpers Ferry National Historical Park Superintendents
(designated May 29, 1963)

Joseph R. Prentice 1963—April 9, 1967

Benjamin H. Davis August 27, 1967—April 19, 1972

Martin R. Conway August 20, 1972—September 24, 1978

Acting Superintendents between October 1977 and July 1979 included: Ronald Wrye, Hugh Muller, Rock Comstock, Brien Varnado and J.D. Young. Park division chiefs such as Dwight Stinson, Rock Comstock, and Paul Lee frequently filled the position, as well.¹

Donald W. Campbell July 15, 1979—through 2004

¹ Hugh Bell Muller was detailed to the park May 15, 1978 after Ronald Wrye was appointed Assistant Supt. at Yellowstone, Weekly Report May 23, 1978. Manassas Supt. R. Brien Varnado was named Acting Supt. in April 1979 following Rock Comstock's reassignment to the Appalachian Trail office, Weekly Report April 6, 1979. Varnado returned to Manassas and was replaced by C&O Canal Supt. James D. Young April 26, 1979, Weekly Report April 26, 1979. Chrono. files, MH/HAFE.

Appendix F

Staff Organization Charts

The organization and composition of staff at Harpers Ferry NHP has changed considerably over its history. Remaining staff organization charts, however, provide an inconsistent picture for comparative purposes. These charts also contain sensitive information about employees' grade scale, salaries, awards, and hours. Although many of these charts are available in park files, due to their sensitivity they are best accessed through the administrative officers.

Appendix G

Visitation Statistics

The methods for calculating visitation to Harpers Ferry NHP have changed in relation to observations of tourist use, boundary expansions, and new facilities. Annual numbers are unavailable until 1969. Recreational use statistics are included from 1956 to the present.

Supervisory Ranger Frank Willett mentioned an “avalanche” of visitors in the early months of the park. In the late 1950s, the park multiplied by ten the number of visitors who registered in the Visitor Center, but believed that over the course of a year this method underestimated total visitation. In 1959, the method changed to a single multiplier of 2.9 for person-per-vehicle year-round and both weekdays and weekends via counters on High Street and on Shenandoah Street. The superintendent explained, “Based on actual hand counts of autos and persons per car taken over a prolonged period, we believe that our public use count should be based on an actual count of automobiles taken only during the hours that our visitor center is open to the public” and adjusted according to spot checks throughout the year to address seasonal fluctuations.¹ In 1964, a statistician drew from park investigations as to visitor use and devised a more accurate method to exclude commuters and include visitors to John Brown’s Fort, Storer College, and other outlying areas in the count who did not necessarily include a visit to Lower Town in their trip. This calculation involved a variable multiplier of 3.5 on weekdays and 3.9 on weekends.² The multiplier was simplified to three on weekdays and four on weekends during the 1970s after a visitor use study undertaken by park staff.

Beginning in 1991, the regulation of visitors entering the park through the Cavalier Heights visitor facility changed the compilation method for use statistics. Fee-takers at the entrance count the number of people entering via carload and the number is cross-checked by the number of shuttle riders. Despite what is considered a more accurate form of counting visitors, staff members indicate that some visitors still fall through the system, particularly Appalachian Trail hikers or local residents who enter the park on foot.

Year	Annual Visitation	Recreational Use Only³
1956		115,700
1957		177,200
1958		270,400
1959		604,900
1960		585,800
1961		612,900
1962		658,000
1963		709,300
1964		754,500
1965		789,800
1966		898,000
1967		955,500
1968		1,009,800
1969	1,031,266	1,031,300
1970	1,120,870	1,120,900
1971	1,129,917	881,900
1972	1,110,345	867,615
1973	1,207,766	935,700
1974	893,423	695,700
1975	996,477	780,000
1976	1,079,790	824,800
1977	919,691	706,200
1978	816,801	629,747
1979	565,059	437,448
1980	709,863	549,997
1981	758,991	589,288
1982	894,143	682,386
1983	791,218	600,823
1984	864,958	673,944

1985	780,486	566,661
1986	907,774	907,747
1987	916,361	916,361
1988	697,230	697,230
1989	800,168	624,168
1990	705,404	542,619
1991	489,900 ⁴	489,919
1992		449,341
1993		426,481
1994		394,322
1995		386,247
1996		314,548
1997		340,246
1998		371,094
1999	371,094 ⁵	333,738
2000		317,699
2001		325,156
2002	310,489 ⁶	286,289

¹ Superintendent to Director, NE Region, Memo "Proposal for Revising Travel Factors," December 10, 1963, Folder "HF 1958-64," Box 12, Ent. 414, RG 79, NARA-MA (Ph).

² Chief, Branch of Statistics Analysis Rendel Alldredge to Superintendent, Memo "Public use counting methods," February 4, 1964, Folder "HF 1958-64," Box 12, Ent. 414, RG 79, NARA-MA (Ph).

³ Public Use Statistics Office, National Park Service, <<http://www2.nature.nps.gov/stats/>>

⁴ "Annual Statement for Interpretation and Visitor Services FY92," Harpers Ferry NHP, 1992, Chief of Int. Coll., BH/HAFE.

⁵ "Civil War Site Statistics," Online at <www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/icws/Addendum_B.html>.

⁶ Harpers Ferry NHP, www.nps.gov/hafe.

Appendix H VIP Visitors

Senators Jennings Randolph and Robert C. Byrd have probably been the most important and frequent political visitors to Harpers Ferry NHP. Other West Virginia politicians who have visited the park over the years include Cong. Harley O. Staggers, Cong. Harley O. Staggers, Jr., Cong. Shelley Moore Capito, Cong. and later Gov. Bob Wise and Gov. Gaston Caperton. NPS Directors and Secretarys of the Interior have also visited to attend presentations or highlight initiatives.

In part because of its proximity to Washington, D.C., Harpers Ferry NHP has also hosted national and international leaders. This is a sampling culled from the park's newspaper clipping scrapbooks.

Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas	January 24, 1965
Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm (NY) Congressman Anthony Young (GA)	June 1976
President Jimmy Carter and First Lady Rosalyn Carter	July 6, 1978
Senator Frank Lautenberg (NJ) Senator Spark Matsunaga (HI)	March 29, 1985
First Lady Nancy Reagan	September 11, 1986
Hungarian President Madyas Szuros	March 17, 1990
Iceland Ambassador to the U.S. Tomas Tomasson Iceland Prime Minister David Oddsson Iceland (former) Prime Minister Steingrimur Hermannsson	September 22, 1991
President Bill Clinton Vice President Al Gore	April 22, 1998
Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk al-Sharra Secretary of State Madeleine Albright	January 8, 2000
Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak Secretary of State Madeleine Albright	January 9, 2000