Regional Office
421 Walnut Street
Philadelphia 6, Pa.

April 23, 1959

Memorandum

To: Superintendent, Harpers Ferry
From: Acting Regional Director
Subject: Research Project No. H-55, Historic Building Report,
Part II, for Buildings No. 12 and 12A

This is a very useful and good summary of evidence on Buildings No. 12 and 12A. We judge that the statement at the top of page 6 with regard to Building 12A is based on architectural evidence and that this will presumably be more fully developed in the architectural section of the Part II Historic Structure Report on this building. If the first floor of Building 12A was designed to be a small shop, it seems odd that there is no newspaper evidence on its use as such.

Subject to such minor changes as may be warranted by the discovery of additional historical evidence, this report should be adopted in due course as the Historical Data Section of a Part II Historic Structure Report on these buildings. Again there is colorful evidence herein from Mrs. Ginsburg's correspondence which has interpretative value for John Brown Raid purposes.

(Sgd.) George A. Palmer

George A. Palmer
Acting Regional Director

In duplicate
Copy to: Director w/copy of report

General
Daily
Area

FBarnes: ftc
Memorandum

To: Regional Director, Region Five
From: Superintendent, Harpers Ferry National Monument

Subject: Research Project No. HF-55, Part II, Historical Data Section, Bldgs. No. 12 and 12A


[Signature]
Frank H. Anderson
Superintendent

In duplicate

Enclosures
HISTORIC BUILDING REPORT

PART II.

Bldgs. No. 12 and 12A

The Ann C. Stephenson Buildings

Harpers Ferry National Monument

Prepared by:

Charles W. Snell
Historian (Park Supervisor)
March 17, 1959
16 Pages
Project No. HR-55
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ownership Of The Land, 1782-1870</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Early Use Of The Lot, 1803-March 31, 1838</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Construction of Buildings No. 12 And 12A</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Use Of Buildings No. 12 And 12A, 1839-1861</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Historical Plans Of Buildings</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Historical Photographs</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Summary Of Historical Data</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
HISTORICAL DATA SECTION

1. OWNERSHIP OF THE LAND, 1782-1870

Wager Lot No. 15, subdivision 1, the present site of Bldgs. No. 12 and 12A, was owned by the Wager family from 1782 until 1837. On October 28, 1837, the lot was sold to Mrs. Ann C. Stephenson for about $1600 or $1700. The orange and purple area on the 1835 plat of the Wager property, on the next page of this report, represents the land acquired by Mrs. Stephenson in 1837. In October, 1857, Mrs. Stephenson sold a small portion of her lot (the purple area on the 1835 plat) to Alfred Burton for $100. The bulk of the original lot (the orange area), however, remained the property of Mrs. Stephenson from 1837 until 1870.

2. EARLY USE OF THE LOT, 1803-March 31, 1838

Lot No. 15, subdivisions 1, 2 and 3, were the site of the "Harpers Ferry Hotel" from 1803 to March 31, 1838. This spacious old frame building had been erected by the Wager family and was leased by them over the years to various tavern keepers. From April, 1824, until March, 1830, the building

1. For detailed story of ownership of this lot, see Snell, Charles W., "Historic Building Report, Part I, for Bldgs. No. 12 and 12A, the Stephenson Buildings," dated October 8, 1957, revised February 3, 1958, pp.1-3, and maps. For the exact date of sale, all four subdivisions of Lot No. 15 were sold on the same day—October 28, 1837, and prices paid for each, see Snell, C. W., "Historic Building Report, Part I, for Bldgs. No. 11 and 11A, the Anderson Buildings," dated October 3, 1957, revised January 31, 1958, p.2. Also, Snell, C. W., "Historic Building Report, Part I, for Bldgs. No. 10 and 10A, the John C. Unselld Buildings," dated May 28, 1958, p.3. Coons paid $1450 for his lot; William Anderson $1,610 for his lot; Mrs. Stephenson probably paid a higher price at the public auction for her lot, it being a corner lot.


3. Ibid., p.3.
Tracing of Portion of 1835 Plat of Wager Lots. Traced from the Original in the Jefferson County Court House, Deed Book 29, by A. W. Franzen.
had been operated as a hotel by Mrs. Ann C. Stephenson and her husband, Major James Stephenson. From April, 1830, to February, 1837, Mrs. Stephenson next operated a hotel in Bldg. No. 45. Her husband died in 1833.

3. **CONSTRUCTION OF BLDGS. NO. 12 AND 12A**

On October 28, 1837, the old "Harpers Ferry Hotel" and lot was divided among three different owners. Lot No. 15, subdivision 1, was purchased by Mrs. Ann C. Stephenson; subdivisions 2 and 4 were acquired by William Anderson; and Philip Coons bought subdivision 3. The old hotel building itself had been leased by the Jefferson County Court to Mrs. Isabella Fitssimmons from April 1, 1837, to March 31, 1838. Thus the three new owners were unable to touch the old structure until the lease expired. This fact, however, did not hinder them from making plans for constructing new buildings on their recently acquired property.

Thus in November, 1837, William Anderson and his brother, Samuel B. Anderson, and Dr. George B. Stephenson, the oldest son of Mrs. Ann C. Stephenson, jointly advertised:

"**HOUSE BUILDERS LOOK OUT**

W. & S. B. Anderson and George B. Stephenson will receive proposals until the 16th of Dec. 1837, for the building of two brick houses, each 30 by 40 feet, three stories high, with cellars of stone. These would be Bldgs.

4. For detailed history of Harpers Ferry Hotel, 1803-1838, see Snell, C. W., "Historic Bldg. Report, Part I, for Bldgs. No. 10 and 10A," pp.7-11. This account is accurate except for the correction noted above in the text.


-3-
No. 11 and 12). Also two stone houses (Bldgs. No. 7 and 13), each 24 by 40 feet, with cellars, one of them to be one, and the other two stories high—all to be covered with slate. To be commenced on the 1st of April next (1836), and finished by the 1st of December following. A plan of each building may be seen at the store of W. & B. B. Anderson (which was then located on Wager Lot No. 51, at the corner of High and Shenandoah Streets). The proposition for each building to be made separately, and may be made for Mason work and the Joiners' work separately or together, for each building. Cash will be furnished at any time for the purchase of material if desired. 8

From the above-quoted document and architectural evidence to be found in the two structures themselves, it is apparent that Bldgs. No. 11 and 12 were erected at the same time and on the same general plan, with only a brick fire wall separating the two houses in the middle. As originally laid out on the 1835 Wager plat, subdivision 1 and 2 of Lot No. 15 both fronted 30 feet on Shenandoah Street. As actually constructed, however, Bldg. No. 12 fronted only 28 feet on the street while Bldg. No. 11 had a 32 feet frontage on Shenandoah Street. It is thus clear that William Anderson must have purchased a strip of land two feet wide by at least 41 feet deep from Mrs. Stephenson in 1837-38 in order to give his Bldg. No. 11 its present width.

Bldgs. No. 11 and 12 were thus jointly constructed in 1838-39, fronting together a total of 60 feet on Shenandoah Street by 40 feet 10 inches in depth. Both were 3½ story brick buildings with slate roofs and stone cellars. Bldg. No. 12, by itself, fronted 28 feet on Shenandoah Street and was 40 feet 10 inches deep along High Street. Both Bldgs. No. 11 and 12 had large two


story frame porches across the Shenandoah fronts of the structures. The first floor of Bldg. No. 12 was designed for use as a large store and the upper 2½ stories for use as a dwelling house. Bldg. No. 12 was completed and occupied by April 20, 1839.

No direct evidence relating to the construction of Bldg. No. 12A has been found. It would appear, however, from evidence relating to the construction of the additions or annexes to Bldgs. No. 11, 10, and 9, that Bldg. No. 12A was probably erected between 1840 and 1845. Bldg. No. 12A was built as a two story brick structure, with cellar, measuring 28 feet 6½ inches by 23 feet 7¼ inches in size.

No direct description of the interior of Bldg. No. 12 prior to 1861 has been found. As both Bldgs. No. 11 and 12 were erected at the same time, however, and probably on the same general plan, we present at this point a brief description of the upper 2½ floors of Bldg. No. 11 as it appeared in 1846, with the thought that it may well be applied to Bldg. No. 12.

Mr. William Anderson stated in 1846 that the dwelling portion of Bldg. No. 11 contained “nine comfortable Rooms — six of them with fire-places— and has a good pantry.” In addition, on the second floor of Bldg. No. 11A were “A good Kitchen and extra pantry attached.” Bldg. No. 12 probably contained a like number of rooms on the upper 2½ floors. The cellar of Bldg. No. 12A

12. Harpers Ferry Constitutionalist, May 1, 1839, p.3. Advertisement dated April 20, 1839.
13. See Drawing No. HM-HF-3065, Sheets 1, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12.
may have been used as a ware house for the store in Bldg. No. 12. The first
floor of 12A was probably originally designed for use as a small shop and the
second floor probably contained a kitchen and pantry intended for use in con-
junction with the dwelling part in Bldg. No. 12.

NOTES:
1. Further architectural information that may be of use in restoring Bldgs.
No. 12, will probably be found by examining Bldgs. No. 11, 7 and 15, all of
which were constructed by William Anderson in 1838-39.
2. Further documentary and photographic evidence that may be of use in re-
storing certain details in Bldg. No. 12 will be found in Snell, Charles W.,
"Historic Building Site Survey Report for the Noah H. Swayne Lot, Wager Lot
No. 517 dated July 24, 1958, 31 pages. Located on Lot No. 51 was a large
2½ story brick building erected by William Anderson in 1832.

The Perris-Sanborn Map of Harpers Ferry, dated November, 1894, showing
Bldgs. No. 12 and 12A at that date, will be found on the following page of
this report.
4. USE OF BLDGS. NO. 12 AND 12A, 1839-1861

On April 20, 1839, the Dry Goods merchants, Breitenbaugh and Kirby, informed the public "that they have removed their STORE to the new house of Mrs. Stephenson, on the corner of Shenandoah and High Streets." This firm occupied the store in newly completed Bldg. No. 12 from April, 1839, until probably March 31, 1841.

From April, 1841, to March, 1842, Bldg. No. 12 was next rented as a dry goods store by J. M. Robinson.

In April, 1842, "the Store Room formerly occupied by J. M. Robinson, Corner of High and Shenandoah Street," was leased by A. & G. W. Holland. These gentlemen sold "Dry Goods, Groceries, Hardware, China, Glass and Queenswear, Shoes, Boots, and Hats." Bldg. No. 12 was rented by this firm from 1842 until December 31, 1844.

On January 1, 1845, the partnership of A. & G. W. Holland was dissolved; and the business was continued in Bldg. No. 12 under the name of A. Holland & Company until 1847. From 1847 until March 31, 1853, the firm operated under the name of Robinson and Holland and were still located in Bldg. No. 12.

15. Harpers Ferry Constitutionalist, May 1, 1839, p.4. Notice dated April 20, 1839. For list of goods also see page 3 of same issue.

17. Ibid., February 3, 1842, p.3, c.5.
18. Ibid., April 28, 1842, p.3, c.2.
19. Ibid., October 13, 1842, p.4; April 13, 1843, p.1, c.1; May 11, 1843, p.3, c.3 & 4; January 11, 1844, p.3, c.4; March 14, 1844, p.1, c.1.
20. Ibid., January 16, 1845, p.3, c.2.
21. Ibid., April 17, 1845, p.3, c.3; December 18, 1845, p.3, c.2; October 22, 1846, p.4, c.1.
during this period.

In March, 1853, Mrs. Ana C. Stephenson advertised: "For rent—The very valuable and desirable Store Room formerly occupied by Messrs. Robinson & Holland (lately vacated) situated on the Corner of High and Shenandoah Streets... Possession given April 1st." There is no record of who rented the store from April, 1853, to December, 1855.

In January, 1856, Thomas Peacher announced that he had "opened a large and well selected stock of Dry Goods, Groceries, Queensware, Books, Shoes, Hats, Caps, &c., in the Store Room known as 'Stephenson's Corner' being on the corner of Main and High Streets..." Mr. Peacher, however, only remained in business in Bldg. No. 12 from January to March, 1856, for in April of that year Mrs. Stephenson again gave notice that the store room was for rent. The store was then rented to some unknown party until March, 1857, at which time Mrs. Stephenson advertised that the store in Bldg. 12 was again for rent. From about June, 1857, until August, 1859, Bldg. No. 12 was leased by George W. Legg, who sold dry goods, groceries, Hardware, Queensware, boots and shoes.

22. *Virginia Free Press*, August 12, 1847, p.1, c.3; April 28, 1848, p.3, c.1; August 16, 1849, p.4, c.5; October 4, 1850, p.4, c.7.


27. *Ibid.*, October 29, 1857; November 11, 1858, p.3, c.4; July 8, 1858, p.3, c.3 & 4; December 16, 1858, p.3, c.5; August 4, 1859, p.3, c.3.
His store was robbed in February, 1859.

From September, 1859, to April, 1861, the beginning of the Civil War, Bldg. No. 12 was occupied by George W. Taylor, a dry goods merchant. Mr. Taylor resided over the store in Bldg. No. 12 and Bldg. No. 12A, and a few rooms in 12 were occupied by Mrs. Ann C. Stephenson and her servant as her dwelling.

Thus at the time of the John Brown Raid in October, 1859, Bldg. No. 12 was occupied by George W. Taylor. Thomas Boerly was shot and killed by the John Brown Raiders while standing by Bldg. No. 12, as is revealed by the following excerpt from a letter of George Mauny to James H. Burton dated December 3, 1859:

"...not a man out of a 100 (the local townspeople) were armed with any thing more than an old shot gun, the very things that A. (Alexander) Kelly and Thos. Boerly were armed with when they made the first attack at Taylor's Corner (Bldg. No. 12) upon the guard at the Arsenal Gate & from whence the latter fled, a dead shot by a negro with a Sharps' rifle..." 31

The Census of 1860 provides us with the following information on the people living in Bldgs. No. 12 and 12A:


29. Ibid., December 8, 1859, p.4, c.3. Advertisement dated September 26, 1859; July 5, 1860, p.3, c.2.
31. MS letter, Mauny to Burton, December 3, 1859, letter in possession of Mrs. Kenneth Ginsberg, Md., copied by C. W. Snell. Mauny was a civil engineer and river agent for the Shenandoah Canal Company. Burton was a former Master Armorer of the Harpers Ferry Armory and in 1859 the Superintendent of the Enfield Arsenal in Great Britain.

MRS. KENNETH GINSBERG, 1839 ROLLING ROAD, ST. DENNIS 27, MD
George E. Taylor, 1, male. Born in Va."

Bldg. 12 or
Bldg. 12A:
Mary Forden, 64, female. Domestic. Born in Maryland."  32

5. HISTORICAL PLANS OF BLDGS.

No historical plans of Bldgs. No. 12 and 12A have been found and it is highly unlikely that any will ever be located. For modern measured drawing of these structures see Drawing No. HM-HR-3065, 17 sheets.

6. HISTORICAL PHOTOGRAPHS

Historical photographs showing Bldgs. No. 12 and 12A will be found in the following reports that have already been submitted:


5. 1863-65 photograph, HF-377, on page 23 of the above report. A blow-up made from HF-40, showing Bldgs. No. 11 and 12 in more detail.


7. 1873 painting, HF-145 on page 16 of above report. View of 12 & 12A.

8. 1892-1896 photograph, HF-99, on page 25 of "History of Wager Lot No. 51." Shows front of Bldg. No. 12 and 12A; also Bldg. No. 11 rebuilt as a four story structure.


13. 1962 photograph, HF-376. On the following page of this report will be found HF-376, a blow-up made from HF-40, showing in detail the porches on the front of Bldgs. No. 11 and 12, and the original roof line of these structures.

7. SUMMARY OF HISTORICAL DATA

A. Ownership of the Land, 1782-1870

Subdivision 1 of Wager Lot No. 15 was owned by the Wager family from 1782 until 1837. The lot and a portion of the old Harpers Ferry Hotel were
HARPER'S FERRY, VA., 1862

Original photograph in National Archives
Still Picture Section, Washington, D. C.
CN-5079.

This photograph, Harpers Ferry Negative
No. HR-376 is a blowup made from HR-11.

Thro the break in the bridge, from left to right, may be seen Bldgs.
No. 9, 10, 11 and 12. Note that Bldg. No. 10 is a 2½ story structure and
that Bldgs. No. 11 and 12 are both three story buildings. Bldgs. No. 10,
11 and 12 also have two story porches on their fronts on Shenandoah Street.
sold to Mrs. Ann C. Stephenson on October 28, 1837, for about $1,700. In 1857 Mr. Stephenson sold a small portion of her lot to Alfred Burton for $100; the bulk of subdivision No. 1 of Lot No. 15, however, remained the property of Mrs. Stephenson from 1837 until 1870.

B. Construction of Bldgs. No. 12 and 12A

Bldgs. No. 12 and 11 were jointly erected by Mrs. Ann C. Stephenson and William Anderson in 1838-39. Bldg. No. 12, a 3½ story brick building with slate roof, fronted 28 feet on Shenandoah Street and extended back 40 feet 10 inches along High Street. There was a stone foundation and cellar under the structure. The first floor was designed for use as one store and the upper two and a half floors were intended to be utilized as a dwelling. Probably in 1838-39 and certainly by 1859, Bldg. No. 12 had a large two story frame porch on the Shenandoah Street front of the structure.

Bldg. No. 12A, a two story brick wing with cellar, was added to the rear of Bldg. No. 12 by Mrs. Stephenson at some date between 1840 and 1845. The structure fronted 28 feet 8½ inches on High Street and was 23 feet and 7½ inches wide. The first floor of Bldg. No. 12A probably contained a small shop originally and the upper floor a kitchen and pantry. The latter were probably intended for use in conjunction with the dwelling portion of Bldg. No. 12.

No description of the interior of Bldg. No. 12 prior to the Civil War has been found. As the building was constructed on the same general plan as Bldg. No. 11, however, it is probable that Bldg. No. 12, like 11, contained nine comfortable rooms—six of them with fire places—and a good pantry on the upper 2½ floors prior to 1861. In addition, there was also probably a kitchen and pantry located on the second floor of Bldg. No. 12A.
C. Use of Bldg. No. 12 and 12A, 1839-1861

The first floor of Bldg. No. 12 was used as a dry goods store from 1839 to 1861. The upper floors of the house were utilized during the same period as the residence of the shop keepers of the store located below. The first floor of Bldg. No. 12A may have been used as a small shop or perhaps as a "counting room" for the main store in 12. The cellar of 12A probably served as a ware house for the store. The second floor of 12A contained the kitchen and a pantry for the service of the main building.

A summary of use, 1839-61, follows:

1. April, 1839-March, 1841; dry goods store of Breitenbaugh and Kirby.
2. April, 1841-March, 1842; dry goods store of J. M. Robinson.
3. April, 1842-December, 1844; dry goods store of A. & G. W. Holland.
5. 1847-March, 1853; dry goods store of Robinson and Holland.
6. April, 1853-December, 1855; no record of use.
8. April, 1856-March, 1857, no record of use.
10. September, 1859-April, 1861; dry goods store of George W. Taylor.

John Brown Raid

Alexander Kelley and Thomas Boerly launched their attacks on the raiders holding the two arsenals from the corner of Bldg. No. 12. Boerly was shot and killed by Brown's men while standing by Bldg. No. 12.
In October, 1859, Mr. Taylor was running the store in Bldg. No. 12 and residing on the upper floors. Mrs. Stephenson was living either in a few rooms in Bldg. No. 12 or in Bldg. No. 12A.

(Sgd) CHARLES W. SNELL

Charles W. Snell
Historian (Park Supervisory)
March 17, 1959
Memorandum

To: Regional Director, Region Five

From: Superintendent, Harpers Ferry National Monument

Subject: Research Project No. HR-55, Historic Building Report, Part II, for Bldgs. No. 12 and 12A


Frank H. Anderson
Superintendent

In duplicate