001321
~~Park~~
HFR 144

RESEARCH REPORT,

HISTORY OF

GOVERNMENT DWELLING HOUSE NO. 43,

THE FIRST PAYMASTER'S HOUSE,

Block B, Lot 5, Shenandoah Street, 1800-1865

Harpers Ferry National Monument

Prepared By:

Philip R. Smith, Jr.
Historian
Dated December 19, 1958
Revised April 30, 1959
17 Pages
Project No. HF-24C

TABLE OF CONTENTS

		Page No.
I.	Ownership of the Land, 1796-1865	1
II.	Construction of the First Paymaster's House	3
III.	Use of the Building, First Paymaster's Quarters	5
IV.	Historical Prints and Photographs	6
V.	Historical Plans of Building	6
VI.	Summary of Historical Data	7
	Conclusions and Recommendations	9
	Appendix I - 1835 Map of Harpers Ferry	10
	Appendix II - 1913 B&O RR Map of Harpers Ferry	12
	Appendix III - Photographs (Three)	14

FIRST PAYMASTER'S HOUSE

I. OWNERSHIP OF THE LAND, 1796-1865

The lot on which the first paymaster's house was 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]

It remained in the possession of the United States until 1852, when it was sold at the sale of lots and buildings in that year. (See 1852 map on the following page.) It was described in 1852 as follows:

"Block B. on Shenandoah
Lot No. 5, S. East, or opposite side of Railroad embankment, 100 feet on Washington St. continued and South of it. 104 feet on Railroad embankment, and 120 feet on line of Market House reservation.
Dwelling No. 43" [2]

The house was sold at a private sale in August, 1852, to George W. Gompf, a workman at the Armory, for the sum of $900.[3]

Gompf paid in full for the lot in December, 1856, and received a deed for it.[4] He owned the property until after 1865.[5]

1. Deed, June 15, 1796, Wager to U. S., National Archives, Reel 21, V.7, pp.704-708.

2. "Legend Exhibiting the Corresponding Numbers of the Houses, Inventory of the 30th June, 1852, with the Lots of Land as per Brown's Map of the same, Where Correspondence Exists, and in Other Cases, an Approximation." Map Case, Drawer No. 3, Map No. 82.

3. Account of Sales at Harpers Ferry Armory, made by Benjamin Huger, of Lots, and Dwelling Houses thereon..., Reel 24, V.7, p.617.

4. Clowe to Craig, December 3, 1856, Reel 25, V.10, pp.963-964.

5. Records of the Bureau of the Census (RG 29) Population Schedules of the Eighth Census of the United States 1860, Virginia, Volume 13, Jefferson County (Part), The National Archives and Records Service, General Services Administration, Washington 67, Reel 10, V.2, p.198.

S. HOWELL BROWN'S MAP OF HARPE'S FERRY 1852. ON WHICH IS SUPERIMPOSED THE BUILDINGS AS SHOWN ON HIS MAP OF HARPE'S FERRY, 1848.

II. CONSTRUCTION OF THE FIRST PAYMASTER'S HOUSE

No plans or correspondence has been found relating to the construction of this house, but the structure was probably erected between 1799 and 1801.[6] The building was standing in 1803 (see house on the 1803 map on page 4).[7] The house is also shown in Harpers Ferry Negative No. HF-21, print made before 1806, page 9, in "History of the Large and Small Arsenals, 1796-1869, Block A, Lots 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7, Shenandoah Street," by Philip R. Smith, Jr.

In 1810, the paymaster's house was described as: "Building No. 12, Brick, 28 by 19 feet, two stories and cellar, with kitchen adjoining for the accomodation of the Paymaster."[8]

The paymaster's house was also described in 1821 as a two story brick house with cellar and with dimensions of 40 by 24 feet.[9]

In 1823, $500 was spent for enlarging the paymaster's house.[10] An additional $300 was spent in repairing the house in 1825,[11] and in 1826 $55.75 was spent for building a small well house and an addition to the paymaster's dwelling.[12]

6. Statement of the expenditures at the United States Armory at Harpers Ferry, Va., and of the arms made and repaired therein, from its establishment to the close of the year 1821, November 30, 1822, Reel 17, V.3, p.203.

7. Plan of the proposed junction of the Canal at the lower Falls of Shenandoah, with the Public Canal at Harpers Ferry, and the necessary locks for descending into the Potomack River, Surveyed & level'd by N. King & L. Harbaugh, Feby, 1803 for the Public & the Potomak Company. Map No. 49, Drawer No. 9.

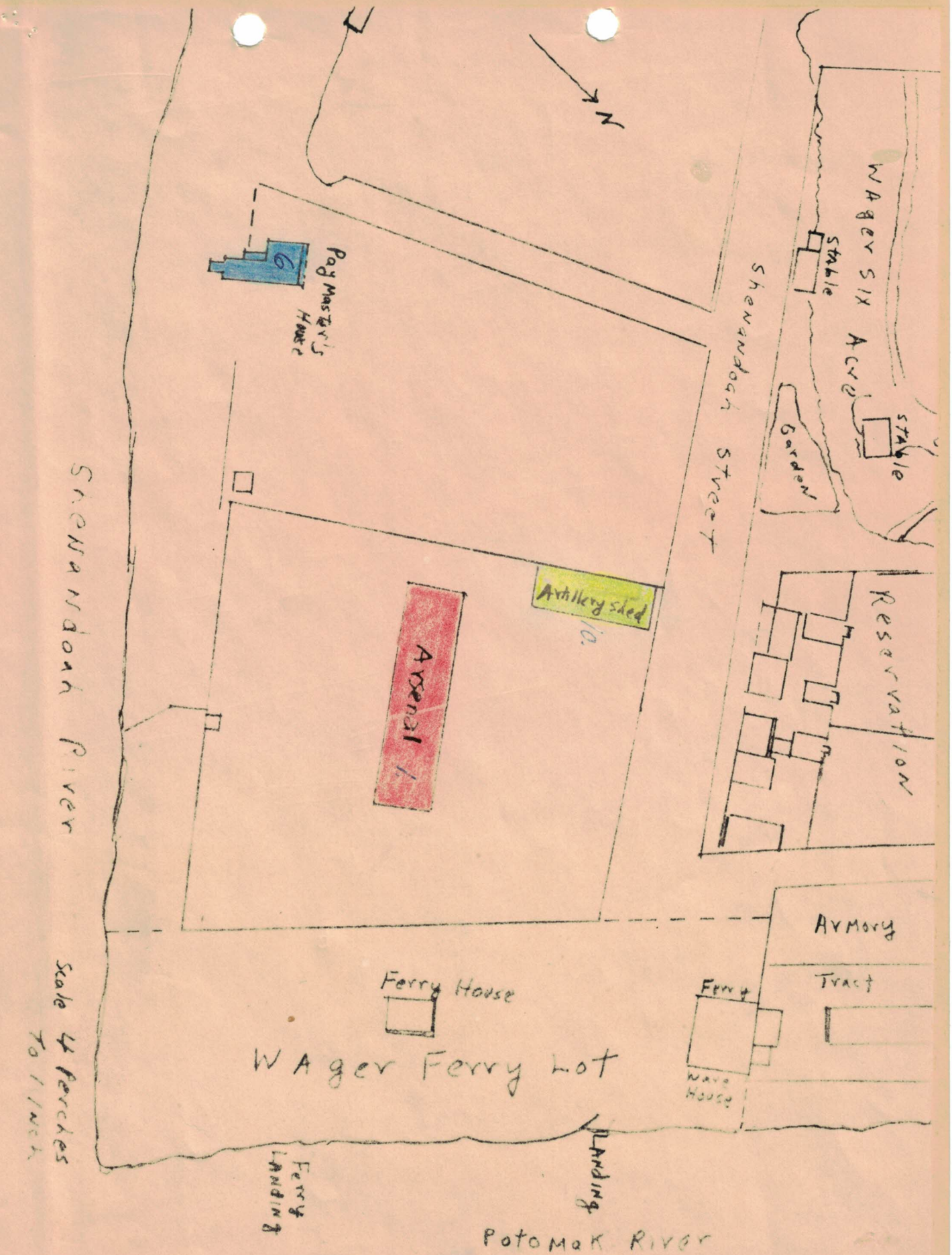
8. Public Buildings at Harpers Ferry in Virginia, 1st January 1810, War Department, Secretary of War, Ltrs. Rec'd A-29 (5) Eng. Samuel Annin, March 17, 1810, National Archives.

9. American State Papers, V.I, p.482, Reel 17, V.2, p.204.

10. National Armory Accounts 1823, Entry 935, National Archives R.G.

11. Entry 935, War Department, Ordnance, National Archives R.G. 156, 1825, National Armory Accounts.

12. Ibid., 1826.


N
Wager Six Acre
Stable
Stable
Garden
Shenandoah Street
Pay Master's House
Reservation
Artillery shed
Arsenal
Shenandoah River
Armory
Tract
Ferry House
Ferry
Wager Ferry Lot
Wave House
Scale 4 Perches To 1 Inch
Ferry Landing
Landing
Potomac River

1-03 map

Despite these repairs, there was a special estimate made in 1834 for $2,079.72 to repair the buildings occupied by the paymaster and clerks of the armory because the structures were in such dilipitated condition.[13] The house as it appeared in 1835 may be seen on the 1835 map in Appendix I.

In 1848 the building was described as:

"House No. 43, Brick 2 stories, Class 6, Valuation, $800, Where situated, Between Rail Rd & Shenandoah River,..." [14]

The building is delineated on the 1894 map of Harpers Ferry as a three story building, the first two brick and the top frame, the latter added after the Civil War, with dimensions of 26 by 30 feet. There was also a two story addition with dimensions of 18 by 30 feet. The building's overall dimensions were thus 44 by 30 feet.[15] A 1913 map also showing House No. 43 will be found in Appendix II of this report.

III. USE OF THE BUILDING, FIRST PAYMASTER'S QUARTERS

The right of way granted through the Armory land to the Winchester and Potomac Railroad carried it so close to the First Paymaster's house as to make it undesireable as a residence.[16] The right of way may be seen on the 1835 map in Appendix II. The paymaster, however, continued to live there until 1844.

A succession of paymasters lived in the building; these included Samuel Annin, 1801-1815; Major Lloyd Beall, 1815-1817; William McGuire,

13. Special Estimates for 1834, Reel 20, V.6, pp.583, 589.

14. List of Dwelling Houses belonging to the United States At Harpers Ferry, Reel 18, V.12, p.1186.

15. Sanborn-Perris 1894 Map of Harpers Ferry.

16. Rust to Bomford, December 8, 1834, Reel 23, V.1, p.21.

17. Symington to Talcott, November 29, 1844, Reel 23, V.3, p.251.

1817-1820; William Little, 1820-1822; John McGuire, 1822-1823; William P. Craighill, 1823-1824; William Broadus, 1824-1830; Daniel Bedinger, 1830-1838; and Richard Parker, 1838-1847.

By 1844 the Paymaster was lodged in the Superintendent's old quarters which were located in the Armory yard (Bldg. No. 1 on the 1848 map of the Musket Factory).[17] ~~From~~ In 1845 the building became known as Government Dwelling House No. 43 and was utilized as a two family house for Armory workmen. In 1848 the Paymaster's first house was occupied by George Atchinson, and Samuel Trail, who both paid a rent of $10.75 per quarter.[18] In 1850 Samuel Trail, carpenter and George W. Gompf, armorer, were living in the house.[19] The house was sold to Gompf in August 31, 1852 for $900.[20] The house was used as a residence by Gompf from 1852 until 1861.[21]

IV. HISTORICAL PRINTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS

Three photographs of the First Paymaster's House will be found in Appendix III of this report.

V. HISTORICAL PLANS OF BUILDING

No historical plans of the First Paymster's House (House No. 43) have been located and it is unlikely that any will ever be found.

18. "List of Dwelling Houses belonging to the United States at Harpers Ferry, 30th June, 1848," Reel 18, V.12, p.1186.

19. Records of the Bureau of the Census, (RG29) Population Schedules of the Seventh Census of the United States, 1850, Virginia, V.12, Jefferson County (Past), National Archives and Records Service, General Administration, p.834, Reel 10, V.2, p.130-131, National Archives R.G.

20. Account of Sales at Harpers Ferry Armory, made by Benjamin Huger, of Lots and Dwelling Houses thereon..., Reel 24, V.7, p.617.

21. Records of the Bureau of the Census (RG 29) Population Schedules of the Eighth Census of the United States 1860, Virginia, V.13, Jefferson County (Part) The National Archives, National Archives and Records Service, General Services Administration, Washington 57, Reel 17, V.3, p.203.

VI. SUMMARY OF HISTORICAL DATA

A. Ownership of the Land

The lot on which the first Paymaster's house or House No. 43 was erected was purchased by the United States from John Wager, Senior, in 1796. In 1852 the house was sold by the United States at private sale to George W. Gompf, a workman at the Armory, for $900. Gompf owned Lot No. 5, Block B, Shenandoah Street, until after the Civil War.

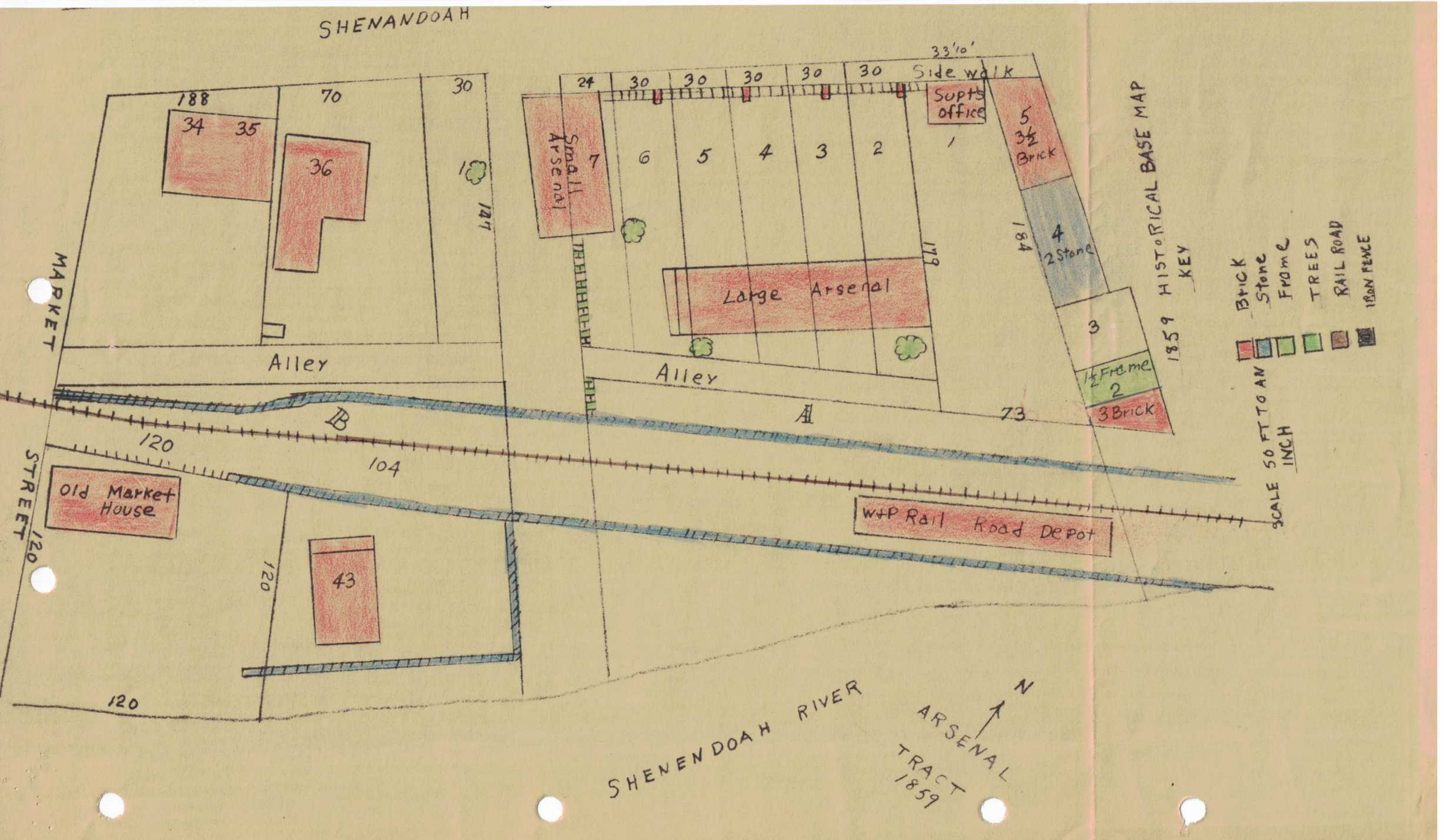
B. Construction of the First Paymaster's House (House No. 43)

The first Paymaster's house, erected about 1800, was of brick construction, 28 by 19 feet in size, with two stories and a cellar. A frame kitchen adjoined the house. By 1821 the house had been increased in size to 40 by 24 feet.

In 1823, 1825, and 1826, further repairs and additions were made. The dimensions of the building in 1913 were 50 by 30 feet, thus reflecting the many additions that were made to the house. The house is shown on the 1859 Historical Base Map on the next page of this report.

C. Use of the First Paymaster's House (House No. 43)

From 1801 until 1844 each of the Paymasters of the Armory resided in this house. In 1844 the paymaster moved to the Superintendent's old quarters, and in 1845 the first Paymaster's house became known as Government House No. 43. The building was used from 1845 to 1852 as a two family Government dwelling house. On August 30, 1852, the house was purchased at its appraised value by George W. Gompf, an Armory workman for $900. Mr. Gompf lived in the house from 1852 until 1861. The two story house was still standing in 1865 and a third story was added to the building after the Civil War.


SHENANDOAH
33'10"
Side walk
24
30
30
30
30
30
Supt's office
188
70
30
34
35
36
Small Arsenal
7
6
5
4
3
2
1
5
3½ Brick
4
2 Stone
3
1½ Frame
2
3 Brick
184
178
73
Large Arsenal
MARKET
Alley
Alley
B
A
120
104
STREET
120
Old Market House
120
43
120
120
W+P Rail Road Depot
SHENENDOAH RIVER
ARSENAL TRACT 1859
N
1859 HISTORICAL BASE MAP
KEY
Brick
Stone
Frame
TREES
RAIL ROAD
IRON FENCE
SCALE 50 FT TO AN INCH

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

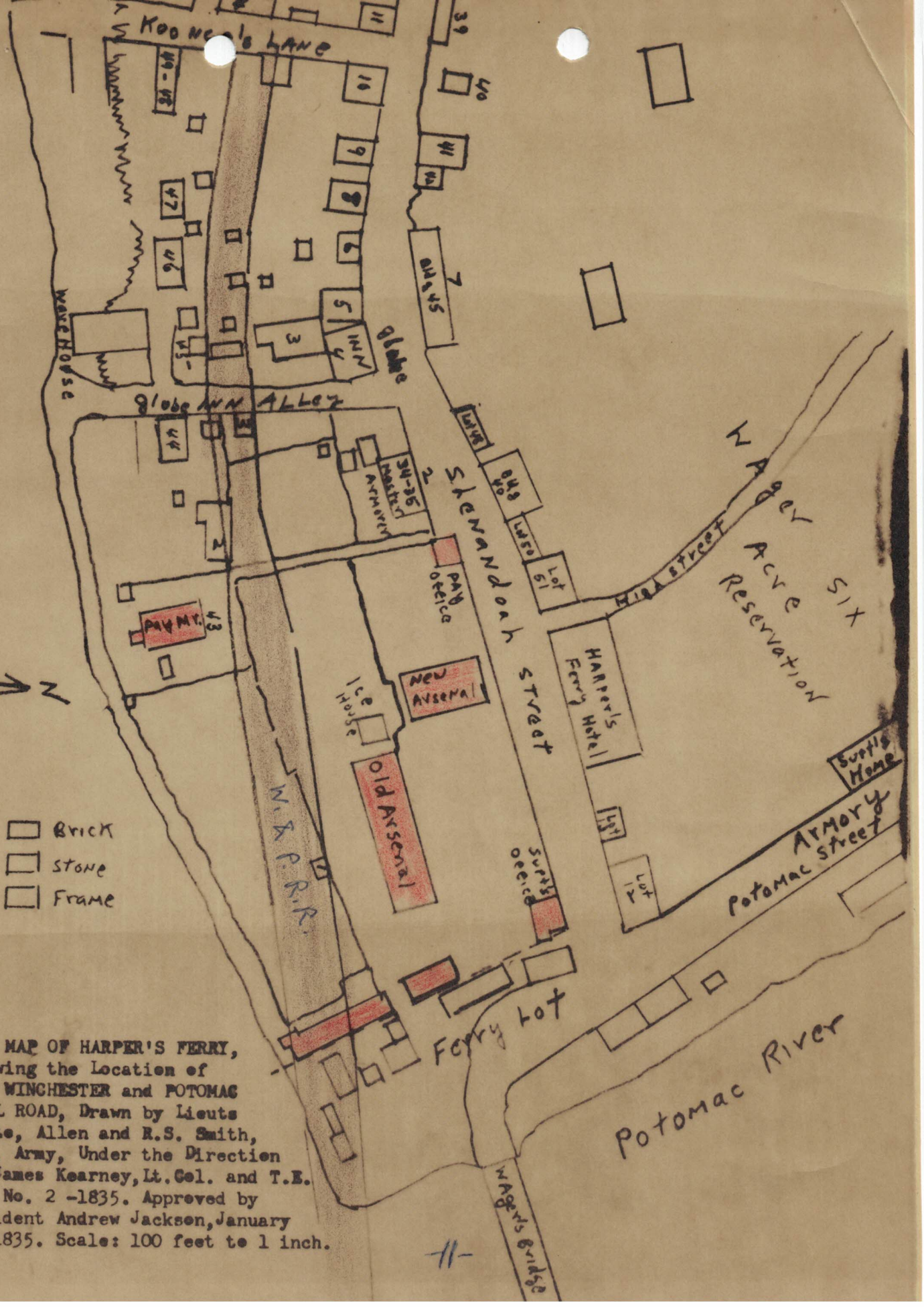
The ruined walls of Government Dwelling House No. 43 (Paymaster's First House) are still standing today. It is recommended that archeological exploration of the ruins of this house be carried out at the same time that other archeological excavations are made. The proposed by-pass road around the Old Town Section must pass through or close to these ruins and it is recommended that this area be salvaged before the road is constructed. The ruins could also be interpreted along with the adjacent Market House, by means of early photographs that show both buildings.

Philip R. Smith, Jr.

Philip R. Smith, Jr.
Historian
April 30, 1959

APPENDIX I

1835 Map of Harpers Ferry Shewing the Location of the Winchester and Potomac Railroad. National Archives R.G. 77. Records of the Office of the Chief of Engineers, Fortification Map File, Part of Map, Drawer 150, Sheet 82-2.



MAP OF HARPER'S FERRY, Shewing the Location of the WINCHESTER and POTOMAC RAIL ROAD, Drawn by Lieuts White, Allen and R.S. Smith, U.S. Army, Under the Direction of James Kearney, Lt. Col. and T.E. Map No. 2 -1835. Approved by President Andrew Jackson, January 27, 1835. Scale: 100 feet to 1 inch.

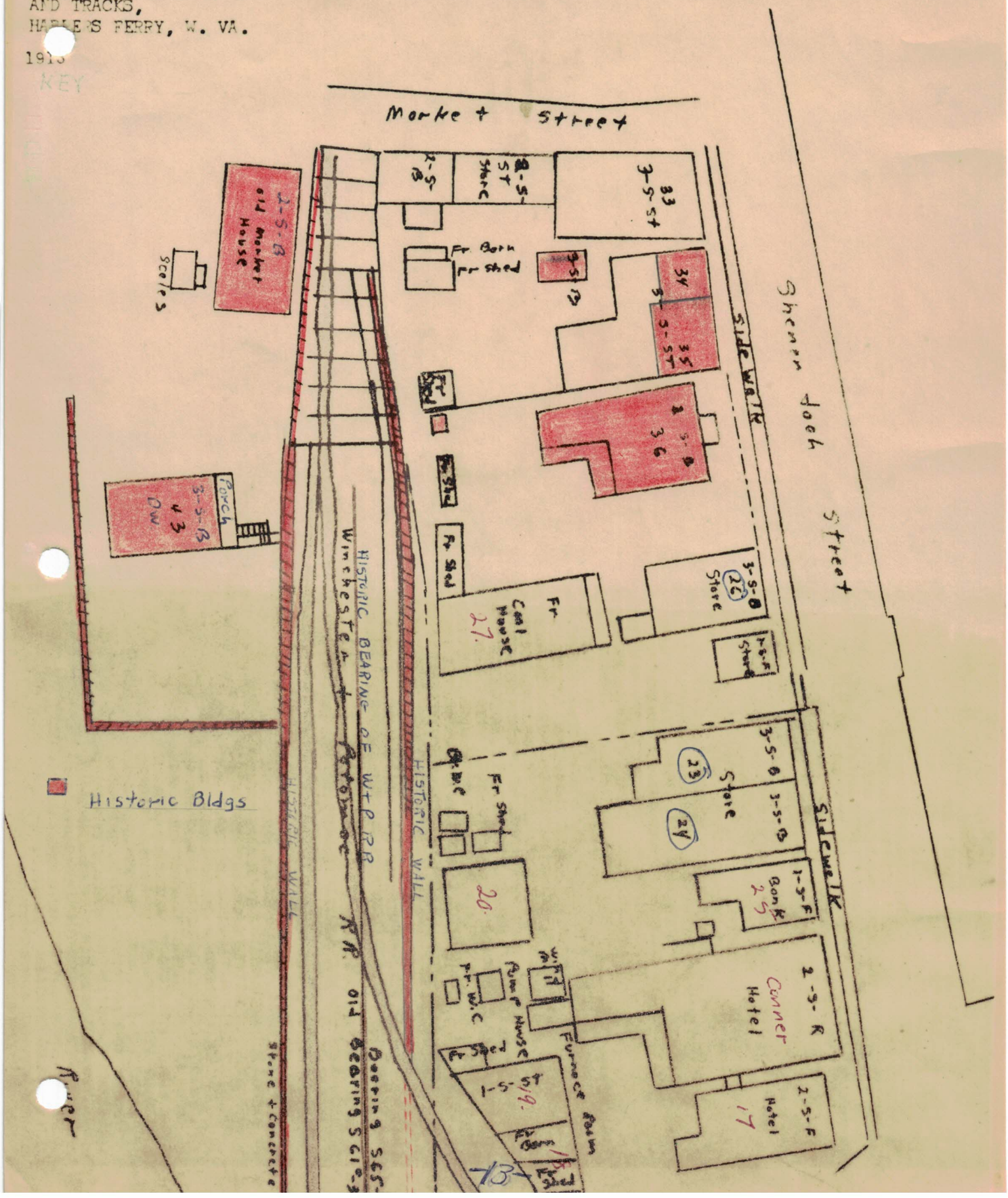
APPENDIX II

B&O RR Mainline District, Shenandoah Division - Mainline: Plan Showing Right of Way, Buildings and Tracks Harpers Ferry W Va. from B&O Archives, Baltimore, Md. Map No. 38, Drawer No. 12.

B & O RR PLAN SHOWING
RIGHT OF WAY, BUILDINGS
AND TRACKS,
HARPER'S FERRY, W. VA.

1913

KEY


Market Street
Shenan doah Street
Sidewalk
Sidewalk
2-S-B old Market House
Scales
2-S-B Store
3-S-B Store
33 3-S-St
3V 3-S-St
35 3-S-St
3-S-B 36
Fr Barn
Fr Shed
Fr Shed
Fr Shed
Fr Shed
Fr Coal House 27.
3-S-B 26 Store
1-S-F Store
3-S-B 23 Store
3-S-B 24
1-S-F Bank 25
2-S-R Conner Hotel
2-S-F Hotel 17
Furnace Room
Pump House
Fr Shed
Fr Shed
Fr Shed
Fr Shed

APPENDIX III

PHOTOGRAPHS

(Three)

HARPERS FERRY FROM B&O ON MARYLAND SHORE

Brady Photograph, Reproduced from Library of Congress.
Harpers Ferry Photograph HF-40.

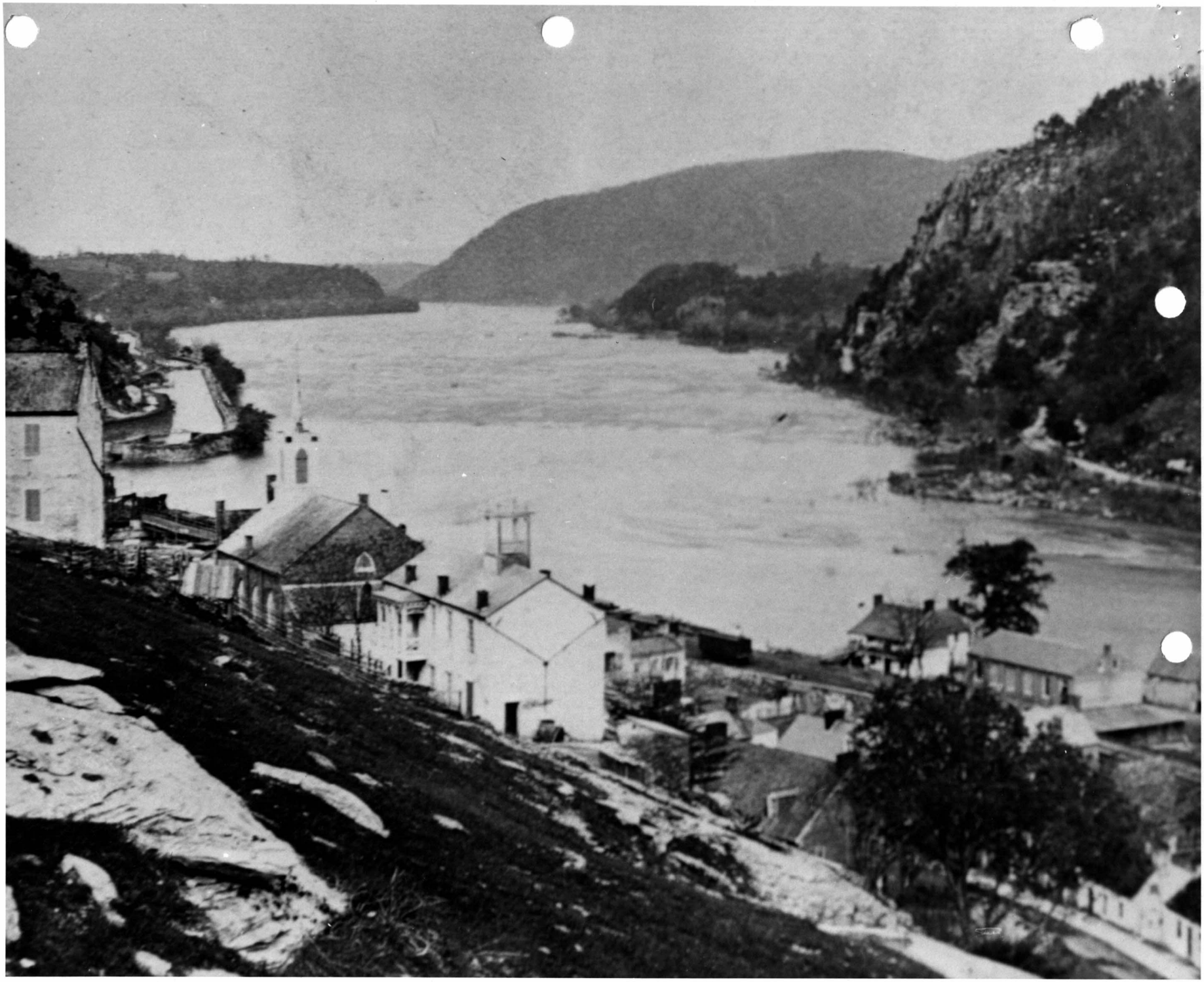
This photograph was taken sometime in 1862. Just in back of the first railroad car at the far end of the bridge is the old arsenal with a temporary roof. A chimney has apparently been added and the building appears to be in use either for the quartering or troops of perhaps as a depot. On the bank of the river to the left of the photograph the paymaster's old house or government dwelling no. 43 is located in among the trees. The Ferry Lot Buildings were destroyed in February, 1862, making possible this view of the buildings on Shenandoah Street.

On page 26 of the Historic Building Report, Part I, for Building No. 40, The William Richards Bldg., Harpers Ferry National Monument, prepared by Charles W. Snell, Historian (Park Supervisory), June 9, 1958, there is a blowup of this area with an enlarged view of the old arsenal. ~~See same view, Blowup on page 181 of this report.~~

VALLEY OF THE POTOMAC, FROM HARPER'S FERRY

Stereopticon View No. 336.
Photographed and published by Kilburn Brothers
Littleton, N.H. - Mat Sepia.
From McDonald Collection #11.
Harpers Ferry Negative No. HF-361.

The photograph was taken in 1865 or 1866. To the right of the photograph, standing between the Winchester & Potomac Railroad Tracks and the Shenandoah River, is to be seen the second story of Market House. This is the large brick building with six windows facing the railroad and a roofed porch around the first story. The two story brick building standing just to the left of the Market House on Lot 5, Block B, Shenandoah Street, is the Paymaster's Old Residence or Government Dwelling House No. 43. To the left of the railroad car, on Lot No. 2, Block B, is to be seen a portion of the two story brick house now called Bldg. No. 36. To the right of Bldg. No. 36 are to be seen the roof of Bldg. No. 34-35. In the foreground, at the base of the cliff is the roof of Bldg. No. 45. To the left of Bldg. No. 45, and on top of the cliff stands the Catholic School, the ~~whole~~ two story stone building. To the left of the school is to be seen the Catholic Church and to the left of the Church is visible a portion of Government Dwelling House No. 65.



HARPERS FERRY FROM SHENANDOAH

Harpers Ferry Negative No. HF-331.
Taken after 1896 because the Catholic
Church has been remodeled.

The three story brick building on the right, standing on the river's edge, is Building Number 43, the Paymaster's Old Quarters. Note that a third story has been added to the building. The wall shown on earlier maps enclosing the grounds may be seen in the photograph. To the left of the House No. 43 is the old market house, a two story brick building with six windows on the second floor and six arched doorways on the first.

Region Five
421 Walnut Street
Philadelphia 6, Pa.

June 12, 1959

Memorandum

To: Superintendent, Harpers Ferry National Monument

From: Regional Historian

Subject: House No. 43, Research Project No. HF-24C

This report is adequate for present purposes. However, it is really not good historical writing. It is mainly a compilation of findings, with very little analysis, and very little attempt at a readable narrative. Thus, for instance, the consecutive quoted descriptions on page 3, each giving distinctly different dimensions. Could not an opinion be ventured as to the meaning of the discrepancy? Can we suppose that the 1821 figures represent the adding-in of the "kitchen adjoining" of 1810, or that there was some enlarging done prior to 1823?

The opening stumbles along without any clear initial reference to the building involved, which is finally given a number as an incidental part of the quotation in the middle of the page. This page might better have been written along these lines:

> "The lot on which the first paymaster's house (Bldg.43) . . . Federal Armory at Harpers Ferry. At the time of its sale in 1852 it was described as Lot 5 of Block B, Shenandoah Street, lying southeast, or on the opposite side of the (W & F) railroad embankment. It extended 104 feet along that embankment, 100 feet on Washington Street continued, and 120 feet on the line of the Market House reservation. The purchaser in 1852 was George W. Gompf, a workman at the Armory, who paid the purchase price of $900 in full in December 1856. Gompf owned the property till after 1865."

Signed

Frank Barnes
Regional Historian

In duplicate

Copy to: Director w/copy of Report
History w/copy of Report

FBarnes/mm
General
Daily
Area

IN REPLY REFER TO:

H2215

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Harpers Ferry National Monument
Harpers Ferry, West Virginia

May 1, 1959

REGION FIVE MAY 4 - 1959	INITIAL AND DATE
REG. DIRECTOR	
ASST. REG DIR.	
OPERATIONS	
~~INTERPRETATION~~	
ADM.	4/5
REC RES. PLAN	
RANGER ACT'S	
History	
Nat. His.	
Archeo.	
Publ.	
Museum	
Sec'y.	

Memorandum

To: Regional Director, Region Five

From: Superintendent, Harpers Ferry National Monument

Subject: House No. 43, Research Project No. HF-24C

Enclosed please find four copies of the "Research Report, History of Government Dwelling House No. 43, The First Paymaster's House, Block B, Lot 5, Shenandoah Street, 1800-1865," dated December 19, 1958, revised April 30, 1959, as prepared by Historian Philip R. Smith, Jr.

Frank H. Anderson

Frank H. Anderson
Superintendent

In duplicate

H2215

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

May 1, 1959

Memorandum

To: Regional Director, Region Five

From: Superintendent, Harpers Ferry National Monument

Subject: House No. 43, Research Project No. HF-24C

Enclosed please find four copies of the "Research Report, History of Government Dwelling House No. 43, The First Paymaster's House, Block B, Lot 5, Shenandoah Street, 1800-1865," dated December 19, 1958, revised April 30, 1959, as prepared by Historian Philip R. Smith, Jr.

(SGD) FRANK H. ANDERSON

Frank H. Anderson
Superintendent

In duplicate