

HISTORIC BUILDING REPORT.PART II.HISTORICAL DATA SECTION.FOR

*Part II - Historical Data
Section*

BLDG. NO. 15.THE SUGAN DOWNEY HOUSE

HF-54

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17

Harpers Ferry National Monument

DIVISION OF HISTORY
N.P.S.
FILE COPY

Prepared by:

Charles W. Snell
Historian (Park Supervisory)
Dated: March 27, 1959
15 Pages
Project No. HF-54 ✓

4 Maps, 1 Photo

4. April, 1843-March, 1844: Shoemaker shop of John Wells and J. Hartshorn.
5. April, 1844-January, 1848: Shoemaker shop of Alfred Andrews.
6. 1848-1849: Rented by Miss Barriek.
7. August, 1849-March, 1850: Shoemaker shop of George W. Furtney.
8. April, 1850-1851 to ? : Shoemaker shop of William and John Avis.
9. 1854-1856: Boarding house of Mrs. Pina.
10. April, 1856: For rent, use unknown. Probably rented as a boarding house and shoemaker's shop.
11. 1859-61 period: Probably residence and shop of George W. Furtney, a shoemaker.

(Sgd) CHARLES W. SNELL

Charles W. Snell
Historian (Park Supervisory)
March 27, 1959



H30

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

April 1, 1959

Memorandum

To: Regional Director, Region Five
From: Superintendent, Harpers Ferry National Monument
Subject: Research Project No. HF-54, Bldg. No. 15

Enclosed please find one copy of the "Historic Building Report, Part II, Historical Data Section, for Bldg. No. 15, the Susan Downey House," dated March 27, 1959, 15 pages, as prepared by Historian Charles W. Snell. This is being submitted for technical review by Regional Historian Frank Barnes.

(SGD) FRANK H. ANDERSON

Frank H. Anderson
Superintendent

In duplicate



UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Harpers Ferry National Monument
Harpers Ferry, West Virginia

June 2, 1959

Memorandum

To: Regional Director, Region Five

From: Superintendent, Harpers Ferry National Monument

Subject: Research Project No. HF-54, Building No. 15

Historian Snell offers the following comments in regard to the questions raised in Regional Historian Frank Barnes' memorandum of May 29 concerning the Part II-Historical Data Section for Bldg. No. 15:

1. The correct name of the property owner, page 1 of this report, is Mrs. Susan Downey. The three variations (Susan Downey, Downey and Mrs. Susan Downey) were used in the report in an attempt to avoid literary monotony - I could have also called her the "Widow Downey," which the lady was at that time.
2. The name "Potomac Street" may also be added to the 1846 and 1848 maps, pages 2 and 3, after the word "alley," as suggested by Mr. Barnes. The "alley" was widened into a larger street and renamed "Potomac Street or North Cliff Street" in 1850-1851.

(SGD) FRANK H. ANDERSON

Frank H. Anderson
Superintendent

In duplicate

Copy to: Director



UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Region Five
421 Walnut Street
Philadelphia 6, Pa.

May 29, 1959

IN REPLY REFER TO:

H2215

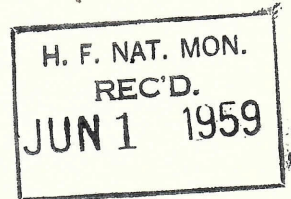
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From: Regional Historian

Subject: Research Project No. HF-54 - Building No. 15



In general, this report is very good. When the time comes for incorporating it in the complete Part II Historic Structure Report on this building, however, certain minor deficiencies might be corrected. In paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 on page 1, three versions of property holder Downey are used: which is the strictly correct name for the property holder(s) involved? Potomac Street, mentioned in the text on page 1, should be shown on the map as the later name for the "alley."

Frank Barnes

Frank Barnes
Regional Historian

In duplicate

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1. OWNERSHIP OF THE LAND, 1782-1868

Wager Lot No. 15, subdivision 4, the present site of Bldg. No. 15, was owned by the Wager family from 1782-1837. On October 28, 1837, this lot and also subdivision No. 2 of Lot 15, were sold to William Anderson at public auction. Mr. Anderson paid \$1,610 for No. 2 and \$1,012.50 for No. 4. The location of these lots may be seen on the 1846 plat that appears on the following page.

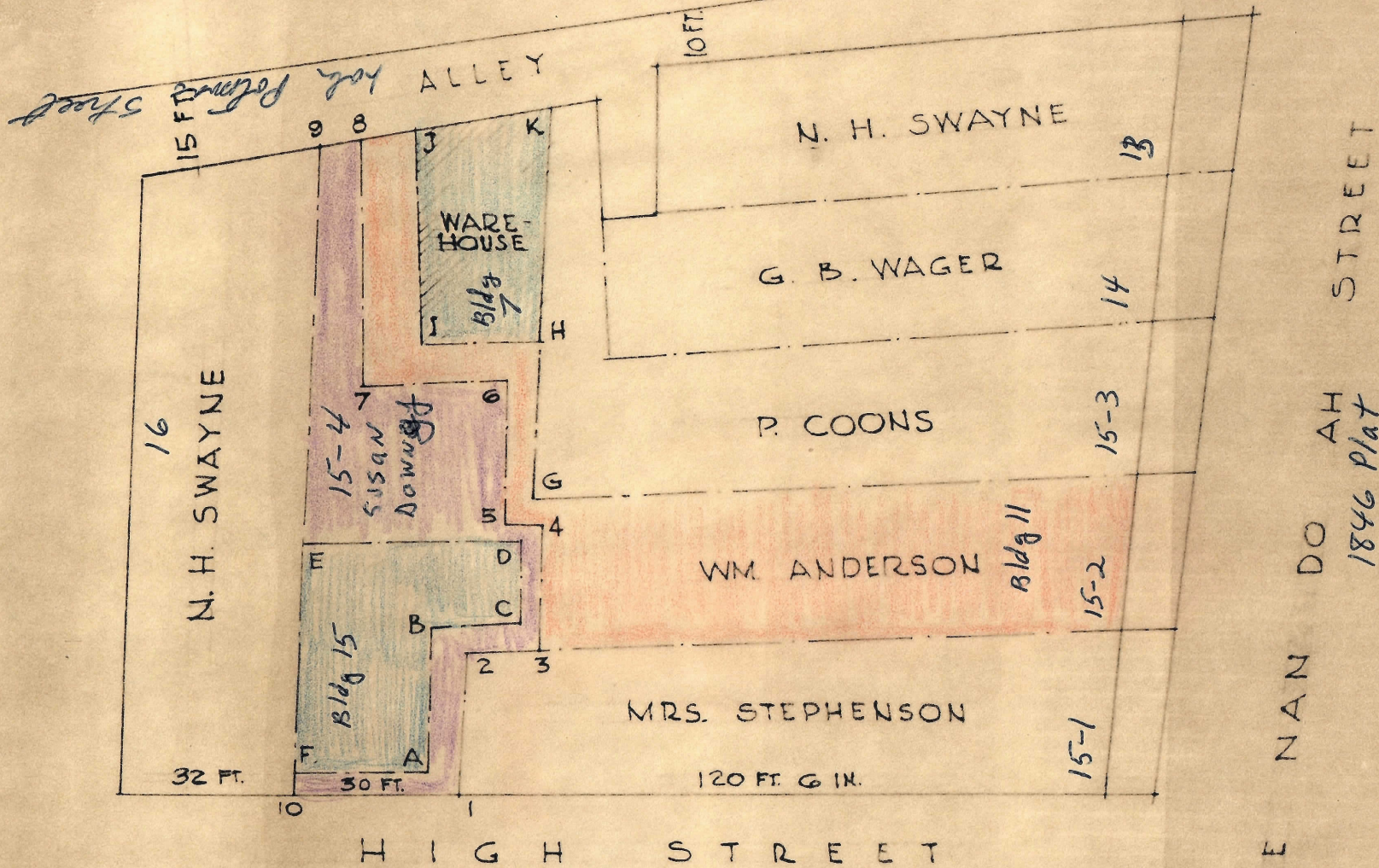
On July 20, 1846, Anderson sold most of subdivision 4 of Lot No. 15 and Bldg. No. 15 to Susan Downey for \$3,000 (see purple and blue area-Bldg. No. 15 on 1846 plat); Anderson only retained a right of way from subdivision 2 across the south side of subdivision 4 to Potomac Street.

On August 1, 1848, Downey acquired this right of way from Mr. Anderson for \$300 and granted him a right of way from the rear of Bldg. No. 11 along the south side of Bldg. No. 15 to High Street (see 1848 plat, page 3).

On May 26, 1849, Mrs. Downey sold the portion of subdivision 4 that fronted on Potomac Street 18 feet wide by 25 feet deep to the United States Government for \$200 (see 1848 plat, page 3). The Government acquired this vacant lot in order to widen Potomac or North Cliff Street to a 40 foot width, thus creating both a wider street and a fire lane between the Musket Factory shops situated on Armory property and the private buildings located on the Wager Six Acre reservation.

Mrs. Downey retained title to Bldg. No. 15 and the lot until her death in 1856 and her heir held the property until 1868.

1. For a detailed and documented study of the ownership of this lot, see Snell, Charles W., "Historic Building Report, Part I, for Bldg. No. 15, the Downey Building," dated October 7, 1957, revised January 30, 1958, pp.1-4. For the story of the widening of Potomac Street, see Sullivan, Arthur L., "History of Wager Lots No. 17 to 34, 1782-1869," dated February 18, 1959, pp.21-27. For death of Downey, Virginia Free Press, July 3, 1856, p.2, c.6.



2. EARLY USE OF THE LOT, 1803-March 31, 1838

Lot No. 15, subdivision 1, 2 and 3, were the site of the "Harpers Ferry Hotel" from 1803 until March 31, 1838. Subdivision 4 of lot 15 probably contained kitchens and other outbuildings for the service of the main structure. This spacious old frame building was erected by the Wager family and was leased² by them over the years to various tavern keepers.

3. CONSTRUCTION OF BLDG. NO. 15

On October 28, 1837, the old "Harpers Ferry Hotel" and lot was divided among three different owners. Lot No. 15, subdivisions 2 and 4 were acquired by William Anderson, subdivision 1 by Mrs. Ann C. Stephenson and subdivision 3 by Philip Coons. The old hotel building itself had been leased by the Jefferson County Court to Mrs. Isabella Fitzsimmons from April 1, 1837, to March 31, 1838.³ Thus the three new owners were unable to touch the old structure until the lease expired. This fact, however, did not hinder them from making plans for constructing new buildings on their recently acquired property.

Thus in November, 1837, William Anderson and his brother, Samuel B. Anderson, and Dr. George B. Stephenson, the oldest son of Mrs. Ann C. Stephenson, jointly advertised:

"HOUSE BUILDERS LOOK OUT

W. & S. B. Anderson and George B. Stephenson will receive proposals until the 16th of Dec. 1837, for the building of two brick houses, each 30 by 40 feet, three stories high, with cellars of stone (These would be Bldgs. No. 11 and 12). Also two stone houses, each 24 by 40 feet, with cellars, one of them to be one (Bldg. No. 7), and the other two stories high (Bldg. No. 15)-all to be covered with slate. To be commenced on the 1st of April next

2. For detailed history of Harpers Ferry Hotel, 1803-1838, see Snell, Charles W., "Historic Building Report, Part I, for Bldgs. No. 10 and 10A, the John C. Unseld Buildings," dated May 28, 1958, pp.7-11.

3. Ibid., p.10.

(1838), and finished by the 1st of December following. A plan of each building may be seen at the store of W. & S. B. Anderson (which was then located on Wager Lot No. 51, at the corner of High and Shenandoah Street). The proposition for each building to be made separately, and may be made for Mason work and the Joiners' work separately, or together, for each building. Cash will be furnished at any time for the purchase of material if desired." 4

5

Bldg. No. 15 was completed and occupied in September, 1839. The ground plan of the house may be seen on the 1846 and 1848 plats on pages 2 and 3 of this report. The main house fronted 24 feet on High Street and was 40 feet eight inches in depth. On the southeast rear corner of the main house stood a one story stone kitchen over a one story stone cellar. The kitchen was 15 feet wide and 16 feet long. The main house was built of stone and was 2½ stories high over a one story stone cellar. Both the main house and kitchen were covered with slate. On the following page will be found a modern plan of the first floor of Bldg. No. 15, furnished through the courtesy of Architect Archie Franzen, that shows that except for the addition of frame porches, Bldg. No. 15 is still the same size and shape as is indicated on the 1846-48 plats. The right of way reserved by William Anderson in 1848 along the south side of Bldg. No. 15 indicates that these frame porches must have been added to the original house after William Anderson sold Bldg. No. 11 in 1865. (Porch is not shown on Perrie-Sanborn Map of 1894.)

In March, 1841, William Anderson described Bldg. No. 15 as follows:

"The HOUSE is of stone and is new, and well finished. Its size is 24 x 40 feet-3 stories high-with a good kitchen attached..." 6

4. Virginia Free Press, November 16, 1837, p.3, c.4; For location of the Anderson store in 1837, see Snell, C. W., "Historic Building Site Survey Report for the Noah H. Swayne Lot, Wager Lot No. 51," dated July 24, 1958, pp.4-8.

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

6. Virginia Free Press, March 4, 1841, p.3, c.4.

The house was altered by Anderson in 1841, for he then announced: "I have for rent a newly finished STORE ROOM, 21 by 15 feet, with a dry and first rate CELLAR of the same size, situated on High, a few paces above Shenandoah Street."⁷

He also stated that he had for rent in Bldg. No. 15 "two rooms in the basement; one of them has a large fireplace-two rooms on the first floor with fireplaces-two rooms on the second floor, one of them has a fire place and one Garret Room. These rooms as so constructed as to suit small families, or for offices."⁸

In 1842, William Anderson provided us with a complete description of the interior of Bldg. No. 15:

"FOR RENT.

A two story Stone House, situated on High and Shenandoah Streets. It has a basement with brick floor, four rooms, two of them with fireplaces, and suitable for kitchens; first floor two large rooms, each with fireplaces, one of them handsomely finished for a store room, which, with one of the basement rooms immediately under it, renders it desirable for a mercantile business. The other room on the first floor, is suitable for a parlor; on the second floor are four rooms, two of them with fireplaces; on the garret floor are two rooms; a passage running through the middle of the house separates and makes nearly all the rooms private. A stone kitchen one and a half story is attached. A small and convenient lot is attached to the back part of the building, and leads to a public alley.

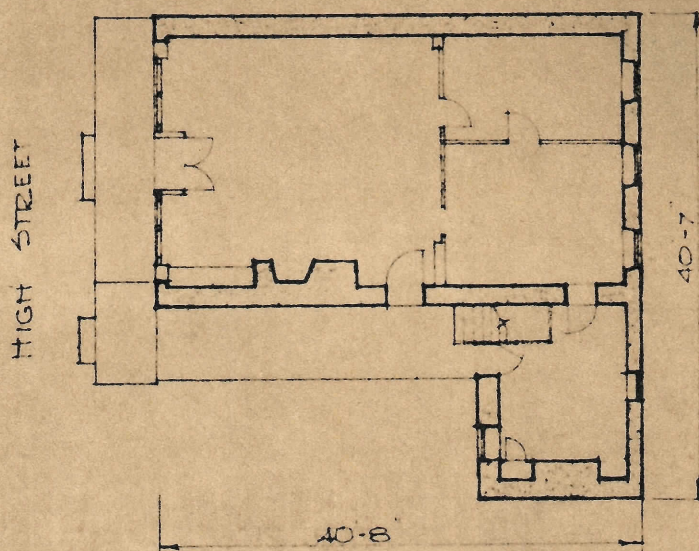
Said house is now occupied by four distinct families in harmony and good feeling towards each other, but they do not want it longer than 1st April next."⁹

Further alterations were made to the house by 1844. Anderson described the interior layout at that time as given in 1842, except that the first floor

7. Virginia Free Press, August 12, 1841, p.3, c.4.

8. Ibid., August 5, 1841, p.3, c.5.

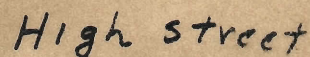
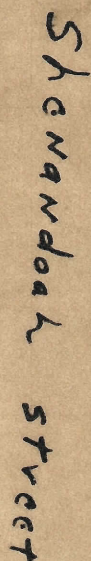
9. Ibid., February 3, 1842, p.3, c.6.



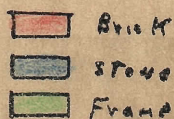
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STREET LEVEL PLAN
POST OFFICE - BLDG #15



Potomac Street



MAIN LINE RECORD

now contained a "front room...finished for a store" and "two back rooms suitable for a small family."¹⁰ (See modern drawing of first floor.)

In 1855 Mrs. Susan Downey stated Bldg. No. 15 contained a shop and eleven¹¹ rooms.

4. USE OF BLDG. NO. 15, 1839-1861

Bldg. No. 15 was erected by William Anderson in 1838-39 and was occupied by James H. Hayman, editor of the Harpers Ferry Constitutionalist, as a tavern and bar in September, 1839, at an annual rent of \$325.¹² Hayman remained in business at Bldg. No. 15 until March 31, 1841.¹³

A portion of the house was then rented by Robert Delany from 1841 to 1842.¹⁴ The first floor was fitted up as a shop in August, 1841, and by February, 1842,¹⁵ the house was occupied by four families.

In August, 1842, Henry V. Andrews informed the public that he had removed his variety store and "is now located on High Street, in the new store room belonging to William Anderson, a few doors from the Post Office, and directly opposite George W. Cutshaw's Merchant Tailor Shop." ^{ON HIGH ST. A High Street} Andrews called his new store "SOCIAL RETREAT NO. 4."¹⁶

10. Virginia Free Press, February 29, 1844, p.3, c.2.

11. Ibid., March 8, 1855, p.2, c.5.

12. Harpers Ferry Constitutionalist, September 11, 1839, p.3; Also Deed of Trust, Hayman to Edward Lucas, Jr., March 6, 1840, Deed Book 24, pp.131-132, listing rent and furnishing in Bldg. 15.

13. Virginia Free Press, March 4, 1841, p.3, c.4; May 27, 1841, p.3, c.2.

14. Ibid., May 27, 1841, p.3, c.2.

15. Ibid., February 3, 1842, p.3, c.6.

16. Ibid., August 11, 1842, p.3, c.2.

He remained in business at this location until April, 1843. John Wells and J. Hartshorn then announced that they had opened their new tailor shop "on High Street in the room formerly occupied by H. V. Andrews as a fancy store, and near the old Post Office Building."¹⁷

Bldg. No. 15 was again offered for rent in February, 1844.¹⁸ It was next rented, probably from 1844 to his death in January, 1848, by Alfred Andrews, a shoemaker.¹⁹ In 1849, G. H. Furtney, Boot and Shoe Manufacturer-"Successor to Alfred Andrews," announced he had "lately removed his stand to High Street, in the room lately occupied by Miss Barrick."²⁰ By April, 1850, Bldg. No. 15 was next occupied by William and John Avis, boot and shoe makers, who opened their new shop "on High Street, in the shop recently occupied by Mr. George Furtney."²¹ These gentlemen continued in business at this stand until at least 1851.²²

From 1854 to 1855 the house was rented by Philip Engle, Jr., a merchant.²³ The building was then advertised as being for rent in March, 1855. From 1855 to March, 1856, Bldg. No. 15 was rented as a boarding house by a Mrs. Pine. In April, 1856, Susan Downey advertised: "HOUSE FOR RENT, on High Street...lately occupied by Mrs. Pine. The house is well adapted for a Boarding House. Possession given immediately."²⁴ There is no record of who next rented the house.

17. Virginia Free Press, April 27, 1843, p.3, c.2.

18. Ibid., February 29, 1844, p.3, c.2.

19. Ibid., May 14, 1846, p.4, c.3; Deed of B. & S., Anderson to Downey, July 20, 1846, Deed Book 28, p.174; Virginia Free Press, January 12, 1848, p.3, c.2; March 4, 1848, p.3, c.3.

20. Ibid., August 30, 1849, p.3, c.1.

21. Ibid., April 18, 1850, p.3, c.1; Census of 1850, Reel 10, V.2, p.120.

25

Mrs. Susan Downey died in June, 1856, in her 80th year. The property was then inherited by her three daughters, Sarah Walters, Lousia Hartshorn, and Ellen Maria Chambers.

26

Judging by the 1860 census, Bldg. No. 15 was occupied as a residence in the 1859-61 period by George W. Furtney. The census provides us with the following data on this family:

"George W. Furtney, 42 years old, male. Shoemaker. Value of personal Estate: \$200. Born in Va.
Mary E. Furtney, 29, female. Born in Md.
John H. " 15, male. Born in Va.
Gertrude " 13, female, " " "
Mary C. " 5, female, " " "
Raymond P. " 8, male, " " "
James " 2, male, " " "

27

5. HISTORICAL PLANS OF BUILDING

No historical plans of Bldg. No. 15 have been found and it is highly unlikely that any will ever be located. Measured drawings of the house have not as yet been prepared.

6. HISTORICAL PRINTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS

Prints and photographs showing Bldg. No. 15 will be found in the following reports:

1. 1859 photograph, ⁶⁴HF-55, in Snell, Charles W., "Report for Wager Lots No. 6, 7 and Part of 8, The Wager House or United States Hotel," dated August 7,
22. Virginia Free Press, November 22, 1850, p.3, c.2; July 10, 1851, p.3, c.4.
23. Ibid., March 8, 1855, p.2, c.5.
24. Ibid., April 10, 1856, p.3.
25. Ibid., July 3, 1856, p.2, c.6.
26. Deed of B. & S., April 28, 1868, Deed Book 3, pp.337-338.
27. Census of 1860, Reel 10, V.2, pp.169-170.

1958, page 35. View of rear roof line of Bldg. No. 15.

2. 1870 photograph, HF-33, in Snell, C. W., "Historic Building Site Survey Report, for Wager Lot No. 56, High Street," dated August 1, 1958, page 15.

3. 1873 painting, HF-145, in above report, page 16.

4. 1895 photograph, HF-99, in Snell, C. W., "Historic Building Site Survey Report for Bldg. No. 3-Wager Lot No. 53, High Street," July 28, 1958, page 17.
HF-770 - ca 1882 Photo

5. 1900 photograph, HF-142, in above report, page 18.

6. 1955 view of front of Bldg. No. 15 in Snell, C. W., "Historic Building Report, Part I, for Bldg. No. 15," page 12.

7. 1889-1892 photograph, HF-57, in Snell, C. W., "Historic Building Report, Part I, for Bldg. No. 7, dated October 1, 1957, revised January 29, 1958, page 11, rear view of kitchen.

8. 1865 photograph HF-55, in Snell, C. W., "Historic Building Report, Part II, Historical Data Section, for Bldgs. No. 9 and 8, The Gerard B. Wager Buildings," dated March 18, 1959, page 17; Excellent view of rear dormer windows on Bldg. 15.

9. 1896 photograph, HF-96, in Sullivan, Arthur L., "History of Wager Lots No. 17-34, 1782-1869," page 90.

10. On the following page will be found Photograph HF-92, showing High Street in 1896.

7. SUMMARY OF HISTORICAL DATA

A. Ownership of the Land, 1782-1868

Subdivision 4 of Wager Lot No. 15 was owned by the Wager family from 1782 to 1837. In October, 1837, the lot was purchased by William Anderson for \$1012.50. In 1846, Anderson sold most of this lot and Bldg. No. 15 to

HARPERS FERRY FROM LOUDOUN HEIGHTS, 1898

Harpers Ferry Negative No. HF-92.

High Street runs up the hill in the center.

On the right side of the street are to be seen Bldg. No. 12,
at the corner of High and Shenandoah Streets, then proceeding up the
hill, Bldgs. No. 12A, 13, 14, 15 and 16.

Susan Downey for \$3,000. In 1848 he also sold Mrs. Downey the remaining portion of Subdivision 4 for \$300. Mrs. Downey retained title to this property from 1846 until her death in 1856 and her heirs did not sell the lot and house until 1868.

B. Construction of Bldg. No. 15

Bldg. No. 15 was built by William Anderson in 1838-1839. The main house was $2\frac{1}{2}$ stories high, built of stone over a one story stone cellar, and had a slate roof. The house fronted 24 feet on High Street and was 40 feet 8 inches deep. Attached to the southeast corner of the main house was a one and a half story stone kitchen with a slate roof. The kitchen was 15 feet wide and 16 feet long. In 1859 the house probably contained four rooms in the basement or cellar, two of which had fireplaces. The floor of the basement was brick. On the first floor were three rooms; two of these had fireplaces. One of them, the front room, 21 by 16 feet in size, was made over into a store or shop room in 1841. In the rear of the store there were two smaller rooms that had been created by dividing the original large rear room by means of a partition wall in 1844.

On the second floor were four more rooms divided by a central passageway. Two of these rooms had fireplaces. The third floor or garret contained two more rooms, thus making a total of 13 rooms in the main house. The kitchen and pantry were located in the $1\frac{1}{2}$ story stone wing.

C. Use of Bldg. No. 15, 1839-1861

1. September, 1839-March 31, 1841: Tavern of James H. Hayman.
2. 1841-42; Rented in part by Robert Delany and three other families.
3. August, 1842-1843: Variety and fancy store of Henry V. Andrews.

4. April, 1843-March, 1844: Shoemaker shop of John Wells and J. Hartshorn.
5. April, 1844-January, 1848: Shoemaker shop of Alfred Andrews.
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(Sgd) CHARLES W. SNELL

Charles W. Snell
Historian (Park Supervisory)
March 27, 1959





H30

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

April 1, 1959

Memorandum

To: Regional Director, Region Five
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Subject: Research Project No. HF-54, Bldg. No. 15

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(SGD) FRANK H. ANDERSON

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Superintendent

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Harpers Ferry National Monument
Harpers Ferry, West Virginia

June 2, 1959

Memorandum

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Frank H. Anderson
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Region Five
421 Walnut Street
Philadelphia 6, Pa.

May 29, 1959

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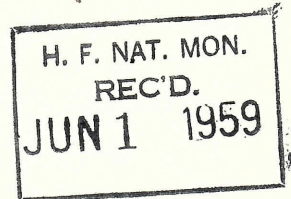
	ACT	INFO
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