

HISTORIC STRUCTURES REPORT
Part I

001073

WAR CORRESPONDENTS ARCH
CRAMPTON'S GAP

ANTIETAM NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD SITE

by

Robert L. Lagemann
Park Historian

May 18, 1961

HISTORIC STRUCTURES REPORT

PART I

WAR CORRESPONDENTS ARCH

CRAMPTON'S GAP

MARYLAND

May 18, 1961

APPROVAL SHEET

RECOMMENDED

Benjamin H. Davis
Superintendent

Date May 18, 1961

Ronald F. Lee
Regional Director

Date May 17, 1962

Robert G. Hall
Chief, EODC

Date May 1, 1962

APPROVED

Assistant
Director, ASSISTANT

Date Oct. 3, 1962

5. Administrative Data

- a. War Correspondents Memorial Arch,
Crampton's Gap. (Not numbered)
- b. The Arch was erected as a memorial
to the correspondents who covered
the battles of the Civil War; it
will remain as a memorial.
- c. Funds for routine maintenance of the
structure and the grounds are pro-
vided in our regular appropriations.
- d. \$14,600

6. Historical Data

The small trapezium plot of land on which the War Correspondents Arch stands was once included in a 105-acres purchase made by George Alfred Townsend in 1875. At that time, Mr. Townsend was an author achieving monetary success writing under the pen-name of "Gath." He chose this site at Crampton's Gap on South Mountain, with its splendid view of the beautiful valleys on each side of the ridge, as an ideal location for constructing his writer's den. The number of buildings erected here by Townsend increased during the 1880's and '90's to twenty, five of them being stone residences.

Having made a considerable portion of his fortune as a newspaper writer, and having begun his career as a Civil War Correspondent for the New York Herald, Townsend decided during the early 90's that he should sponsor a lasting memorial to the Civil War journalists. Accordingly, Townsend furnished the 0.2 acre plot of land, and initiated a popular subscription to help raise money for construction of the memorial arch.

Part of his 105 acres along the ridge at Crampton's Gap lies in Washington County (Md.) and part in Frederick County (Md.). Townsend selected the site for his proposed monument to the newspaper artists and



WAR CORRESPONDENTS' ARCH, Crampton's Gap
on South Mountain. (Between 1942 and 1954.)

correspondents of the Civil War near the heart of his property, near the highest point in the narrow pass, just a few yards east of the county line.

The widest dimension, ninety-four feet, is the eastern line along which once extended a stone wall (the lower courses of which remain). The west side, only ten feet long, and about sixty-eight feet east of the Washington-Frederick county line, formerly was marked by an iron fence and gate. The iron post and woven wire fence once extended along both the north side, seventy-five feet, six inches long, and along the south side, seventy-nine feet long. Had the north and south sides extended a few more feet to the west, they would have intersected, thus forming a true triangle; this plot is popularly described as a triangle, anyway.

The center of the monument is about fifty feet east of the west line of the plot, as marked by remaining iron gate posts. These iron posted fence lines were not originally part of the monument plot when the monument was dedicated, but were installed during the jurisdiction of the War Department, and having subsequently fallen into disrepair through neglect, all of the wire and some of the posts were removed after maintenance of the site became a

National Park Service responsibility. Several of the lone posts remain as a barrier to automobiles along the roadside edges of the plot.

Most accounts ascribe the design of the memorial arch to impressions made on "Gath" by the architecture of a fire-engine house and a railroad station in Hagerstown.^{1 2} Two dates are cited for the year of its completion: 1896 and 1898. The cornerstone in the structure itself bears the year 1896. A feature article in a Sunday supplement states: "It was dedicated in 1896 and was turned over to the ~~F~~Federal Government in 1904 by Mr. Townsend."³ By 1905, Townsend's health as well as his fortune declined, forcing him to abandon his elaborate estate at Gapland.

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- 1 The Sunday Star, Washington, April 6, 1941, Gravuer Section, pages 6-7: "It embodies the most bizarre features of a Moorish Arch at a railway station and a fire house tower, both of which had struck the writer's Townsend's fancy."
 - 2 Per interview with Supt. Mills, Gathland State Park: The two buildings referred to in above article were the Antietam Fire Hall bell tower and the old B&O Station across the street. The RR station is no longer extant and the bell tower has been removed from the fire-engine house.
 - 3 The Sunday Star, Washington, April 6, 1941, ibid.

Upon his death in 1914 all his Gap property, except the arch which had already been deeded⁴ to the U. S. Government, was sold at a public auction. He had, however, provided for the future of one of his many stone structures at Crampton's Gap, the memorial arch. When the U. S. Government had accepted the memorial ten years earlier, it was with the provision that this tribute to Civil War correspondents would be maintained as a public monument. The War Department was assigned this responsibility and placed it under the administration of Antietam National Battlefield Site.

By the time this property was transferred to the National Park Service, August 10, 1933, the other portions of Townsend's Gapland estate had changed hands a number of times and had fallen into dereliction. Since that date the other properties continued to change hands and to further deteriorate until 1948 when the State of Maryland acquired it and established Gathland State Park at the Gap.⁴ So the War Correspondents Memorial Arch at Crampton's Gap now has the status of federally owned and park entirely surrounded by a state owned and operated park.

⁴ Letter on display in Gathland State Park museum, dated July 3, 1948, addressed to Joseph F. Kaylor, Maryland Department of State Forests and Parks.

Since its acquisition by the National Park Service, as an outlying area of Antietam National Battlefield Site, the Correspondents Arch at Crampton's Gap, six miles south of Turner's Gap on U. S. Alternate Route 40, and ten miles east of Sharpsburg, the monument has received minor repair work. In 1934, the memorial arch was repointed by a PWA project.⁵ On July 25, 1942, a severe electrical storm damaged the arch.⁶ The weather-vane on the south turret was knocked off and "damaged beyond repair." Three (or four) of the cap stones at and near the top of this turret were dislodged by the lightning stroke and fell to the ground. By December 1, 1942,⁷ the three large, 200-pound cap stones had been replaced, a duplicate of the weathervane had been installed, and some additional repair work not originally anticipated had been completed. This included replacing part of two courses of paving brick sized stones which supported one of the dislodged capstones. During this

⁵ Hagerstown Herald, August 10, 1934, page unknown.

⁶ NPS memorandum to Regional Director, Region One, from Supt. C. L. Nett, Antietam National Battlefield Site, dated August 1, 1942.

⁷ NPS memorandum to Supt. Gettysburg National Military Park, from Supt. Nett, Antietam National Battlefield Site, dated December 2, 1942.

repair, it was decided a lightning rod should be installed. The rod was attached to the north turret of the monument by the contractor who performed the repair work.

In 1946 a proposal to add the names of Ernie Pyle, Louis Creel, and other World War II correspondents was not approved.⁸ Beginning in 1953 requests for the removal of the two trees supposed at that time to have been planted by Townsend⁹ near the west gate to the monument plot resulted in the removal of one of the trees in 1958. The trees were alleged to have impaired the view of the arch desired by photographers.¹⁰ In addition, one of the trees was infested with bees which stung some of the visitors to the Gathland State Park.

The arch today appears as it did when originally constructed, with a few minor exceptions. An interview with the present Superintendent of Gathland State Park¹¹ and a study of the miscellaneous materials in his records disclosed some data apparently not available elsewhere.

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- 8 NPS memorandum to Supt., Antietam National Battlefield Site, from NPS Chief Historian Kahler, dated April 6, 1951; and, Interior Department telegram to J. W. Coleman, Mammoth Cave NP, from Supt. Paul H. Younger, Antietam NBS, dated October 10, 1946.
- 9 NPS memorandum to Director from Supt. H. W. Doust, Antietam NBS, dated September 4, 1953.
- 10 loc. cit.
- 11 Supt. Mills, at his park office, Crampton's Gap, Maryland, April 7, 1961. Interviewed by R. L. Lagemann, Park Historian, Antietam NBS

A photograph made from an old glass slide¹² of the monument shows that once there was no fence around the plot; no trees had yet been planted near the west gate; six cannon barrels stood vertically in a row along the north boundary; the New Jersey Brigade Monument had not yet been installed; but that the four cast iron War Department tablets had already been mounted along the east end of the south boundary. Furthermore, on the structure of the arch itself, at the time this picture was taken, the weathervane was in place on the south turret; there were no lightning rods; and a ball-topped flag pole about twenty or twenty-five feet high (estimated by its proportion to other known dimensions of the structure) was then mounted on top of the north turret. A post card, quite evidently/^acolored copy of the glass slide view of the monument, dates the above description as not later than 1913. This card, copyrighted by Hays Brothers (Hagerstown), #400,819, was mailed to Rahrsersville from Hagerstown and was postmarked in 1913.

A photograph of the monument taken in 1941, and now in the Gathland museum, shows the weathervane

12 Picture owned by Mrs. Wm. Baker, 229 N. Locust Street, Hagerstown, Maryland.

still in place; but shows no lightning rod, nor the flag pole. One of the employees of the state park lived in the immediate vicinity of the Gap during 1929-31, and states that the flag pole was still atop the monument then. The iron fence shows clearly in the 1941 photograph, as does the New Jersey monument just east of the west gate. The specifications of the contract for the repair work in 1942¹³ required the mortar to be of the same texture and color as the original; replaced stones were to be rubbed with sandstone to match the weathering of the original stones. Minor damage has been inflicted on the statuary decorations by vandals. Some of the inscriptions are scarcely legible, due to weathering. The iron posted fence around the north, west, and south sides of the monument plot have been removed. Some stones have been removed from the wall on the east side. And the 1st

13 Short form contract between U. S. Dept. of Interior, NPS, Gettysburg National Military Park, and Hammaker Brothers (Contractor), Thurmont, Maryland, dated October 19, 1942, five pages; in file "D32", Antietam National Battlefield Site Office, Sharpsburg, Maryland.

New Jersey Brigade stone marker with its bronze plaque¹⁴ has since been erected between the arch and the west gate to the plot. But in the main, the Correspondents Memorial Arch today presents the same appearance as when it was dedicated.

The accompanying drawing¹⁵ shows the main architectural details, including pertinent dimensions. The brown stone tablet on the north elevation has cut into it letters reading: "To the Army Correspondents and Artists 1861-65, Whose toils cheered the camps, thrilled the fireside, ... Erected by Subscription 1884." The soft stone tablet on the south elevation, which is badly weathered, bears ten quotations ranging

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- 14 Inscription on plaque: "First New Jersey Brigade, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th Infantry and Hex-amer's Battery, September 14, 1862. Late in the afternoon the brigade advanced from the fields north and west of Burkittsville, charged up the mountain, carried this point, and followed the enemy to the west foot of the mountain. Loss in the brigade 40 killed, 134 wounded.
- 15 Copy, NPS-Ant/R5-9020, of blueprint entitled: "WAR CORRESPONDENTS MONUMENT. CRAMPTON'S PASS, SOUTH MT., 1 mile N.W. of Burkittsville, Md. Drawn by J. Wm. Schnebly C. E. from notes by Capt. J. K. Beckenbaugh & J. W. S. Antietam National Cemetery Office. Sharpsburg, Md. April 11, 1934. Scale: 1/8" = 1'-0".

in source from the Bible to MacGahan at Khiva in 1873, and including Henry M. Stanley's "Dr. Livingston, I presume," of 1871.

The cornerstone in the north-east corner, at the height of the "SPEED" plaque, is inscribed "Sept. 14, 62-96," representing the dates of the Battle of South Mountain (1862) and of the dedication of the arch (1896). Two tablets of a fairly durable stone on the east elevation list the names of 106 Civil War correspondents (Union), twenty-nine names labeled simply "Southern," and sixteen names of Artists (including Matthew Brady). Details of the west (front) elevation may be examined in the photograph on page 5 of this report. Damaged portions include: 1. Of the two red cement horse heads, the southern one has the lower jaw and right ear shot off; 2. The feminine front-face figure above the word "SPEED" has several nicks in it; and 3. The pointing between some of the keystones in the lower (main) arch has fallen out. The top of the north turret is out of plumb, but the stones of this crenelated turret do not seem to be loose.

Since the Gathland State Park was dedicated, November 14, 1958, very noticeable improvements and re-

habilitation have been made in the character and appearance of the land surrounding the War Correspondents Arch. The number of visitors to the park has greatly increased each succeeding year. Superintendent Mills reports that on summer Sundays when nearly every space at the many picnic tables just north of the Arch is filled, he receives countless inquiries on the arch and its history. Recently¹⁶ overtures to the National Park Service for the transferral of the monument and plot to the State were declined.

The outside interpretive exhibit plan for Antietam National Battlefield Site currently being completed by the National Park Service Museum Laboratory Exhibit Planning Team includes a permanent installation interpreting the Battle of South Mountain and the War Correspondents Arch on this monument plot.

Therefore, these several factors, reflecting an increased awareness of the value of the Arch to present and future visitors, in addition to the basic requirement

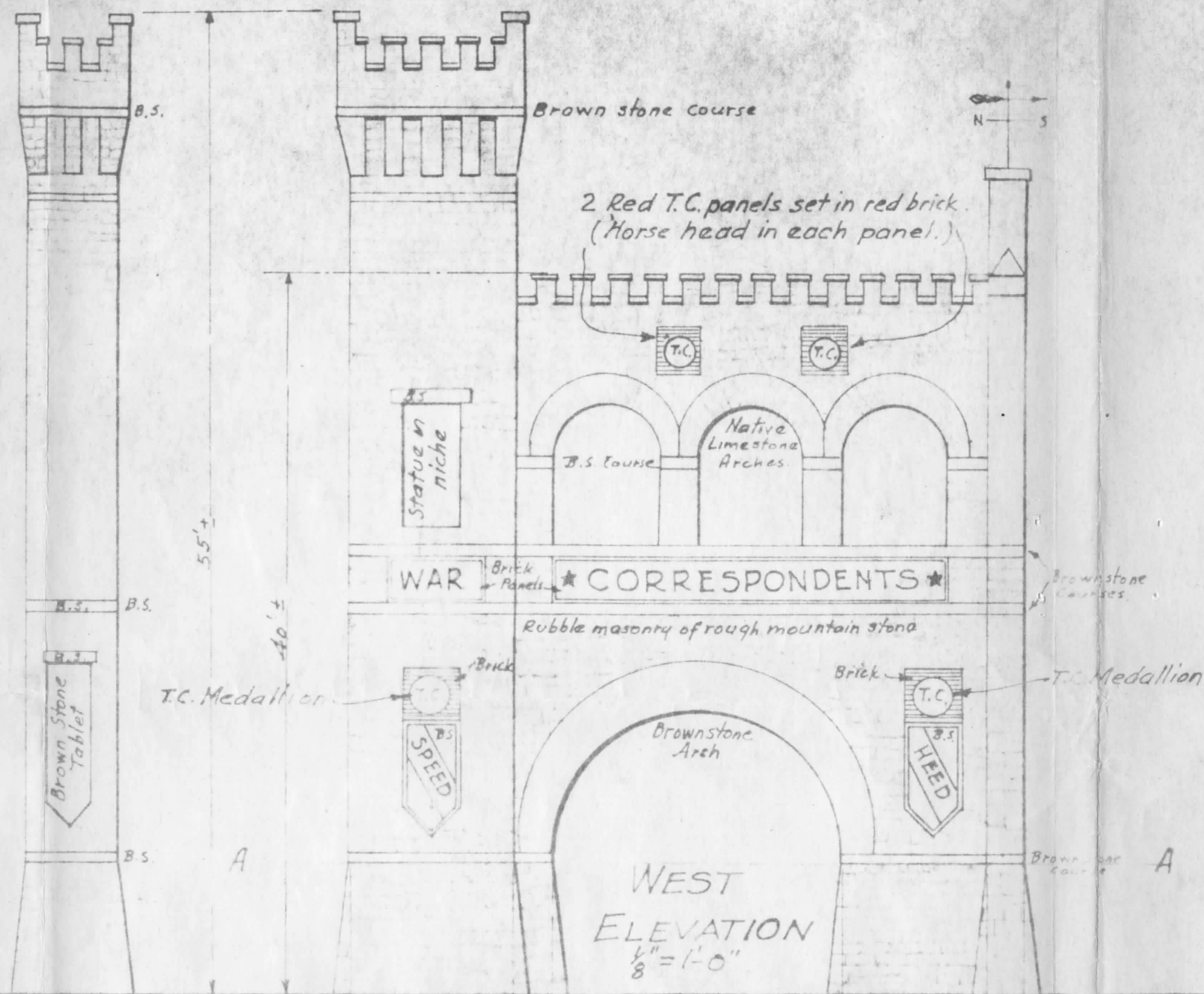
16 NPS memorandum to Supt. H. W. Doust, Antietam National Battlefield Site, from Supt. E. M. Dale, Chesapeake & Ohio Canal NHP Project, dated November 24, 1958; and NPS memorandum to Regional Director, Region Five, from Supt. Doust, dated December 1, 1958.

of preserving the monument physically intact, are timely reasons for repairing this structure and keeping it up to National Park Service standards of maintenance. Some re-landscaping of the monument plot will be proposed in the new roadside interpretive exhibit plan referred to before.

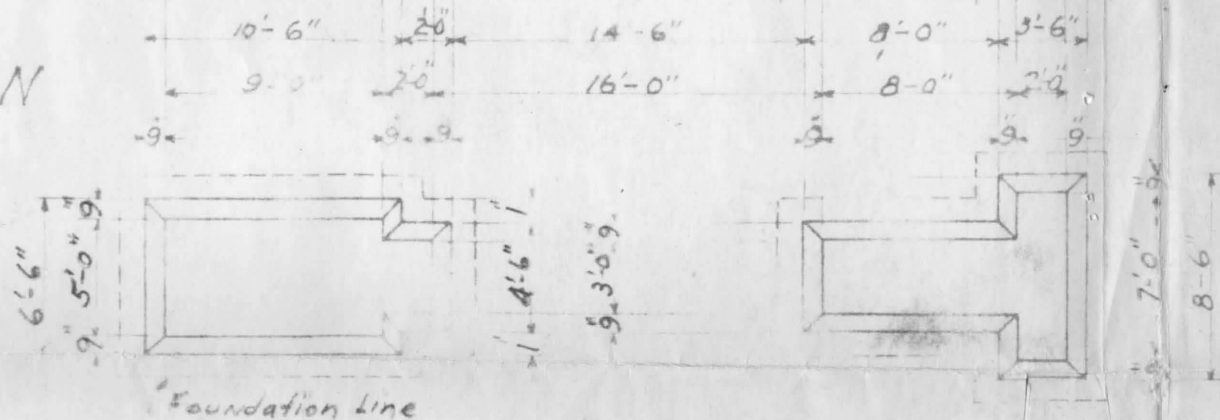
This memorial is popularly reputed to be "the only monument to War Correspondents in the world." To the best of my knowledge, there are no other monuments, in the United States, at least, to correspondents of any wars, although some individuals have been monumented. Because this monument was dedicated to Civil War correspondents it is appropriate that it be directly related with a Civil War National Battlefield Site, rather than associated with a state recreational park.

This writer does not now envisage a need for further research on this subject.

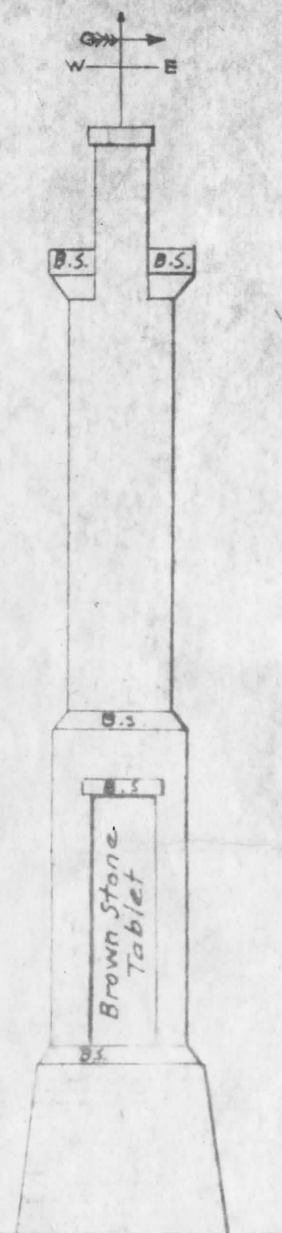
Robert L. Lagemann
Park Historian
Antietam National Battlefield Site
May 18, 1961



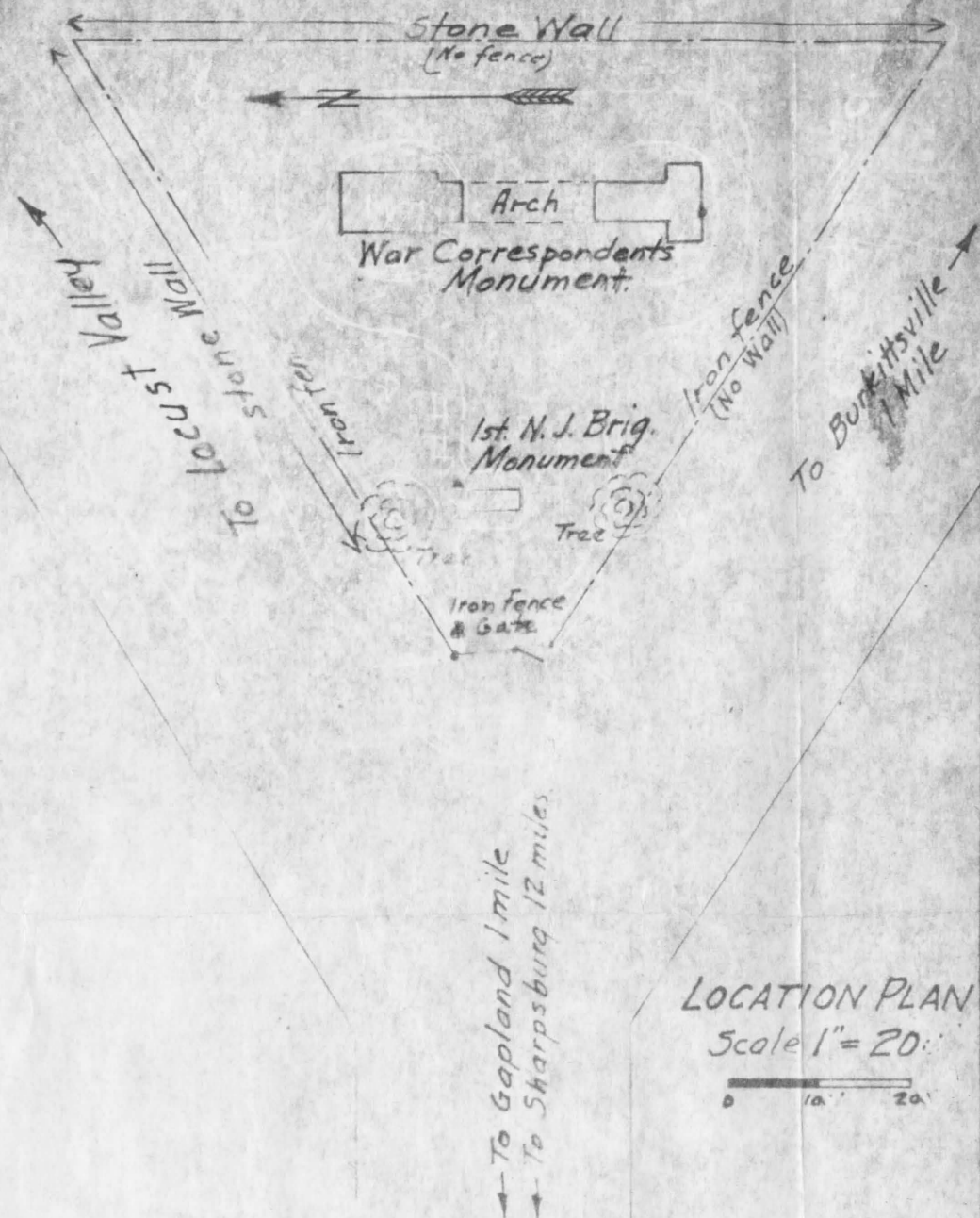
NORTH ELEVATION
 $\frac{1}{8}'' = 1'-0''$



PLAN AT "A-A"
 $\frac{1}{8}'' = 1'-0''$



SOUTH ELEVATION
 $\frac{1}{8}'' = 1'-0''$



LOCATION PLAN
 Scale 1" = 20'

Frederick Washington County
 County

NBS-ANT
 RS-9020

WAR CORRESPONDENTS
 MONUMENT.
 CRAMPTON'S PASS, SOUTH MT.
 1 MILE N.W. of BURKITTSTVILLE, MD.

Drawn by J.W.M. Schnebly C.E. from notes
 by Capt. J.K. Beckenbaugh & J.W.S.
 Antietam National Cemetery Office.
 Sharpsburg Md. April 11, 1934.

ARCHITECTURAL DATA

A. DESCRIPTION OF STRUCTURE

The structure is constructed of native rubble stone with arches of brownstone and limestone. On the north and south ends are brownstone panels. Brick and terra cotta panels are set in the east and west facades.

On the north end rises a tower 9 feet by 6 feet to a high point of 55 feet above the ground. Approximately 26 feet above the ground on the west side is a niche containing a statue. The top of the tower is finished with battlements copped with native rubble stone. From the center of this tower a flagpole rose about 20 feet.

The south tower is 2 feet by 7 feet forming a tee with the center wall and extending approximately 45 feet above the ground. It was originally surmounted by a metal weather-vane since removed.

Photographs attached show the conditions in 1954.

above the main arch is a series of three arches formed with rock face limestone.

B. PRESENT CONDITION OF FABRIC

Generally the structural condition of the monument is good. Some mortar joints are showing signs of deterioration. One terra cotta panel with horses head is slightly damaged. The original flagpole and weathervane have been removed following damage by lightning.

C. ARCHITECTURAL INVESTIGATION

Further architectural investigation is not deemed necessary at this time.

D. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that: (1) All mortar joints in the monument be raked to a depth of $1\frac{1}{2}$ " and repointed to match the existing color. (2) Structurally unsound stone, brick or terra cotta be replaced. (3) Flagpole and weathervane be replaced and lightning protection be installed. (4) Stone wall defining the original delta shaped plot of land be restored. (5) Landscape treatment in keeping with field interpretative exhibits be accomplished. (6) Tree intruding on the view be removed.