HISTORIC STRUCTURES REPORT
PART I

JOHN C. UNSELD BUILDINGS
(No. 10 & 10A)

HARPERS FERRY NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK
Administrative, Historical
and
Architectural Data

by
Charles W. Snell
May 28, 1958

001340 16

EASTERN OFFICE
Division of Design & Construction
JUN 2 4 1958
Chief
Architect
Landscape Architect
Engineer
Hist. Architect
Proj. Control Off.
Safety Engineer
Adm. Officer
Personnel Officer

Region Five
421 Walnut Street
Philadelphia 6, Pa.

June 23, 1958

Memorandum

To: Director

From: Regional Director

Subject: Historic Building Report, John C. Unseld Buildings (Buildings 10 and 10-A), Harpers Ferry National Monument

In accordance with the procedure outlined in FO-11-56, attached for your consideration is the Historic Building Report for the John C. Unseld Buildings (Buildings 10 and 10-A), Harpers Ferry National Monument, prepared by Superintendent Anderson and Historian Snell. By copy of this memorandum, we are forwarding one copy of the report to EODC for review and comment.

The report should be reviewed by no later than July 3. Our comments will follow.

(Sgd.) Daniel J. Tobin

Daniel J. Tobin
Regional Director

In duplicate

Attachment

Copy to: Chief, EODC, w/c report
Supt., Harpers Ferry

H30

EASTERN OFFICE
Division of Design & Construction
AUG 2 5 1958
Chief
Architect
Landscape Architect
Engineer
Proj. Control Off.
Safety Engineer
Adm. Officer
Personnel Officer

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Region Five
421 Walnut Street
Philadelphia 6, Pa.

August 22, 1958

Memorandum

To: Superintendent, Harpers Ferry National Monument

From: Regional Director

Subject: Historic Building Report, John C. Unseld Buildings (Buildings 10 and 10-A, Harpers Ferry National Monument

A busy travel season for personnel of this Office has prevented our commenting on the subject report. In the meantime, as you are of course aware, it has been approved by the Washington Office.

We, too, recommend its approval, subject to the proviso of its being amended, if necessary, in accordance with an approved MISSION 66 Prospectus for Harpers Ferry. We particularly like the recommendation to keep Building 10-A as ruins, which will serve to preserve the atmosphere of age and tie in the town with the other ruins of the area, such as the Hall's rifle works. By way of a suggestion, we should very much like to see an artist's sketch of the restored buildings covering the entire block or section prepared when all the survey reports for the buildings composing it have been approved.

(Sgd.) Daniel J. Tobin

Daniel J. Tobin
Regional Director

In duplicate

Copy to: Director
Chief, EODC

001340

HISTORIC BUILDING REPORT

PART I

for

BUILDINGS NO. 10 AND 10-A,

THE JOHN C. UNSELD BUILDINGS

Harpers Ferry National Monument

Prepared by:

Charles W. Snell,
Historian (Park Supervisory)
Dated: May 28, 1958
40 pages.

APPROVAL SHEET

Recommended: _____
Director

Recommended: _____
Regional Director

Recommended: _____
Chief, E.O.D.C.

APPROVED: Frank H. Anderson
Superintendent

Harpers Ferry National Monument

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SECTION I - ADMINISTRATIVE DATA

A. Names and Numbers of Buildings:

Buildings No. 10 and 10-A (Ruin), The John C. Unseld Buildings.

B. Proposed Use of Structures:

The exterior of Building No. 10 is to be restored to the 1859-65 period and perhaps also the first floor as the Great Southern Clothing Hall, a period exhibit of a ready made clothing store. The ruined wall of Building No. 10-A is to be stabilized.

C. Provisions for Operating the House:

No funds have been programed for the restoration. Money will, of course, be required for both the restoration and for the exhibit of a ready made clothing store.

D. Preliminary Estimate of Cost for Rehabilitating the Structures and Grounds:

The estimated cost for restoring the exterior and rehabilitating the interior of Building No 10 as well as stabilizing the ruins of Building No. 10-A is $46,000.

SECTION II - HISTORICAL DATA

I. OWNERSHIP OF THE LAND, 1835 - 1865.

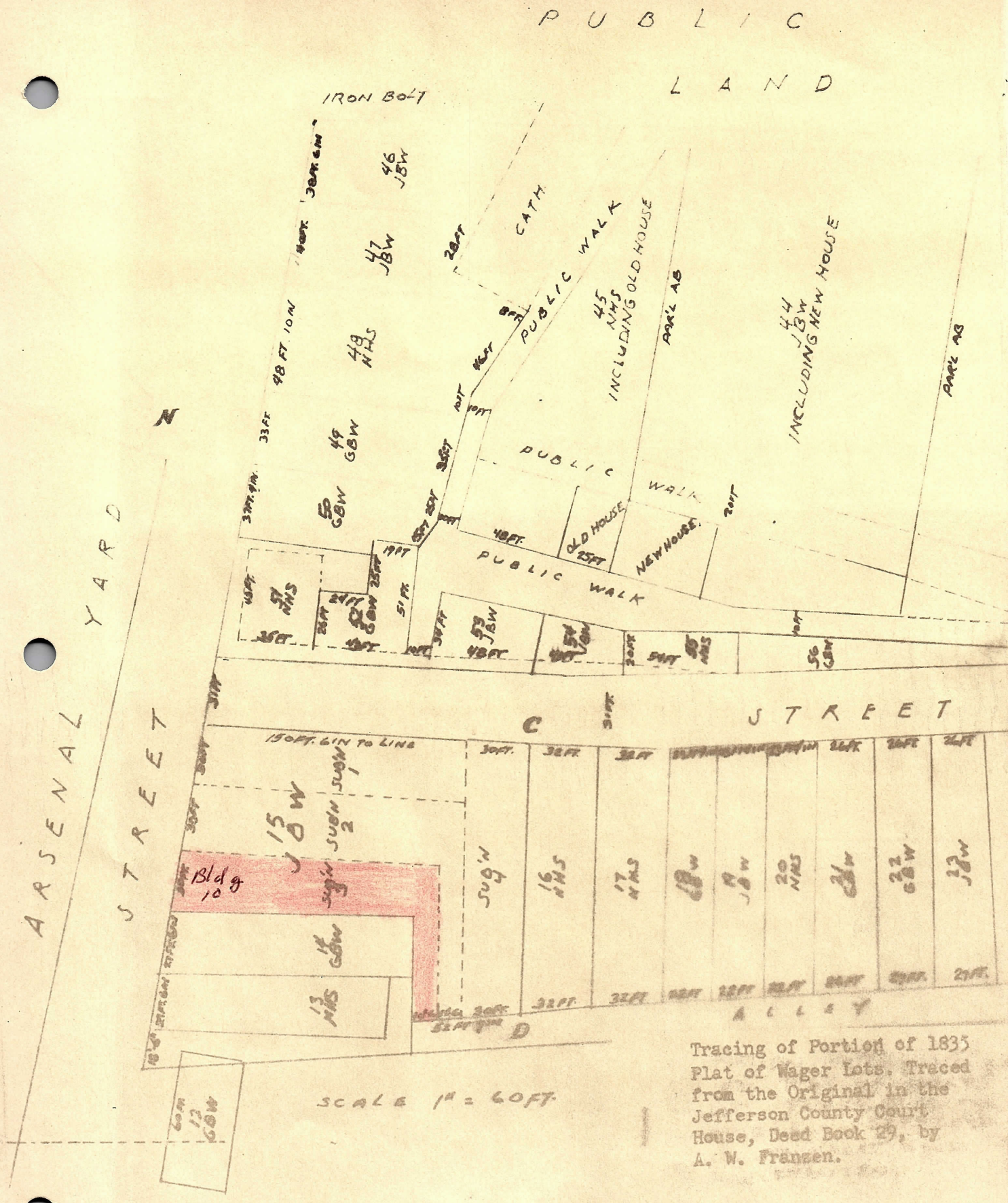
On April 2, 1835 the Circuit Superior Court of Law and Chancery for Jefferson County, Virginia, appointed Commissioners "to lay off and divide into three equal lots and parcels, the real estate at Harper's Ferry which descended to James B. Wager, Gerard B. Wager and Salley Ann Wager, now Salley Ann Swayne, the wife of Noah H. Swayne, from their father, John Wager, (Jr.) deceased."[1] The property thus being divided at Harpers Ferry was commonly known as the "Wager Six Acre Reservation", an island of land in private ownership, surrounded on all sides by land owned by the United Government.

On October 10, 1835 the three Commissioners reported to the Court: "To James B. Wager we allot & assign the following lots as designated J.B.W. & numbered in the annexed Plat, viz. Lots No. 1-7-9- 15 being a part of the old tavern lot (on which Bldg. No. 10 and 10-A now stand) -19-23-25-27-37-39-41-44, including the new buildings recently attached to the mansion -46-47-53 & 54." The Court further directed that George W. Sappington be appointed as a special receiver of the Court to take into possession the share assigned to James B. Wager for the purpose of collecting rents on this land into the Court, "from and after the time the said (James B.) Wager took benefit of the insolvent laws..."[3]

1. Gibson, etc. vs Wager, etc., Decree, Deed Book 29, pp.140-141, Jefferson County Court House, Charles Town, West Virginia.

2. 1835 Plat, "The Wager Six Acre Reservation, Drawn by James M. Brown, S.G.C.," in Deed Book 29, p.140, see page two of this report.

3. Deed Book 29, pp.140-141.



Tracing of Portion of 1835 Plat of Wager Lots. Traced from the Original in the Jefferson County Court House, Deed Book 29, by A. W. Franzen.

On January 14, 1836, the Court appointed two Commissioners and directed them to sell at public auction to the highest bidder the real estate of James B. Wager in Harpers Ferry. On November 26, 1836 the Court further authorized the Commissioners to divide Lot No. 15, the old tavern lot, into parcels. The Commissioners therefore divided Lot No. 15 into four lots numbered subdivisions No. 1, 2, 3, and 4 of Lot No.15. On October 28, 1837, Lot No. 15, with its four subdivisions, were offered for sale at public auction.[4]

Lot No. 15, subdivision 3, on which Bldg. No. 10 and 10-A now stand, was therefore purchased by Philip Coons on October 28, 1837 for the sum of $1,450.00.[5]

On May 1, 1840, 51 men purchased Wager Lot No. 15, subdivision 3, from Philip Coons for the sum of $1,250. The group, however, was unable to raise the full amount within the required time limits, and under the terms of the original agreement, the property was put up at public auction on November 6, 1841 "before Philip Coons store" (then located in Bldg. No.44) at Harpers Ferry. Philip Coons himself, being the highest bidder, repurchased the property for $1,000.[6]

On May 30, 1846, in consideration for $100 paid by Philip Coons to Gerard B. Wager, Coons and Wager exchanged the following land:

4. Deed of B. & S., February 8, 1841, Deed Book 24, pp.457-58.
5. Deed of B. & S., August 1, 1843, Deed Book 26, pp. 474-475.
6. Deed of B. & S., March 31, 1843, Deed Book 27, p.204

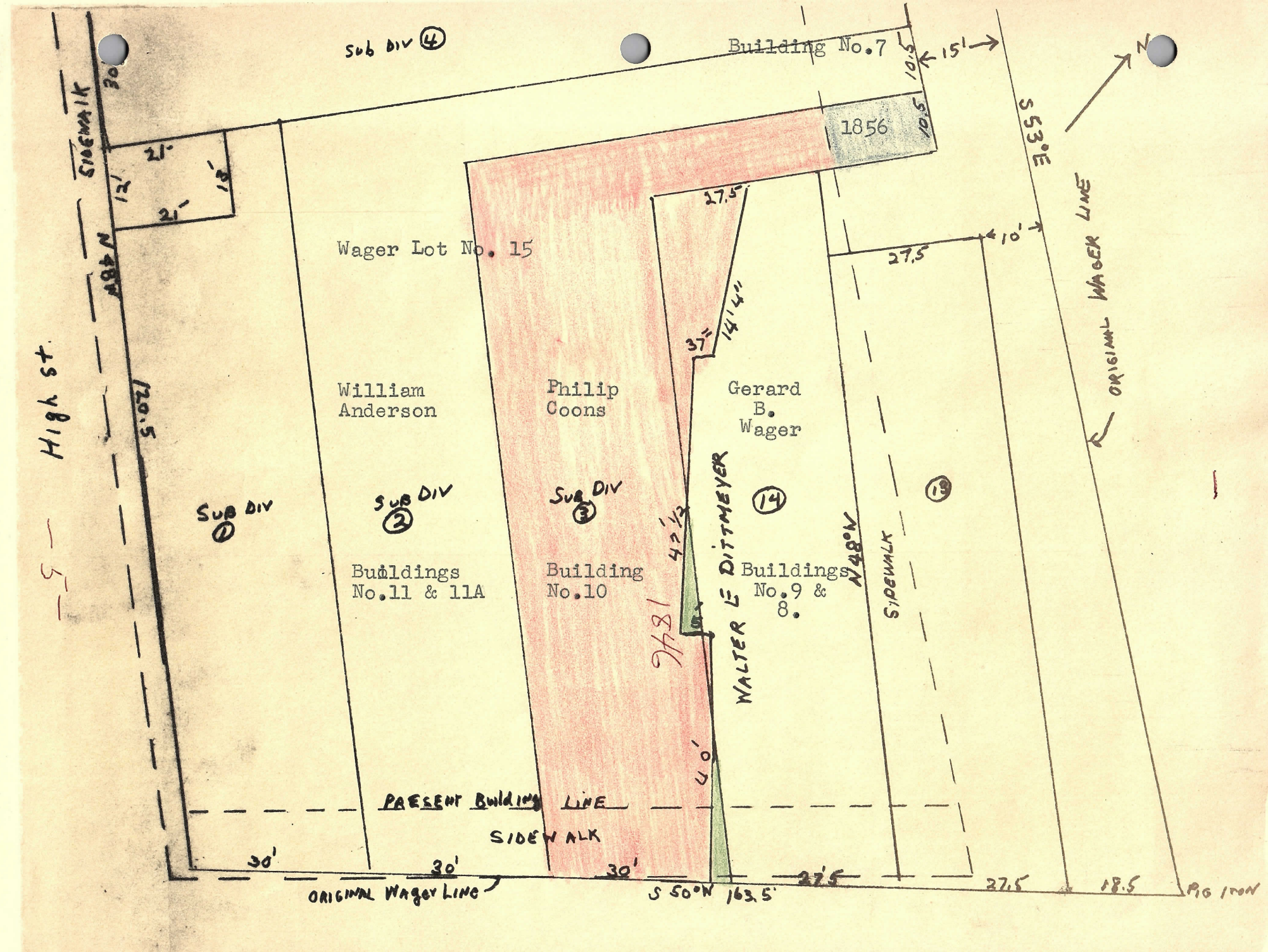
"Whereas Gerard B. Wager and Philip Coons are the owners of two lots or parcels of land lying and being at Harper's Ferry,... contiguous to each other upon Shenandoah Street, and known and designated upon the map or plat of the lands of the heirs of Jno Wager, decd as number fourteen and as number three of lot number fifteen, the said Gerard B. Wager being the owner of the first and the said Philip Coons being the owner of the second mentioned, and the boundary line between these two lots intersecting the street in their front not at right angles but obliquely, and the said boundary line being on that account, inconvenient and disadvantageous to both parties hereto, they have agreed to change and to substitute therefore the lines and boundaries herein and hereafter mentioned and described,... that the boundary lines between these two lots shall hereafter be as follows: beginning at a point in the front line of lot number three of lot fifteen about two 10/12 feet westwardly from the corner common to both in said front line, and running thence in a north westernly direction along and parallel to the south western side of the south western gable of the three story brick house upon the lot of the said Gerard B. Wager to the western corner of said building, thence in a straight line at right angles to the first line five feet, thence in a line at right angles to the second line and parallel to the first Forty seven 6/12 feet to an iron bolt driven in the ground, thence at right angles to the last line thirty seven inches to another Iron bolt in the ground, thence in a straight line and in a northwardly direction fourteen 4/12 feet to another bolt set in back line of lot number 14 fifty 9/12 feet from the wall supposed to be on the U.S. line, fifteen 2/12 feet from the southern and thirty 1/12 feet from the eastern corner of William Anderson's (now Bldg. No.7) Warehouse..."

Wager gave to Coons "in and to so much of lot number fourteen before mentioned as lies west and south of the boundary line herein and before described as agreed upon between the parties hereto, to have and to hold that part of said lot number fourteen lying west and south of said boundary line..."

And Coons gave to Wager: "to so much of said lot number three of lot number fifteen as lies north and east of said boundary line herein and before mentioned and described..." 7

See page 5 for a plat showing the above exchange of land. The purpose of this agreement was twofold: First, through error, Michael Foley, the builder of Bldg. No.9 which stood on Wager Lot No.14, had built over the original line about two feet on Coons' lot. The exchange of land therefore rectified this error by granting Gerard B. Wager the land on which his structure actually stood. Second, it granted Philip Coons the right to built on to the end of Bldg. No. 9.

7. May 30, 1846, Deed of Exchange, Deed Book 28, pp.144-145.


Sub Div (4)
Building No.7
1856
15'
10.5
10.5
N
S53°E
Original Wager Line
Wager Lot No. 15
27.5
10'
27.5
37"
141.4"
William Anderson
Philip Coons
Gerard B. Wager
Sub Div (1)
Sub Div (2)
Sub Div (3)
(14)
(13)
Buildings No.11 & 11A
Building No.10
Buildings No.9 & 8.
42 1/2
7481
Walter L. Dittmeyer
N48°W
Sidewalk
40'
Present Building Line
Sidewalk
30'
30'
30'
27.5
27.5
18.5
Original Wager Line
S 50°W 163.5'
Big Iron
High St.
Sidewalk
48°W
20.5'
30'
21'
12'
13'
21'

On October 18, 1855, in order to secure debts owned to John C. Unseld, of Maryland, Philip Coons put the following property into trust:

"...A certain House & Lot of Land lying and being at Harpers Ferry..., being the same now occupied by the Said Philip Coons & Coons & Beckham as a Dwelling and Store, on Shenandoah Street, opposite the Arsenal yard, and the same which was purchased by the said Coons from...Commissioners appointed by the Circuit Superior Court of Law and Chancery for the County of Jefferson... to sell the real estate of James B. Wager, Said lot being designated on the map of the land of the heirs of John Wager decd, as Lot 3 of Lot 15..." 8

In May 1856 a series of court actions were brought against Philip Coons' real and personal property to settle a number of his debts.[9]

On July 18, 1856 the Common Council of the Town of Harpers Ferry acquired for $227.08 and one-third cent from Philip Coons the following property:

"...being the whole of the portion of said subdivision of said Lots that fronts on the 15 feet alley delineated on Said Plat running back 25 feet from said fifteen foot alley 9 1/12 feet for its width and containing 229 1/12 square feet of Land..."

The purpose of this acquisition was to open or widen what is now called Potomac Street, at this point, to its present width.[10] (See Plat on page 5 of this report).

On October 25, 1856,[11] Philip Coons' Bldg. No. 10 and 10-A, with the lot, were auctioned off at a trustee's sale and purchased for $3,000.00 by John C. Unseld.[12] Mr. Unseld remained the owner of this property from 1856 until after the Civil War. As Unseld was the owner of this property during the period with which we are primarily concerned, 1859-65, it is suggested that Bldg. No. 10 be called the "John C. Unseld Building."

8. Deed of Trust, October 15, 1855, Deed Book 35, pp.120-122.
9. Court Actions in Deed Book 35, May 8, 1856, p.355; May 11, 1856, p.358-59; May 13, 1856, pp.355-356.
10. July 18, 1856, Deed Book 35, pp.311-312.
11. Virginia Free Press, October 23, 1856, p.3, c.3.
12. Deed of B. & S., February 24, 1857, Deed Book 37, pp.411-413.

II. A MYSTERY SOLVED. USE OF THE OLD TAVERN LOT NO. 15, 1800-1837.

One of the questions that has bothered this Historian in the preparation of Survey Reports on Bldgs. No. 11 and 12, has been the relationship of the buildings known to have been standing on Wager Lot No.15, subdivisions 1, 2, 3, and 4 before 1836 to the structures standing today on those same lots. This question has now been answered.

In preparation for the public auction of the James B. Wager real estate at Harpers Ferry in 1836, the newspaper carried the following description of Wager Lot No. 15 before it was divided into four smaller lots:

"A lot fronting on the U.S. Arsenal 90 feet by about 150, binding on a cross street (High Street). On this lot are erected the spacious frame buildings occupied and known as a Hotel for the last 30 years..."[13]

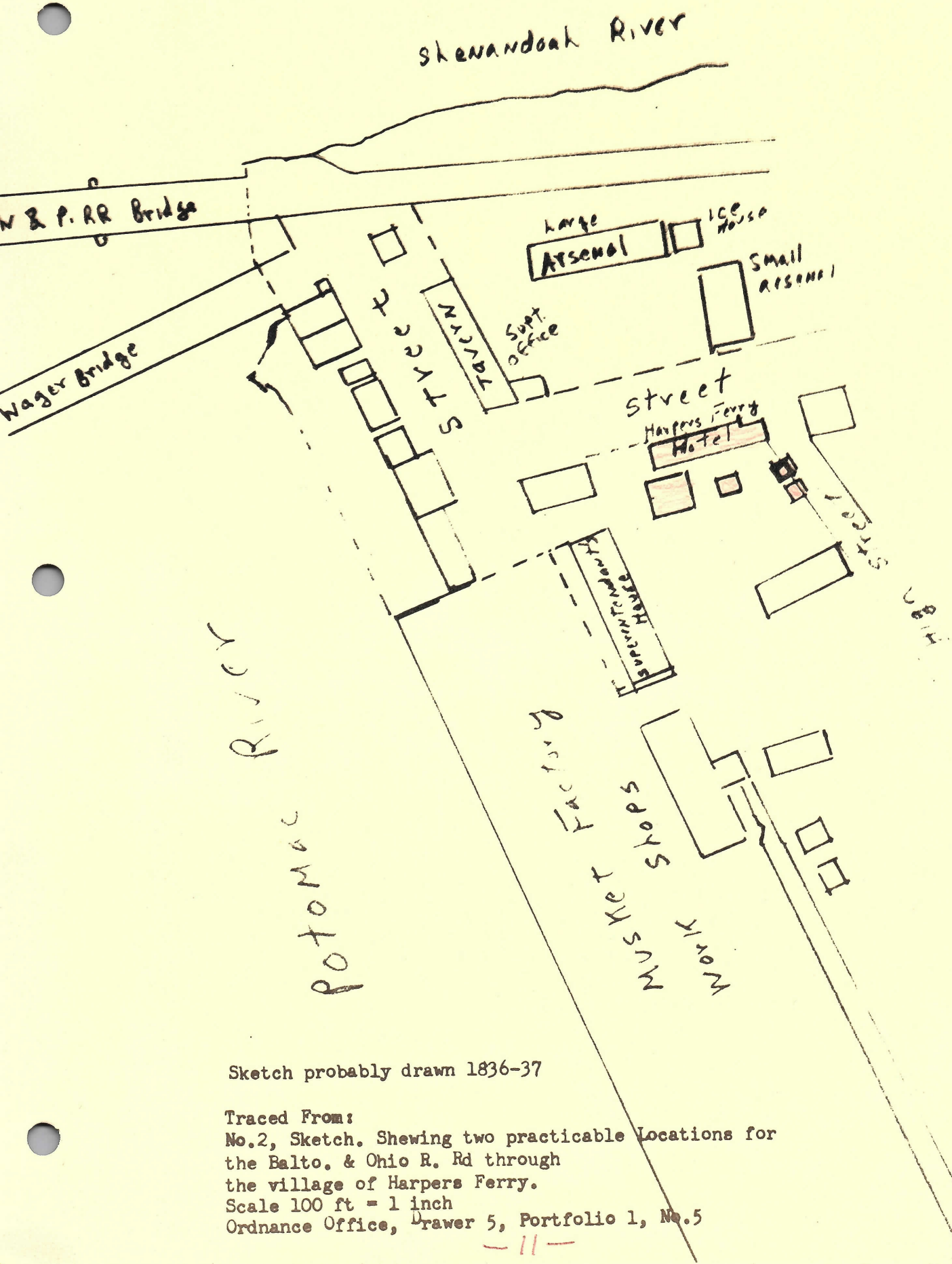
Indeed these building dated back to 1803, as the group of structures are shown as standing on the site of Wager Lot 15, subdivisions 1, 2, and 3 on "Plan of the proposed junction of the Canal at the Lower Falls of the Shenandoah with the Public Canal at HARPERS FERRY and the necessary Locks for descending into the Potomack River," dated February 1803.[14] See page 8 of this report for a tracing of the 1803 map.

A large building covering this same general area is also shown on the 1835 map: "Harpers Ferry Shewing the Location of the Winchester and Potomac Railroad, Drawn by Lieut. White, Allen and R.S. Smith, U. S. Army, under the direction of James Kearney, Lt. Col. and T.E., 1835, Map 2."[15]

13. Virginia Free Press, April 7, 1836, p.4,

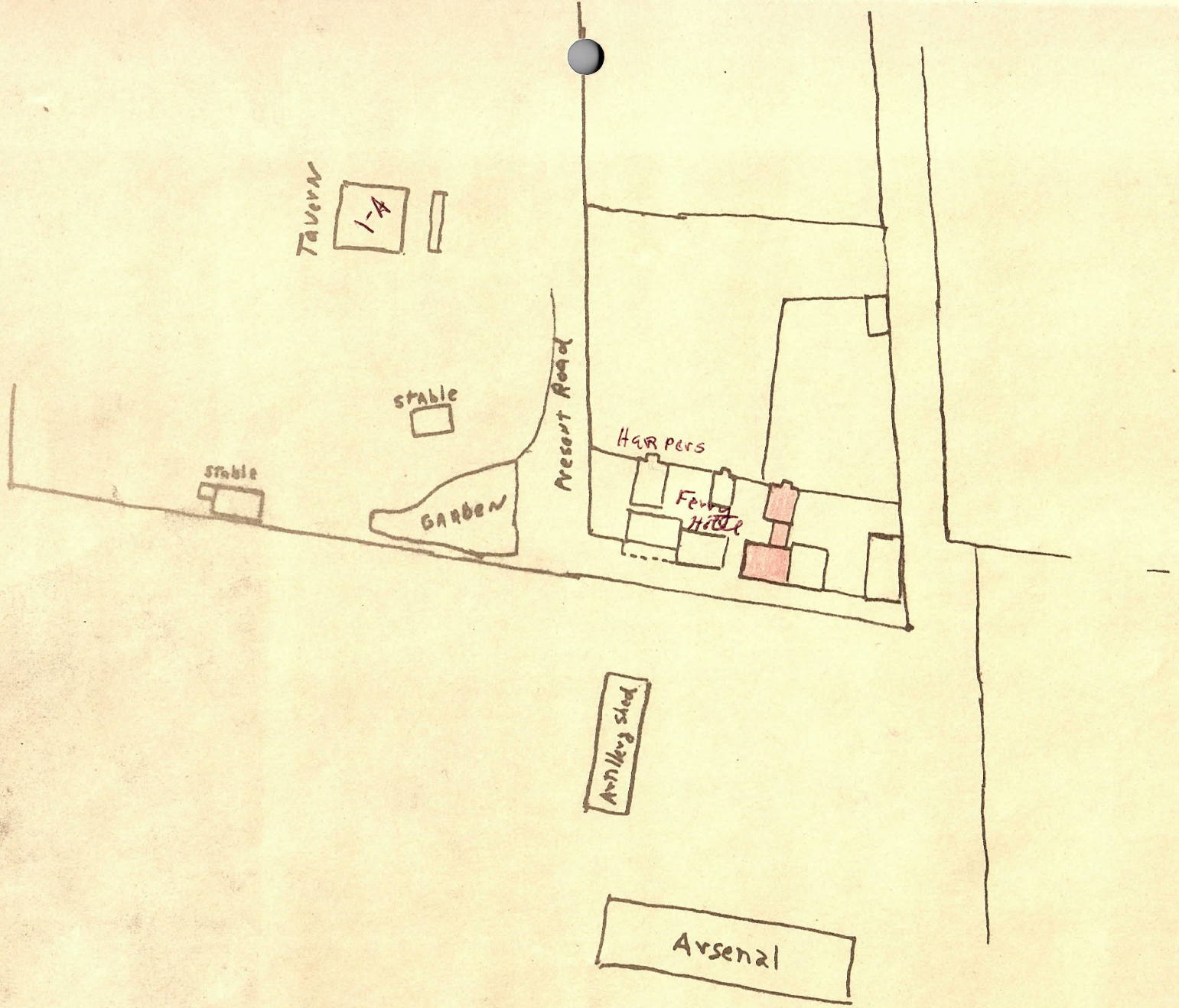
14. National Archives R.G. 77, Records of the Office of the Chief of Engineers, Fortification Map File, Part of Map: Dr. 150-sheet 1.

15. National Archives R.G. 77, Dr. 150 Sheet 82-2. Map reproduced as Part of Harpers Ferry N.M. Master Plan, Drawing No. NM-HF-3002, sheet 2 of 3.



Sketch probably drawn 1836-37

Traced From:
No.2, Sketch. Shewing two practicable Locations for the Balto. & Ohio R. Rd through the village of Harpers Ferry.
Scale 100 ft = 1 inch
Ordnance Office, Drawer 5, Portfolio 1, No.5



Tracing of a Portion of the 1803 Map
of Harpers Ferry. Scale 4 perches to an Inch.

An advertisement of Catherine Wager, the widow of John Wager, Jr., in 1824 throws considerable light on the nature of these buildings:

"HARPERS FERRY HOTEL

"I will rent for one or more years, this noted establishment at Harpers Ferry, Va., consisting of 22 rooms, several of which answer for parlours, and one, 40 by 20 feet, is suitable for public occasions, with all the necessary out-houses." 16

From at least October 23, 1814 until October 1817, the tavern was leased at $640 per annum[17] and operated by Basil Williamson. From November 1817 until February or March 1823, the hotel was operated by William Graham for a rent of $680 per year.[18] Major James Stephenson ran the hotel from April 1824 until April 1830.[19] From 1830 to 1834 it was operated by Captain Meriwether Thompson.[20] In July 1834, Mrs. Ann C. Stephenson, the widow of Major James Stephenson, and Fontaine Beckham leased the structure as the "Harpers Ferry Hotel and Mail Stage Office", and it was here that Henry Clay was entertained when he visited Harpers Ferry in July of that year.[21] An "Oyster Refectory" was opened in the basement of the hotel by Alexander Ball in October of 1834.[22]

On October 10, 1835, because of the bankruptcy of James B. Wager, the Court divided the Six Acre Reservation into three equal parcels, distributing the land among the three Wager heirs. Lot No. 15 with the tavern, fell to the lot of James B. Wager, and was leased out from that date by a Special Commissioner of the Circuit Court until the final sale of the lot on October 28, 1837.

16. Harpers Ferry Free Press, March 31, 1824, p.4, c.3.

17. Will Book No.2, pp. 287-289.

18. Will Book No. 3, pp.137-143; 168-170; 231-237; 263-267; 424-429.

19. Lease, June 2, 1826, Deed Book 15, pp.76-78, Virginia Free Press, March 7, 1827, p.3, April 7, 1830, p.3,c.5.

During this period of operation under the supervision of the Court, the Hotel was apparently operated by Nicolas Fitzimmons and his wife, Isabella;[23] their lease expired on March 31, 1838. This event ushered in a new era in the history of Harpers Ferry; the complete range of old buildings comprising the Harpers Ferry Hotel was razed to the ground. It is thus clear that these buildings bear no relation to the present buildings, No. 10, 10-A, 11, 11-A, 12 and 12-A, that now occupy the original site of the old Harpers Ferry Hotel.

On page 11 of this report will be found "Sketch No. 2, Shewing two practicable Locations for the Balto. & Ohio R. Rd, through the Village of Harpers Ferry." This map must have been drawn sometime in 1836 or 1837 and thus delineates the old Harpers Ferry Hotel buildings just before they were torn down.

20. Virginia Free Press, June 16, 1830, p.3,c.5; September 15, 1830, p.3, c.3; November 3, 1830, p.3; January 19, 1831, p.3; January 19, 1831, p.3, c.5; June 2, 1831, p.3,c.4; September 1,1831, p.3; June 21, 1832, p.3; March 21, 1833, p.4.

21. Virginia Free Press,July 10, 1834, p.3,c.1; July 24, 1834, p.3, c.3.

22. Virginia Free Press, October 31, 1834, p.3, c4.

23. Virginia Free Press, May 5, 1836, p.3, c.4; April 20, 1837, p.3,c.2; September 22, 1836, p.3,c.5; February 23, 1837, p.3, c.2; April 6, 1837, p.3, c.3; November 23, 1837, p.3,c.6.

III. 1838, A NEW ERA, THE CONSTRUCTION OF BLDG. NO. 10 and 10-A.

The spring of 1838 was a busy one in the construction field at Harpers Ferry. It witnessed the complete demolition of the range of old structures that had comprised the Harpers Ferry Hotel and saw the erection of an entire row of new buildings in their place. John G. Wilson was constructing a fine three story brick building, with cellar, on Wager Lot No. 13 (see the plat on page 2).[24] Foley Michael was also building a three story brick house, now known as Bldg. No. 9, on Wager Lot No. 14.[25] On Wager Lot No. 15, subdivisions 1 and 2, William Anderson was in the process of erecting two fine three story brick buildings with slate roofs that are now known as Bldgs. No. 11 and 12. These two structures were completed in the spring of 1839.[26] Also constructed by Anderson in the 1838-39 period, on Wager Lot 15, subdivision 4, were two stone two-story buildings, with slate roofs, that are now known as Bldgs. No. 7 and 15.[27]

Mr. Philip Coons, the owner of Wager Lot No. 15, subdivision 3, we are happy to report, was no less industrious than his neighbors and hence was busily engaged in erecting not only Bldgs. No. 10 and 10-A, but also on Wager Lot No. 46, a two story stone structure, with two store rooms on the first floor, that is now known as Bldg. No. 44. All three of Philip Coons' buildings were completed by the winter of 1838.[28]

24. Virginia Free Press, July 12, 1838, p.3, c.5.

25. Virginia Free Press, September 27, 1838, p.3, c.3.

26. Virginia Free Press, November 16, 1837, p.3,c.4. Harpers Ferry Constitutionalist. May 1,1839,p.4.

27. Virginia Free Press, November 16, 1837, p.3,c.4.

28. Virginia Free Press, December 6, 1838, p.3,c.7. September 27, 1838,p.3,c.3; October 25, 1838,p.3,c.3. Businesses moving into the new buildings.

Bldg. No. 10, as originally constructed by Philip Coons in 1838, apparently fronted approximately 25 feet on Shenandoah Street, extending from Bldg No. 11 towards Bldg. No. 9, but leaving a three foot alley between Bldg. No. 10 and 9. Bldg. No. 10 was 40 feet five inches deep, built of ~~brick~~ brick, two stories high, and probably had a slate roof in 1838. There was a cellar under the structure, one large store room on the first floor and the second floor was designed to be used as a dwelling house.

Bldg. No. 10-A, judging by the ruined walls, was 25 feet wide and about 35 feet deep. It was also constructed of brick, two stories in height, probably had a slate roof, but there was no cellar under the structure. The firstfloor of Bldg. No. 10-A was first used as a bakery. An advertisement appearing in a 1839 newspaper gives us the following information regarding the second floor of this structure:

"FOR RENT

"Three rooms over the Bake House, with the use of cellar (in Bldg. No.10?). The access to them is on one side (off the alley?), and entirely unconnected with the balance of the house. Persons desirous of renting, can see them by calling on the subscriber on the premises...
B. Sweetman." 29

In 1846 Coons apparently enlarged and altered Bldg. No. 10 by closing the three foot alley that had previously existed between Bldgs. No. 9 and 10. This was done by extending Bldg. No. 10 up to and building on to the wall of Bldg. No. 9. Authority for using the end of Bldg. No.9 for this purpose was granted in 1846 in the deed of exchange of land between Philip Coons and Gerard B. Wager; this agreement reads in part:

29. Harpers Ferry Constitutionalist, September 11, 1839, p.3.

Gerard B. Wager consented that Philip Coons:

"shall have the privilege of building against the south western side of the south western gable wall of said main building of said Wager, and of placing upon and against the said gable wall such lumber and materials as shall be necessary and proper for that purpose, provided that said Philip Coons shall not by any means nor in any manner weaken, impair or injuriously affect the strength of said wall, nor said building, nor penetrate said gable wall further than seven inches..." 30

See page 15 of this report for a tracing of the original 1846 plat covering this exchange of land. Other evidence ~~for~~ supporting the closing up of the alley about this time appeared in the deed for the sale of part of Wager Lot No.15, subdivisions 2 and 4, to Susan Downey by William Anderson in 1848. Anderson, in making this sale, particularly reserved a ~~way~~ right of way to his Bldg. No.11-A because of his "said lot being closed up in front", which had not been the case before. 31

A newspaper gives us the following description of Bldg. No. 10 in October 1856:

" "TRUSTEE'S SALE

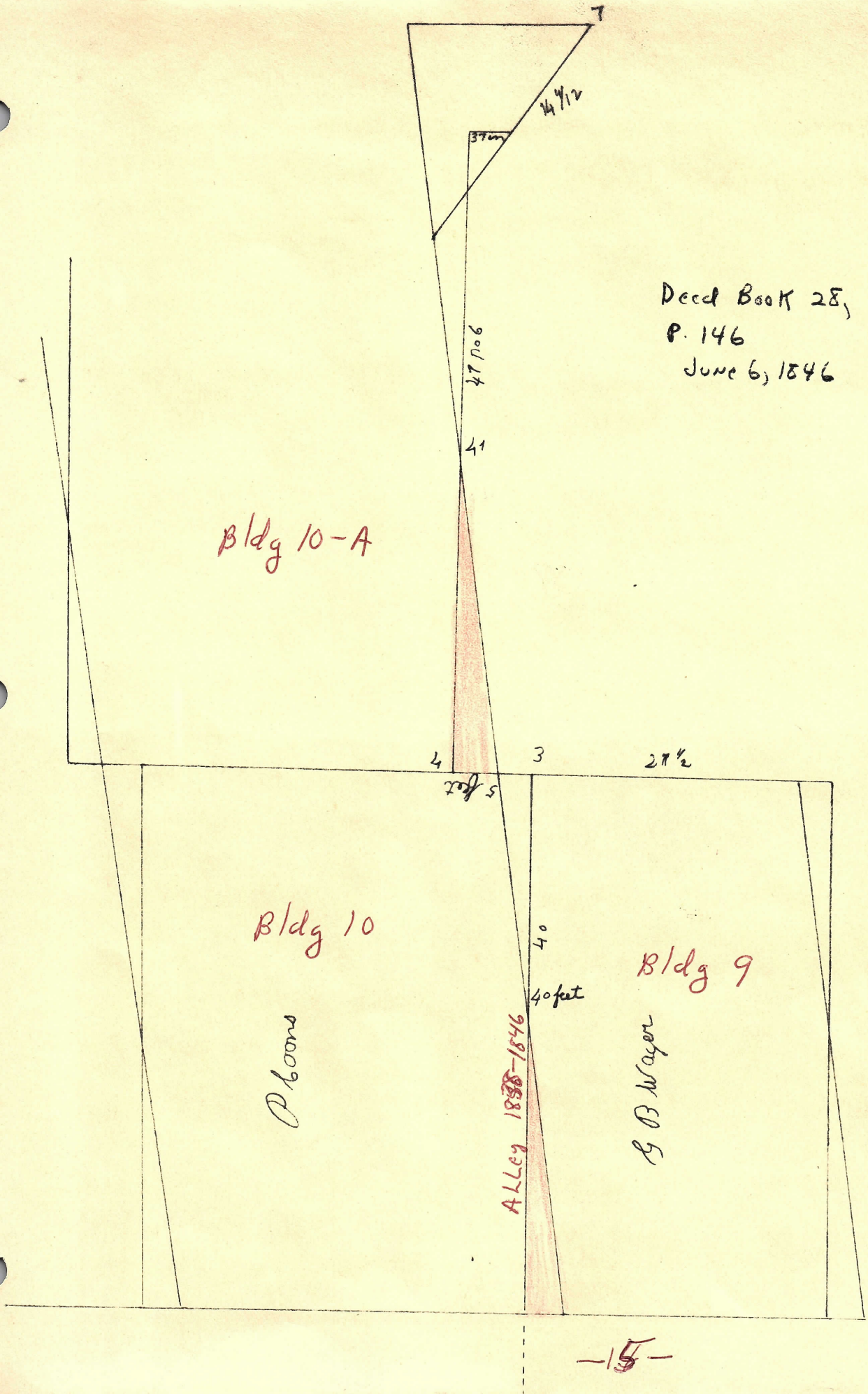
"Philip Coons & wife for J. C. Unseld, will sell on Saturday 25hh of October 1856 the valuable brick dwelling and store house lately occupied by said Coons opposite the Arsenal Yard on Shenandoah Street. Two stories covered with slate. Commodatious store room on first floor." 32

Photographs and drawings of Building No. 10, made during the Civil War, and included in Appendix I of this report, indicate that the structure was still a two story building as of that date. It would therefore appear that the present third story must have been added to the building some time after 1865.

30. May 30, 1846, Deed of Exchange, Deed Book 28, pp.144-145.

32. Virginia Free Press, October 9, 1856, p.3, c.3. See also May 29, 1856, p.2, c.2, for similar description of building.

31. Deed Book 30, Deed of B. & S., August 1, 1848, pp.306-307. See Historic Bldg. Report, Part I, for Bldg. No.15, pp.3-4 for full details.


7
44½
37½
47 no6
41
Deed Book 28,
P. 146
June 6, 1846
Bldg 10-A
4
3
27½
7 of 5
Bldg 10
40
40 feet
Bldg 9
9 rooms
ALLey 1838-1846
9 B Wayer

In conclusion, the map dated May 9, 1866, entitled "A Sketch of the Present Position & Proposed Alteration of the line of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad at Harpers Ferry", definitely shows both Bldg. No. 10 and 10-A as standing at that date.[33] See tracing of this map on page 17 of report.

IV. HISTORICAL USES OF BLDGS. NO. 10 AND 10-A, 1838 to 1861.

On December 6, 1838, Adam Young, JR., a druggist, announced:

"THIS WAY!

"YOUNG'S Drug Store have been removed (from Bldg. No.37) to the old Tavern Stand (Bldg. No. 10) opposite the Arsenal, Main Street(Shenandoah Street)...

"FRUIT AND CONFECTIONARY STORE, Young has opened the above store in the room immediately in the rear of his Drug and Medicinal Store... also Best Oysters, at his new stand."[34]

By May 1839 Young had his new sign in place: "The Sign of the GOLDEN EAGLE".[35]

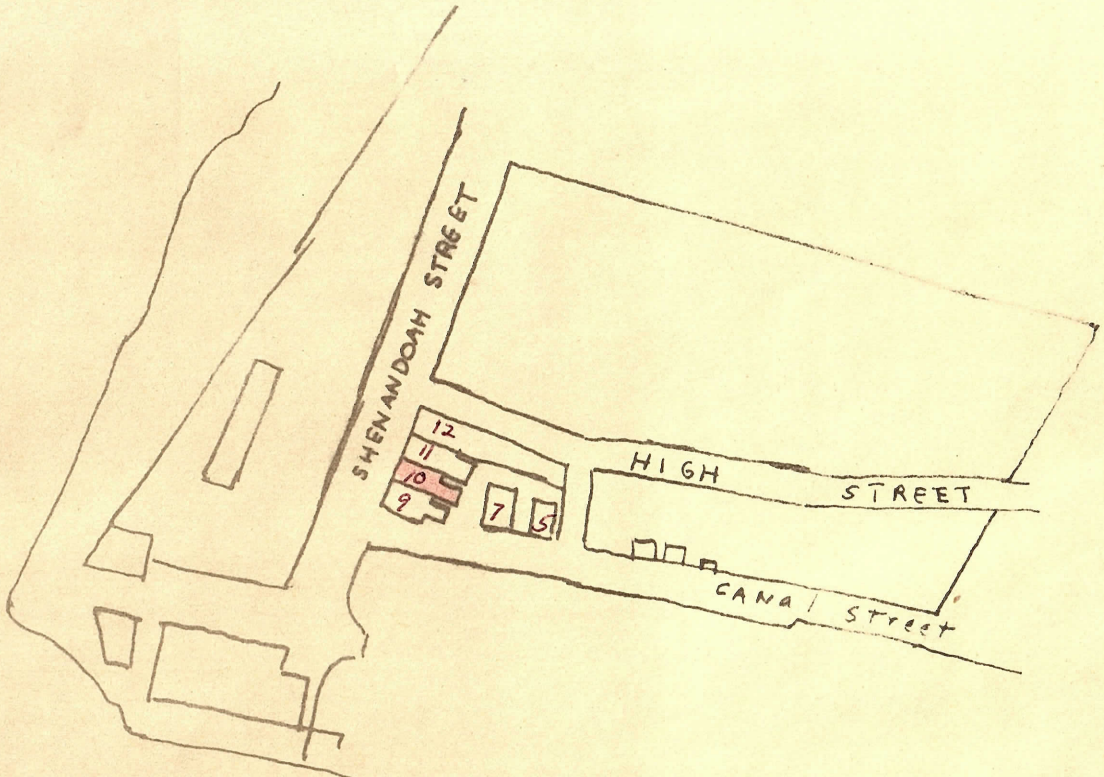
May of 1839 also saw the first floor of Bldg. No. 10 occupied by Bartholomew Sweetman as a bakery:

"HARPER'S FERRY BAKERY
In THE REAR OF ADAM YOUNG'S DRUG STORE, MAIN STREET, NEAR THE UNITED STATES ARMORY.
"The subscriber would respectfully inform the inhabitants of Harpers-Ferry that he has commenced the Baking business in all its varieties. He intends keeping
BREAD AND CAKES of every description on the most reasonable terms.
He will be happy to see his friends andthe public generally. Persons from the country will find this a most convenient place where they can obtain articles of the best quality in his line at a low price, and on more reasonable terms than they can be got on any of the eastern cities.

33. National Archives R. G. 77, Dr. 150-sheet 54.

34. Virginia Free Press, December 6, 1838, p.3, c.7.

35. Virginia Free Press, May 23, 1839, p.3, c.2.



Tracing of A Portion of
the B. & O. R.R. Map
of Harpers Ferry,
May 9, 1866

"HOT ROLLS FOR EVENING TEA, RUSK, &c.
Public Contractors, Captains of Canal and Packet Boats - and all concerned in the works of Internal Improvement - would do well to favor the subscriber with their custom; by so doing they will confer a favor.
MALT YEAST, fresh every day.
FRESH HOPS, for sale of this year's growth. 36
BARTHOLOMEW SWEETMAN, Late of Baltimore, Md."

In January 1840, Sweetman again announced:

"PUBLIC BAKERY, IN REAR OF THE SUPERINTENDENT'S RESIDENCE(See Map page 11 for location of this house), NEAR THE UNITED STATES ARMORY. The subscriber respectfully informs the public that he has recovered from his late illness, and has again commenced the Baking Business at the stand heretofore occupied by him..." 37

Any question as to where exactly Young and Sweetman were located is settled by the following extract from the deed made between 51 men, and Philip Coons, when the former, on May 1, 1840, purchased Bldgs. No. 10 and 10-A:

"...the lot or parcel of land adjoins on the one side the lot of W. &. S.B. Anderson (Wager Lot 15-subdivision 2, with Bldg. 11), and on the other side the lot of Gerard B. Wager, known & designated on the plat of the heirs of John Wager, deceased, as number fourteen(with Bldg. No.9) - and the same lot or parcel of land, then, at the time of conveyance (May 1, 1840), on which Adam Young Jr. resided & kept his apothecary, and Bartholomew Sweetman his bakery, together with all their right, title, interest, and claim to the same..." 38

The detailed use of Bldg. No.10-A is not known after 1843, but it was probably used as a part of the dwelling of 10. The use of Bldg. No. 10, however, is quite clear.

Bldg. No. 10 was occupied by Adam Young, Jr., as a drug store from December 1838 until August 1842.[39] On this latter date, Young advertised

36. Harpers Ferry Constitutionalist, May 23, 1839, p.3, also May 29,1839,p.3.

37. Harpers Ferry Constitutionalist, January 15, 1840, p.3.

38. March 31, 1843, Deed of B. & S., Deed Book 27, p.204.

39. Harpers Ferry Constitutionalist, January 8, 1840, p.1; July 23, 1840, p.4. Virginia Free Press, March 12, 1840, p.4,c.1; September 17, 1840, p.3, c.5; February 18, 1841, p.3, c.5; June 3, 1841, p.3,c.5; November 18, 1841,p3.c.4; July 7, 1842, p.3, c.5.

that he:

"Has removed Young's Drug, Medicine and Fancy Store (from Bldg. No. 10) to the corner store (located on Wager Lot No. 12) formerly occupied by J. L. Russell, adjoining Yost's Grocery Store." 40

From 1842 until October 1855, Bldg. No. 10 was occupied by Philip Coons himself, as his Dry Goods Store and dwelling house. His stock consisted of dress materials, cloth, groceries, hats, boots, caps, medicine, bacon, and whiskey.[41] From March 1847 to March 1848, Coons conducted his business at Bldg. No.10 in partnership with R. H. Hoffman.[42] After dissolving this partnership at the end of a year's operation, Coons continued the business by himself until October 1855.[43]

The census of 1850 provides us with the following information on Coons family, who were then living in Bldg. No. 10 and probably 10-A:

"Philip Coons, 50 years old, male, merchant, born in Virginia.
Ann C. Coons, 40 " " , female " " "
Emma Coons, 19 " " female " " "
Harry Coons, 12 " " male " " "
Chilton Coons, 13 " " male " " "

Also living in the same house were:

"John Danhoe, 28 years old, clerk, male, born in Virginia.
Harriet Buea, 43 or 63, female born in Maryland.
George W. Worth, 15, male born in Virginia.
John Douglass, 24, male, mulatto " " " ".[44]

40. Virginia Free Press, August 11, 1842, p.3, c.2.

41. Virginia Free Press, April 13, 1843, p.3,c.1, also p.2, c.7; December 19, 1844, p.4, c.3; June 24, 1847, p.4, c.5.

43. Virginia Free Press, May 11, 1848, p.3, c.1; January 24, 1850, p.4, c.5; December 29, 1853, p.3, c.2.

42. Virginia Free Press, July 8, 1847, p.3,c.2; October 6, 1847, p.3,c.4; February 12, 1848, p.3,c.3; April 1, 1848, p.3, c.3.

44. National Archives R.G. 29, Records of the Bureau of the Census, Population Schedules of the 7th Census of the U.S., 1850-Virginia, Volume 12, Jefferson County,Part. p.832.

In addition to his activities as a merchant and builder, Philip Coons had canal boats running on the C. & O. Canal in the 1840's and also leased and operated the "Island Flour Mills" on the Island of Virginius for several years.[45] He served as President of the Shenandoah Bridge Company from 1843 to at least 1854,[46] and was also President of the Hillsborough and Harpers Ferry Turnpike Company in the 1850's.[47]

In 1854 Coons apparently considered retiring from the mercantile business:

" "A BARGIN WILL BE GIVEN

"I will sell my stock of goods (and rent my store house) which consists of almost every kind of merchandise usually kept in a country store. Possession given 1st of April." [48]

A month later he further advertised: "I will rent my STORE HOUSE, which is large and convenient, with or without the DWELLING, for one or five years."[49] In the end, however, he either had no taker or changed his mind,[50] as Coons continued to operate the store throughout 1854.

In February 1855, Coons tried again: "I will rent my large Brick Store House which has just been improved with or without the Dwelling, for one or five years."[51] But again he continued in business until October 1855.[52]

45. Virginia Free Press, August 31, 1843, p.1, c.3.

46. Virginia Free Press, July 18, 1843, p.3, c.1; July 20, 1854, p.3,c.1.

47. Virgina Free Press, September 18, 1851, p.3, c.3.

48. Virginia Free Press, January 12, 1854, p.3,c.2.

49. Virginia Free Press, February 9, 1854, p.3,c.5.

50. Virginia Free Press, March 23, 1854, p.3,c.1; April 6, 1854, p.2,c.7. January 18, 1855, p.3,c.3.

51. Ibid., February 15, 1855,p.3, c.1. 52. Ibid., June 21,1855,p.3,c.1.

On October 25, 1855 Philip Coons finally sold out his stock of goods and rented his store to James A. Beckham and Louis J. Coons. The notice announcing this change read:

"1855 FALL TRADE 1855

"Having purchased the entire stock of Phillip Coons, the subscribers are now supplied with the Largest and Most Varied General Assortment of Dry Goods, Carpets, and Fancy Dress Goods, Domestic and Foreign, ever offered in Harpers Ferry, to which we invite the attention of the public.

"The one price system will be established and adhered to, believing it to be the only true principal of selling goods. We shall receive NEW GOODS WEEKLY, Through the season, giving our customers the advantage of every new style as soon as received.

"Customers will bear in mind that our Fall Stock is ENTIRELY NEW.

"FAMILY GROCERIES

"We are receiving, and will constantly keep on hand a large assortment of the best selected and choicest FAMILY GROCERIES, LIQUORS, &c. Also hardware, Cook Stoves, and Stoves of all kinds for Wood and Coal.

COONS AND BECKHAM." [53]

A notice appearing in January 1856 notified readers that: "HEREAFTER, the Mercantile House of Coons & Beckham, will be named and known under the style and name of Beckham & Co. - James A. Beckham, Louis J. Coons." [54]

In April 1856, Beckham and Company announeed a closeout sale, [55] which probably continued until their lease expired in October 1856. [56] On October 25, 1856, Bldgs. No. 10 and 10-A were purchased by John C. Unseld and the use of these structures from that date until March 1858 has not yet been established.

53. Virginia Free Press, October 25, 1855, p.3, c.1.

54. Virginia Free Press, January 3, 1856, p.2.

55. Virginia Free Press, April 10, 1856, p.3, c.3.

56. Deed of Trust, May 7, 1856, Deed Book 35, pp.448-451.

On April 1, 1858 the following notice appeared in the paper, thus indicating that a new store had opened in Bldg. No. 10:

"GREAT SOUTHERN CLOTHING HALL

"Opposite the U. S. Arsenal, Walter, Brother and Frank, formerly oocupied by Philip Coons. Men's, boys' and youths' Clothing." 57

In March of 1859 the dissolution of this firm was announced:

"THE Co-partnership heretofore existing at Harpers-Ferry under the name and Style of WALTER, BROTHER & FRANK has this day (March 3) been dissolved by mutual consent. The business of the late firm will be settled up by Nisan Frank, who will always be found at P. Coonce's (sic) old stand whre all persons knowing themselves indebted to us are requested to call soon and make settlement.
R. Walter, J. Walter, and N. Frank."

"Having sold out our entire stock and interest to Nisan Frank, the undersigned would respectfully recommend him to our numerous friends and the public generally, and ask for him the same share of patronage bestowed on the late firm of Walter, Brother and Frank.
R. Walter, J. Walter." 58

Nisan Frank himself, advertised at this time:

"GREAT SOUTHERN CLOTHING HALL,
Shenandoah Street, Opposite the U.S. Arsenal, Harpers Ferry, Va.
NISAN FRANK, Successor to Walter, Brother and Frank.

"Having purchased the entire stock of merchandise of Walter, Brother and Frank, I would call to the attention of my friends and customers that I have adopted the Cash system which will enable me to sell at a small advance above the manufacturing price.

"I have on hand a large stock of
CLOTHING
superior to that made to order as well as a good fit.
Also a complete stock of GENTS FURNISHING GOODS and a well assorted stock of
BOOTS AND SHOES
which I am selling cheap for CASH. I am thankful for past favors and patronage, and hope the continuance of the same." 59

57. Virginia Free Press, April 1,1858, p.2, c.7; July 8, 1858,p.3,c.7; July 22, 1858, p.4, c.3.

58. Virginia Free Press, March 3, 1859, p.3,c.1.

59. Virginia Free Press, March 3,1859, p.3,c.1.

On September 22, 1859, and still appearing in the newspaper at the time of the John Brown raid in October 1859, was the same ad as quoted above, with the exception of the following heading:

"FALL AND WINTER CLOTHING AT THE GREAT SOUTHERN CLOTHING HALL, SHENANDOAH STREET, OPPOSITE THE U.S. ARSENAL, HARPERS FERRY, VA. NISAN FRANK, SUCCESSOR TO WALTER, BROTHER & FRANK....." [60]

Bldg. No. 10, at the time of the Brown raid, was thus known as the "GREAT SOUTHERN CLOTHING HALL"[b], and the second floor of 10 and proably all of 10-A were occupied as a boarding house.

In conclusion, the census of 1860 gives the following data on Nisan Frank:

"Nisan Frank, 28 years old, male, unmarried, Merchant, born in Germany." [61]

V. HISTORICAL PRINTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS

All historical prints and photographs of Bldgs. No. 10 and 10-A will be found in Appendix I of this report, Page 33.

VI. HISTORICAL PLANS OF THE BUILDINGS.

No historical plans of the two buildings have been found. Modern measured drawings of Bldg. No 10 and the ruins of 10-A have not yet been prepared. Rough preliminary floor plans of the first and sedond floor of Bldg. No.10 have been furnished for this report by Architect Archie W. Franzen and will be found in the Architectural Data Section. There are no floor plans of any type for the third floor of Bldg. No. 10.

60. Virginia Free Press, December 8, 1859, p.4,c.6.

61. National Archives. Records of the Bureau of the Census R.G. 29, Population Schedules of the 8th Census of the United States, 1860. Virginia, Volume 13, Jefferson County(part), pp.820-821.

VII. SUMMARY OF THE HISTORICAL DATA

1. Ownership of the land: With the exception of the period May 1,1840 to November 6, 1841, Wager Lot No. 15, subdivision 3 was the property of Philip Coons from October 28, 1836 until October 25, 1856. In October 1856 John C. Unseld purchased the lot and Bldgs. No. 10 and 10-A from Coons for $3,000, and Unseld remained the owner until after the Civil War.

2. Construction of Bldgs. No. 10 and 10-A: These buildings were erected by Philip Coons in 1838. Bldg. No.10 was constructed as a two story brick structure, with a cellar and slate roof. The first floor contained a large store room and the second was designed for use as a dwelling house. The building originally fronted 25 feet on Shenandoah Street, thus leaving a three foot alley between Bldgs. No. 10 and 9, and was 40 feet and five inches in depth. In 1846 alterations were made to Bldg. No. 10 and the structure was extended on to the end of Bldg. No. 9, thus eliminating the former alley. In 1855 Bldg. No. 10 was still a two story brick building was a slate roof. Photographic evidence indicates that the present third floor was added at some time after the Civil War.

Bldg. No. 10-A was also apparently erected as a two story brick house with a slate roof, but without a cellar. The building was about 25 feet wide by 35 feet deep and located in the rear and against Bldg. No. 10. Only the ruined walls of this structure now stand. The first floor, containing two fire places, was first used as a bakery and the second floor apparently contained three rooms intended for use as living quarters.

3. USE OF BUILDING NO. 10, 1838-1860:

a. Bldg. No. 10-A: First floor used as a bakery by Bartholomew Sweetman from May 1839 to 1841 or 1842. Use of the structure thereafter is unknown, but it was probably used as a dwelling house in conjunction with Bldg. No. 10.

b. Bldg. No. 10:

1. December 6, 1838 to August 1842, used as a Drug, Fruit and Confectionary and Fancy Store, operated by Adam Young, Jr. His sign on the building was a Golden Eagle.

2. August 1842 to October 1855, used as a Dry Goods Store, operated by Philip Coons. The upper floor was used by Coons as his residence until October 1856.

3. October 1855 to October 1856: used as a Dry Goods Store, operated by James A. Beckham and Louis J. Coons.

4. November 1856 to March 31, 1857, use not yet established.

5. April 1, 1858 to March 3, 1859, used as a ready made clothing clothing store, operated by the firm of Walter, Brother and Frank. Their sign on the building read "The Great Southern Clothing Hall".

6. March 4, 1859 to at least April 1, 1861, used as a ready made clothing store, operated by Nisan Frank. His sign on the building read: "The Great Southern Clothing Hall." The upper floor of Bldg. No. 10 and probably 10-A, were apparently utilized as a boarding house from 1858 to 1861.

VIII. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is believed that enough evidence from documentary and photographic sources has been presented in this report to permit the accurate restoration of the exterior of Bldg. No. 10 to its appearance in the 1859-65, and it is therefore recommended that such exterior restoration be carried out. Involved would be the removal of the present third floor, placing a slate roof on the structure, and the reconstruction of an exterior wooden stairway on the front of the building leading to the second floor. Otherwise it is believed that the exterior of Bldg. No. 10 is as it was in the 1859-65 period.

Insufficent documentary evidence has been found, or probably will ever be found, to restore the interior to the 1859-65 on the basis of written sources alone. The first and second floors of Bldg. No. 10 are probably still laid out approximately as they were in 1859, but actual architectural investigation of the interior of the structure should throw much more light on this question. In any case, it is recommended that all interior restoration be limited to the first floor store and that the second floor of stripped to a shell and used for the storage of exhibits from the first floor in the event of a flood.

The completion of "A Preliminary Study of the Town of Harpers Ferry in 1859, Covering 250 Buildings," dated April 24, 1958, 39 pages, has enabled us to form our first good idea of what the town consisted of in 1859. Due to historical accident, in relation to buildings standing in 1859 and still standing in 1958, we would seem to be oversupplied with stores of a certain type, such as Clothing Stores, and rather short in

other categories. To reduce the amount of research required aswell as the number of exhibit objects that would be needed, and to avoid duplicating five or six stores of the same type,if all stores were restored, it is suggested that we plan to restore only one store of each type that existed in the 1859 town. Under this plan there would thus be one clothing store, one general dry goods store, one drug store, a bakery, a shoemaker's shop, a tailor shop, a saddle maker's shop, and perhaps a hotel. The other mercantile buildings could be marked with their proper 1859 signs, but their store windows could be utilized to exhibit objects connected with the general history of the town. Interior restoration of these latter buildings would therefore be unnecesaary.

It is further suggested that the decision on which buildings are to be actually restored on the interior as shops, be reserved until the final number and location of visitors' centers has been determined and the tour routes worked out. Restored shops could then be distributed along the tour route in the most effective manner.

Bldg. No. 10-A, today, consists only of two ruined walls. It is recommended that these walls be stablized and that no effort be made to reconstruct the structure, there being insufficent evidence to permit such reconstruction even if it were believed to be desirable.

Charles W. Snell

Charles W. Snell,
Historian (Park Supervisory)
May 28, 1958

SECTION III - ARCHITECTURAL DATA

1. Bldg. No. 10 Today:

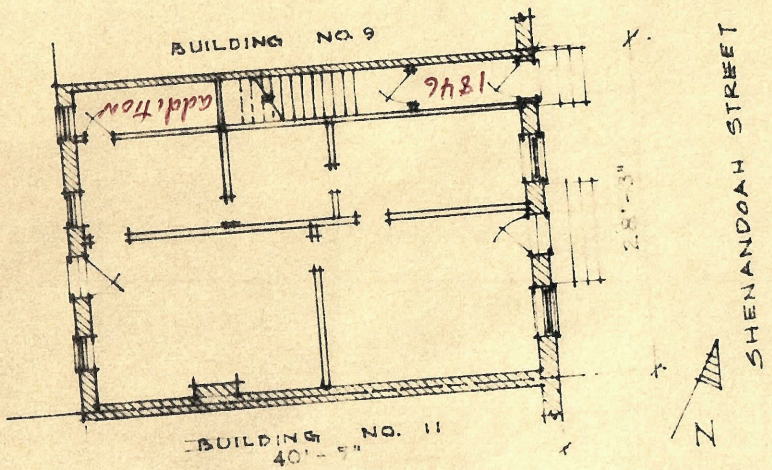
Bldg. No. 10 today is a three story brick building, with cellar and a temporary roof (last roof, since removed, was slate). The structure fronts 28 feet and three inches on Shenandoah Street and is 40 feet and 3 inches in depth. There are no historical or modern measured drawings of the buildings available. Included on the next two pages of this report are small floor plans of the first and second floors, furnished through the courtesy of Architect Archie W. Franzen. No floor plans are available of the third floor.

Included in Appendix I of this report are modern photographs showing the front and rear, with Bldg. No. 10-A, as they appear today on the exterior.

The exterior of the first and second floors of Bldg. No. 10 is probably much as it appeared in the 1859-65 period. The layout of the interior of these two floors is also probably much as it was in 1859, but actual architectural investigation of the structure can best determine this question.

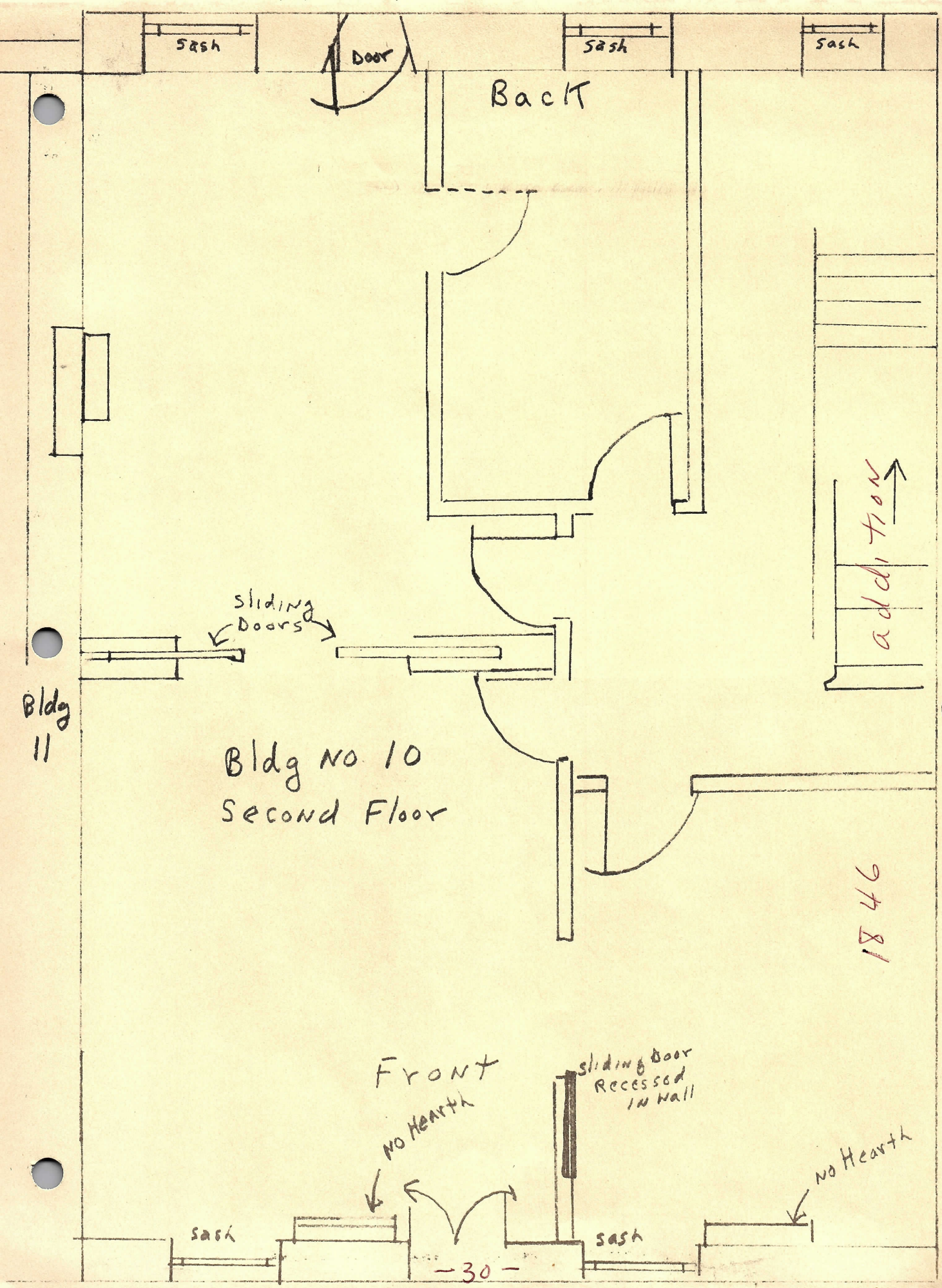
2. Restoration Required:

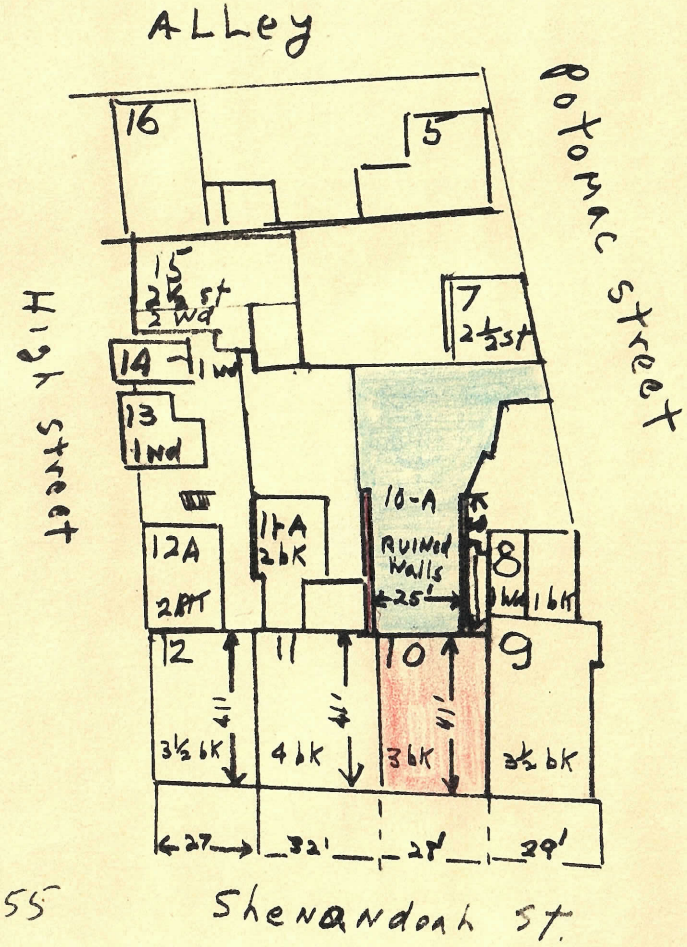
To restore the exterior of Bldg. No. 10 to the 1859-65 period, the third floor of this structure must be removed. Architect Franzen is of the opinion that the existing roof rafters are the original (1846) ones that were used in the building before the Civil War. In adding the third floor after 1865, the builders apparently reused the original rafters for the new roof. A slate roof must also be place on the structure. A small wooden exterior stairway leading to the door on



BUILDING NO. 10
FIRST FLOOR PLAN

SCALE 1/16" = 1'-0"


Sash
Door
Sash
Sash
Back
addition
Sliding Doors
Bldg 11
Bldg 9
Bldg No 10
Second Floor
1846
Front
No Hearth
Sliding Door Recessed in Wall
No Hearth
Sash
Sash



From
Drawing no. MHF 3055
1957
Scale 1 inch = 50 Feet

APPENDIX I

PRINTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS, HISTORICAL

AND

MODERN

Harpers Ferry from Church Street, 1859 (?).

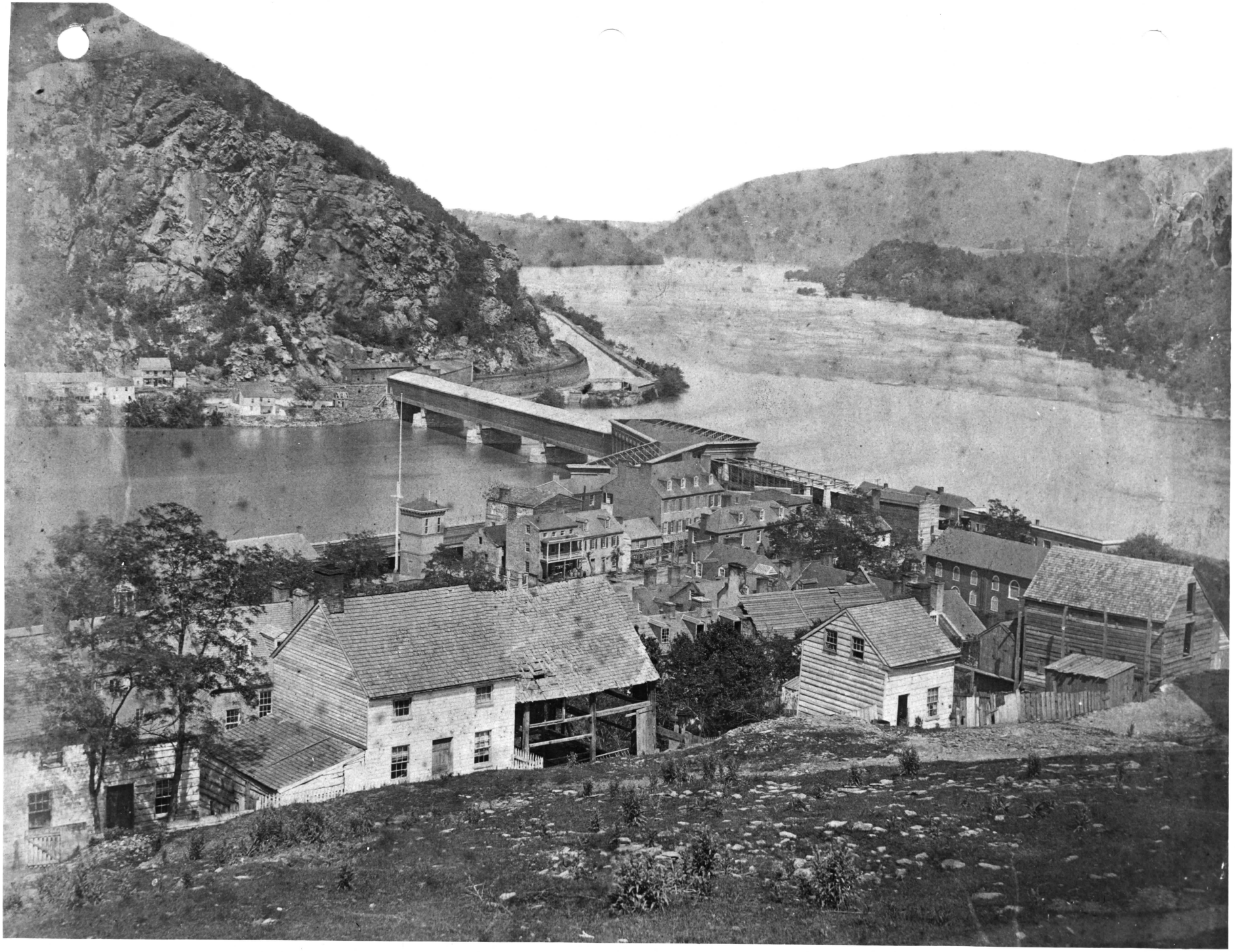
Original photograph contributed by John Perry, of Bolivar Heights.

National Geographic File No. 140325-A.

Harpers Ferry Negative No. 66-HF.

Because this photograph shows the Marmion Row being reroofed it is believed that the picture may have been taken in 1859. In any case, it was certainly taken before June 1861, when the old B. &. O. R.R. bridge shown here was destroyed.

Visible over Bldg. No.1-B(which is being reroofed) are the roof tops of Bldg. No. 9, moving to the right, the roof of Bldg. No. 10 -with the sky-light appearing, also in the rear of 10, Bldg.10-A's roof, and to the right of Bldg. No. 10, the roof of Bldg. No. 11, then a three story buildings Bldg. No. 10, as shown in this photograph is a two or two and one half story building.



" Harper's Ferry, Va. - 1862"

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

Harpers Ferry Negative No. HF-11.

This remarkable view was made after February 1862, as the buildings have been destroyed that stood on the point of land prior to that date. Through the gape in the center of the bridge can be seen Bldg. No. 9, then to left-Bldg. No.10- a two or two and one-half story bldg, and then Bldgs. No. 11 and 12.



"Harpers Ferry, Va. 1862"

This is a blowup made from Negative HF-11,

see page 35.

Harpers Ferry Negative No. HF-376

Bldg. No. 9, 10, 11 and 12, from ~~right~~ Left to ~~left~~ Right in 1862.

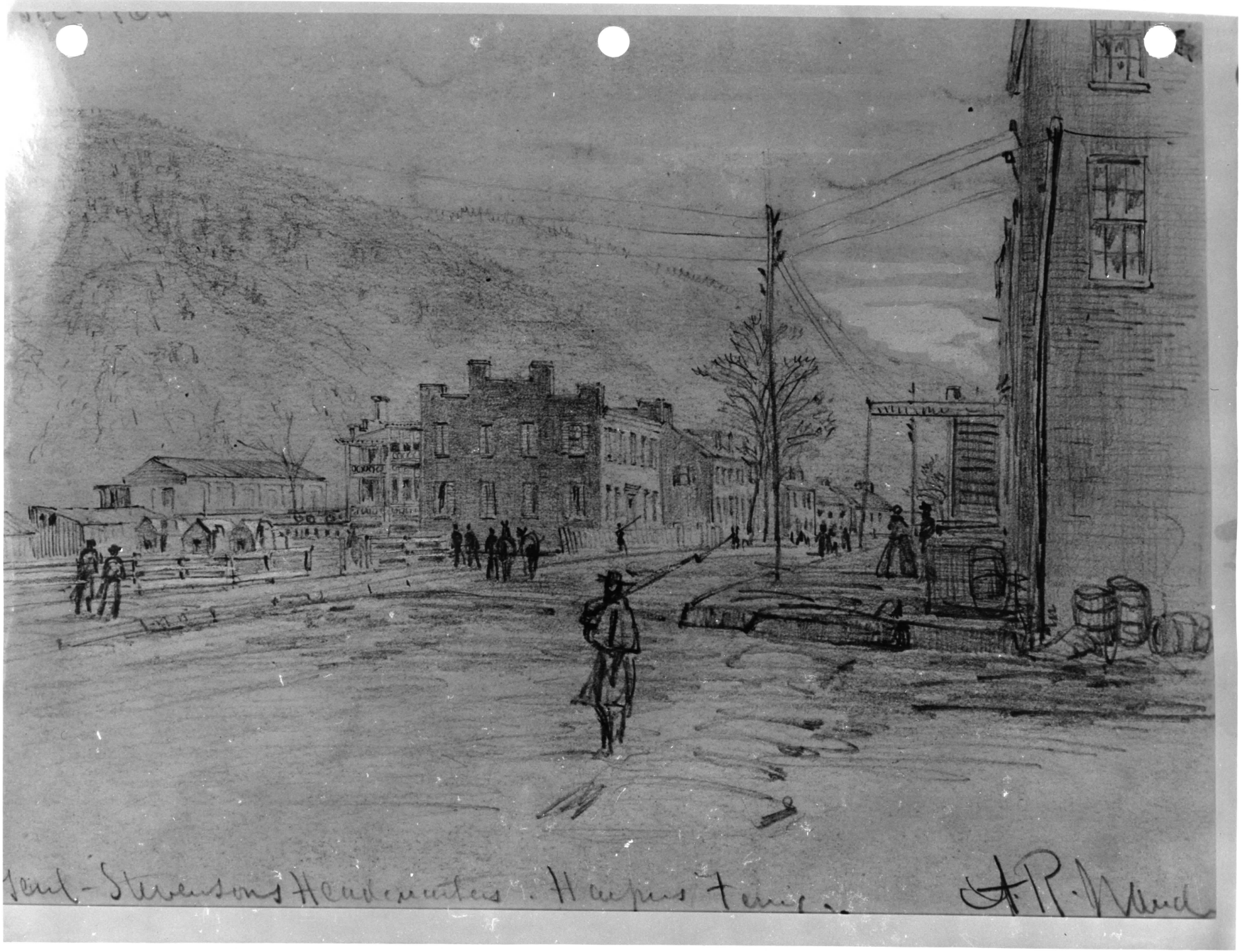
Note Photographer Printed negative Backwards

"A Genl. Stevensons Headquarters - Harpers Ferry."
The original sketch by A. R. Waud.
Published in 1865(see following photograph).

Original sketch in Library of Congress Waud Collection

Harpers Ferry Negative No. HF-224

The Bldg. on the right is Bldg. No. 9; next with the exterior staircase on the front of it is Bldg. No. 10. Acroes the street comes first Bldg. No.36 and then Bldg. No. 34-35.

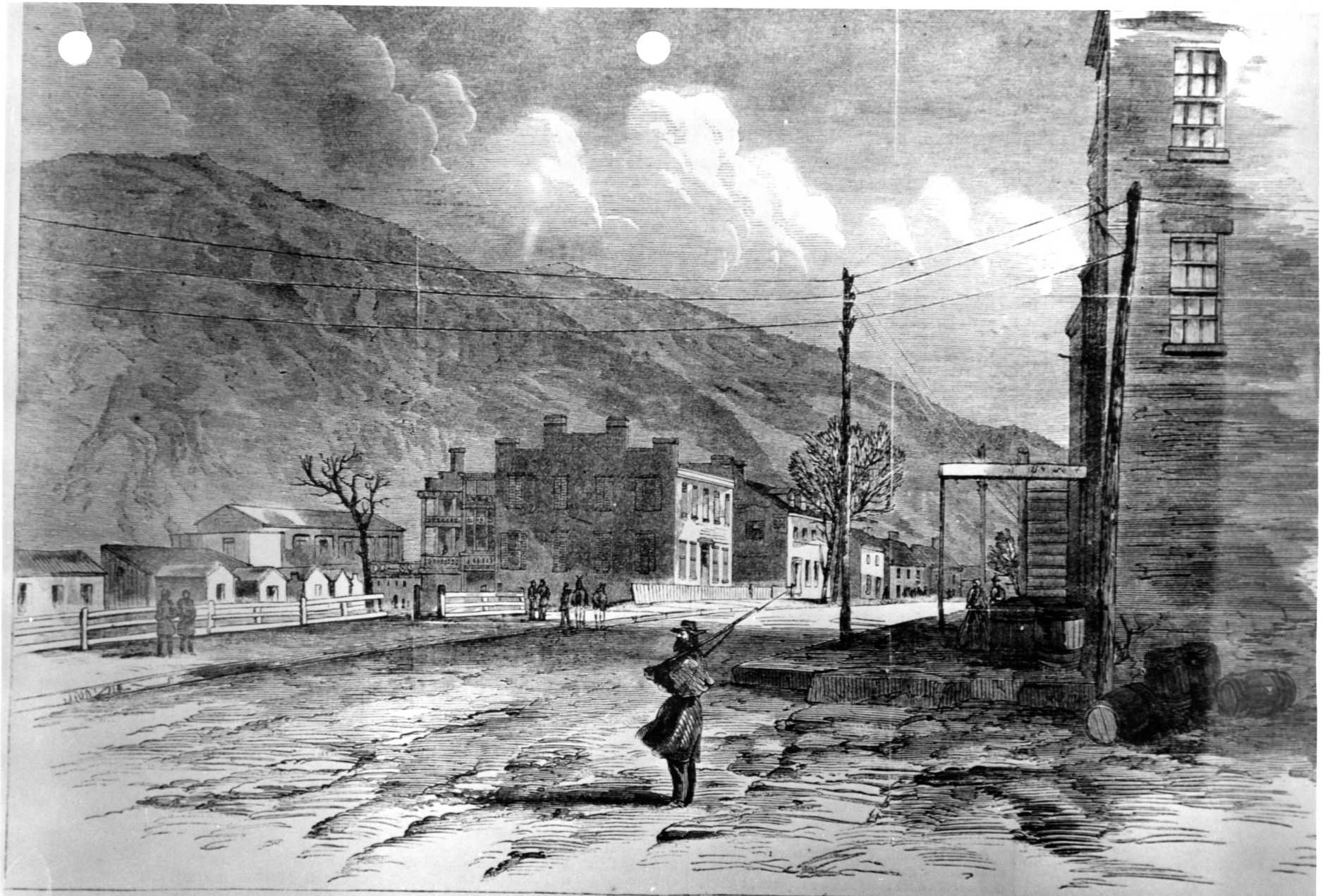

Genl - Stevenson's Headquarters - Harpers Ferry
A. R. Ward

VIEW IN HARPERS FERRY.- GENERAL STEVENSON'S HEAD-QUARTERS, LOUDON HEIGHTS IN THE DISTANCE.-(Sketched by A.R. Waud.)

As published by Harper's Weekley, March 11, 1865, p. 153.

Harpers Ferry Negative No. HF-141

Bldg. No. 9 on corner to right; then Bldg. No. 10 with exterior stair case on front. Across the street, first Bldg. No. 36 and then Bldg. No.34-35.



VIEW IN HARPERS FERRY.—GENERAL STEVENSON'S HEAD-QUARTERS, LOUDON HEIGHTS IN THE DISTANCE.—[SKETCHED BY A. R. WAUD.]

FRONT OF BLDG. NO. 10 - July 2, 1957

Photograph by Architect Archie W. Franzen.

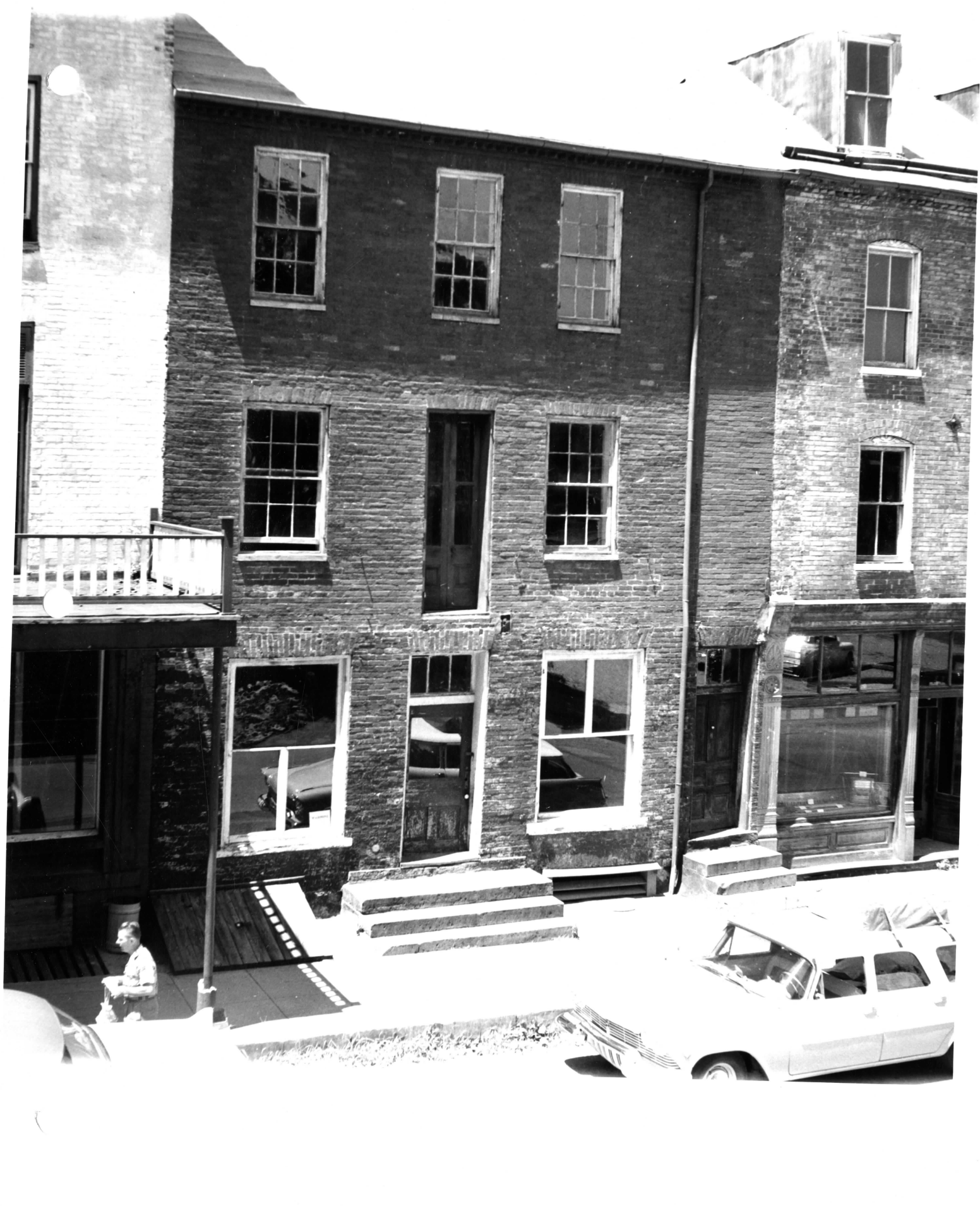
Harpers Ferry Negative No. NHF-225

Reading left to right:

Extreme left, a corner of Bldg. No. 11,

Center, the front of Bldg. No. 10. The third is believed to have been added after the Civil War. Before 1865 it was a two or two and one-half story building.

Extreme Right, a portion of Bldg. No. 9.



Rear of Bldg. No. 10 and ruins of 10-A, 1956

Harpers Ferry Negative No. NHF-224

Extreme left, rear of Bldg. No. 9 and 8.
Center, rear of Bldg. No. 10 (with white walls), and in foreground, the two brick walls are the ruins of Bldg. No. 10-A. Ruins of two fireplaces are located in the walls on the right.
Extreme right, the rear of Bldg. No. 11.


THE R ll STORE