

HISTORIC STRUCTURES REPORT

HISTORICAL DATA SECTION

HARPERS FERRY NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

BUILDING 37

THE JOHN T. RIELEY BUILDING

1865-1952

by: Patricia Chickering
February 1993

based on the draft report
by:

Kira Ramakrishna
September 1990

CONTENTS

I. OWNERSHIP OF THE LAND: 1865-1952.....	1
II. BUILDING CONFIGURATION.....	3
III. USES OF BUILDING 37	
A. Pre-Civil War.....	6
B. Post-Civil War.....	8

APPENDICES:

Appendix A.....	21
-----------------	----

S. Howell Brown plat of Estate of
Gerard B. Wager; c. 1866

Appendix B.....	22
-----------------	----

Photographs: HF 381: WL 51 following 1913 fire
HF 787: High Street Harpers Ferry c. 1886
HF 94: Stone Steps, probably c. 1892
HF 359: Stone Steps and Building 37,
 probably c. 1879-95/6
HF 989: Stone Steps and Building 37,
 postdates 1896
HR 4: Stone Steps and Building 37,
 postdates 1896

Appendix C.....	23
-----------------	----

Sanborn Maps: 1894
 1902
 1907
 1912
 1922
 1933

Appendix D.....	24
-----------------	----

Chronology of Leo O'Beirne

BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	33
-------------------	----

BUILDING 37

THE JOHN T. RIELEY BUILDING

Harpers Ferry National Historical Park Building 37 fronts on High Street on Wager Lot 52, adjoining the historic stone steps on the downhill side. It was named by the Park Service after John T. Rieley, a boot and shoe maker who occupied it from 1853 to 1861.¹

I. OWNERSHIP OF THE LAND: 1865-1952

Building 37 stands on Wager Lot 52 which was part of the "Wager Six Acre Reservation . . . " ² The Wager family retained ownership of Wager Lot 52 until December 20, 1889, when the property was sold to James Conway by special commissioners acting for Gerard B. and Ellen A. Wager, both deceased.³

Lot 52 and Building 37 figured in the financial affairs of James Conway long before he purchased them. An 1878 deed of *Lis Pendens* (a pending suit in which the court has control over the property involved) reveals he placed a lien to satisfy a \$293.83 debt dated March 23, 1873, against the property. The lien involved the one-fourth interest of Catharine and John Schilling (daughter

¹"Building 37" is the Harpers Ferry National Historical Park (HAFE) designation.

For pre-Civil War data, please see:
Charles W. Snell. Historic Building Report. Part I for Building No. 37 The John T. Reiley Building. Harpers Ferry National Monument. June 30, 1958.

²Snell. Page 1.

³Deed Book U, Page 336, Deed of Bargain and Sale. Special Commissioners to James Conway. December 20, 1889.

All public records referenced are located in the Jefferson C o u n t y Courthouse in Charles Town, West Virginia

and son-in-law of Gerard B. Wager).⁴

Conway's name appears again in a deed of trust dated July 14, 1885, in which Elizabeth M. Wager (daughter of Gerard B. Wager) put into trust to L. A. Montague, trustee for James Conway, "Lot no. 52 at the foot of the stone steps having on it a stone building or buildings." The release of trust is dated November 2, 1889.⁵

When Conway died intestate in 1911 the property passed to his grandsons, James R. Rau and Charles W. Rau. William O. Rau, their father, was appointed guardian for Charles W. Rau, who was a minor. James subsequently conveyed his interest to Charles.⁶ In 1916 Charles W. Rau sold the property to Leo O'Beirne as sole owner.⁷

The property was the subject of two Trust transactions during the 1920s. Leo O'Beirne granted it to Forrest A. Brown in November 1926, and then six months later, in April 1927, Leo O'Beirne and his sister, Katherine O'Beirne Keating granted it to the same Forrest A. Brown.⁸

⁴Deed Book G, p.21, Deed of *Lis Pendens*. Catharine M. and John L. Schilling vs. James Conway, November 6, 1878.

⁵Deed Book O, page 120, Deed of Trust. Elizabeth M. Wager to L. A. Montague, trustee for James Conway. July 14, 1885.

Release Book 3, page 9, Release. James Conway and L. A. Montague to Elizabeth M. Wager. November 2, 1889.

⁶Deed Book 110, page 75, Deed of Bargain and Sale. James R. Rau to Charles W. Rau. November 11, 1913.

⁷Deed Book 118, Page 253, Deed of Bargain and Sale. Charles W. Rau to Leo O'Beirne. October 24, 1916.

⁸Deed Book 128, Page 92. November 10, 1926. Trust. Leo O'Beirne to Forrest A. Brown;

Deed Book 128, Page 445. April 4, 1927. Trust. Leo O'Beirne and Katherine O'Beirne Keating to Forrest A. Brown.

It is perhaps significant that between these two trust transactions O'Beirne sold his Wager Lot 54A property to William W. Kronk (Deed Book 128, Page 306. February 10, 1927)

Special Commissioners sold the property to the Bank of Harpers Ferry in 1930 to satisfy debts the estate of the late Leo O'Beirne owed to the Levering Coffee Company.⁹ The Bank of Harpers Ferry sold the property to C.W. Demory in 1938, who in turn sold it to the State of West Virginia in November, 1952.¹⁰

II. BUILDING 37 CONFIGURATION

According to Historian Charles W. Snell's 1958 research, the building was constructed at some time between 1803 and 1813.¹¹ Originally a two story stone structure with a wooden-shake, gable roof, the present building remains two stories, but has a sloping tin roof and a seven foot addition to its High Street front. Historian Snell hypothesized this change occurred after 1917. His conclusion may have been based on the 1922 Sanborn map (see Appendix C), which shows Building 37 in its original, set-back configuration. However, experience has proven Sanborns are not infallible. Additionally, photograph HF 381 (see Appendix B) bears a 1930 date; recently a more accurate date of late 1913 or early 1914 for that photograph has been determined.¹²

⁹Deed Book 148, Page 331, Deed of Bargain and Sale. Special Commissioners in chancery to E.A. Rinehart, Receiver for the Bank of Harpers Ferry, February 17, 1930.

¹⁰Deed Book 148, Page 331, Deed of Bargain and Sale. Bank of Harpers Ferry to C.W. Demory, September 21, 1938; Deed Book 190, Page 317, Deed of Bargain and Sale. C.W. Demory to the State of West Virginia, November 29, 1952.

¹¹Snell, Page 6.

¹²Ibid. Page 16;

The revised dating of photograph HF 381 is substantiated by numerous newspaper references to the 1913 fire on lots 51 and 52, and by references to the filling station which occupied the corner of Shenandoah and High Streets from the

Newspaper evidence has revealed the change in configuration of Building 37 probably dates from rebuilding immediately after a December 1913 fire. The extension of the building's front out to the sidewalk likely occurred then.

According to the Spirit of Jefferson, on December 28, 1913, a fire broke out in the A. R. Miles & Sons store (on Lot 51 at the corner of Shenandoah and High Streets), consuming that building and all its contents and "the one directly back of it" (Building 37). Park Building 38 adjoining the Miles store on Shenandoah Street was also damaged.¹³ A Farmers' Advocate news article identified the properties as belonging respectively to the Misses Riddle of Charles Town, the Conway heirs, and the Tearney heirs. The Advocate noted the Conway property was uninsured; it had been occupied by William Jackson as a restaurant on the lower floor, and Eugene Shugart Esq. used the upper floor as an office.¹⁴

Note of the fire also appeared in the Virginia Free Press, but that account states the fire "originated in the small building at the foot of the stone steps leading up to the Catholic church. It [undoubtedly Building 37] belonged to the Conney (sic) heirs and

late 1920s on through the 1930s. Data can be confirmed by consulting the History Database at the Park.

¹³Spirit of Jefferson. January 6, 1914. Page 2, Col. 3.

The newspapers referenced in this report, Farmers Advocate, Spirit of Jefferson, and Virginia Free Press, were published simultaneously in the late 19th and early 20th centuries at Charles Town, West Virginia. Citations are from Park's History Database.

¹⁴Farmers Advocate. January 3, 1914. Page 4, Col. 6.

was not insured."¹⁵

A week later the Farmers Advocate reported that the "Rau property burnt in the recent conflagration" was being rebuilt, and would be " . . . much larger . . . " (emphasis ours) and more modern when finished. The Rauses were the aforementioned heirs of James Conway. The following week the same source stated that Leo O'Beirne would lease the new building under construction by Mr. Rau " . . . on the burnt corner . . . " and would move his store into it as soon as completed.¹⁶

On January 31 the paper noted:

O'Beirne's grocery under the superintendency of Mr. William Rau is growing into its full size . . . joists of the second story have been placed and the walls are rising to receive the rafters. Much of the old walls however had been left to stand. A large cellar was blasted out of solid rock which took many of the days of the open month.¹⁷

By mid-March work had progressed so that O'Beirne was expected to begin occupying the building in April, and on April 25 the Farmers Advocate reported:

Mr. Leo O'Beirne, known by young and old as Leo, has moved into his new quarters on High St . . . at the foot of the stone steps. The building has been recently rebuilt by the Conway heirs into an up-to-date storeroom with a wareroom on the second floor and is brilliantly lighted with electricity, which shines through the large glass front and with the additional electric lights on the outside imparts an especial attraction to the spot. Mr. O'Beirne has been in the grocery and confectionery business for eleven years succeeding Mr.

¹⁵Virginia Free Press. January 8, 1914. Page 3, Col. 4.

¹⁶Farmers Advocate. January 17, 1914. Page 2, Col. 4.

¹⁷Ibid. January 31, 1914. Page 2, Col. 2.

William Rau for whom he clerked as a boy . . . ¹⁸

In a deed of bargain and sale dated October 24, 1916, Charles W. Rau conveyed the "two story metal roof store property" to Leo O'Beirne. This description appears to affirm that the 1914 rebuilding brought Building 37 to its present configuration. The deed conveying the property to O'Beirne was recorded in 1920.¹⁹

III. USES OF BUILDING 37

A. Pre-Civil War

In his Historic Structure Report for Building 37, Historian Snell accounts for the use of the building until 1861, when he contends Rieley closed his boot and shoe manufactory. Snell's information is collected mainly from newspaper advertisements in the Virginia Free Press, and from deeds and census records.²⁰

The following summary of the building's history prior to the Civil War is derived from information in Snell's report supplemented by the History Database at Harpers Ferry National Historical Park.

October, 1782	Sarah Harper, wife of John Wager, Sr., inherited the estate containing Wager Lot 52.
February, 1803	N. King and L. Harbaugh made a survey map

¹⁸Ibid. March 21, 1914. Page 2, Col. 2;
Ibid. April 25, 1914. Page 2, Col. 1.

¹⁹Deed Book 118, Page 537, Deed of Bargain and Sale. Charles W. Rau to Leo O'Beirne, October 24, 1916;
Spirit of Jefferson. March 2, 1920. Page 5, Col. 3.

²⁰Snell, p.13.

of Harpers Ferry which shows no building on Wager Lot 52.

September 21, 1803 John Wager, Sr. died and John Wager, Jr. inherited land containing Wager Lot 52.

1803-1813 John Wager, Jr. built a two-story stone building, Building 37, on Wager Lot 52.

October 22, 1813 John Wager, Jr. died and his wife, Catherine Wager, and four minor children inherited Wager acreage containing Building 37.

1813-1824 Building 37 was leased to Roger Humphreys, probably for use as a general store. Humphreys was Postmaster in 1814, so building could have served as post office.

1828-1831 Building leased by Dr. John R. Hayden as drug and apothecary shop

October 10, 1835 The Wager family real estate was divided among the three surviving children of John and Catherine Wager upon Catherine's death. Gerard B. Wager inherited Building 37.

1828-1831 Building 37 leased to Dr. John R. Hayden for use as drug store and apothecary shop

April 1831-
December 1838 Building 37 was leased by Adam Young for use as a drug store and apothecary shop

1835 Adam Young, Jr., [probably same person as "Adam Young"] opened a confectionery and fancy store above the drugstore in rooms formerly occupied by him as a dwelling.

December 1838-
December 1839 Adam Whip leased Building 37 for use as a saddle shop.

February 8, 1839 Gerard B. Wager and wife Ellen A. Wager exchanged land with Noah H. and Sarah A. Swayne reducing the High Street frontage of Wager Lot 52 from 43 feet to the width of Building 37: 29 feet, four inches. The land taken from Wager Lot 52 was added to Wager Lot 51, immediately adjacent.

January 1840- Alfred and H. V. Andrews operated a

August, 1842	shoemaker's shop in Building 37.
1842- December, 1845	Alfred Andrews opened a shoemaker's shop in Building 37.
By 1844	Deed records note that a 1-1/2 story frame building had been built to the rear of Wager Lot 52 for use as a kitchen by Alfred Andrews. In 1854 the frame structure as well as Building 37 were offered for sale by the estate of Gerard B. Wager but remained unsold until after the Civil War.
April 1842- April 1848	The first floor of the building may have been used by Philip P. W. Stephenson as a drugstore.
December 1845- December 1846	James A. Fitzsimmons operated a bookstore and confectionery in Building 37 (possibly in the space adjacent to the Stephenson drugstore).
April 1846- April 1848	Use of Building unknown.
May 1848- January 1851	Building 37 may have been used by Dr. Joseph G. Hays as a drugstore.
1848- After the Civil War	Wager Lot 52 was owned by the estate of Gerard B. Wager.
February 1851- December 1852	Use of Building unknown.
January 1853- February 1861	John T. Rieley operated a boot and shoe shop on the first floor of Building 37 and may have resided with his family on the floor above

B. Post-Civil War

There were few newspapers published locally during the Civil War, and documentation of the building in both newspapers and public records after the war is minimal.

The earliest reference to a post-Civil War business in Building 37 appears in a February 26, 1867, Spirit of Jefferson

advertisement headed: "Saddle and Harness Making at Harper's Ferry," In this ad Wm. A. Bantz announces he is " . . . prepared at his SHOP IN HARPER'S FERRY on High Street just above the store of S.V. Yantis, to execute all kinds of work in the SADDLE AND HARNESS LINE . . . ," and also conduct boot and shoe making business, and will have at all times " . . . a competent hand to attend to this branch of the business." It is noteworthy that Wm. A. Bantz' ad appears immediately below a similar notice, headed "A New Enterprise" placed by "Bantz & Wachter" of No. 61, West Patrick Street, Frederick (Md.). No connection between the two businesses has been established.²¹

Another advertisement signed W. A. Bantz appeared 2 days later in the Virginia Free Press. The wording is more specific: "The undersigned having removed to Harper's Ferry, and taken the house on High Street, one door above Mr. Yantis Store, lately occupied by H. R. Hershburger . . . " In an adjoining column is a news note:

W. A. Bantz.

Mr. Bantz has removed from "No. 10," Halltown, and has located at Harper's Ferry, where he designs manufacturing, largely, Harness, Saddles, Boots and Shoes of every description. Mr. Bantz has the energy coupled with the means to drive a big business in his department."²²

No information about the type of business H. R. Hershberger conducted, or the length of his occupation of Building 37, has been

²¹Spirit of Jefferson. February 26, 1867. Page 4, Col. 1.;
Deed Book 4, Page 65, Deed of Bargain and Sale. Noah H. and Sarah A. Swayne to Solomon V. Yantis, August 1, 1865;
Solomon V. Yantis' storeroom was located on Wager Lot 51 at the corner of Shenandoah and High Streets.

²²Virginia Free Press. February 28, 1867. Page 2, Cols. 5 & 6.

found. W. A. Bantz continued advertising in the Virginia Free Press through April 4, 1867; thereafter his name never recurs in any local source. Neither Bantz nor Hershberger appears in any Harpers Ferry census, nor do their names appear on leases granted by the Wagers.

In August 1867 the Spirit of Jefferson carried an article on Harpers Ferry which alluded to "Tom Earnshaw's saloon" located "at the first flight" of the stone steps.²³ This reference is hardly detailed enough to be interpreted as Building 37, but the possibility should be considered. The Earnshaw family had resided in Harpers Ferry since 1820 (except that they are missing from the 1840 census) and continued in local listings until 1880. Therefore, Building 37 could have served as a saloon for a while.²⁴

The commissioner's sale of the Gerard Wager estate, scheduled for October 30, 1869, was advertised in the September 30, 1869, issue of the Virginia Free Press. Although the advertisement for the commissioner's sale does not identify specific properties for sale, Wager Lot 52 appears on an S. Howell Brown plat (see Appendix A) of the property disputed in a chancery case.²⁵

²³Spirit of Jefferson. August 13, 1867. Page 2, Col. 7.

²⁴Census. 1820. Page 535 of Harpers Ferry;
Ibid. 1830. Page 166 of Harpers Ferry;
Ibid. 1850. Page 419 of Harpers Ferry;
Ibid. 1860. Page 199 of Harpers Ferry;
Ibid. 1870. Page 38 of Harpers Ferry P. O./Bolivar Township;
Ibid. 1880. Page 13 of Harpers Ferry Town.

All Census data referenced is available on microfilm at Harpers Ferry National Historical Park.

²⁵Spirit of Jefferson. September 30, 1869. Page 2, Col. 6. Sale made in accordance with judgment in the chancery case of Walter Taylor and Lucy Wager vs. the administrators of Gerard B. Wager, deceased.

It remains unclear, however, how much of Gerard Wager's property, if any, was sold in 1869. A search of deeds in the Jefferson County Courthouse reveals no sale of the property recorded between the years 1869 and 1889, during which time the property was tied up in chancery.

The sale of Wager Lot 52 was recorded on December 20, 1889, when special commissioners deeded the property to James Conway. As indicated earlier, Conway possibly used the property before this date, but at least had some financial interest in it (see page 1).²⁶

James Conway emigrated to the United States during the Civil War from Limerick, Ireland, and arrived at Harpers Ferry at the end of the War. His 1911 obituary states he was a clerk for Major Quinn, a wholesale and retail liquor dealer on the corner of Potomac and Shenandoah streets (Wager Lot 14, present site of Park Building 9), and that he eventually succeeded to proprietorship of the Quinn store, later moving his store into a dwelling he built.²⁷

Conway appears in the 1870 and 1880 censuses as a retail liquor dealer; he is listed in the 1870 census as owning real estate valued at \$5000. It has not been determined how an

²⁶Deed Book U, Page 336, Deed of Bargain and Sale. Special commissioners to James Conway, December 20, 1889.

²⁷Farmers Advocate. February 18, 1911. Page 2, Col. 1.

During the 1870s there appears note of both a "Major T. Quinn" and "Matthew Quinn" in the news record. The "Major Quinn" referred to in the obituary almost certainly occupied Wager Lot 14, and the "Matthew Quinn" had a business on Government Lot C6. It is plausible these were two individuals, but references could be to one person. Matthew Quinn appears in the 1870 census as a 38 year-old native of Ireland, keeper of livery stable. A liquor license issued to Matthew Quinn in 1871 was transferred to Edward Murphy after Quinn died following a fall.

immigrant "without means" in 1866 amassed such a substantial real estate holding in only four years.²⁸

No deeds show Conway as a property owner in lower town until November, 1879, when he purchased Lot A7 on Shenandoah Street from the United States.²⁹ Harpers Ferry chronicler James Barry notes James Conway's presence in the town, stating " . . . Daniel Ames, who died recently, and James Conway erected . . . fine houses after the war--the last named after the government sale."³⁰

The first time Conway's name appears in the Spirit of Jefferson for receipt of a retail liquor license is in May, 1870.³¹ He was issued licenses regularly thereafter. In 1873 the Virginia Free Press announced a meeting of the Shenandoah Bridge Company at James Conway's Saloon. Conway's involvement with Wager Lot 52 may indicate his saloon was in Building 37 at this time, although tax records clearly show the property was owned by the Wager estate.³²

Randall's Business Directory for Harpers Ferry for 1892-93 lists Conway's saloon on Shenandoah Street. It is likely this saloon was located on Lot A7, which was the only property Conway

²⁸Census. Ninth Census of the United States (1870), Jefferson County, West Virginia.

²⁹Deed Book 86, Page 302, Deed of Bargain and Sale. The United States to James Conway, November 6, 1879. The property had been bid in at the 1869 sale by "Mary Conway." The sale was abated 10 years later then deeded to James Conway.

³⁰Joseph Barry. The Strange Story of Harpers Ferry . . . 1st printing by Thompson Brothers, Martinsburg, West Virginia. 1903. 7th printing published by The Woman's Club of Harpers Ferry District (Printed by the Shepherdstown Register, Inc., Shepherdstown, W.Va.). 1974. Page 149.

³¹Spirit of Jefferson. May 3, 1870. Page 3, Col. 2.

³²Virginia Free Press. July 26, 1873. Page 3, Col. 2.

then owned on Shenandoah Street. He owned six properties elsewhere in Harpers Ferry and Bolivar by the early 1890s.³³

Historic photographs in the Park library provide some information about Building 37's use. Photograph HF-787, dated 1886, shows a corner of the front porch of Building 37 and part of a sign hanging in front of the store reading " IONERY." The sign could have read "confectionery" or "stationery." Records, unfortunately, have failed to place a specific confectioner in that High Street location in 1886, although it is known there were confectioners and/or bakers in the town during that era. If the letters are part of the word "stationery" it could be a drug store sign, as local drug stores often advertised stationery.

Photographs HF-94 and HF-359, included in Snell's report, are identified as circa 1865. Closer inspection and recent data reveal the photos are significantly later in the century.

HF-94 shows the right (northeast) side of the building and the porch and steps leading to the second floor. On the porch outside the second-floor door is a small sign reading "Dr. D.M. SCHAEFFER." Dr. Schaeffer was a B & O railroad physician, assisting Dr. B. B. Ranson, a prominent Harpers Ferry physician.³⁴

The 1880 and 1900 censuses reveal Dr. D. M. Schaeffer was born in 1867, the son of Emanuel Schaeffer. No other "Schaeffer" family appears in the Harpers Ferry area in this time period, although

³³Randall's Business Directory of Winchester, Berryville and Front Royal, VA., Charlestown and Harpers Ferry, W.VA. 1892-'93. John C. Randall, Martinsburg, W.Va, 1892. Page 53.

³⁴Spirit of Jefferson. December 16, 1890. Page 3, Col. 2.

the 1870 Census spells the family name as "Shaffer." Dr. Schaeffer appears on an 1892 voter role as a 26 year-old doctor who is a native of the state, county and district.³⁵

The April 19, 1892, issue of the Spirit of Jefferson announced Dr. Schaeffer had just been married "and will live on High Street."³⁶ In September, 1895, Dr. Schaeffer located at Halltown to practice medicine with Dr. Hurst of Fauquier County, Virginia. He may have retained his Harpers Ferry office, however. Since St. Peter's Catholic Church has not yet been remodelled (1896) in photograph HF-94 (showing the Dr. Schaeffer sign), the picture likely was taken between April, 1892, and 1895-6.³⁷

In HF-359, the street lamp beside the Stone Steps in front of the church helps date the photo. According to issues of the Spirit of Jefferson eight years apart, Harpers Ferry first " . . . has public street lamps . . . one step ahead of Charlestown" in 1879; Shenandoah and High Streets received street lamps in September and November, 1887. Thus, since the photo shows the old St. Peter's, it probably dates between 1879 and 1896.³⁸

HF-989 shows the new St. Peter's, and a "GROCERIES" sign on the

³⁵Census. 1870. Page 19 of Harpers Ferry;
Census. 1880. Page 28 of Bolivar District;
Census. 1900. Page 82A of Bolivar Town;
"Oak Grove, Harpers Ferry Dist., Precinct No. 4, 1892" (voter registration roll). T. T. Perry Collection. Box 58. Virginia Historical Society.

³⁶Spirit of Jefferson. April 19, 1892. Page 3, Col. 3.

³⁷Spirit of Jefferson. September 10, 1895. Page 3, Col. 2.

³⁸Ibid. May 13, 1879. Page 3, Col. 1;
Ibid. September 20, 1887, Page 3, Col. 1;
Ibid. November 15, 1887, Page 3, Col. 3.

front of Building 37. This same "GROCERIES" sign appears in photographs HF-94, HF-359 and HR 4, indicating grocery occupation from as early as 1879 until some time after 1896, though possibly not continuously, as the 1894 Sanborn Fire insurance map shows Building 37 a dwelling. In HR 4 the structure appears unoccupied and in need of repair.

The proprietor (or proprietors) of the grocery in this period remains unknown, although it is possible Conway's son-in-law, William O. Rau, had a store in the building. Rau was a Harpers Ferry grocer, and is listed in Randall's Business Directory as operating a grocery at the corner of Shenandoah and High Streets in 1892. Building 37 may fit this description, as "the corner of Shenandoah and High" was a nebulous designation. Newspapers reveal, at various times, at least six different merchants in six different locations who claimed to occupy the corner of Shenandoah and High Streets. A more likely location of Rau's store was on Wager Lot 51, which according to the 1894 Sanborn map, was a grocery.³⁹

The Sanborn maps for the years 1902 and 1907 both show Building 37 as vacant (and in the case of the 1902 map, "vacant and old"). By 1913, however, and possibly earlier, William Jackson ran a restaurant in the building, and there was an office on the second floor.⁴⁰ References to and an advertisement for William H. Jackson, restaurateur and caterer, appeared in the Farmers Advocate.

³⁹Randall's Business Directory. Pages 48-49.

⁴⁰Farmers Advocate. January 3, 1914. Page 4, Col. 6.

in 1909, 1910, and 1912.⁴¹ Although there were several men named "William Jackson" in and around Harpers Ferry, the one in question may be the William H. Jackson enumerated on the 1910 census as a 35 year-old white male, born in Virginia, whose occupation was listed as "cook/restaurant." William H. Jackson was probably not in Building 37 in 1909, as the advertisement cited places him on "South Shenandoah Street."⁴²

Another William Jackson cannot be discounted, especially since the Farmers Advocate account of the December, 1913, fire omits the middle initial "H." William R. Jackson, a 21 year-old black male in the 1880 census, is listed as "waiter in hotel." He does not appear in the 1900 or 1910 censuses.⁴³ The Harpers Ferry Times reported in February 1906 that a "negro tough" had been arrested while trying to dispose of meat at the restaurant of Wm. Jackson on Potomac Street; later that same year the Jefferson County Court issued "eating house" licenses to both W. H. Jackson and Wm. Jackson. Wm. H. Jackson advertised the "Gem Cafe" opposite the Old Stone Steps leading to Jefferson Rock in August, 1906. And there is the previously cited ad for William H. Jackson offering " . . . fresh first class oysters by the gallon or smaller measure . . ."

⁴¹Ibid. December 11, 1909. Page 4, Col. 5;
Ibid. June 11, 1910. Page 2, Col. 3;
Ibid. April 20, 1912. Page 2, Col. 4.

⁴²Census. 1910. Page 181: Bolivar-Town.

⁴³Census. 1880, Page 20. Page 13 of Bolivar Town.

at South Shenandoah Street in December 1909.⁴⁴

Accounts of social events in both 1910 and 1912 name "William Jackson" (no middle initial) as "caterer." It is notable that these accounts are contemporary to William H. Jackson's documented restaurant operation and closely approach the 1913 identification of Jackson in Building 37.⁴⁵

The second floor office of Building 37 was occupied in March, 1911, by F. P. Edgell, D.D.S. Dr. Edgell is described in the Farmers Advocate with his office in the "Conway Building," second floor "as you go up the stone steps."⁴⁶ Edgell came from Keyser, WV, where he had six years' experience, and lived with his small family on Fillmore "Avenue." Dr. Edgell moved his office from "down in the Ferry" to his Camp Hill residence for the winter of 1911.⁴⁷ In February, 1913, he opened an office in Charles Town, while continuing to maintain his practice in Harpers Ferry. In June, 1913, he advertised that he would be in his Charles Town office every day.⁴⁸

By late 1913, Dr. Edgell apparently no longer occupied the second floor office of Building 37, as the account of the 1913 fire

⁴⁴Harpers Ferry Times. February 2, 1906. Page 4, Col. 1;
Farmers Advocate. April 7, 1906. Page 2, Col. 2;
Harpers Ferry Times. August 3, 1906. Page 5, Col. 2;
Farmers Advocate. December 11, 1909. Page 4, Col. 5.

⁴⁵Farmers Advocate. June 11, 1910. Page 2, Col. 3;
Ibid. April 20, 1912. Page 2, Col. 4.

⁴⁶Farmers Advocate. March 11, 1911. Page 2, Col. 2; Page 3, Col. 2.

⁴⁷Spirit of Jefferson. September 23, 1911. Page 2, Col. 4;

⁴⁸Ibid. February 18, 1913. Page 2, Col. 7;
Ibid. June 3, 1913. Page 2, Col. 7.

states the office was occupied by Eugene Shugart, Esq.⁴⁹

When Charles W. Rau (grandson of James Conway) deeded the property to Leo O'Beirne in October, 1916, O'Beirne had operated his grocery business there for some time.⁵⁰ In addition to accounts of the rebuilding of Building 37 following the 1913 fire (which state O'Beirne would occupy the building as a grocery), the November 7, 1916, issue of the Spirit of Jefferson announced: "Mr. Leo O'Beirne has purchased the building which he now occupies from C.W. Rau for \$1000.00."⁵¹ One reference to O'Beirne's grocery appeared in July, 1916, three months prior to his purchase, when the Spirit reported: "Mr. Garney Conrad has accepted a job with Leo O'Beirne the grocer."⁵²

According to the Farmers Advocate, in 1920 Leo O'Beirne was a successful merchant who, in addition to his "prosperous grocery," owned a restaurant and a pool and billiards hall in Harpers Ferry.⁵³ O'Beirne was a well-known local citizen during the first 3 decades of the 20th century, and recent interviews have provided a few details on him. In the first Mary Cavalier Dalgarn stated in August 1990 that Leo O'Beirne " . . . always kept animals in cages out in front of his store. He was in the stone building to the

⁴⁹Farmers Advocate. January 3, 1914. Page 4, Col. 6.

⁵⁰Deed Book 118, Page 253, Deed of Bargain and Sale. Charles W. Rau to Leo O'Beirne, September 20, 1916.

⁵¹Spirit of Jefferson. November 7, 1916. Page 3, Col. 2.

⁵²Ibid. July 18, 1916. Page 2, Col. 1.

⁵³Farmers Advocate. April 24, 1920. Page 1, Col. 6.

left of the steps up to Jefferson Rock . . . "⁵⁴ Mrs. Isabel Kern Flanagan in August 1992 also alluded to animals, saying O'Beirne had a cage with albino squirrels and also kept an alligator in a tank of water!⁵⁵ Additionally, among papers loaned by Mrs. John Newcomer in September 1992 was a letter signed by Leo O'Beirne attesting to the character of Daniel Newcomer, son of a prominent Camp Hill family, and grandson of Storer College founding president Nathan C. Brackett. For more information on Leo O'Beirne, and a photocopy of the character letter, see Appendix D.⁵⁶

Leo O'Beirne was only forty-five years old when he drowned in the canal in August, 1928 (see account in Appendix D, Page 30).⁵⁷ In 1930 the Building 37 property was sold to the Bank of Harpers Ferry to settle the late O'Beirne's debts with the Levering Coffee Company.⁵⁸ While this might indicate O'Beirne was still in the grocery business when he died, the news account of his death states " . . . [he] until recently [emphasis ours] operated a general store near the corner of High and Shenandoah streets . . . "⁵⁹

Another sale occurred, however, before the 1930 settlement.

⁵⁴Interview conducted by Patricia Craig with Mary Cavalier Dalgarn, August 8, 1990. Notes in Historic Research Office, HFNHP.

⁵⁵Interviews conducted by Historic Research Staff in August and September 1992 with Mrs. Isabel Kern Flanagan, Harpers Ferry native & resident until 1947. Tape recording and notes in Historic Research Office.

⁵⁶Newcomer Family Papers. Mrs. John Newcomer, Harpers Ferry, WV.

⁵⁷Spirit of Jefferson. August 9, 1928, Page 1, Col. 1.

⁵⁸Deed Book 133, p.297, Deed of Bargain and Sale. Special Commissioners to E.A. Rinehart, Receiver for the Bank of Harpers Ferry, February 17, 1930.

⁵⁹Farmers Advocate. August 11, 1928. Page 1, Col. 1.

In October, 1928, local papers indicate the property had been sold to Chester L. Sexton for \$2,310.⁶⁰ Sexton, with Roy Butts, had operated a meat market across High Street in the "Burton" building (Park Building 14) and planned to move into the newly purchased O'Beirne building in the near future. Since no other documentation of this transaction has surfaced, it may have foundered due to the Levering Coffee Company litigation.⁶¹

The Bank of Harpers Ferry held the property for eight years before selling it to C. W. Demory in 1938. Little information documents the use of the building in years following O'Beirne's death. The only evidence discovered thus far is the 1933 Sanborn map showing the building in use as a store, and an undocumented photograph believed taken circa 1955 with a sign outside reading "STONE STEPS INN." This was possibly the last business in Building 37 before C. W. Demory sold it to the State of West Virginia in 1952.⁶²

⁶⁰Spirit of Jefferson. October 4, 1928. Page 1, Col. 1.

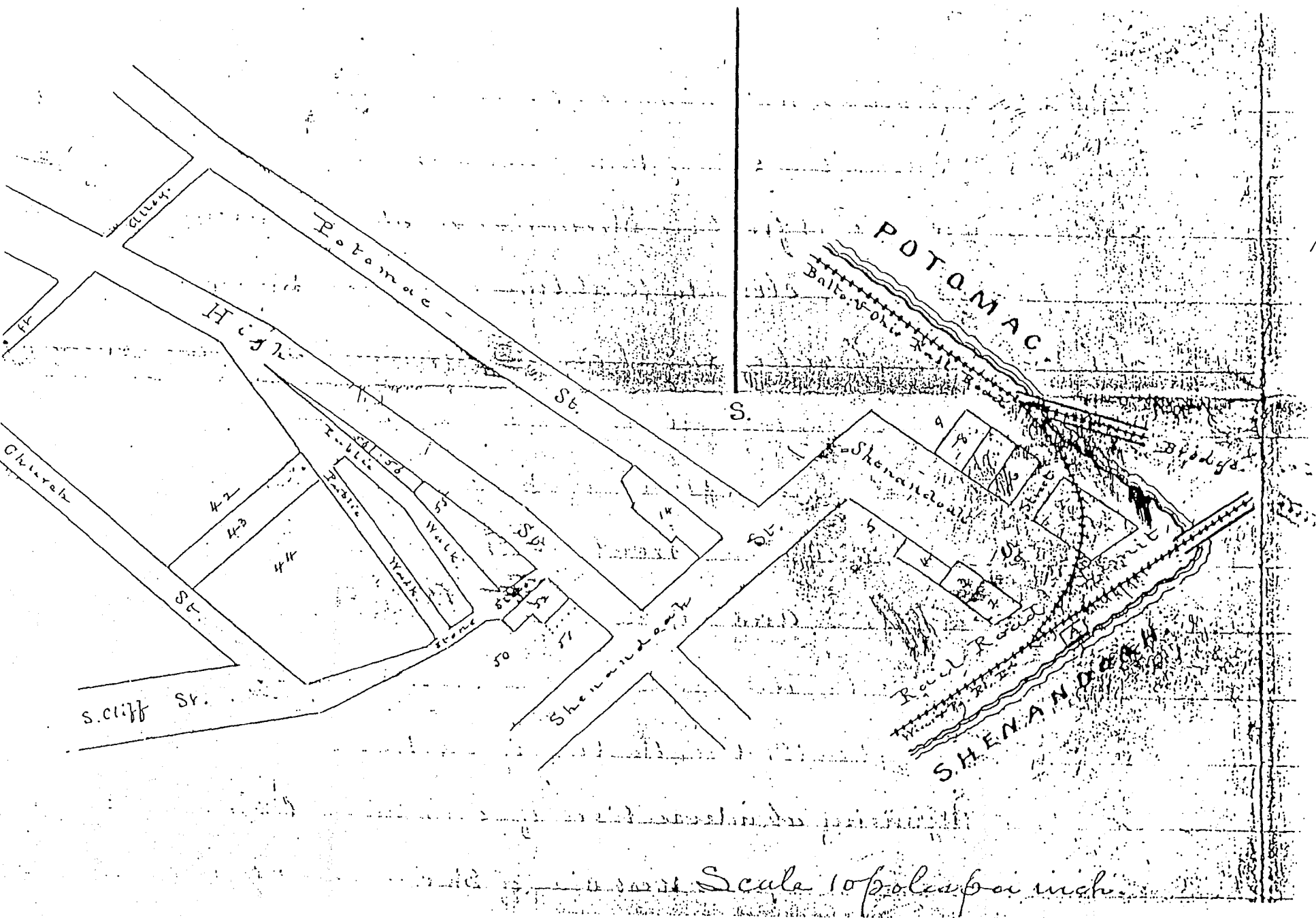
⁶¹Farmers Advocate. October 6, 1928. Page 1, Col. 1.

⁶²Deed Book 148, Page 331. Deed of Bargain and Sale. E.A. Rinehart, Receiver for the Bank of Harpers Ferry to C.W. Demory, September 21, 1938;
Deed Book 190, Page 317, Deed of Bargain and Sale. C.W. Demory to the State of West Virginia, November 29, 1952;

APPENDIX A

S. Howell Brown plat of estate of Gerard B. Wager, c. 1866 *

* C. J. Faulkner sub-collection, T. T. Perry Collection, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia



S. HOWELL BROWN PLAT OF ESTATE OF GERARD B. WAGER c. 1866 FROM C.J. FAULKNER PAPERS,
VIRGINIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY, RICHMOND, VA.

APPENDIX B

PHOTOGRAPHS:

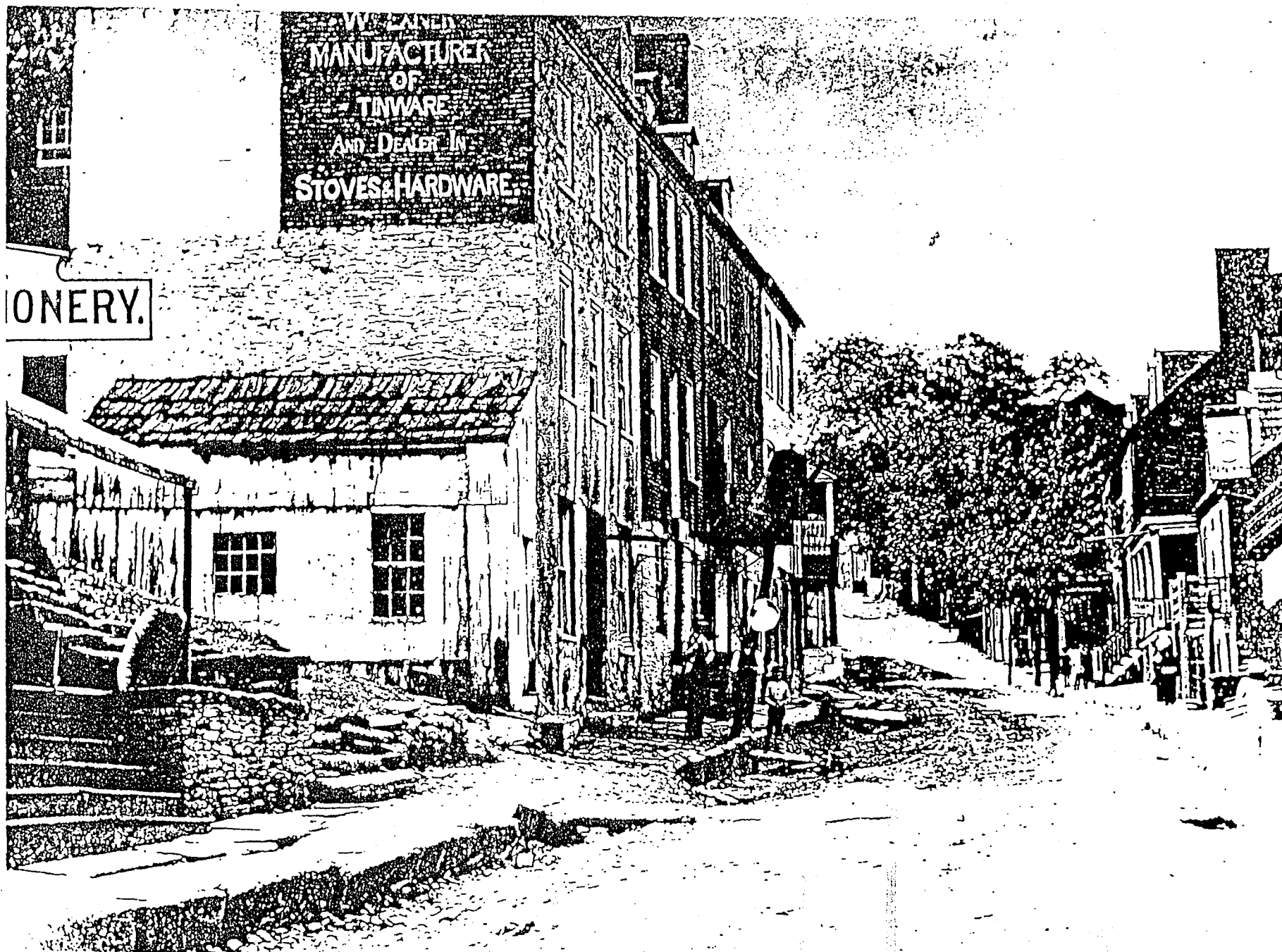
- HF 381: WL 51 following 1913 fire
- HF 787: High Street Harpers Ferry c. 1886
- HF 94: Stone Steps, probably c. 1892
- HF 359: Stone Steps and Building 37,
probably c. 1879-95/6
- HF 989: Stone Steps and Building 37,
postdates 1896
- HR 4: Stone Steps and Building 37,
postdates 1896

* Photographs in Park Library



PHOTOGRAPH '1

HF381-c.1914. LOT 51 AFTER FIRE IN 1914

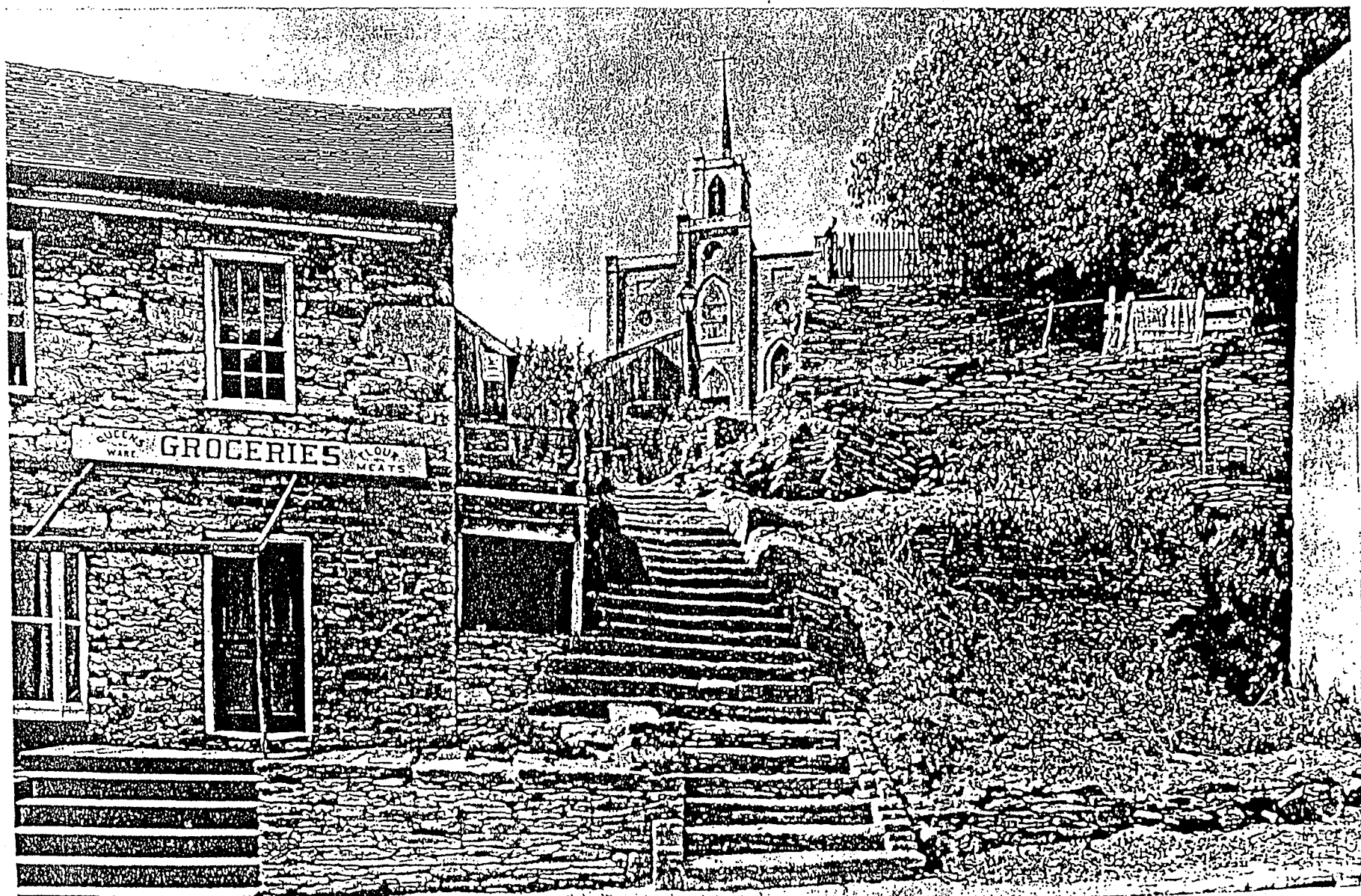


PHOTOGRAPH 2



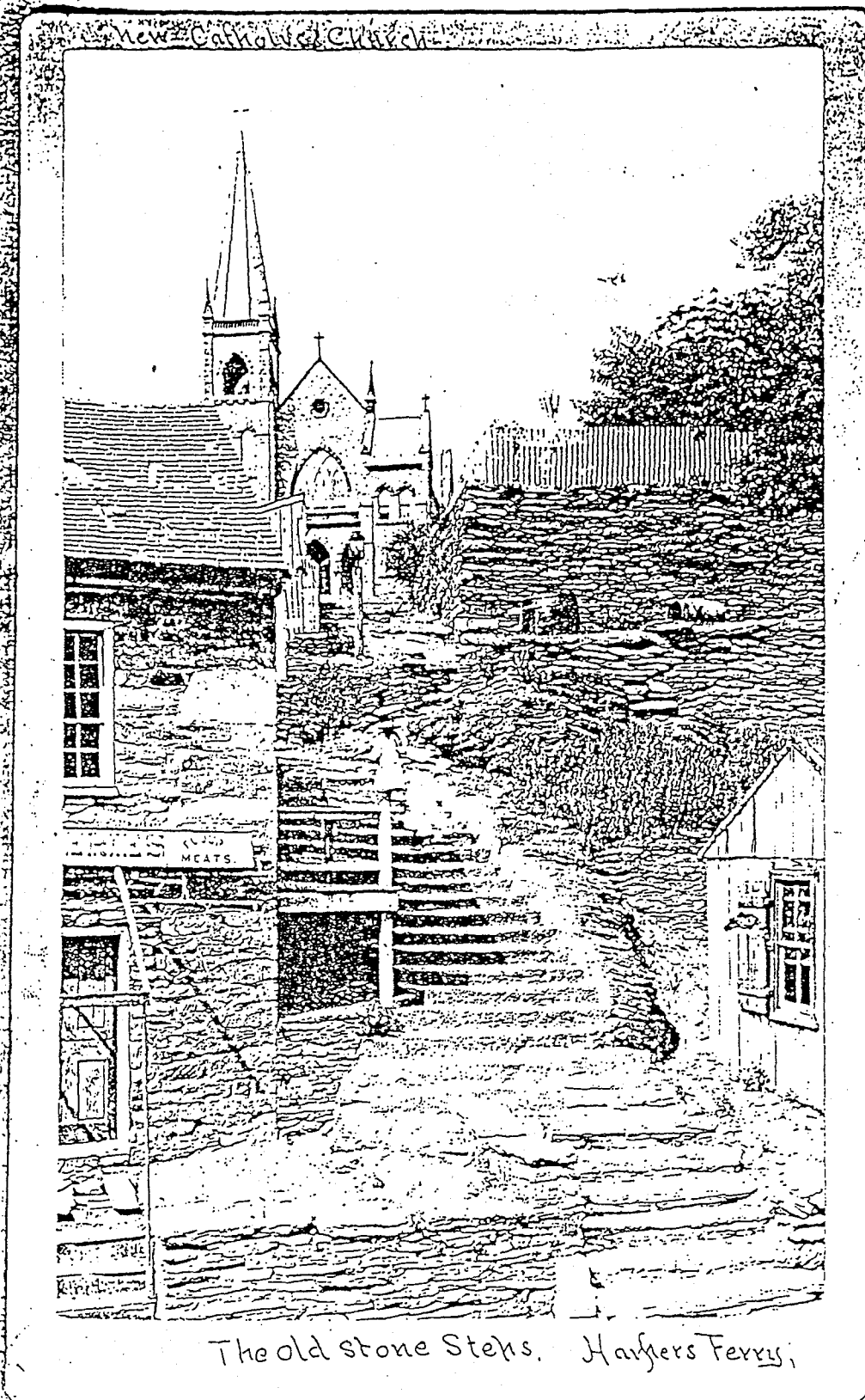
PHOTOGRAPH 3

HF94-DATED c.1865. SHOULD BE c.1892.



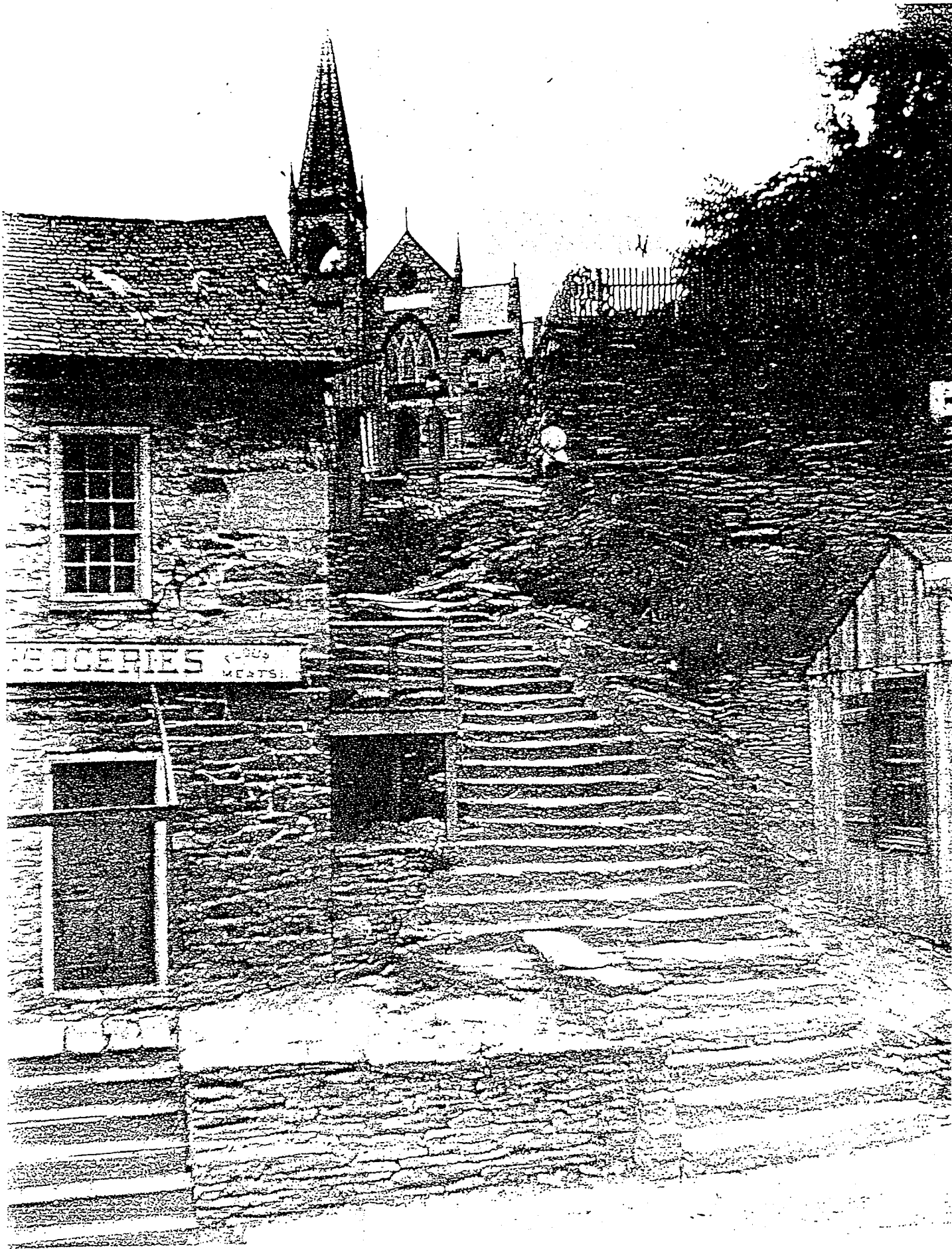
PHOTOGRAPH 4

HF359-DATED BY SNEII AS 1865 SHOULD BE DATED BETWEEN 1887-1896: PARK LIBRARY DATES IT 1882-1888



PHOTOGRAPH. 5

HF989-AFTER 1896



APPENDIX C

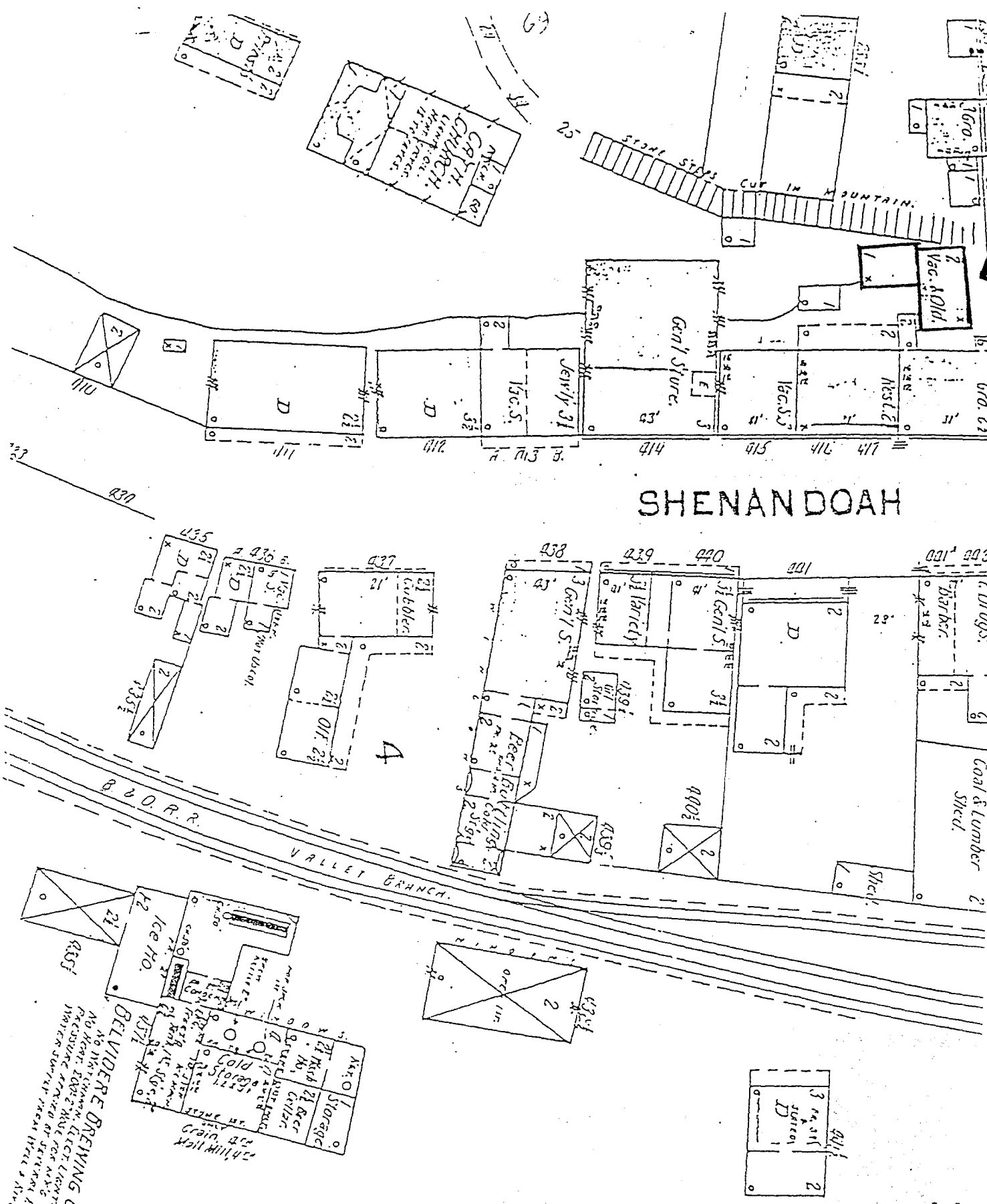
SANBORN PERRIS FIRE INSURANCE MAPS:

1894
1902
1907
1912
1922
1933

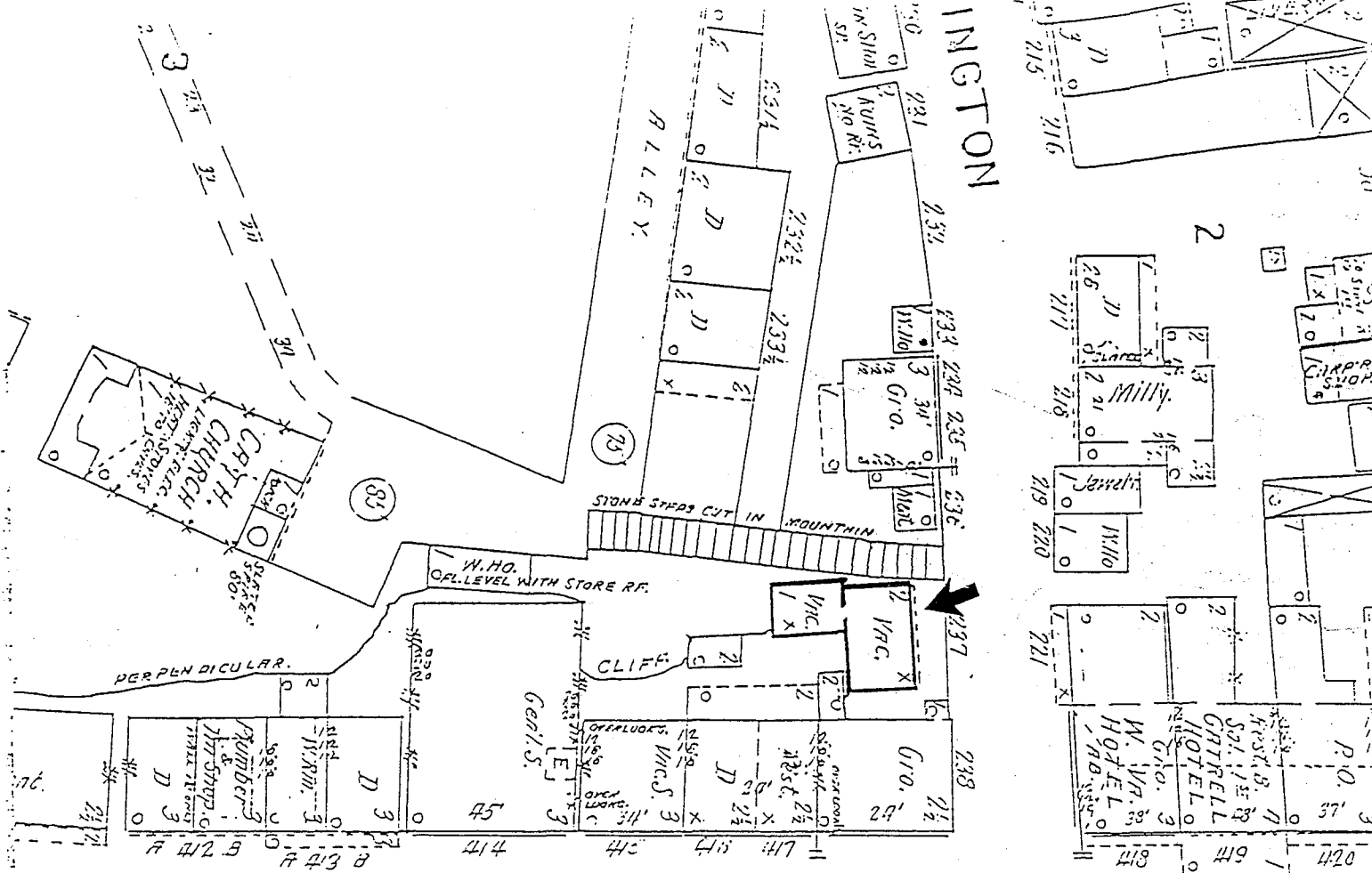
Q. 12. (NEW LINE)



This is a Sanborn fire insurance map from 1894, showing a section of a city. The central feature is a large rectangular building labeled "HOTEL CONNER". To the left of the hotel is a street labeled "D.C." (Dexter Court) and a building labeled "P.O." (Post Office). To the right of the hotel is a street labeled "D.C." (Dexter Court) and a building labeled "P.O." (Post Office). The map also shows several other streets, including "D.C." (Dexter Court), "D.C." (Dexter Court), and "D.C." (Dexter Court). The map is oriented with North at the top. The year "1894" is printed in the center of the map.



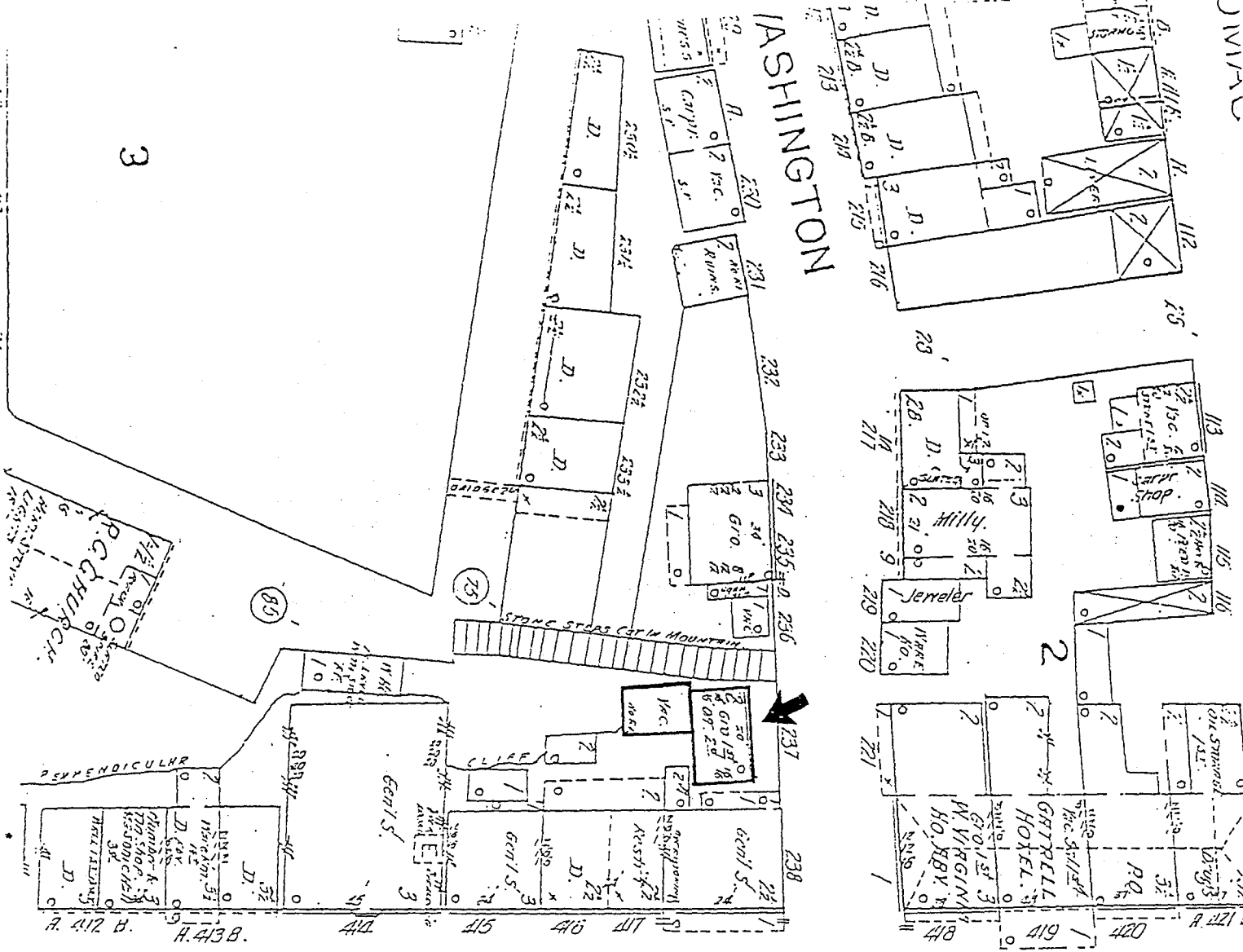
Sanborn Perris
Fire Insurance Map



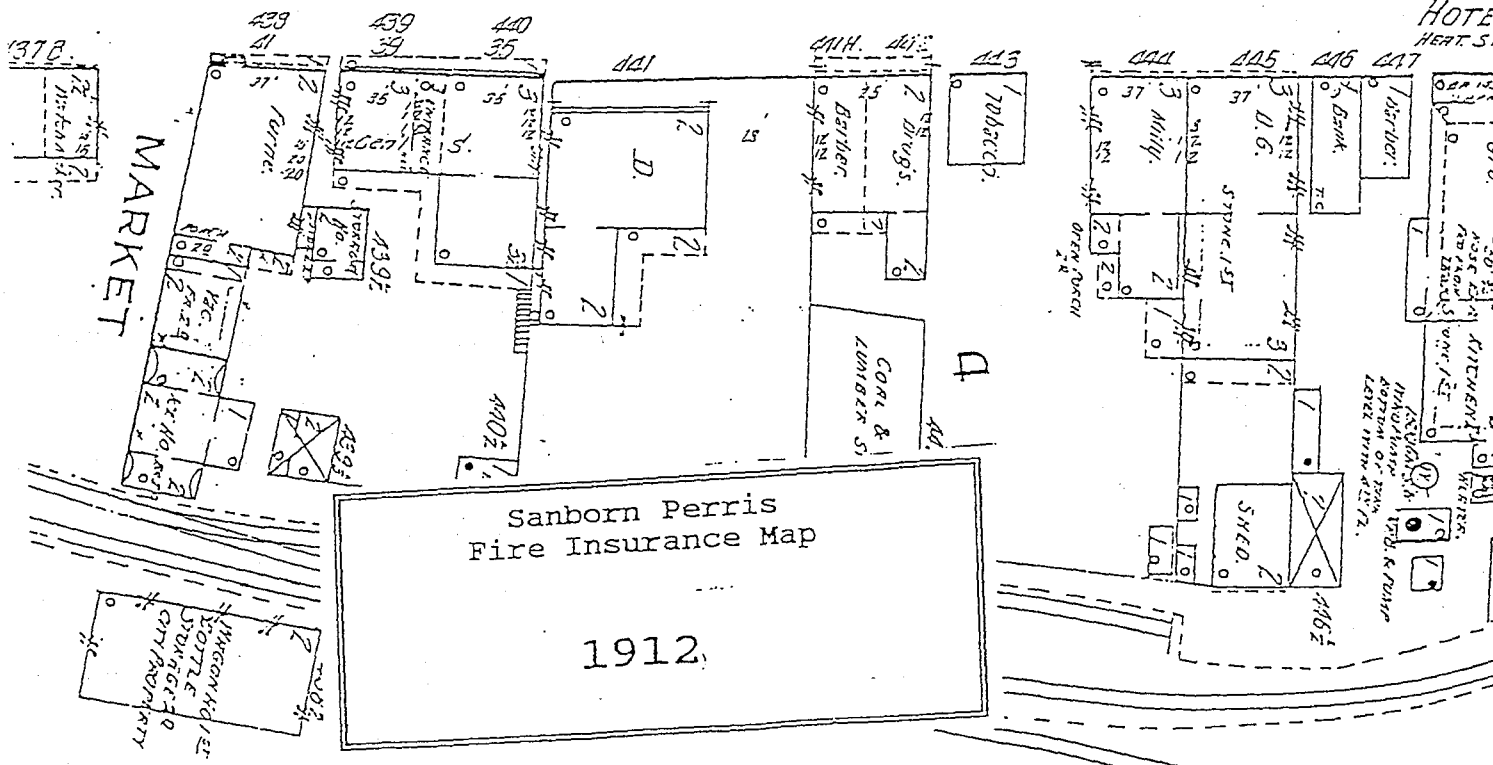
UNIVAC

WASHINGTON

3

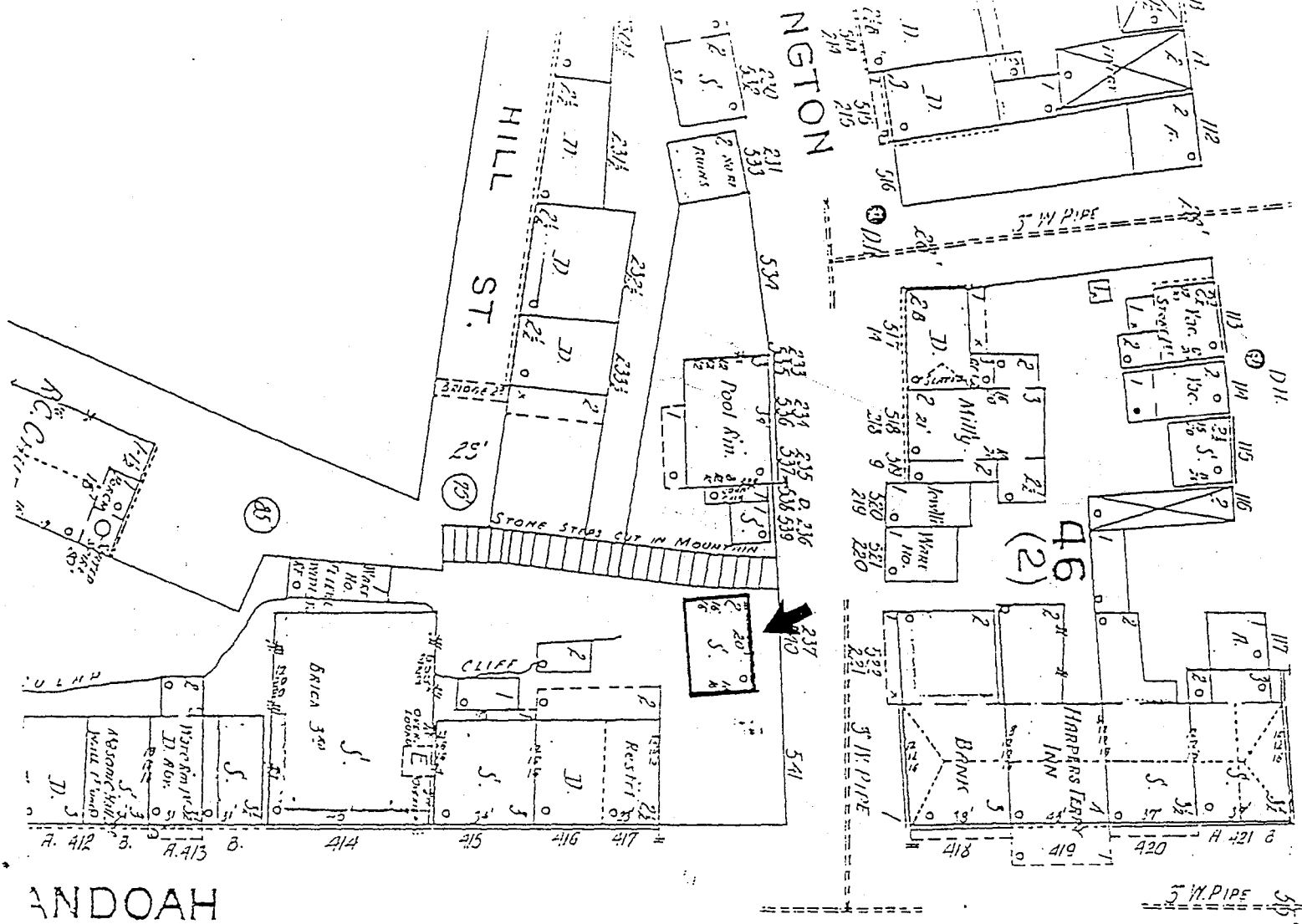


ANDOAH

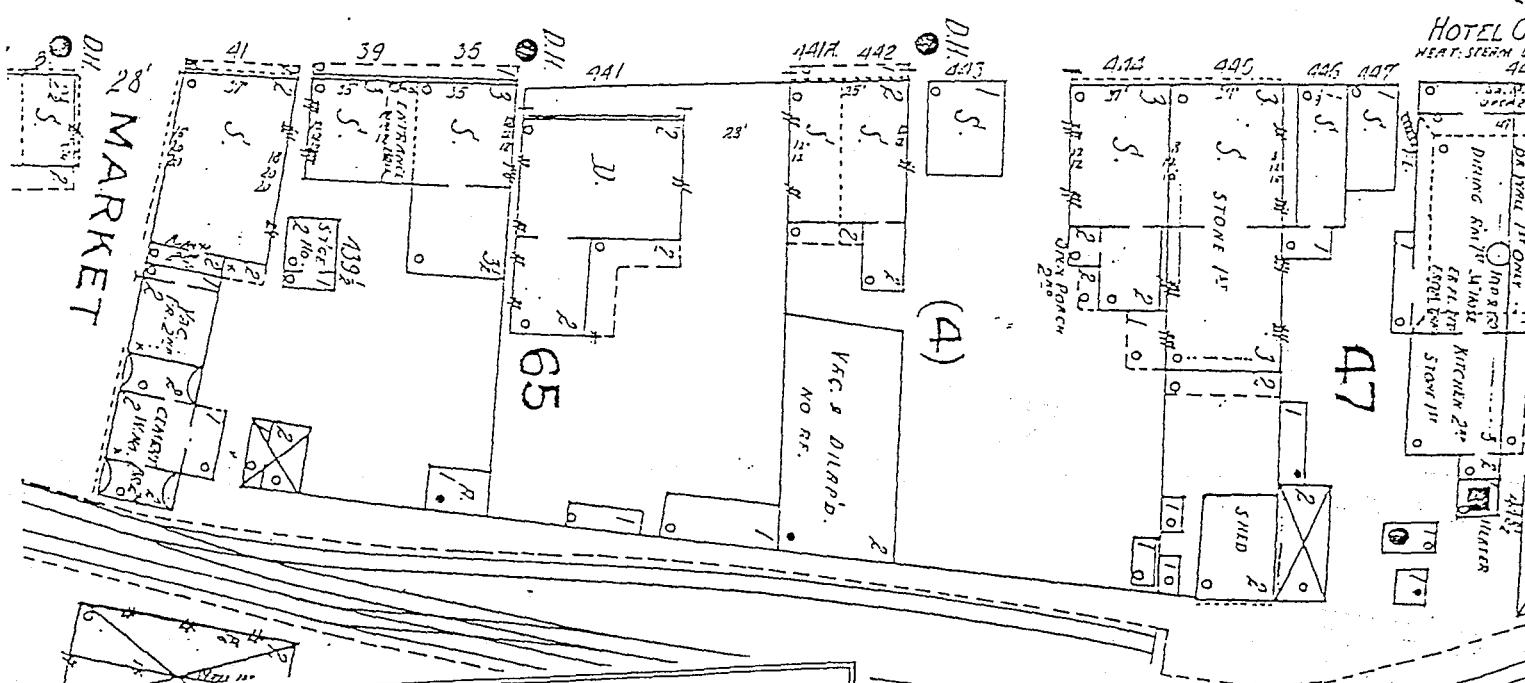


Sanborn Perris
Fire Insurance Map

1912



AND OAH



Sanborn Perris
Fire Insurance Map

1922



LEO O'BEIRNE CHRONOLOGY

Throughout the census, newspaper and deed records, the family surname is variously spelled:

Byrn, Byrne, Obeirn, Obeirne, Obiern, Obierne, O'beirn, O'beirne, O'biern, O'bierne, Oburn, O'burn, Obyrn, Obyrne, O'Byrne, O'byrn, etc., sometimes with the 'B' in upper and sometimes in lower case

Unfortunately the family monument in St. Peters Catholic Cemetery has fallen over and is unreadable.

For consistency in this report the name is spelled "O'Beirne," which was apparently the spelling of choice.

FAMILY BACKGROUND

The O'Beirne family first appeared in the Harpers Ferry Census in 1870. At the turn of the century Leo O'Beirne was apparently the youngest surviving child of Patrick and Ellen O'Beirne.

(note: census information is notoriously unreliable as to age, especially concerning subjects born in the early to mid 19th century; thereafter age seems to become more reliable)

The patriarch of the O'Beirne clan, Patrick O'Beirne, appears in the 1870 census under "Byrne;" but there is no doubt that the listing is for Patrick O'Beirne. He is listed as a 35 year-old retail liquor dealer; his wife Ellen (20) and daughters Mary (4) and Kate (1) are also listed. In the 1880 census the family appears as "O'Beirne." Patrick (45) is listed as a stone mason, followed by Ellen (35) and a string of children including the girls listed above, and sons Frank and William, but not including Leo.

There is no 1890 census. Patrick O'Beirne, however, is listed in the 1892 Voters Registration Roll as a 46 (based on the 1870 and 1880 census data he would more accurately have been 57) year-old stone mason, native of Ireland, resident of state, county and district for 32 years, naturalized at Baltimore.

In 1900 the family, without Patrick, is listed under "O'Burn", and includes Ellen (60), and the daughters, as well as sons Frank and Leo. Leo's occupation is listed as grocery salesman. Patrick died on January 13, 1900; his age was reported as 75 (65 would fit with census data).

Leo is listed in the 1900 census as age 16, dating his birth to 1884. The report of his drowning on August 7, 1928, states he was 45, affirming his birth in 1883 or 1884. It is somewhat remarkable that in 1905 he was elected to the Harpers Ferry Town Council; he would have been only 21 or 22 at that time.

The 1910 census lists Leo, age 25, as a grocer, and living in the household of Ellen O'Beirne. Ellen died in 1920.

Ellen O'Beirne's maiden name was Fitzpatrick. She was the niece of Harpers Ferry merchants Richard and Michael Doran. Ellen, therefore, was a first cousin to William and Mary Ellen Doran, who succeeded their parents, Michael and Sarah Doran, in the mercantile business. William and Mary Ellen were succeeded in the business by Mary Cecilia Doran, William's daughter. Thus Mary Cecilia Doran and Leo O'Beirne were second cousins. The Doran name remained active in business in Harpers Ferry through the early 1940s.

CHRONOLOGY

1900 Census; first mention of Leo O'Beirne; 16 year old grocery salesman living in home of mother, Ellen O'Beirne (census spelling is O'Burn)

1903.1120 (HF
TIMES)* Thomas J. Bond was working in Leo O'Beirne grocery store

.1127 " Leo O'Beirne bought goods in Baltimore

1905.0110 (SOJ)* Leo O'Beirne elected councilman at HF on Citizen's Ticket

.0519 (HF
TIMES) samples of handsome pictures & 25 labels of Martinsburg bread given away at stores of M. A. Cavalier & Leo O'Beirne

.1125 (FA)* Leo O'Beirne is on committee for annual Thanksgiving Ball to be given at Hilltop House by "young men"

1906.0109 (SOJ) Leo O'Beirne again elected to HF Council

* local newspapers are abbreviated as follows:

HF TIMES: Harpers Ferry Times
SOJ: Spirit of Jefferson
FA: Farmers Advocate
VFP: Virginia Free Press

- 1906.0209 (HF
TIMES) Leo O'Beirne on HF Town Finance Committee
- 1907.0104 (HF
TIMES) Leo O'Beirne among local attendees at masquerade ball in Brunswick
- .1123 (FA) Leo O'Beirne, Harry Stoutzenburger & Bud Evans went coon hunting
- .1207 (FA) Leo O'Beirne among members of Order of Knights of Columbus assisting in initiation of new members into order in Martinsburg
- 1908.0118 (FA) Leo O'Beirne elected to HF Council
- .0502 (FA) Leo O'Beirne elected delegate to Congressional Convention in primary
- .0704 (FA) Leo O'Beirne & friends went with HF team to baseball game in Shepherdstown
- .0815 (FA) Leo O'Beirne listed as participant in charity "home talent" entertainment event
- .1121 (FA) Merchants Leo O'Beirne & Walter Dittmeyer are in city purchasing Christmas goods
- 1909.0109 (FA) Leo O'Beirne lost bid for mayoralty of HF to incumbent C. B. Wentzell; Wentzell slate was said to be pledged to higher license for local saloons
- .0508 (FA) "popular young merchant and politician" Leo O'Beirne was confined to home with illness
- .0612 (FA) pseudonyms for players in 2nd annual baseball game between married & single men of HF; on "Miles' Teddy Bears" team: "Ex-Mayor O'Beirne" (also officially tally clerk)
- .1023 (FA) among pallbearers in funeral for Dr. Irvin McConnell "young men from among his acquaintances here" including Leo O'Beirne
- 1910 Census Leo O'Beirne, Age 25, occupation "Grocer/Store," listed in household of Ellen O'Beirne
- 1910.0115 (FA) T. J. Burleigh & Leo O'Beirne attended boxing match in Baltimore
- .0129 (FA) Leo O'Beirne & Bernard Miles attended a public Ball in Frederick

- 1910.0212 (FA) Leo O'Beirne & Bernard Miles & Misses Anna & Rena Wentzell attended a dance in Palmbaum hall (Charles Town) given by Smart Set Club
- .0917 (FA) account of meeting held by business men of HF & steps taken to oppose substitution of tungsten lights by legal proceedings; includes Leo O'Beirne among those present
- .1119 (FA) L. O'Beirne was to take part in "Robinson Crusoe" to be given in New Opera House by "Home Talent" (Also B.J. Miles); note that children's high school parade was in charge of Messrs. B. J. Miles, Leo O'Beirne & Eugene Shugart
- 1911.0311 (FA) "Sarg." Burleigh, Leo O'Beirne, Bernard Miles & others went coon hunting in Loudoun & nearly froze to death; got one coon & had him roasted at O'Beirne's cafe opposite the depot
- .0513 (FA) Messrs. Bernard Miles, Leo & Frank O'Beirne & William Rau will jointly purchase an automobile
- .0527 (FA) Mr. Shep Gatrell & Leo O'Beirne built large cages for their pet grey squirrels in the open outside their business places
- .1021 (FA) Comedy was given in "town hall" to large audience; among players: Leo O'Beirne
- .1028 (FA) Leo O'Beirne "our young townsman with marked sporting proclivities" & Messrs. Reese Cummings, Will Rau & Gus Daily went to the mountain & brought home 2 big coons
- .1111 (FA) Messrs. Louis Becker, Bernard Miles & Leo O'Beirne of Raccoon Club No. 9 of HF attended oyster roast in Baltimore
- .1125 (FA) account of coon roast at "O'Beirn Cafe" opposite the depot
- 1912.0302 (FA) Mr. Will Harrell won a large portable gas lamp chanced off by Mr. Leo O'Beirne & is using it to light his shop window
- .0305 (SOJ) account of ground breaking & parade for new high school; officers at "the hall" included Leo O'Beirne
- .0420 (FA) Mr. Leo O'Beirne "chief of staff" of local hunting

fraternity returned with nice fat coon weighing 26 pounds a few nights ago

- .0620 (VFP) Among delegates to Democratic Congressional Convention at Grafton: Leo O'Beirne
- .1109 (FA) Chippy White & Leo O'Beirne brought home 50 odd rabbits in 2 day hunt
- .1130 (FA) Bernard J. Miles & Leo O'Beirne visited friends in Frederick on return from trip through valley with other friends in their car
- 1914.0117 (FA) report that Leo O'Beirne would lease "new building" under construction by Mr. Rau "on the burnt corner" (rebuilt Bldg. 37)
- .0131 (FA) report that O'Beirne's grocery "is growing into its full size . . ." (reconstruction of Bldg. 37 progressing)
- .0425 (FA) "Mr. Leo O'Beirne . . . moved into new quarters on High St. at foot of stone steps. . . has been in grocery and confectionery business for eleven years succeeding Mr. William Rau for whom he clerked as a boy."
- 1914.0728 (SOJ) public sale of real estate in Marmion chancery suit to be held at Leo O'Beirne's store in HF
- 1915.0817 (SOJ) Among members of Boosters Club for Chataugua to be held August 21-24: Leo O'Beirne
- .1116 (SOJ) Among pallbearers in funeral for Ms. Genevieve Walsh sister of merchant W. A. Walsh: Leo O'Beirne
- 1916.0718 (SOJ) Mr. Garney Conrad accepted job with Leo O'Beirne the grocer
- .1107 (SOJ) Mr. Leo O'Beirne bought building which he occupies from C. W. Rau for \$1,000
- 1917.0109 (SOJ) HF Municipal elections: Leo O'Beirne elected councilman
- 1918.0716 (SOJ) Among election officers appointed by County Court: HF District Precinct #4, Democrat: Leo O'Beirne
- 1919.0107 (SOJ) HF election: Leo O'Beirne elected a councilman
- .0204 (SOJ) Quaker Oats cooker offer; mentions among HF grocers: Leo O'Beirne

- .0520 (SOJ) "Mr. G. F. Glass bought corner lot in Brant District." States adjacent is "George O'Biern's store" which stands on site of cabin of Peter Stevens, half breed indian who owned ferry; site is at foot of stone steps
- 1920.0106 (SOJ) Elected councilman at HF: Leo O'Beirne
- .0413 (SOJ) Among election officers appointed by County Court: HF District Precinct #4: Leo O'Beirne
- .0608 (SOJ) Among applicants to County Court for Sunday licenses: Leo O'Beirne for eating house/restaurant
- 1921.0111 (SOJ) Elected councilman at HF: Leo O'Beirne
- .0612 (SPECIAL ARTICLE FROM WASHINGTON SUNDAY STAR)
full page story on HF with 6 photos; includes note on "frame lunch room of Leo O'Beirne seen "as you come down the station platform steps" which has as cook famous old dining car cook called "Pidgery"
- 1922.0107 (FA) Loudoun Valley cornet band played concert "before Leo O'Beirne's store where there was a bright light." Leo took them to his restaurant for a treat.
- .0429 (FA) Loudoun County band performed for HF people in front of Leo O'Beirne's store
- .0603 (FA) comment on council bringing water into lower town along Shenandoah Street & up to O'Beirne's where it meets pipe laid to that point from source on Camp Hill
- 1923.0106 (FA) "Extremely tasteful decoration" of windows in Leo O'Beirne's store was done by young school boy Tommy Kern;
note on calendars given out by local businesses states Leo O'Beirne gave customers choice of 3 subjects;
old Wentzell cigar shop was purchased by Leo O'Beirne & will be pulled up to a vacant lot on High St.
- .0410 (FA) Mr. Leo O'Beirne completed excavation of lot on High St. where he will move "one of the old landmarks of HF," the building occupied by the late Mr. Wentzell, tobacconist
- 1926.0707 (SOJ) Obituary of James Lovett, 75, "widely known" cook in hotels & restaurants of HF for many years; last

employed in restaurant of Leo O'Beirne

- .0804 (SOJ) attorneys for town of HF admitted imprisonment without just cause in 2-week detention of "Lee" O'Beirne on drunken charge; action was on instigation of Mayor Shirley Rockenbaugh of HF; \$100 fine paid by O'Beirne was returned to him on his release
- .1110 Deed Book 128, Page 92: Trust transaction. Leo O'Beirn granted Wager Lot 52 to Forrest A. Brown.
- .1215 (SOJ) A. Kaplon of HF to hold public sale of miscellaneous articles opposite O'Beirne's store at HF. (note: Kaplon had recently gone out of business downtown)
- 1927.0210 Deed Book 128, Page 306: Deed of Bargain and Sale. Leo O'Beirn sold Wager Lot 54A to William W. Kronk.
- .0404 Deed Book 128, Page 445: Trust transaction. Leo O'Beirne and Katherine O'Beirne Keating granted Wager Lot 52 to Forrest A. Brown.
- 1928.0308 (SOJ) among recent donors to Charles Town hospital from HF: Leo O'Beirne
- .0807 (FA) report on drowning in Canal of Leo O'Beirne (see attached transcript)
- .0927 (SOJ) appraisers of estate of late Leo O'Beirne fixed valuation of \$2,613.35 of which \$2,000 is store building in HF & remainder is stock, fixtures & personal articles
- .1004 (SOJ) Mr. K. K. Cavalier will sell personal property in estate of late Leo O'Beirne;
Mr. C. L. Sexton of Loudoun County purchased High St. HF Building owned by late Leo O'Beirne who operated a grocery store there; Mr. Sexton with Mr. Roy Butts operated a meat market in the Burton bldg. opposite the O'Beirne bldg.; they will move into newly-purchased building in near future
- 1929.0620 (SOJ) notice of chancery suite of Levering Coffee Co. & other creditors of Leo O'Beirne deceased Vs. K. K. Cavalier administrator of Leo O'Beirne; names Frank O'Beirne, Kate O'Beirne Keating, Bank of HF, Forrest A. Brown, Trustee
- .1107 (SOJ) notice of public sale of HF real estate in chancery suit of Levering Coffee Co. etc. Vs. K. K. Cavalier

administrator of Lee O'Beirne & others etc. in front of Bank of HF; real estate in HF of which Leo O'Beirne died seized & possessed includes lot with building & improvements conveyed to Leo O'Beirne by C. W Rau by deed of 1916.1024 (Bldg. 37)

1931.0218 (SOJ) report of K. K. Cavalier administrator of Leo O'Beirne showing distribution of all funds was confirmed & case of Levering Coffee Co. Vs. K. K. Cavalier ordered retired from docket

TRANSCRIPTION OF REPORT FROM FARMERS ADVOCATE OF DROWNING OF LEO
O'BEIRNE, AUGUST 7, 1928 *

HARPERS FERRY--BOLIVAR

LEO O'BEIRNE, MERCHANT, DROWNED IN CANAL--
PERSONAL NEWS OF THE TOWNS.

This section of the county was shocked early Tuesday morning when it became known that the dead body of Leo O'Beirne had been found in the waters of the C. & O. Canal at Goodhart's lock, a half mile up the Potomac river from the highway bridge. Mystery surrounds the case. It was first reported that he had been drowned. Lacerations found on chest, arms and head, gave rise to a suspicion that he had met with foul play. Authorities in Washington county, Md., where the casualty occurred, summoned a coroner's jury early Tuesday morning. After hearing the testimony of some witnesses, the coroner's court adjourned, returning a verdict that the unfortunate man came to his death by drowning. Mr. O'Beirne, who until recently operated a general store near the corner of High and Shenandoah streets, was at one time one of the most popular merchants of the town. In addition to his store business, he conducted a lunch room successfully near the entrance to the bridges. He was a life-long resident of the town, his father, the late Patrick O'Beirne having been town sergeant here years ago. Deceased, who was about 45 years of age and unmarried, leaves one brother, Frank O'Beirne, and one sister, Mrs. Kate Keating, both residents of Harpers Ferry. Funeral services were held at 10:30 o'clock Thursday morning in St. Peters Catholic Church. Interment was in the Catholic Cemetery.

Witnesses before the coroner's jury said that Mr. O'Beirne fell into 16 feet of water in the canal and was unable to save himself. His sister Mrs. Kate Keating, was with him at the time and jumped into the water in an effort to save her brother. She had become almost exhausted in the unsuccessful effort when Gordon Goodheart heard her screams and went to her rescue.

* Farmers Advocate, August 11, 1928, Page 1, Column 1.

Note: portions of the account are difficult to read due to poor microfilming, but the above is an accurate transcription.

PHONE NO. 41

LEO. O'BEIRNE,

FANCY AND STAPLE GROCER.

HARPERS FERRY, W. VA.,

DEC 31st 1917

To whom it may Concern
This is to certify that I have
known the bearer of this
— D. J. Newcomer —
for the past (10) few years.
He has always been Honest, Sober,
and Industrious. I cheerfully
recommend him for any position
he should apply for.
Very Truly
Leo. O'Beirne

BIBLIOGRAPHY

PUBLISHED WORKS:

Barry, Joseph. The Strange Story of Harpers Ferry . . . 1st printing by Thompson Brothers, Martinsburg, West Virginia. 1903. 7th printing published by The Woman's Club of Harpers Ferry District (Printed by the Shepherdstown Register, Inc., by Shepherdstown, W.Va.) 1974.

Randall's Business Directory of Winchester, Berryville and Front Royal, VA., Charlestown and Harpers Ferry, W.VA. 1892-'93. John C. Randall, Martinsburg, W.Va. 1892. Page 53.

UNPUBLISHED WORKS:

Snell, Charles W. Historic Building Report. Part I for Building No. 37 The John T. Reiley Building. Harpers Ferry National Monument. June 30, 1958.

PRIMARY SOURCES:

Censuses of the United States, Harpers Ferry region. Microfilm available at Harpers Ferry National Historical Park.

Historic Photographs from the collection in the Library at Harpers Ferry National Historical Park supplemented by unaccessioned material from collections of Mrs. Isabel Kern Flanagan and Mrs. John Newcomer available in Historic Research Office, Harpers Ferry National Historical Park.

History Database at Harpers Ferry National Historical Park (principally an index of demographic, newspaper, and property records relevant to the Harpers Ferry Park area)

Newcomer Family Papers. In collection of Mrs. John Newcomer, Harpers Ferry, WV. Relevant items photocopied and available in Historic Research Office, Harpers Ferry National Historical Park.

Personal Interviews:

Mrs. Mary Cavalier Dalgarn. Conducted by Patricia Craig, August 8, 1990. Notes in Historic Research Office Harpers Ferry National Historical Park.

Mrs. Isabel Kern Flanagan. Conducted in several sessions during August and September, 1992, by Patricia Chickering, Michael A. Jenkins, and Carol Petravage, with

contributions from John Barker and Mary Johnson.
Transcript in library, Harpers Ferry National Historical
Park.

Public Records (Deeds, Wills, etc.): Jefferson County Courthouse,
Charles Town, WV

S. Howell Brown plat of estate of Gerard B. Wager, c. 1866. C. J.
Faulkner sub-collection. T. T. Perry Collection. Virginia
Historical Society, Richmond, VA.

Sanborn Perris Fire Insurance maps. From library collection at
Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, supplemented by
original documents at Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.

T. T. Perry Collection. Virginia Historical Society. Richmond,
Virginia.