

**Heyward Shepherd Memorial
and
John Brown Fort Tablet**

Special History Study

THIRD DRAFT

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PREFACE

This report examines two memorials: the tablet placed on the armory fire engine house (more commonly known as the John Brown Fort) in commemoration of John Brown and his raiders, and the Heyward Shepherd Memorial. Once located on the Storer College campus, the John Brown Fort (Park Building 63) currently stands in Lower Town at the intersection of Shenandoah and Potomac streets. This location is across Shenandoah Street from the original location of the engine house. The Heyward Shepherd memorial is located next to Park Buildings 8 and 9 and across Potomac Street from the original engine house site.

The tablet honoring John Brown was placed on the fort in 1918, without controversy, but considerable furor accompanied the erection of the Heyward Shepherd Memorial in 1931. Despite the furor, the monument remained on Potomac Street until 1975 when it was placed in temporary storage during the restoration of Park Buildings 8 and 9. It was returned to its original Potomac Street location following the completion of restoration work. However, word of its impending re-display preceded the move and disrupted the harmony of the community with threats to deface the stone, objections to its wording, and expressions of concern by Park employees about the community reaction.

Amidst a swirl of local controversy, the artifact was crated in a protective covering and stored on its original site. This guarded it from vandalism and maintained neutrality in the community until all interest groups could air their issues. In 1981, the Park superintendent began meeting with the United Daughters of the Confederacy, Sons of Confederate Veterans, the NAACP, and Park employees. Efforts to have all interest groups sit down together proved futile

and later "shuttle diplomacy" between the superintendent and various groups did not resolve the matter. Interest in re-display of the monument waned.

In the 1990's, the Park renewed its efforts to re-display the monument as part of Harpers Ferry's history. Scholars studying the National Park system and the Park urged that the monument be re-displayed.¹ This encouragement provided the impetus for scholarly research into the history of the monument that led to the preparation of this report.

On June 9, 1995, the Park put the memorial on display again. In addition to the monument, a nearby wayside exhibit provides contextual information that provides background material about Heyward Shepherd and describes the monument's origin, dedication, and the African-American response. Information on the wayside is factual, minimal, and neutral. This report includes the factual information that led to the development of the wayside exhibit text.

In summary, the Park has a unique opportunity to enhance interpretation of two Park themes--John Brown and black history--with artifacts that have stood in Harpers Ferry for over sixty years, and this report seeks to provide information to facilitate interpretation of these two memorials. The report presents known information on the creation of the two memorials and any controversy surrounding their creation. (Discussion of issues arising since the Park assumed stewardship of the fort and the memorial was not within the scope of this report.) Furthermore, it attempts to establish the context, local and national, in which each was erected.

¹James Oliver Horton, "The Challenge of Public History," *Public Historian* 16, no. 2 (Spring 1994), p. 129; Richard E. Miller, "The National Park Service and the Afro-American Experience 1990: An Independent Assessment from the Black Perspective," (Afro-American Institute for Historic Preservation and Community Development, 10 May 1991), pp. 70-71.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

On the night of October 16, 1859, John Brown and eighteen of his men, both white and black, made their way to Harpers Ferry from the Kennedy farm across the Potomac River in Maryland, where they had been ensconced for three months, plotting to start a war to liberate the slaves. Moving quietly into town, the men quickly took control of several strategic positions. A detail sent to take hostages in the surrounding countryside returned with three whites and several slaves. Brown's men captured other hostages in town. They also killed several men, the first of them being Heyward Shepherd, a free black employed as a porter at the train station. Local militia and townsmen easily defeated several groups of raiders, and John Brown and his surviving men, together with several hostages, took refuge in the engine house. There, John Brown was captured when marines commanded by Lt. Col. Robert E. Lee stormed the building. Thirty-six hours after it began, John Brown's Raid ended.²

The contemporary reaction to John Brown was polarized, ranging from ecstatic support on the part of many abolitionists, who looked approvingly upon Brown's impending martyrdom at the end of a rope, to hatred and terror on the part of southerners convinced of the complicity of the entire North. Brown's raid fueled the country's headlong race toward the conflict that finally would determine the fate of slavery. No consensus on Brown has been reached in the 135 years since the raid on Harpers Ferry. As Stephen Oates wrote in his biography of Brown, "Either Brown was *right* or he was *wrong*. Either he was a great and immortal hero who sacrificed his

²Stephen B. Oates, To Purge this Land with Blood: A Biography of John Brown, 2d ed. (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1984), pp. 275, 290-92, 295-96, 300-301.

life to free the slaves. Or he was a crazy horse thief, a murderer, a psychopath."³

On the one hand, most southern whites described Brown as a criminal whose actions at Harpers Ferry had forced them to secede from the Union, and ultimately take up arms against it, in defense of their constitutional rights, indeed their entire way of life. Decades later, many of their descendants still argued the justness of this decision. From them, too, the mere mention of John Brown's name could evoke a passionate attack on the man who had plotted "rapine and murder" of white southerners. They were vigilant in trying to protect southern history from any approbation of Brown and what he represented. Locally, their views were well represented by the Virginia Free Press, a Charles Town newspaper, which for decades routinely reminded readers of the murders Brown had committed at Harpers Ferry and that his first victim had been an "industrious, inoffensive colored man."⁴

To most blacks, on the other hand, Brown was a hero. Brown displayed an egalitarianism toward blacks virtually unheard of before the Civil War, even among many of the most committed abolitionists. More important, Brown opposed slavery, not just by word, but by deed. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, blacks visited Harpers Ferry or Brown's grave in North Elba, New York. For instance, local newspapers noted visits by groups of black excursionists to Harpers Ferry from the 1870s into the 1920s. While in part drawn by the same leisure interests attracting whites to the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad's Island Park, as well as perhaps by Storer College, a black school, these blacks no doubt also came because of the community's association

³Oates, p. vii.

⁴Gaines M. Foster, Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, the Lost Cause, and the Emergence of the New South, 1865 to 1913 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 5, 117-18; Report of the President General, Minutes of the Twenty-Seventh Annual Convention of the United Daughters of the Confederacy (Asheville, NC, November 9-13, 1920), p. 40. The Confederate Veteran, the official organ of confederate groups, was even more diligent in attacking any pro-Brown rhetoric.

with John Brown.⁵ Even in the 1960s, when many militant black leaders portrayed whites in general in negative terms, John Brown continued to command respect. As Benjamin Quarles notes, "His name would be evoked by a century of black protestors--civil rights spokesman and other seekers of the new day they hoped was coming."⁶

In the first decades of the twentieth century, the new day blacks awaited appeared far away. Although the Civil War ended slavery, blacks still occupied second-class status. Initial successes during Reconstruction, such as citizenship, suffrage, and political office-holding, soon eroded. Redeemer politicians swept into office across the South when Reconstruction ended in 1876 and the North turned its attention to other concerns. From the 1880s to the 1900s, state after state reversed the advances blacks made under Reconstruction. The change did not come overnight, but the direction was clear. Laws formalized segregation in schools and other public facilities. Southern states effectively disfranchised blacks. West Virginia, which broke with Virginia at the beginning of the Civil War and became a separate state in the Union in 1863, technically was not part of Reconstruction. However, after initial Republican control, once the franchise was restored to former Confederates, conservative Democrats quickly dominated the political scene. West Virginia did not deny blacks the vote, either *de jure* or *de facto*, but segregation became a reality.⁷

Fundamental to the exclusion of blacks from full participation in American society was the

⁵Benjamin Quarles, Allies for Freedom: Blacks and John Brown (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), p. 179. For evidence of excursions to Harpers Ferry see Virginia Free Press, 14 July 1877, p. 3, col. 2; 8 July 1886, p. 3, col. 1; Spirit of Jefferson, 24 August 1880, p. 1, col. 3; 8 September 1908, p. 3, col. 2; Farmers Advocate, 14 August 1915, p. 2, col. 2; 23 July 1921, p. 1, col. 2. For a brief discussion on the B&O's Island Park and leisure, see Frances Barbour Lumbard, "The Railroad and the Landscapes of Leisure: Resort Development by the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, 1870-1910," (M.A. thesis, George Washington University, 8 May 1994).

⁶Quarles, Allies for Freedom, p. 170. Also pp. 195-97.

⁷John Alexander Williams, West Virginia: A History (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1984), pp. 86-94; Eric Foner, Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877 (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1988), pp. 587-601.

view whites held of blacks. Racism long had gripped American society and produced many justifications for slavery. After the Civil War, although the end of slavery generally was accepted, few whites could visualize equality with blacks. One strain of thought in the South dwelt upon the goodwill between slaves and masters in the antebellum period, the love and loyalty slaves felt for whites, and the beneficial training blacks had received while enslaved. For many whites, blacks had only degenerated as freeman, and this view was fully supported in some white intellectual circles—even among historians—during the first half of the twentieth century.⁸ Vividly revealing the thinking of the era was D. W. Griffith's "The Birth of a Nation" (1915), perhaps the most popular silent film ever made. Based on Thomas Dixon's The Clansman, it glorified the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) and portrayed the freed black under Reconstruction as a combination of child and brute.⁹

This assault did not go unchallenged. While some blacks stressed interracial cooperation as the way to achieve long-term advancement, others demanded immediate changes. Some boycotted segregated facilities and filed lawsuits. Others protested through black literature, music, and perhaps most important, the black press, which helped lead the outcry against white violence, legal discrimination, and offensive characterizations of blacks. At the forefront in the fight for justice and equality was the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), organized in 1909. A period of black militancy emerged during and after World War I. Stimulated by black migration to the North, war propaganda proclaiming a world safe for democracy, and the growth of the NAACP, this assertiveness collided with increased white

⁸George M. Fredrickson, The Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817-1914 (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1971), pp. 169, 204-209, 221, 228-82; Foner, pp. xix-xxi, 609.

⁹Charles Harpole, ed., History of the American Cinema (New York: Scribner, 1990; reprint, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), vol. 3, An Evening's Entertainment: The Age of the Silent Feature Picture, 1915-1928, by Richard Koszarski, p. 31; Fredrickson, pp. 280-81.

hostility, particularly as reflected in the resurgence of the KKK, and declining economic opportunity for blacks.¹⁰ Even Harpers Ferry, which, according to one report, experienced good race relations in the 1920s, was not insulated from these forces. In August 1923, about forty Klansmen and another forty or fifty men marched from downtown Harpers Ferry to Bolivar Heights for a "conference."¹¹

This defines the era during which the Storer College alumni placed the tablet honoring John Brown on the John Brown Fort, and the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) and Sons of Confederate Veterans (SCV) erected a memorial to Heyward Shepherd. The tablet on the fort represents a pro-Brown view, but the college and alumni likely created it primarily as a result of local circumstances rather than with any conscious intent to impact national thinking on Brown. In 1917, the year the decision was made, Storer College would celebrate its fiftieth anniversary. With regard to the Heyward Shepherd Memorial, however, the decision to honor Shepherd and the opposition that decision created clearly related to a larger struggle over how to interpret John Brown and slavery and who had the right to make that interpretation.¹² This memorial reflects its creators' view of slavery as a benign institution, their antipathy toward John Brown and assertive blacks, and their desire to present a positive view of the antebellum South and the Confederacy. But, several decades before they began to see real progress in removing roadblocks

¹⁰Mary Frances Berry and John W. Blassingame, Long Memory: The Black Experience in America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), pp. 353-71, 375-78; Benjamin Quarles, The Negro in the Making of America, 3d ed. (New York: Collier Books, 1987), pp. 192-95; August Meier and Elliott Rudwick, Along the Color Line: Explorations in the Black Experience (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1976), pp. 232-34; 307-89.

¹¹Farmers Advocate, 1 September 1923, p. 1, col. 2; Recorder [Henry T. McDonald] to Pres. Daniel Willard, B&O Railroad, 2 June 1922, Storer College Binder 1910-1925, Harpers Ferry National Historical Park (HFNHP). In November 1922, in a letter regarding some sort of trouble between some students and the Storer College administration, one parent wrote his son had left school because "the Ku Klux Klan together with trouble at the college made him feel that it wasn't safe for him to stay there." This suggests race relations may not have been as cordial as McDonald had noted in his letter to Willard (Lee R. Taylor to Mr. McDonald, 16 November 1922, Reel 113, Flash 4, HFNHP).

¹²Several historians have written about the struggle over ownership of history. See for example, Robert R. Weyeneth, "History, He Wrote: Murder, Politics, and the Challenges of Public History in a Community with a Secret," Public Historian 16, no. 2 (Spring 1994), pp. 51-73, and Edward Tabor Linenthal, Sacred Ground: Americans and Their Battlefields, 2d ed. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993).

to equality, blacks of the 1920s and 1930s increasingly refused to accept quietly the indignities suffered by the generations before them. To them, this memorial represented a false and potentially dangerous view of John Brown and blacks that they had to challenge. Their protests, and those of like-minded whites, delayed, but did not prevent, the erection of the Heyward Shepherd Memorial at Harpers Ferry in 1931. Since then, this memorial has remained the "ever present bone of contention" it was predicted it would be.¹³

¹³Unsigned note [by Henry T. McDonald], 2 June 1922, on "Copy of Proposed Inscription," Storer College Binder 1910-1925.

JOHN BROWN FORT TABLET

The available documentation on the tablet located on the outside of the John Brown Fort is sketchy. In December 1918, the Storer Record reported on the placement of a white marble tablet in the pilaster on one end of the John Brown Fort. During the Storer College commencement a year earlier, college president Henry McDonald suggested that the alumni place

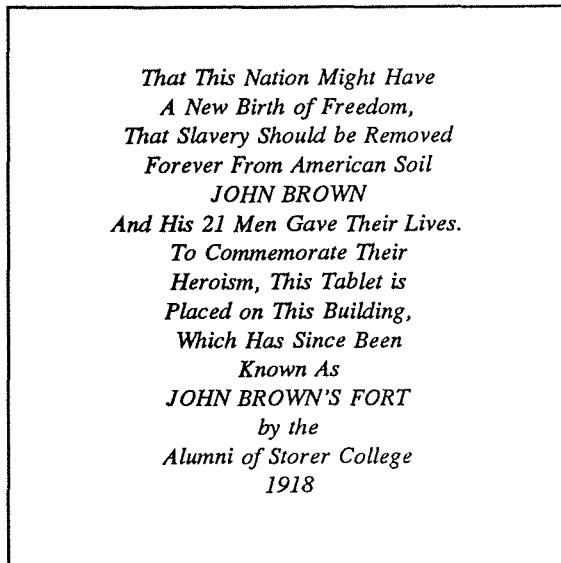


Figure 1. *Inscription on John Brown Fort Tablet.*

the tablet in memory of John Brown and his fellow raiders. The alumni approved and subscribed money, but difficulty in locating a marble stone delayed the project. Finally, a stone was found in Hagerstown, Maryland, and taken to Charles Town, where it was inscribed with words written by McDonald. The same day World War I ended, William Peregoy, a Confederate veteran and carpenter who was connected to the college for several decades, placed the tablet in the fort wall.

The Storer Record account of the tablet's placement made no mention of any accompanying ceremony.¹⁴

Local newspapers made no mention of the event at all.¹⁵ Nationally, newspapers

¹⁴Storer Record, December 1918, p. 3, col. 1, Reel 122, Flash 30; President [Henry T. McDonald] to Rev. J.J. Turner, 1 June 1932, Reel 123, Flash 9; Biographical Sketch of William R. Peregoy, Reel 131, Flash 15, HFNHP.

¹⁵According to a report by a UDC member, the text of the tablet was quoted in one newspaper (name unknown, but apparently not local) seven years later. Minutes of the Thirty-Second Annual Convention of the United Daughters of the Confederacy (Hot Springs, AK, November 17-21, 1925), pp. 226-27.

published by whites infrequently reported on blacks. The exceptions usually involved alleged criminal acts by blacks, black behavior that challenged commonly-held white views of their place in society, or obituaries for black persons who had possessed the traits whites most appreciated in blacks. Coverage on blacks in the local press since the Civil War generally had followed along the same lines, although by the 1910s a more accepting attitude toward blacks emerged. By this time, Storer College was receiving more publicity, in part due to the efforts of the college leadership, who established themselves as important members of the community. Therefore, the absence of comment on the John Brown Fort tablet suggests most whites may have neither approved of the tablet, nor been sufficiently alarmed by it to make comment.¹⁶

Additionally, in 1918 the John Brown Fort stood on the Storer College campus. This fact is significant in understanding the context in which the tablet was placed on the building and why white Harpers Ferrians apparently ignored the tablet. Founded in 1867, Storer College served as an extension of the post-war educational work of the Freewill Baptists, the American Missionary Association, and the Freedmen's Bureau. Mission schools opened in several communities to educate blacks, but, when the Freewill Baptists made plans for a normal school to train black teachers, they chose Harpers Ferry as its location. The reasons were several: a large number of freed slaves had migrated to Harpers Ferry during and at the end of the Civil War; the old government buildings on Camp Hill were available for use; and Harpers Ferry was symbolically important for attracting students and continued financial assistance from northern organizations with abolitionist sentiments because it was the site where John Brown had struck a blow against

¹⁶It is worth noting the Virginia Free Press, the conservative Democratic newspaper most frequently associated with anti-Brown and black rhetoric, ceased publication in 1916. With regard to the college leadership, original principal N.C. Brackett and his brother-in-law, Scott Lightner, husband of college treasurer Lura Brackett Lightner, were affiliated with the Bank of Harpers Ferry from the 1890s on. Henry McDonald also was affiliated with the bank, was elected town recorder in 1918, and spent much time making speeches to various clubs.

slavery.¹⁷

Henry McDonald, head of Storer College from 1899 to 1944, fully understood the link between John Brown and the college. McDonald gave speeches on Brown, whom he called "one of the great characters of history," "from Lake Placid, N.Y. . . . to Charleston, W.Va. on the south and from Washington, D.C. to Cleveland."¹⁸ In 1909, during McDonald's tenure, Storer College purchased the John Brown Fort, then two miles away on the Murphy farm, and moved the building to the college campus. To some whites, the fort represented a detested symbol of John Brown's raid and its aftermath, and reportedly "threats were openly made that direful happenings would result if the Fort was so moved."¹⁹ These threats were not carried out, and once on the campus, the John Brown Fort became a museum.

In subsequent decades, many people visited the fort.²⁰ Aside from names and addresses in the museum registers, no information exists to verify the identity of these people. Blacks, many of whom revered John Brown for his hatred of slavery and the direct action he took against it, had visited Harpers Ferry in large numbers for decades and likely included the Storer College campus and John Brown Fort in their itineraries.²¹ Whites also came. While some sympathized with the goals of Storer College and admired John Brown, others likely were Brown critics drawn to

¹⁷John Edmund Stealey, III, "The Freedmen's Bureau in West Virginia," *West Virginia History* 39 (1978), pp. 104-106, 109, 133-36; Miss Kate J. Anthony, *Storer College, Harper's Ferry, W. Va.: Brief Historical Sketch, 1867-1891* (Boston: Morning Star Publishing House, 1891), 4-6, 23.

¹⁸President [Henry T. McDonald] to Rev. J.J. Turner, 1 June 1932, Reel 123, Flash 9, HFNHP.

¹⁹President of Storer College Alumni Association to Associated Negro Press, 30 May 1932, Reel 115, Flash 10, HFNHP. The *Virginia Free Press* represented the views of those whites who took an anti-John Brown position and regularly reminded those with a more favorable view that Brown's first victim was a black man. In the late 1800s, when there was talk first of making the building a museum and later, after it had gone to Chicago, of bringing the fort back to Harpers Ferry, the *VFP* was opposed, suggesting that if these actions were taken an inscription be added to the building noting who Brown's first victim was. (*Virginia Free Press*, 13 November 1884, p. 2, col. 1; 27 September 1893, p. 3, col. 2)

²⁰Registers of the John Brown Fort attest to the number of visitors from the 1920s to the 1950s. These registers are located in Boxes 158 and 159, A&M 1322, Storer College Collection, West Virginia and Regional History Collection, West Virginia University.

²¹Quarles, *Allies for Freedom*, pp. 170-71, 176-80.



Figure 2. HF-965. Alumni tablet on John Brown Fort is seen in this 1936 photograph.

the fort out of curiosity.²²

Henry McDonald, ever committed to promoting racial harmony, recognized the disparate views of John Brown. Storer College, therefore, attempted to address opposition to John Brown by giving every visitor a circular which, in part, said:

However one may view John Brown and his men, 'he was a man with an idea and willing to die for it.' He started something. He probably never dreamed of a college for colored youth, and yet Storer is a definite result of the freedom which came for all.²³

Thus, the tablet placed on the fort by the alumni in 1918 served as a memorial to men whose actions the college believed had led to the establishment of Storer College. Its inscription represented the thinking of John Brown's more moderate admirers like author Henry McDonald. McDonald honored Brown's commitment to ending slavery and his willingness to die for that cause, but he did not approve of the violent means he used to attain that end. Furthermore, for McDonald, interracial cooperation and goodwill stood above all other concerns, and he wrote the inscription with the intent of honoring Brown and his fellow raiders in language he believed would not unduly offend whites who held an opposing view of John Brown.²⁴

²²The UDC reported the story of one such critic, who went into the museum to see what John Brown relics it contained. After seeing "such libelous canards" as a spiked iron collar and handcuffs, described as items slaves were compelled to wear, the woman did not look further. Minutes of the Thirty-Second Annual Convention, p. 227.

²³Quoted in President, Storer College Alumni Association, to Associated Negro Press, 30 May 1932, Reel 115, Flash 10, HFNHP.

²⁴[Henry T. McDonald] to Dr. Winters, 19 October 1932, Binder "Heyward Shepherd Memorial (McDonald Collection)"; President [Henry T. McDonald] to Rev. J.J. Turner, 1 June 1932, Reel 123, Flash 9.

HEYWARD SHEPHERD MEMORIAL

The Heyward Shepherd Memorial is the only known memorial to blacks erected by the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) and Sons of Confederate Veterans (SCV). These two organizations, formed in 1894 and 1896 respectively, grew out of the "Lost Cause," a movement that developed after the Civil War to defend and celebrate the Confederacy and, by extension, the Old South, and to honor the sacrifices made by southerners during the war. In a broader context, the UDC and SCV represented only two of the numerous associations formed both in the North and the South between the end of the Civil War and start of World War I to celebrate and preserve, for example, the history of the American Revolution, the Civil War, other conflicts, and colonial America.²⁵

One aspect of many of these organizations was the memorial movement. This highly-visible component of the activities of various Confederate groups led to the erection of hundreds of monuments and memorials throughout the South. Initially, most of the monuments reflected bereavement for deceased soldiers, and they accordingly were located in cemeteries. Beginning in the 1880s, however, the emphasis shifted to a celebration of the Confederacy, and monuments more frequently were placed on courthouse yards or city streets. Located in public places, these monuments also presented opportunities to inform young people of the heroism and loyalty exhibited by defenders of the southern cause and to instill such values in future generations.²⁶

²⁵Foster, pp. 4-6, 108, 113. According to Foster, this organizational interest in the past was an outgrowth of the social tensions such as industrialization, labor unrest, and economic uncertainty (pp. 79-87, 113-14).

²⁶Foster, pp. 37-41, 44, 89, 128-31; Charles Reagan Wilson, *Baptized in Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause, 1865-1920* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1980), pp. 18, 29; Mary B. Poppenheim, et al, *The History of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, 1894-1955* (Raleigh, NC: Edwards & Broughton Co., 1956), p. 49.

These monuments typically honored confederate soldiers and leaders or marked the sites of particular battles, but other types of monuments were considered as well. For example, several monuments to Confederate women were built in the South.²⁷ Additionally, beginning about 1900, Confederate organizations considered erecting a monument to "the faithful slave."²⁸ One UDC member expressed the sentiments of those favoring such a monument:

Erecting this monument would influence for good the present and coming generations, and prove that the people of the South who owned slaves valued and respected their good qualities as no one else ever did or will do. It would bespeak the real conception of the affection of the owner toward the slave and refute the slanders and falsehoods published in 'Uncle Tom's Cabin'. . . .

Erect the monument; it will result in much good, as it will tell future generations that the white men of the South were the negro's best friends then and that the men of the South are the negro's best friends to-day.²⁹

Many other UDC members adamantly opposed such a monument. One member reported every member of her chapter--save one--rejected this idea. In support of her position, the writer stated only 10 percent of slaves had remained with their masters after emancipation and concluded, "The negro of this generation would not appreciate any monument not smacking of social equality."³⁰ At its Norfolk convention in 1907, the UDC considered a resolution calling for such a monument, but the "organization was not ready for the work then and postponed consideration of it."³¹

Thirteen years later, Dr. Matthew Page Andrews of Baltimore, Maryland, suggested the

²⁷Foster, pp. 175-78. For some monuments and memorials erected by the UDC before the mid-1950s, see Poppenheim, pp. 49-92, 276-314.

²⁸Foster, pp. 156-57; Wilson, p. 105.

²⁹Excerpt of paper read by Miss Mary M. Solari to a meeting of the J. Harvey Mathews Chapter, UDC, of Memphis, TN, Confederate Veteran, 13, no. 3 (March 1905), pp. 123-24.

³⁰Confederate Veteran, 12, no. 11 (November 1904), p. 525.

³¹Poppenheim, p. 77.

SCV and UDC honor two blacks who died at Harpers Ferry during John Brown's Raid. Born near Shepherdstown, West Virginia, Andrews was the son of confederate veteran Matthew Page Andrews and Anna Robinson Andrews and the scion of slave-holding families of antebellum Jefferson County.³² He was an author, historian, and member of the SCV, in which organization he served as chairman of the Textbook Committee. Describing Andrews' work on that committee, the Confederate Veteran, the official publication of the various confederate organizations, approvingly commented,

He is always on the alert for anything that would be detrimental to the cause for which the Sons stand, and is ever ready to combat false propaganda that is being disseminated throughout the South by textbooks written by men of the North out of sympathy and misinformed of the real conditions prior to and subsequent to the War between the States.³³

Conceived in the context of this mission, the memorial at Harpers Ferry would provide "an antidote to the John Brownism of the period."³⁴

At the annual reunion of confederate veterans' organizations in Houston, Texas, in October 1920, the Sons decided to participate in erecting a monument at Harpers Ferry to "the faithful slave who gave his life in defense of his master during the John Brown raid."³⁵ The membership of the UDC gave their approval a month later at the UDC annual convention in Asheville, North Carolina, when President General Mrs. Roy W. McKinney proposed that the Daughters act in concert with the SCV to erect this monument. The Faithful Slave Memorial Committee headed

³²Poppenheim, p. 77; Eighth Census (1860), Jefferson County, Virginia, pp. 871, 949; Slave Schedule, pp. 150B, 159; Service of M.P. Andrews, Compiled Service Records of Confederate Soldiers who Served in Organizations from Virginia, M 324, Roll 396, National Archives.

³³Confederate Veteran, 40, no. 6 (June 1932), p. 236; Who Was Who in America, (Chicago: The A.N. Marquis Co., 1963), 2: 27.

³⁴Boyd B. Stutler to Dr. Henry T. McDonald, 4 October 1931, Binder "McDonald/Stutler Collection" Vol. I, HFNHP. The report of the president general to the 1920 UDC convention suggests the idea for a memorial at Harpers Ferry arose, at least partly, in connection with the play "Abraham Lincoln" by English playwright John Drinkwater, in which the song "John Brown's Body" was a recurring element, and another play he then was planning that had Robert E. Lee as a major character. See Minutes of the Twenty-Seventh Annual Convention, pp. 38-40.

³⁵Confederate Veteran, 29, no. 3 (March 1921): 117; 28, no. 11 (November 1920): 436.

by Mrs. Mary Dowling Bond of Kentucky was formed. The UDC and SCV each agreed to contribute \$500 toward the monument, the total cost not to exceed \$1,000.³⁶

Although the memorial became a joint effort by the SCV and UDC, much of the responsibility for this project fell to the UDC and Andrews. Despite this, Mrs. Bond envisioned her duties as chairman would last less than a year. Mrs. McKinney already had chosen "our eminent Historian" Matthew Page Andrews to write the inscription for the memorial he had suggested, and Mrs. Bond believed she would have "nothing to do but purchase a simple boulder and procure the site."³⁷ Circumstances, however, would make this project an eleven-year saga fraught with unforeseen obstacles--most significantly, opposition from people disturbed by the memorial's message--and keep this special committee in existence until 1931.³⁸

The proponents of the "Faithful Slave Memorial," as it was called,³⁹ conceived of it as a memorial to "all those faithful negroes" who during John Brown's Raid and the Civil War "so conducted themselves that no stain of violence was left upon their record as long as the old relationship remained." The SCV and UDC originally intended specifically to honor Heyward Shepherd, a free black these organizations erroneously believed was a slave, and James, the hired slave of Col. Lewis Washington, as representatives of all such faithful blacks. Heyward Shepherd was John Brown's first victim, while James, who was taken captive along with Col. Washington,

³⁶Poppenheim, p. 77; Report of the Faithful Slave Memorial Committee, Minutes of the Twenty-Eighth Annual Convention of the United Daughters of the Confederacy (St. Louis, November 8-12, 1921), p. 208; Report, Minutes of the Thirty-Second Annual Convention, p. 225.

³⁷Report, Minutes of the Twenty-Eighth Annual Convention, pp. 207-208.

³⁸The Faithful Slave Memorial Committee was discharged at the end of Elizabeth Bashinsky's term as president general, which ended in 1931. Confederate Veteran, 40, no. 1 (January 1932): 30.

³⁹The term "Heyward Shepherd Memorial" does not appear in available historical records until the dedication in October 1931. Then, several newspapers referred to the boulder by this name (See for example Martinsburg Journal, 12 October 1931, and Shepherdstown Register, 15 October 1931, clippings, Binder "Heyward Shepherd Memorial (McDonald Collection)," HFNHP). When Matthew Page Andrews' address at the dedication was published afterwards, it was done so under the auspices of the Heyward Shepherd Memorial Association. With the exception of West Virginia Division minutes for 1932, the year after the unveiling, available UDC records consistently refer to it as the Faithful Slave Memorial, and that term is used in this report for historical accuracy when recounting the activities of the UDC and SCV.

drowned during the raid. These two black men were the "humble, innocent victims of a proposed servile insurrection."⁴⁰ When Matthew Page Andrews conducted additional research to finalize the boulder inscription, the circumstances of "the faithful servant" James' death came into doubt. Following a visit to Harpers Ferry by Andrews and committee members Col. Braxton D. Gibson and Miss Orra F. Tomlinson of Charles Town, Andrews deleted any reference to James from the inscription.⁴¹

Meanwhile, according to Mrs. Bond, a "bushel-basket capacity" of correspondence ensued between the memorial committee members, the president general of the UDC, the commander-in-chief of the SCV, Dr. Andrews, and a "half dozen" monument businesses. Designs for the memorial were received by late May 1921. The Daughters wanted to use Barre granite. The Sons suggested the best dimensions for the boulder were 6 feet, 2 inches high; 3 feet, 6 inches wide; and 2 feet thick. The committee selected the Peter Burghard Stone Company of Louisville, Kentucky, to make the monument, which was completed in August 1921.⁴²

After considering various dates in October, the committee chose September 9, 1921, as the dedication day for the Faithful Slave Memorial. This date immediately followed the West Virginia UDC Convention at Keyser, located in the eastern panhandle of the state and, therefore, not far from Harpers Ferry. In choosing this date, the committee hoped that Daughters attending the state

⁴⁰From an early version of the proposed inscription, quoted in Confederate Veteran, 29, no. 6 (June 1921): 237.

⁴¹Report, Minutes of the Twenty-Eighth Annual Convention, pp. 208-209. Accounts of James' death vary. Joseph Barry, who lived at Harpers Ferry at the time of the raid, indicated James was trying to escape from the raiders when he drowned. However, Oswald Villard stated, "[S]ome thought he was driven by citizens in an attempt to run away, while others held that he was shot by [John Brown raider John] Cook." See Joseph Barry, The Strange Story of Harper's Ferry with Legends of the Surrounding Country (Martinsburg, WV: Thompson Bros., 1903; reprint Shepherdstown, WV: Shepherdstown Register, Inc. for the Woman's Club of Harpers Ferry District, 1979), p. 83; Oswald Garrison Villard, John Brown, 1800-1859: A Biography Fifty Years After (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1910), p. 468.

⁴²Report, Minutes of the Twenty-Eighth Annual Convention, pp. 208-209.

convention would journey to Harpers Ferry for the monument unveiling.⁴³

However, the committee could not obtain permission to place the Faithful Slave Memorial in Harpers Ferry, and the dedication was postponed. Because Heyward Shepherd had worked for the railroad and had been mortally wounded while on duty at the depot, the UDC and SCV wished to erect the boulder on railroad property. The committee sent a letter to Daniel Willard, president of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, seeking permission to place the boulder on "a vacant triangular lot at the intersections of streets opposite the B. & O. Railroad Station" and "surrounded by a drive that is in front of the station."⁴⁴ Willard's secretary, James Murray, pointed out the proximity of this site to the spot where five Civil War markers had been placed by the War Department and replied that the B&O would not give its consent unless the War Department concurred. Accordingly, Dr. Andrews approached the War Department. Assistant Secretary Wainwright, noting the property was private, informed Andrews that the department had no objection to the plan. Not satisfied with a letter from the assistant secretary, the B&O requested the signature of Secretary Weeks, who obliged.⁴⁵

Weeks' letter did not remove all obstacles to placement of the boulder on railroad property. George Campbell, assistant to President Willard, discussed the question of permitting the UDC and SCV to locate the memorial in Harpers Ferry with Henry McDonald late in May 1922. When the town council considered the matter at its June 1, 1922 meeting, McDonald "saw to it that the

⁴³Report, Minutes of the Twenty-Eighth Annual Convention, p. 209; Report of the Division Historian, Minutes of the Twenty-Third Annual Convention of the West Virginia Division of the United Daughters of the Confederacy (Keyser, WV, September 7-8, 1921), p. 28.

⁴⁴Report, Minutes of the Thirtieth Annual Convention of the United Daughters of the Confederacy (Washington, DC, November 20-24, 1923), p. 217; Report, Minutes of the Thirty-Second Annual Convention, p. 226; Report, Minutes of the Twenty-Eighth Annual Convention, p. 208. The two descriptions of the proposed location suggests the UDC may have desired a small piece of land on top the railroad embankment formed into a triangle by the intersection of Potomac and Shenandoah streets and the drive up the embankment to the station. This site is near the original location of the Civil War markers referenced in the reply from the B&O (See "Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Plan Showing Right of Way, Buildings and Tracks, Harpers Ferry, W. Va.", 19 February 1913, photocopy in Map Collection, HFNHP).

⁴⁵Report, Minutes of the Twenty-Eighth Annual Convention, p. 208; Report, Minutes of the Thirty-Second Annual Convention, p. 226.

offer was rejected."⁴⁶ The following day, in his capacity as town recorder, McDonald wrote President Willard of the council opposition and noted the monument as proposed was "likely to occasion [*sic*] unpleasant racial feeling in a community where we are so entirely free from it."⁴⁷ McDonald had just learned Heyward Shepherd was a free man, and he saw the memorial as an attempt to "belittle John Brown and his men to magnify the Confederacy through the subtle tribute to one they supposed was a slave."⁴⁸

The railroad company informed the memorial committee of the town council's objection, which the committee apparently understood to mean opposition from McDonald.⁴⁹ The committee took no action over the next few months, as members hoped the municipal election the following January would bring a favorable political change at Harpers Ferry. Unfortunately for the UDC and SCV, the 1923 election merely brought a "rotation in office," whereby McDonald became mayor.⁵⁰ Meanwhile, the Peter Burghard Company kept the boulder "crated and stored" free of charge.⁵¹

At the New Orleans Reunion in April 1923, the president of the Virginia Division UDC volunteered to seek a place for the memorial on Capitol Square, Richmond, if the memorial

⁴⁶[McDonald] note on typescript of letter from Julian S. Carr to Daniel Willard, 12 May 1922, and Daniel Willard to Henry S. McDonald, 27 June 1922, Storer College Binder 1910-1925. The report of the historian of the West Virginia Division UDC suggests the committee may have been seeking approval to locate the memorial on a public lot. Minutes of the Twenty-Fourth Annual Convention of the West Virginia Division of the United Daughters of the Confederacy (Fairmont, WV, September 27-28, 1922), p. 38.

⁴⁷Recorder [Henry T. McDonald] to Pres. Daniel Willard, B&O Railroad, 2 June 1922, Storer College Binder 1910-1925, HFNHP.

⁴⁸Unsigned note [by Henry T. McDonald], 2 June 1922, on "Copy of Proposed Inscription," Storer College Binder 1910-1925, HFNHP.

⁴⁹In its 1922 report, the Faithful Slave Memorial Committee included a copy of Town Recorder McDonald's letter to Daniel Willard, and in its 1923 and 1925 reports, the committee specifically referred to opposition from the town recorder.

⁵⁰Report, Minutes of the Thirtieth Annual Convention, p. 217; Report, Minutes of the Thirty-Second Annual Convention, p. 226; Farmers Advocate, 6 January 1923, p. 4, col. 2.

⁵¹Report, Minutes of the Thirtieth Annual Convention, p. 217; Poppenheim, p. 79. Originally, the stone company was not to be paid anything until the boulder was in place, but with the delay, the committee agreed to pay half the amount due (Minutes of the Thirty-Second Annual Convention, p. 225).

committee wished.⁵² If placed there, the Faithful Slave Memorial would sit near monuments to George Washington and Robert E. Lee and "other excellent citizens and heroes who knew and appreciated the Southern negro and often tested the faithfulness of such men as Heyward Shepherd and the dear 'Black Mammy'".⁵³ However, the Virginia legislature, from whom permission to erect any memorials on Capitol Square had to be obtained, did not convene until December, thus delaying immediate action on this alternative plan.

In the meantime, Col. Gibson reported the Harpers Ferry town council wanted the memorial there if the committee changed one sentence of the inscription from "The negroes of this neighborhood, true to their Christian training, would have no part with those who offered PIKES and STAVES for BLOODY MASSACRE" to "The negroes of this neighborhood, true to their Christian training, would have no part in the TERRIBLE RAID." Mrs. Bond thought deletion of "pikes" and "staves" "too much of a concession." Although he thought the word "raid" did not properly convey John Brown's purpose, Matthew Page Andrews agreed to substitute a milder term for "bloody massacre." The committee put the matter before the 1923 convention for a decision on whether to pursue a location in Richmond or attempt to reach an agreement with the Harpers Ferry town council. The convention favored trying to find a home for the memorial at Harpers Ferry and instructed the committee to resolve the matter.⁵⁴

Two years later, the Faithful Slave Memorial Committee reported the continued lack of progress. The committee was entering its sixth year, and the granite boulder had been ready since

⁵²Report, Minutes of the Thirtieth Annual Convention, p. 217; Confederate Veteran, 31, no. 4 (April 1923): 123.

⁵³Quoted in the Report of the Division Historian (Orra Tomlinson), Minutes of the Twenty-Fifth Annual Convention of the West Virginia Division of the United Daughters of the Confederacy (Martinsburg, WV, September 18-19, 1923), p. 20.

⁵⁴Report, Minutes of the Thirtieth Annual Convention, pp. 217-19.

the first year but had no place to go, a situation that led one woman to term the committee "The Wandering Jew Committee." Earlier that year, Col. Gibson, chairman of the SCV committee, had withdrawn from further involvement in trying to obtain a site in Harpers Ferry. Then, shortly before preparing her report for the 1925 convention, Mrs. Bond learned of a newspaper article "that sheds considerable light on the situation." This article dealt with the John Brown Fort and, more particularly, quoted the text of the tablet placed on it in 1918 by the Storer College alumni to honor John Brown (see page 7). Mrs. Bond also heard a story of a woman who visited the fort, then in use on the college campus as a museum, only to be met with "such libelous canards" as iron collars and handcuffs, described as items slaves were forced to wear.⁵⁵ Mrs. Bond later commented, "[T]o upset these traditions would remove a sensational means of spreading false propaganda." Noting many "bumptious" students attended Storer College, she concluded they likely would join with railroad and town officials in opposing any challenge to "the Brown traditions."⁵⁶

Because the memorial "has an historical import and HAS MADE more HISTORY in seeking a logical position," the committee made three recommendations to the 1925 convention. Since it seemed unlikely that the memorial would find a place at Harpers Ferry, the group recommended the formation of another committee to choose the next best location.⁵⁷ The 1925 convention approved this recommendation, but "prominent students of American and Southern history," who were consulted in 1927 on possible locations, deemed Harpers Ferry the proper

⁵⁵Report, Minutes of the Thirty-Second Annual Convention, pp. 225-27.

⁵⁶Report, Minutes of the Thirty-Third Annual Convention of the United Daughters of the Confederacy (Richmond, VA, November 16-20, 1926), p. 210.

⁵⁷Report, Minutes of the Thirty-Second Annual Convention, pp. 225-27.

place for the memorial.⁵⁸

Not for another four years did the United Daughters of the Confederacy secure a place at Harpers Ferry. When Elizabeth Bashinsky became president general of the UDC in 1930, she

*On The Night Of October 16, 1859,
Heyward Shepherd, An Industrious
And Respected Colored Freeman,
Was Mortally Wounded By John
Brown's Raiders. In Pursuance
Of His Duties As An Employee Of
The Baltimore And Ohio Railroad
Company, He Became The First
Victim Of This Attempted
Insurrection.
This Boulder Is Erected By
The United Daughters Of The
Confederacy And The Sons Of
Confederate Veterans As A
Memorial To Heyward Shepherd
Exemplifying The Character And
Faithfulness Of Thousands Of
Negroes Who Under Many
Temptations Throughout
Subsequent Years of War, So
Conducted Themselves That
No Stain Was Left Upon A Record
Which Is The Peculiar Heritage
Of The American People, And An
Everlasting Tribute To The Best
In Both Races.*

Figure 3. *Inscription on Heyward Shepherd Memorial.*

committed the organization to erecting the boulder at Harpers Ferry, "but not until the inscription should be changed omitting every word of bitterness, since we wished it to perpetuate loyalty & truth rather than any word that might suggest any bitterness or reflect upon the cruelty of others."⁵⁹ As a result, the UDC now deleted the sentence the town council had wanted revised in the early 1920s (see page 19), inserted the word "freeman" and a reference to Shepherd's employment with the B&O, and made other minor revisions.⁶⁰

These revisions, coupled with new town leadership, evidently brought a change of

heart in Harpers Ferry. In 1930, James Ranson, the son of a confederate veteran, became town

⁵⁸Poppenheim, p. 79; Minutes of the Thirty-Second Annual Convention, p. 288.

⁵⁹Elizabeth B. Bashinsky to Hon. Henry T. McDonald, 27 November 1946, Reel 117, Flash 9, HFNHP; Confederate Veteran 37, no. 1 (January 1930): 4.

⁶⁰These changes were determined by comparing the inscription on the memorial to that printed in Report, Minutes of the Thirtieth Annual Convention, pp. 218-19.

mayor. Correspondence between Mayor Ranson and Mrs. Bashinsky ensued, and in mid-1931 the town council unanimously approved erection of the Faithful Slave Memorial at Harpers Ferry. Earlier, Mrs. Bashinsky had met with James Murray, representing the B&O president, regarding the boulder's possible placement on railroad property. As she prepared her report for the July issue of the Confederate Veteran, Mrs. Bashinsky had not yet received necessary permission from the B&O.⁶¹ A few weeks later, Dr. Walter Dittmeyer of Harpers Ferry gave the UDC permission to place the boulder on his property, in "a corner between buildings," located across Potomac Street from the property on which the John Brown Fort once stood and not far from the spot where Heyward Shepherd was shot.⁶² Mrs. Bashinsky asked the West Virginia Division UDC to place an iron fence around the site and plant some shrubs, and members of local UDC chapters assumed that task. (The Smith Fence and Iron Company erected the fence for \$38.)⁶³

On October 10, 1931, the unveiling and dedication of the Faithful Slave Memorial occurred before a crowd estimated to include about 300 whites and 100 blacks.⁶⁴ The ceremony took place from a platform erected on the B&O railroad embankment and draped in Confederate colors. Program participants included the honorary president of the West Virginia Division UDC, a relative of John Brown captive Col. Lewis Washington, Storer College president Henry McDonald, the UDC president general, memorial committee chairman Mary Dowling Bond, Col. Braxton Gibson, Dr. Matthew Page Andrews, and the Storer College Singers. Seated on or near

⁶¹Report, Minutes of the Thirty-Eighth Annual Convention of the United Daughters of the Confederacy (Jacksonville, FL, November 17-21, 1931), p. 299; Confederate Veteran, 37, no. 7 (July 1931): 270.

⁶²Annual Report of President, West Virginia Division, Minutes of the Thirty-Third Annual Convention of the West Virginia Division of the United Daughters of the Confederacy (Bluefield, WV, September 23-24, 1931), p. 17.

⁶³Annual Report of President and New Business, Minutes of the Thirty-Third Annual Convention of the West Virginia Division, pp. 18, 101-102; Report of the Divisional Treasurer, Minutes of the Thirty-Fourth Annual Convention of the West Virginia Division of the United Daughters of the Confederacy (Charleston, WV, September 27-29, 1932), p. 34.

⁶⁴Afro-American, 17 October 1931, Binder "Heyward Shepherd Memorial" (McDonald Collection), HFNHP.

the platform were members of the local committee, members of the UDC and SCV, Heyward Shepherd descendant James Walker, and James Moten, a black man holding the same job at the train station once held by Shepherd.⁶⁵

Typical of such events, the ceremony included an invocation, greetings, introduction of speakers, and benediction, but the text of these remarks is not available. In his welcome address, Henry McDonald characterized the event, not as a day to "remember discord and a past, however memorable and glorious," but as a day to look into the future with "the spirit of peace" inspired by the memorial. He hoped black men and women would see "this truth," that whites were willing to share their advantages with all races who were faithful.⁶⁶

Dr. Matthew Page Andrews made the historical address. Entitled "Heyward Shepherd: Victim of Violence," Andrews' speech largely dwelt upon John Brown and slavery. Andrews portrayed Brown as a crazed man, a criminal attempting to overthrow the government. In his speech, Andrews also denounced abolitionism, the immediate end of slavery. Instead, he supported the theory that changes in the economy would have brought emancipation, which he defined as a gradual freeing of the slaves, and that blacks had benefited from "the period of their indenture" or "racial apprenticeship."⁶⁷

It was the remarks of Mrs. Elizabeth Bashinsky, president general of the UDC, that drew immediate attention. In her address, Mrs. Bashinsky stated that slaves in the United States, unlike those in Haiti, had not violently risen against their masters because they were well-clothed, fed,

⁶⁵Shepherdstown Register, 15 October 1931, p. 1, cols. 1 & 2; Matthew Page Andrews, Heyward Shepherd: Victim of Violence (Heyward Shepherd Memorial Association, n.d.), p. 6.

⁶⁶[Henry McDonald], Remarks at the Unveiling of the Heyward Shepherd Marker, October 10, 1931, McDonald Collection, HFNHP.

⁶⁷Andrews, pp. 19, 32.

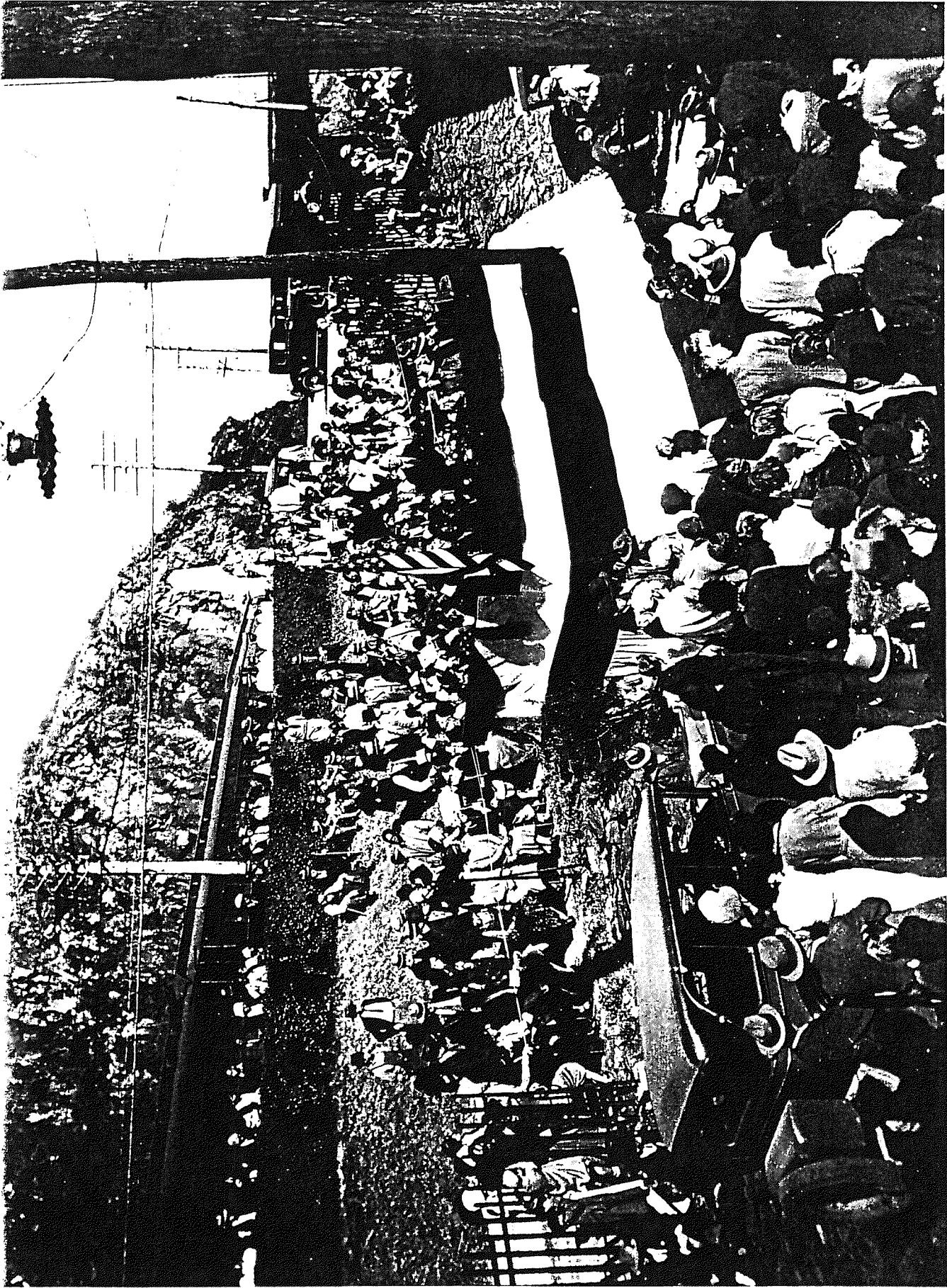


Figure 4. HF-1233. Dedication of the Heyward Shepherd Memorial, October 10, 1931.

and housed, treated kindly, and taught Christianity. The John Brown raid had taught that "the character of the negro, his loyalty and his faithfulness, is a reflection of the example set him by 'Ole Master' and 'Ole Miss'." Mrs. Bashinsky also spoke of her "black mammy," who loved her white "chilluns," and concluded that the sons of those faithful women would never turn against their masters. She continued,

We rejoice in the continual progress of the race; we share in their pride in the creation of their prosperity, . . . ; we sympathize with their aims and ambitions as directed by men of the type of Dr. Booker T. Washington and Professor R. R. Moton, and rejoice in the accomplishments of such splendid institutes as Tuskegee and Hampton.

But in a more intimate sense and closer to our hearts remains the old negro 'Mammy,' who with her humility and sweet decorum has become the real institution.

In closing, Mrs. Bashinsky called upon men and women to live up to the "lofty ideals of fidelity, loyalty, courage, and self-sacrifice" commemorated by the boulder to Heyward Shepherd.⁶⁸ Mrs. Bashinsky "was loudly applauded, for every word that she uttered could be distinctly heard and was heartily approved."⁶⁹

Shortly after Mrs. Bashinsky concluded her remarks, the Storer College Singers rose to provide music. Pearl Tatten, music director at Storer College, apparently incensed at the tone of the event which differed from the "celebration of interracial good-will" she had expected, took occasion to respond.⁷⁰ She said,

I am the daughter of a Connecticut volunteer, who wore the blue, who fought for the freedom of my people, for which John Brown struck the first blow. Today we

⁶⁸Text of Address by Mrs. L.M. Bashinsky, President General, UDC, at the dedication of the Faithful Slave Memorial, Harper's Ferry, W. Va., October 10, 1931, Confederate Veteran, 39, no. 11 (November 1931), pp. 411-14.

⁶⁹Shepherdstown Register, 15 October 1931, p. 1, col. 1.

⁷⁰Quoted in Afro-American, 17 October 1931, clipping, Binder "Heyward Shepherd Memorial (McDonald Collection)," HFNHP.

are looking forward to the future, forgetting those things of the past. We are pushing forward to a larger freedom, not in the spirit of the black mammy but in the spirit of new freedom and rising youth.⁷¹

No public reply nor open notice was given Pearl Tatten's statement. However, she did receive a note from a member of the UDC informing her that her remarks had been "untimely," "out of place," and "discourteous."⁷²

Pearl Tatten's remarks at the ceremony neither began nor ended controversy surrounding the Faithful Slave or Heyward Shepherd Memorial. After seeing an article in the September 22 issue of the Winchester Star, announcing the upcoming ceremony as a memorial to slaves who had remained faithful during John Brown's Raid, Miss Tatten immediately wrote McDonald questioning whether they should participate in such a program when "we honor John Brown and feel that while he may have used the wrong methods, his motive was just."⁷³

McDonald also received inquiries from the Afro-American, a black newspaper published in Baltimore, and the NAACP seeking verification of his participation in the unveiling of the memorial. The former simply sent a telegram asking for confirmation that McDonald would make an address at the dedication of an "UNCLE TOM, ANTI JOHN BROWN MONUMENT."⁷⁴ In his letter, NAACP secretary Walter White questioned the involvement of the president of a black school in the dedication of a memorial he understood attacked John Brown and promoted the idea that blacks did not participate in the struggle for their own freedom. In reply to the

⁷¹Quoted in Pittsburgh Courier, 24 October 1931, clipping, Binder "Heyward Shepherd Memorial (McDonald Collection)," HFNHP.

⁷²Quoted in Afro-American, 17 October 1931, clipping, Binder "Heyward Shepherd Memorial (McDonald Collection)," HFNHP. See also Shepherdstown Register, 15 October 1931, p. 1, col. 1.

⁷³Pearl E. Tatten to Mr. McDonald, 22 September 1931; Winchester Star, 22 September 1931, clipping, Binder "Heyward Shepherd Memorial (McDonald Collection)," HFNHP.

⁷⁴Telegram, Afro-American to Henry T. McDonald, 6 October 1931, Binder "Heyward Shepherd Memorial (McDonald Collection)," HFNHP.

latter, McDonald corrected White's erroneous information on the inscription. To both, he stressed the ceremony as an occasion to promote interracial understanding.⁷⁵

If the NAACP and the Afro-American expressed dismay at the prospect of this memorial, their unhappiness did not compare with the reaction to the dedication on October 10. Articles appeared in black newspapers in such cities as Chicago and Pittsburgh. The latter ran an editorial by Max Barber, president of the John Brown Memorial Association, challenging the comments made on Brown and slave attitudes, and denouncing the entire idea of erecting a memorial to Shepherd. Shepherd "didn't do a single thing to merit a monument," Barber explained. "He ran when one of John Brown's men ordered him to halt. He certainly could not have worshipped slavery. It is a bet that he did not know what John Brown's men came for."⁷⁶

The Afro-American provided the most commentary on the event. The newspaper praised Pearl Tatten for her comments but denounced McDonald and the Reverend George Bragg, a black minister from Baltimore, for their participation. In its October 17 issue, the newspaper carried an article refuting attempts to characterize John Brown as a criminal. The same issue reported speeches at the dedication had met with laughter from B&O railroad porters on a train near the platform and noted dissatisfaction among Storer College students with the ceremony.⁷⁷

A few blacks took an opposing position. Among them was James Walker, Heyward

⁷⁵Walter White to Dr. Henry T. MacDonald, 6 October 1931; Henry T. McDonald to Walter White, 8 October 1931; and [Henry T. McDonald] to the Afro-American, 6 October 1931, Binder "Heyward Shepherd Memorial (McDonald Collection)," HFNHP.

⁷⁶Pittsburgh Courier, 24 October 1931; Quarles, Allies for Freedom, p. 10. Also see Chicago Defender 16 October 1931 and Pittsburgh Courier, 12 October 1931, Binder "Heyward Shepherd Memorial (McDonald Collection)," HFNHP. Organized in 1924, the John Brown Memorial Association had several goals: to conduct annual pilgrimages to John Brown's grave in New York, to "rescue John Brown's name and the names of his followers from the obloquy and ignominy that American historians have heaped upon them," and to erect a monument to Brown. The association erected a monument at North Elba, New York, in 1935 (John Brown Memorial Association Brochure, Storer College Binder, Brackett, Newcomer, McDonald Papers #2; Lake Placid News, 3 May 1935 and 10 May 1935, clipping, McDonald Papers, HFNHP).

⁷⁷See various clippings from Afro-American, 10 October 1931, 17 October 1931 and 31 October 1931 in Binder "Heyward Shepherd Memorial (McDonald Collection); also 17 October 1931 clipping in McDonald Papers, HFNHP.

Shepherd descendant, who occupied a seat on the platform during the ceremony and later wrote an open letter to Pearl Tatten expressing his displeasure with her remarks. According to Walker, the event attempted to bridge sectionalism by having the descendants of those who fought for North and South come together in tribute to a loyal and trustworthy man. Accusing Miss Tatten of giving way to prejudice, Walker stated, "Your untimely blow-out might have wrecked the car of racial progress."⁷⁸ The Reverend Bragg believed the memorial and ceremony an attempt to effect good interracial relations and characterized Andrews' address as "simply magnificent."⁷⁹ Furthermore, a member of the Charles Town UDC reported that "leading colored men" found Andrews' address "so instructive" that they requested it be printed and sold in pamphlet form.⁸⁰

Many blacks, however, rebelled against the whole affair, and the furor continued for months, with Henry McDonald as a particular target.⁸¹ Emphasizing the condition of blacks in the South--Jim Crow laws, disfranchisement, segregation, lynchings, etc.--Storer College graduate Charles Hill called McDonald's participation "a colossal blunder."⁸² Hill wrote the Afro-American stating that, in participating in the dedication of a monument that was "a symbol of that inferiority complex which the slaves could not evade," McDonald was "creating an attitude of

⁷⁸Open Letter of James Walker to Miss Pearl Tatum (Tatten), undated typescript, Reel 117, Flash 9, HFNHP.

⁷⁹George F. Bragg, Jr., to James M Ranson, printed in Matthew Page Andrews, Heyward Shepherd: Victim of Violence. Bragg also wrote of his concern for interracial relations in a letter to Dr. McDonald, 22 October 1931, Binder "Heyward Shepherd Memorial (McDonald Collection)," HFNHP.

⁸⁰Report of the Charles Town Lawson Botts Chapter No. 261, Minutes of the Thirty-Fourth Annual Convention of the West Virginia Division, p. 83.

⁸¹When the memorial originally was proposed, McDonald adamantly opposed it. In 1922, he noted that if the monument were allowed, it would be "an eye sore and ever present bone of contention." (unsigned note [by Henry T. McDonald], 2 June 1922, on "Copy of Proposed Inscription," Storer College Binder 1910-1925, HFNHP). Although the inscription subsequently was changed, eliminating the sentence about which he was most concerned, some of the text he criticized remained. Yet, McDonald introduced the resolution in favor of the memorial at the town council meeting where it was unanimously approved (Minutes of the Thirty-Eighth Annual Convention, p. 299). Why he changed his mind about its presence in Harpers Ferry is not clear.

⁸²Charles E. Hill to Prof. Henry T. McDonald, 15 November 1931, Binder "Heyward Shepherd Memorial (McDonald Collection)," HFNHP.

servility in the students' minds."⁸³ W. E. B. Du Bois, editor of The Crisis, the NAACP publication, called the dedication a "pro-slavery celebration" and termed the participation of McDonald and Bragg "disgraceful."⁸⁴ Even Max Barber, who stated that he knew McDonald, a fellow member of the John Brown Memorial Association, must have left him "shocked and disgusted" at the statements made during the ceremony, concluded McDonald erred in participating in an event concocted by "a bunch of unregenerate rebels."⁸⁵

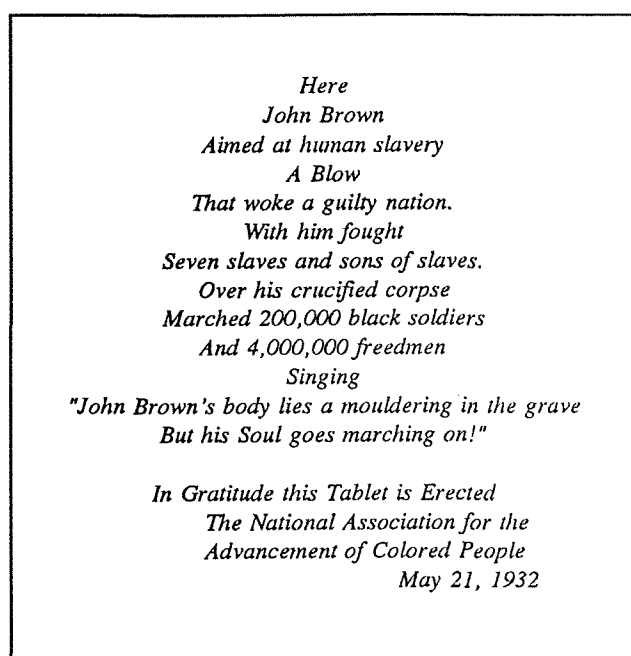


Figure 5. Proposed inscription for NAACP tablet.

The NAACP decided to take action to counter the impression created by the memorial to Heyward Shepherd. In March 1932, J. R. Clifford, former editor of the Pioneer Press, wrote McDonald requesting permission for the NAACP to hold a meeting on the Storer College campus to honor John Brown. McDonald replied favorably, requesting a place on the program "because some have misunderstood my attitude in respect to the Heyward Shepherd

Memorial."⁸⁶ That same month, Walter White wrote McDonald to ask if the NAACP might place a tablet on the John Brown Fort. Again McDonald replied favorably, although he requested

⁸³Afro-American, 31 October 1931, clipping, Binder "Heyward Shepherd Memorial (McDonald Collection)," HFNHP.

⁸⁴The Crisis, 41, no. 1 (January 1932): 467.

⁸⁵Pittsburgh Courier, 24 October 1931, clipping, Binder "Heyward Shepherd Memorial (McDonald Collection)," HFNHP.

⁸⁶President [Henry T. McDonald] to J.R. Clifford, Esq, 17 March 1932; J.R. Clifford to Prof. McDonald, 14 March 1932, Reel 123, Flash 9, HFNHP.

further information on the tablet's inscription. As requested, White forwarded a copy of the inscription written by Du Bois.⁸⁷ (See Figure 5)

McDonald opposed its language. He wrote, "I deem [it] ill-advised and historically inaccurate and I believe that the result of placing a tablet with such an inscription upon the historic fort . . . would be an unhappy thing."⁸⁸ Upon consultation with the trustees, McDonald informed White that the proposed inscription would not do and enclosed the suggestion of trustee Thomas Robertson for a simple statement.⁸⁹ While expressing understanding for McDonald's and the trustees' point of view, White's response clearly shows the impact of the Heyward Shepherd Memorial and the thinking it represented on the NAACP's action:

Inasmuch as there is in the immediate vicinity a nationally publicized tablet giving the Confederate point of view and, far more important, because there has been a growing tendency within recent years towards a new copperheadism so far as the historians treat the Civil War and the reconstruction period, it was our wish to place permanently a statement of the point of view of the Negro and his friends.⁹⁰

The NAACP meeting took place May 21, 1932. McDonald, Oswald Garrison Villard, J. Max Barber, and Du Bois all participated. Several hundred people attended, at which time most first learned the Storer College president and trustees had refused to allow the tablet on the fort and that the tablet would go to New York to await a change at Storer College. Villard's and Barber's speeches apparently paid tribute to John Brown, but Du Bois defended the inscription, suggested the UDC had influenced the college's decision, and expressed sympathy for the college's

⁸⁷Walter White to Dr. McDonald, 23 March 1932; President [Henry T. McDonald] to Walter White, 25 March 1932; and Walter White to Dr. McDonald, 16 April 1932, Reel 123, Flash 9, HFNHP.

⁸⁸Henry T. McDonald to Trustees of Storer College, 19 April 1932, Reel 123, Flash 9, HFNHP.

⁸⁹President [Henry T. McDonald] to Mr. White, 25 April 1932, Reel 123, Flash 9, HFNHP. In general, the trustees, such as Alfred Williams Anthony, Thomas Robertson, Harry Myers, Howard Grose, John Fletcher, Katherine S. Westfall, and S.B. Stillman, seem to have agreed with McDonald. Robertson's suggested inscription was "JOHN BROWN 1800-1859 'HIS SOUL GOES MARCHING ON'." (See 25 April 1932 letter from Thomas E. Robertson)

⁹⁰Walter White to Dr. McDonald, 2 May 1932, Reel 123, Flash 9, HFNHP.

lack of courage. As at the dedication of the Heyward Shepherd Memorial seven months earlier, Pearl Tatten made an unscheduled statement. She said the students did not need sympathy, a statement later said to mean a number of students and teachers opposed the administration's decision.⁹¹

In the aftermath, Storer College and Henry McDonald came under intense fire, usually with language recalling McDonald's participation in the Heyward Shepherd Memorial dedication. For example, the Washington Tribune accused the "white Judases" of Storer College who refused to allow the NAACP tablet of being the same men who had assisted the UDC in erecting the memorial to Shepherd "to glorify human slavery." With such leadership, the newspaper concluded, Storer College was "a failure" and "a detriment to Negro freedom and manhood," and it urged black students to blacklist the college.⁹² The Afro-American described McDonald as the kind of white leader who was more dangerous than racist demagogues, "the Bleases, Tillmans or Heflins."⁹³ In discussing the reaction of those in attendance at the NAACP ceremony at Storer College, the newspaper stated, ". . . it was written in every facial expression that Dr. McDonald, apologist for those Southern whites, who would desecrate John Brown's memory while glorifying the slave regime, must go."⁹⁴

McDonald did not go--at least not for another dozen years--and the furor eventually died

⁹¹Washington Tribune, 27 May 1932, Reel 123, Flash 10, HFNHP; Quarles, Allies for Freedom, pp. 181-82.

⁹²Washington Tribune, 27 May 1932, Reel 123, Flash 10, HFNHP.

⁹³Afro-American, 28 May 1932, Reel 123, Flash 9, HFNHP. The reference is to Senators Cole Blease and Ben Tillman of South Carolina and J. Thomas Heflin of Alabama, who not only championed black disfranchisement and segregation but in general fueled white hatred of blacks for political gain.

⁹⁴Afro-American, 28 May 1932, Reel 123, Flash 9, HFNHP.

down.⁹⁵ Yet the language used throughout the controversy over the Heyward Shepherd Memorial and the NAACP tablet reveals the intensity of black anger over continued racism and white efforts to depict slavery in positive terms, antebellum blacks as ineffectual people loyally clinging to southern whites, and John Brown and his men as criminals on an evil mission. That anger did not die but rather became silent. With the stronger push for black equality in the 1950s and 1960s, it resurfaced to denounce again the message conveyed on the memorial.

⁹⁵This episode probably contributed to McDonald's forced retirement in 1944. McDonald correspondence about that time suggests he opposed blacks who were interested in a more assertive position on black rights and in having black schools such as Storer run by blacks. This correspondence also suggests he believed those blacks were, at least in part, behind the effort to push him aside. See Henry T. McDonald to Dr. Beall, 15 March 1943, 16 June 1943 and 31 January 1944, Reel 117, Flash 5; Henry T. McDonald to Harry [Myers], 29 February 1944, Reel 117, Flash 18.

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