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Region Five
421 Walnut Street
Philadelphia 6, Pa.

May 12, 1959

Memorandum

To: Superintendent, Harpers Ferry National Monument
From: Acting Regional Director
Subject: Research Project No. HF-31A, The Evangelical Lutheran
Christ Church

The Regional Historian finds this report professionally
acceptable.

(Sgd.) George A. Palmer

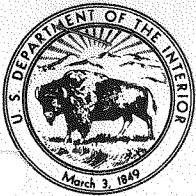
George A. Palmer
Acting Regional Director

In duplicate

Copy to: Director w/copy of Report

FBarnes/mm

General ✓
Daily
Area



UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Harpers Ferry National Monument
Harpers Ferry, West Virginia

April 1, 1959

IN REPLY REFER TO:

H2215

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Memorandum

To: Regional Director, Region Five

From: Superintendent, Harpers Ferry National Monument

Subject: Research Project No. HF-31A, The Evangelical Lutheran Christ Church

Enclosed please find four copies of the "Research Report, History of the Evangelical Lutheran Christ Church, Camp Hill, 1850-1868," dated March 31, 1959, 11 pages, as prepared by Historian Philip R. Smith, Jr.

Frank H. Anderson

Frank H. Anderson
Superintendent

In duplicate

*of
for info*

RESEARCH REPORT

HISTORY OF

THE EVANGELICAN LUTHERAN CHRIST CHURCH

CAMP HILL, 1850 - 1868

Harpers Ferry National Monument

Prepared by:

Philip R. Smith, Jr.
Park Historian
March 31, 1959
11 Pages
Project No. HF-31A

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1. OWNERSHIP OF THE LAND, 1796-1868

The lot on which the Evangelical Lutheran Church was to be erected was a part of the property purchased on June 15, 1796, by the United States from John Wager, Senior, for the purpose of establishing a Federal Armory at Harpers Ferry.¹

On February 6, 1849, Pastor J. P. Smeltzer of the Lutheran Church applied to Secretary of War Marcy for a lot on which to build a church.

"Permit me a missionary of the Lutheran Church and in behalf of my little flock in Harpers Ferry and vicinity, through Major Symington (the Superintendent of the Armory) to make application for a lot of ground on which to build a house in which we may worship God according to the dictates of our conscience.

The reasons why we make this application are the following. The congregation is small and generally the Laboring class of people, We have no place in which to worship except a school room and we know not how long we can obtain that, and also the fact that it is far more agreeable to have a church of our own.

With the hope, Sir, that we may obtain a lot on which to build a church I remain.

P.S. This application is made for a lot on the same terms as those heretofore given for places of worship." 2

Major Symington forwarded the petition to the Secretary of War with the following remarks:

"I respectfully enclose the application to the Honble Secy of War of the Revd Mr Smeltzer of the Lutheran Church, for the lease on the usual terms of a lot on Government ground on which to erect a church.

It is proper to remark in regard to this application that the site desired is on the back grounds immediately adjoining the town of North Bolivar where there is abundant private property that could be obtained for this object, and that the Congregation generally are those living in the town of Bolivar, and not connected with the Armory.

The question therefore is this a proper case for a lease?" 3

1. Deed, June 15, 1796 to U. S., National Archives, Reel 21, V.7, p.704-708.
2. J. P. Smeltzer to Secretary of War Marcy, February 6, 1849, Reel 23, V.12, p.1118.
3. Symington to Talcott, February 7, 1849, Reel 23, V.12, p.1117. Talcott to Secretary of War Marcy, February 16, 1849, Reel 20, V.1, p.41.

This application of the Lutheran Church was not granted by the Secretary because Major Symington had reported that there was an abundance of private land available in Bolivar and the congregation generally lived in that town. ⁴

In June of 1849 the Pastor and committee of the Lutheran Church addressed a second petition to the Secretary of War requesting a lease of a lot. ⁵ The Secretary of War approved this request, stating:

"The ordnance officer in command at Harpers Ferry Armory will select a site for a Church, as prayed for on the extreme limit of the public land not to exceed a quarter of an Acre, with the express condition that the Lutheran Church will hold the same only as tenants at will." ⁶

Superintendent Symington forwarded to Colonel Talcott on February 27, 1850, the lease granted to the Lutheran Church and a copy of the map ^{(see} on the following page ⁷) showing the location of the lot.

The lease granted to the Lutheran Church reads in part:

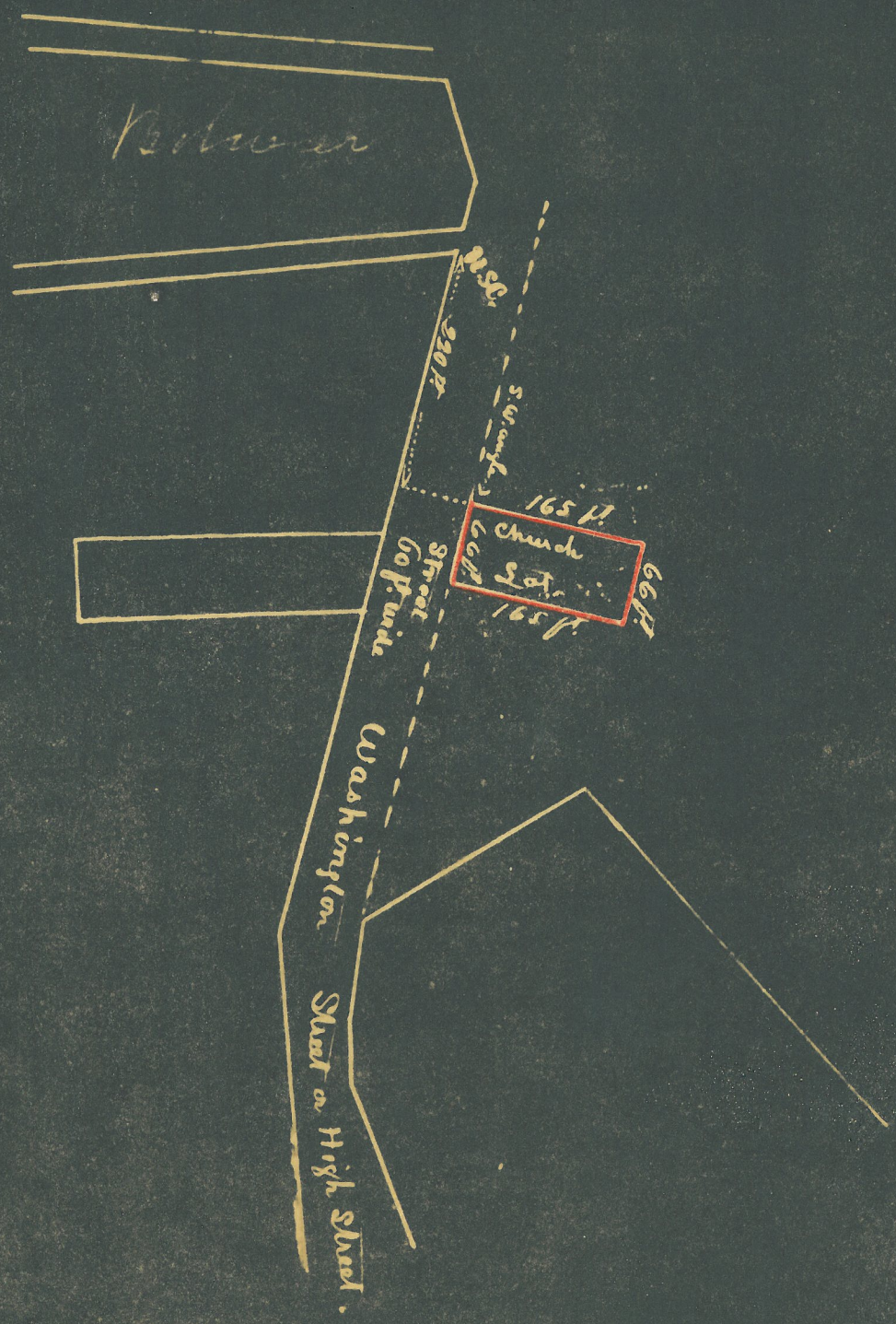
"Now be it known to all whom it may concern that a church site has been selected accordingly on the North side of High Street near the Town of Bolivar, fronting 66 feet on said street, and running back 165 feet with parallel lines containing one quarter acre; and permission is hereby granted to Martin Eichelberger, Isiah E. Miller and George Berry being the Trustees of the said Evangelical Lutheran Christ's Church to construct thereon a House of Public Worship; the said lot of ground to be holden by the said last named parties and their successors at the will of the United States of America...." ⁸

2. CONSTRUCTION OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

On February 26, 1850, the pastor and building committee of the Lutheran

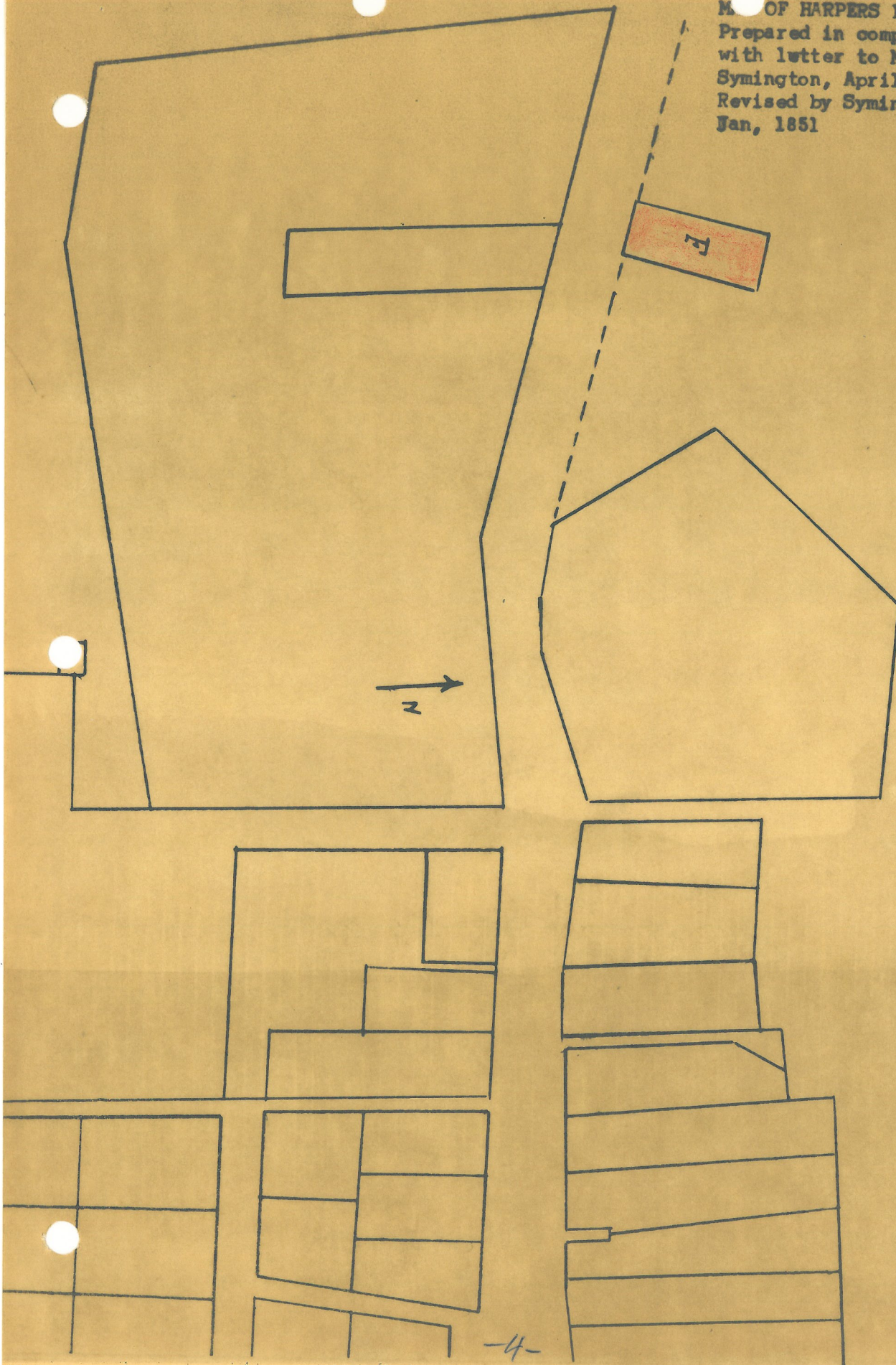
4. Talcott to Secretary of War, June 22, 1849, Reel 24, V.1, p.75.
5. J. P. Smeltzer and Committee of Lutheran Church to Secretary of War Marcy, June 31, 1849. Talcott to Secretary of War, June 22, 1849, Reel 24, V.1, p.75.
6. Talcott to Symington, June 23, 1849, Reel 18, V.4, p.395.
7. Symington to Talcott, February 27, 1850, Reel 26, V.2, p.175.
8. Deed, February 21, 1850, Reel 26, V.2, p.177.

H. F. Murray
27: 4-1850



8791

MAP OF HARPERS FERRY
Prepared in compliance
with letter to Major
Symington, April 22, 1848
Revised by Symington
Jan, 1851



Church requested permission from the Secretary of War fo quarry stone for
9
their church on Government land.

This was forwarded by Colonel Talcott to the Secretary of War on February 28
1850, with the suggestion that the request be left to the descretion of Major
Symington.

The cornerstone of the church was laid on April 13, 1850, and the cere-
monies marking the occasion were described by the newspaper:

"The corner stone of the Evangelical Church in the town of Bolivar was
laid on Saturday last. A procession was formed comprised of the Sons of Tem-
perance, Red Men, Odd Fellows- the whole under the direction of Mr Adam Rhul-
man, Chief Marshal, assisted by Messrs Jacob Gomph, Chas E. Steward, and John
H. Stahl. After the ceremony of laying the stone, the procession returned
to the Methodist Episcopal Church, where several interesting and eloquent
addresses were delivered." 11

The church was probably completed in 1851. The Virginia Free Press noted
on December 11, 1851, that:

"A fair will be held in Harpers Ferry, commencing Monday evening 21st
of December for the benefit of the Ev. Lutheran Church. Ladies and Gentle-
men are respectfully invited to attend." 12

The new church was a one story brick building on a stone foundation with
13
dimensions of forty one by fifty feet. The building was twenty seven feet
14
high to the eaves and had a ten foot tall wooden bell tower. There were

9. Committee of Lutheran Church to Secretary of War, February 26, 1850,
Reel 24, V.3, p.216.

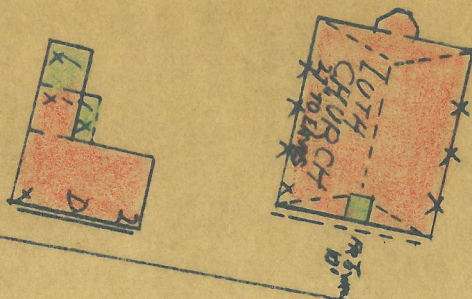
10. Talcott to Secretary of War, February 28, 1850, Reel 20, V.1, p.57.

11. Virginia Free Press, April 18, 1850, p.2, c.3.

12. Ibid., December 11, 1851, p.3, c.1.

13. Sanborn-Perris Maps of Harpers Ferry, 1894, 1907.

14. See Photograph HF-2, on page 11.



WASHINGTON STREET

SANBORN-PERRIS
MAP OF HARPERS FERRY
NOVEMBER, 1894.



~~three~~^{Four} windows on each side and two windows in the front of the building. The church is still standing and has been little altered from its 185⁹~~0~~-65 appearance.

Evangelical Lutheran Parsonage

Pastor Smeltzer of the Evangelical Lutheran Church applied in January of 1852 for the lease of a lot on which to erect a parsonage. The lots asked for were Lots 2 and half of Lot 3, Block J, on Washington Street. These were granted on August 24, 1852.¹⁵

They are shown on the 1852 and 1869 maps that appear on the following pages.

3. USE OF THE BUILDING, EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHRIST CHURCH

The Evangelical Lutheran Christ Church was used from the time of its construction in 1850 until the Civil War for the purposes of religious worship. Services were probably temporarily halted during the Civil War and resumed upon its conclusion. The church has been used to the present day for worship.

4. HISTORICAL PRINTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS

One photograph of the Evangelical Lutheran Church will be found in this report: Photograph HF-2, taken some time during the Civil War. This is a very good view of the Lutheran Church.

5. HISTORICAL PLANS OF BUILDING

No historical plans of the Evangelical Lutheran Church have been found and it is unlikely that any will ever be found.

15. Huger to Craig, August 24, 1852, Reel 26, V.2, p.139.

PUTNAM STREET

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6	5	4	3	2	1
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RIDGE STREET

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8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

WASHINGTON STREET

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4	3	2	1		

6	5	4	3	2	1
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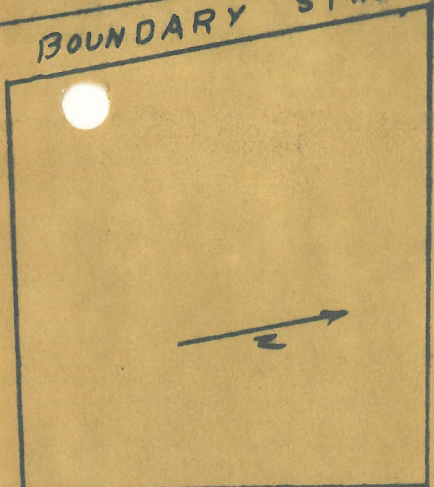
STREET

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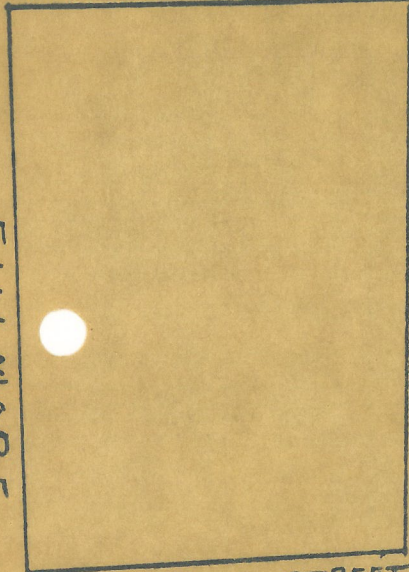
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HARPERS FERRY
S. HOWELL BROWN
1852

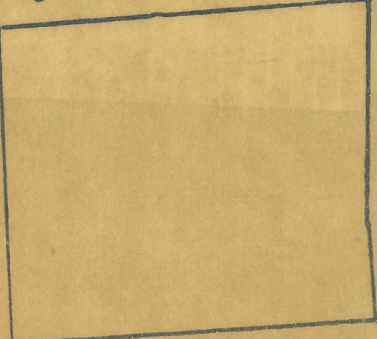
BOUNDARY STREET



TAYLOR STREET



JACKSON STREET



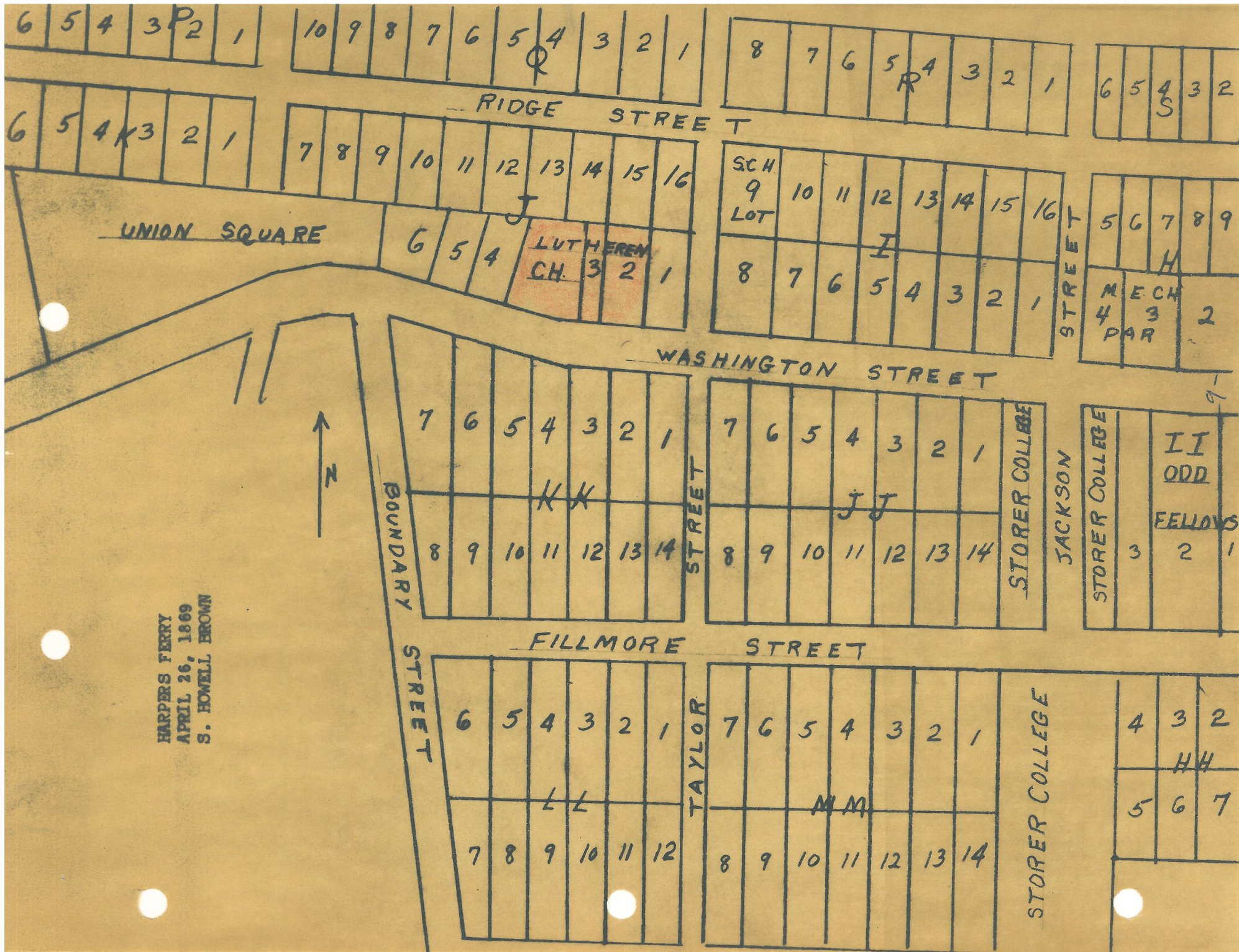
MAC DOWELL

6	7	8	9	10
5	4	3	2	1

FILLMORE STREET

4	5
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HARPERS FERRY
 APRIL 26, 1869
 S. HOWELL BROWN



6. SUMMARY OF HISTORICAL DATA

A. Ownership of the Land

The Evangelical Lutheran Church Lot was owned by the United States from 1796 to 1868. From February, 1850, to 1868, the lot was leased by the United States to the congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. Title to the lots, as laid out on the 1869 map, was granted to the Evangelical Lutheran Church by an act of Congress on December 15, 1868.

B. Construction of the Building

The cornerstone of the church was laid on April 13, 1850, and it was probably finished in 1851. The new church was a one story brick building on stone foundations with dimensions of forty one by fifty feet. The structure was twenty seven feet from the ground to the eaves and had a ten foot wooden bell tower. There were ^{Four} ~~three~~ windows on either side and two and the entrance door on the front facing Washington Street. The church is still standing and has been little altered from its 1859-1865 appearance.

C. Use of the Building

The building was used from 1850 when the church was completed to the Civil War. Services were probably suspended during the war but resumed upon its conclusion and have continued to the present day.

7. EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN PARSONAGE

Lots 2 and 3, Block J, Camp Hill, were granted to the Lutheran Church for use as a parsonage lot but the parsonage was never built.

Philip R. Smith Jr.
Philip R. Smith, Jr.
Park Historian
March 31, 1959

MARYLAND HEIGHTS AT HARPERS FERRY, AND CAPTAIN OTIS'S COMPANY
ON CAMP HILL, 22ND NEW YORK INFANTRY.

Harpers Ferry Negative No. HF-2.
Brady photograph taken during Civil War.
National Archives Still Picture Section:
Order No. B-158.

This photograph is a fine view of the south and ^{East}~~west~~ elevations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. The church was a one story brick building on a stone foundation with a wooden bell tower.

The first building to the right of the church is the public school that was constructed on lot No. 9, Block I, on Camp Hill.

The tents of the troops on Camp Hill appear in the left background.



B-158