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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

Harpers Ferry NHP

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 41

Salty Dog Tavern, (Park Building 80), Located at Lock #33, C. & O. Canal,
Harpers Ferry Road,

Washington County, Maryland. Park Building No. 80 is an two-story stone house with gable roof that was built in period 1833-1850 as a tavern to serve canal users. Privately owned in 1859 it was then a place of ill-repute. Significance -S, Theme XVIII. Theme XIII-Brown Raiders marched by it in 1859.

Railroad

1. The Baltimore & Ohio Railroad:

The Baltimore & Ohio Railroad reached the Maryland shore, opposite Harpers Ferry in December 1834. In 1837 the Company succeeded in spanning the Potomac and thus arrived in Harpers Ferry. In 1838 the Railroad received a 20-foot right of way from the United States along the river front of the Musket Factory and on November 1842, the line was opened from Baltimore to Cumberland.

a. B. & O. Buildings at Harpers Ferry

1. B & O Depot, Wager Lot No. 1, Ferry Lot:

Wager Lot No. 1 and the old Wager "Bridge Lot," located in the Ferry Lot Reservation, were both owned by the B & O Railroad Company in 1859. Situated on Lot No. 1 and perhaps partly on the old bridge lot, was the one-story brick depot of the B & O that had been erected in 1846-47. The dimensions of this structure are unknown. A single track connecting the main stem of the B & O Railroad with the Winchester & Potomac Railroad also ran across Lot No. 1. This B & O Depot is no longer extant. Site in private ownership.

2. The Old B & O Ticket Office, Lot South of the W & P RR:

This lot, situated south of the Winchester & Potomac Railroad track, and just east of the Gault House Saloon, was owned by the B & O RR in 1859. This lot was occupied by a 1-1/2-story brick house that fronted about 30 feet on the railroad track and was about 20 feet deep, with its rear wall resting on the stone Shenandoah River Wall. The building was erected by the Company in 1837 and was used as a ticket office until 1845. In 1859 it was probably used either as a warehouse or tool house. The B & O Office is no longer extant. The site is in private ownership.

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NATIONAL PARK SERVICENATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS**1 NAME** HARPERS FERRY NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

HISTORIC

Salty Dog Tavern

AND/OR COMMON

Salty Dog Tavern (Bldg. No. 80)**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

Lock # 33, C & O Canal, Harpers Ferry Road

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

near Sandy Hook

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

MarylandVICINITY OF
CODESixth
COUNTY
Washington

CODE

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

☐ DISTRICT☒ BUILDING(S)☐ STRUCTURE☐ SITE☐ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

☒ PUBLIC☐ PRIVATE☐ BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS☐ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

☐ OCCUPIED☒ UNOCCUPIED☐ WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

☒ YES: RESTRICTED☒ YES: UNRESTRICTED☐ NO

PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE☐ COMMERCIAL☐ EDUCATIONAL☒ ENTERTAINMENT☒ GOVERNMENT☐ INDUSTRIAL☐ MILITARY☐ MUSEUM☒ PARK☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE☐ RELIGIOUS☐ SCIENTIFIC☐ TRANSPORTATION☒ OTHER ruins**4 AGENCY**

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS (If applicable)

National Park Service, National Capital Parks Regional Office

STREET & NUMBER

1100 Ohio St Drive, SW

CITY, TOWN

Washington

VICINITY OF

STATE
District of Columbia**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETCWashington
County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

Washington Street and Summit Avenue

CITY, TOWN

HagerstownSTATE
Maryland**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**TITLE Historic American Buildings Survey: None.

DATE

☐ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

☐ EXCELLENT
☐ GOOD
☐ FAIR

☐ DETERIORATED
☒ RUINS
☐ UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

☐ UNALTERED
☒ ALTERED

CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE
☐ MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Bldg. No. 80 was a two-story stone structure with a $\frac{1}{2}$ gable roof; there was no basement. There were two rooms on each floor and an attic space above.

A large frame structure was later constructed immediately to the east of the stone building and these were utilized as a tavern known as the Salty Dog during the last half of the 19th century.

In 1961, before the National Park Service had possession of the property, a fire destroyed the frame building and left only the stone walls of the older structure standing. These ruined stone walls have been stabilized.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
☐ PREHISTORIC	☐ ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	☐ COMMUNITY PLANNING	☐ LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	☐ RELIGION	
☒ 1499-1500	☐ ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	☐ CONSERVATION	☐ LAW	☐ SCIENCE	
☐ 1500-1599	☐ AGRICULTURE	☐ ECONOMICS	☐ LITERATURE	☐ SCULPTURE	
☐ 1600-1699	☐ ARCHITECTURE	☐ EDUCATION	☐ MILITARY	☐ SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
☐ 1700-1799	☐ ART	☐ ENGINEERING	☐ MUSIC	☐ THEATER	
☒ 1800-1899	☒ COMMERCE	☐ EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	☐ PHILOSOPHY	☒ TRANSPORTATION	
☐ 1900-	☐ COMMUNICATIONS	☐ INDUSTRY	☐ POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	☒ OTHER (SPECIFY) Crime	
		☐ INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES Built Ca. 1833-50

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The stone section of Bldg. No. 80, a two-story structure, was erected at some undetermined date in the period 1833 to 1850. It may have been built in 1833-34 when the section of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal opposite to Harpers Ferry was completed and put into operation. The structure was apparently built to function as a tavern and to serve travelers on the canal. The structure and tavern was definitely standing in the 1850's, when the Salt Dog tavern was frequently mentioned in the newspapers as the scene of numerous and fierce fights and brawls. The tavern was a place of ill-repute during the 19th century and in the early 20th century is said to have been the hangout of bootleggers and like gentry.

(Note: Research on the C & O Canal National Historical Park indicates that Bldg. No. 80 never served as the Lockkeeper's House for Lock # 33;-- this latter structure, located at that lock, is still standing.)

THE STONE HOUSE

(Mis-named the Salty Dog-opposite C&O Canal Lock 33)

- Land originally patented "Keep Trieste"
- Early 19 century large part of Keep Trieste purchased by Brien Family who owned Antietam Iron Works
- Before 1824 (John McPherson Brien sold the Wager Family of Harpers Ferry strip of land at the base of Maryland Heights. Brien's property re-surveyed and given the name Antietam Iron Works Tract
- 1840-41 - James H. Elgin claimed he had erected the Stone House at the base of Maryland Heights (pp. 7 & 17) Elgin's early ownership and occupancy of the Stone House cannot be clearly documented (p. 8) Elgin leased the house and until near the end of the Civil War and in April, 1865 (according to Elgin) Union Commander at H.F. removed Elgin's tenant from the house. House was turned over to a canal employee named John H. Reed.

Elgin tried to obtain a deed from C&O Canal for the house but the canal Co. never recognized the fact that the house was built by Elgin on C&O property. Property surveyed by James Clarke and it was concluded by the survey that the house was on C&O property. (Elgin had property surveyed). Reed occupied house until his death in 1889.
- 1870 - earliest documentation
- 1873 Eglin indicated Reed was running some type of drinking established at the Stone House
- 1877 Map of Sandy Hook District shows that in 1877 Reed was using Stone House as a store (p. 19)
- 1889 Upon Reed's death, he willed his real estate to his son Winfield S. Reed (? where did the deed come from), part of which was the Stone House, although not specifically mentioned in the will (p. 20) (p. 12 states canal company never gave Elgin or Reed a deed to the house.)

Shortly after his father's death - Winfield sold small part of the Stone House Tract to Albertus Spencer
- 12/1892 - Court ordered the Sheriff to sell remainder of the Stone House Tract (due to debts) which included the Stone House
- 1893 - Albertus Spencer received a deed for the Stone House and operated a store and saloon in the building for two decades
- 1917 - after a fighting and killing nearby the Stone House, local citizenry petitioned to have Spencer's placed closed. Spencer built a 2-story frame house adjacent to the Stone House and established his store in the new frame house and a museum in the Stone House.
- ca. 1933-43 - the new 2-story frame house was rented to various individuals who used it as a tavern and it became known as "Salty Dog Saloon"

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Historic Structure Report

The Stone House (Misnamed the Salty Dog
Saloon) Opposite C & O Canal Lock 33

Historical Data

Harpers Ferry National Historical Park

W.Va.-Va.-Md.

by
Edward D. Smith

Denver Service Center
National Capital Team
National Park Service
United States Department of the Interior
Denver, Colorado

March 25, 1980

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Preface

The abandoned stone house at the base of Maryland Heights opposite Canal Lock 33 is perhaps the most talked-about house along the canal. According to local folklore, the house very early became famous as a center for lusty and riotous entertainment. Like much of the folklore in the Potomac Valley, the stories surrounding the Stone House are based to some degree on actual facts. Since the stories were passed down orally, however, some of the facts have been gradually distorted over the years. For example, the Stone House has been mistakenly identified as being the infamous "Salty Dog Saloon."¹ Although the Salty Dog Saloon did stand very close to the Stone House, the two structures were, in fact, two separate and distinct buildings. The histories of the two buildings were also different.

This report has been made possible by the assistance of a number of persons. Mr. Edgar Marion Weaver of Pleasantville, Maryland granted several interviews in which he provided valuable information and photographs on the history of the Stone House from approximately 1920 to the

1 George W. "Hooper" Wolfe, I Drove Mules On The C & O Canal (Dover, Delaware: Doves Graphics Associates, 1970), page 67. See also Thomas F. Hahn, Towpath Guide to the C & O Canal, Section Two: Seneca to Harpers Ferry (Washington: C & O Canal Association, 1971), pages 63-64. Wolfe claims that the Stone House was actually the Salty Dog. Hahn says that the Stone House was "one end of the main building of the Salty Dog Saloon."

present. Robert and Ola Waters, two longtime residents of Dargan, Maryland, also granted interviews which were valuable to this report. Special thanks also go to Maria Joy and Michael Musick of the National Archives, to Lea Strubble and Dale Sipes of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park, and to Hilda Staubs and Archie Frazen of the Harpers Ferry National Historical Park.

Statement of Historical Significance

The abandoned stone house at the base of Maryland Heights opposite Canal Lock 33 is significant because it is one of only three houses still standing in the Dam 3 Area of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal.¹ Although it was not built by the canal company, it has had a long association with the canal. The Stone House is also significant because of its own unique history. It has been a residence, a store/saloon, and a museum. In addition, it was probably used as a hospital during the Civil War.

1 For a general description of what is called the "Dam 3 Area" of the canal, see Edward D. Smith, Historic Resource Study, Dam 3 Area: Shenandoah River Lock to Lock 36 (Denver: NPS, December 31, 1979), page i.

The stone house at the base of Maryland Heights is situated on an un-numbered lot¹ within a tract of land originally patented as "Keep Trieste."

By the early nineteenth century, a large part of the Keep Trieste tract had been purchased by the Brien Family who also owned the Antietam Iron Works.² Sometime before 1824 John and John McPherson Brien sold the Wager Family (of Harpers Ferry) a strip of land at the base of Maryland Heights.

COLLATERAL
The Wager Family were the descendants of Robert Harper, the founder of Harpers Ferry. They desired a strip of land at the base of Maryland Heights so that a toll bridge could be erected to replace Robert Harper's old ferry. The toll bridge was erected in 1824.³

1 Proof that this lot was never numbered can be found in Deed, Department of Forests and Parks, State of Maryland, to the United States of America, February 13, 1863 (recorded February 1, 1965), in Washington County Land Records, Hagerstown, Maryland, Liber 419, Folios 65-71.

2 The Brien's property was resurveyed in the 1840s and given the name -- "Antietam Iron Works Tract." It was at that time that the tract was divided into numbered lots. The Stone House lot would not have received a number since it was no longer owned by the Briens. For a view of the Antietam Iron Works lots in the vicinity of Maryland Heights, see Appendix A: Antietam Iron Works Plat made by S.S. Downin in 1858 and recopied by E.E. Piper in 1883, located in the Plat Files, Washington County Courthouse, Hagerstown. For a brief discussion of John McPherson Brien and the Antietam Iron Works, see Thomas John Chew Williams, History of Washington County, Maryland, 2 vols. (Hagerstown: Runk and Titsworth, Publishers, 1906; reprint ed., Baltimore: Regional Publishing Company, 1968), I: 247-48.

3 Charles W. Snell, Historic Resource Study, The Business Enterprises and Commercial Development of Harpers Ferry's Lower Town Area, 1803 to 1861 (Washington:NPS, April 9, 1973), page 11.

Sometime after the Wager Family erected their toll bridge, they also erected a "tavern house" somewhere near the Maryland end of the bridge.⁴ This writer could not determine the precise location of the tavern. It is probably safe to say, however, that it was not located on the site of the Stone House. The tavern probably stood within the right-of-way of the proposed Chesapeake and Ohio Canal. Such a location would seem logical in light of the fact that in 1833 the county road had to be relocated in order to make room for the canal.⁵ In addition, before the coming of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, the old Potomac Company's long skirting canal was in operation between the United States Armory Dam and the Wager Toll Bridge. It is quite likely that the Wager Tavern stood between the county road and the Potomac Company's skirting canal. The Wager Tavern was probably not situated on the site of the Stone House because of one other important factor. Before the coming of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal and the relocation of the county road, the Stone House Site would have been part of a rocky hillside.

4 This "tavern house" is mentioned in the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal land records relative to the condemnation of the Wager strip at the base of Maryland Heights. See Legal Records, ca. 1828-1900, C & O Co. Unless otherwise noted, all Chesapeake and Ohio Canal manuscript source materials referred to in this report are deposited in the Department of the Interior files at the National Archives and are designated Record Group 79.

5 For documentation indicating that the county road would have to be moved to make room for the canal, see Profile Map of Section 109, found in Drawings and Other Records Concerning Construction, 1828-1937, C & O Co. A copy of this profile map can also be found in Edward D. Smith, Historic Resource Study, Dam 3 Area: Shenandoah River Lock to Lock 36, Appendix B.

Even after the arrival of the canal and the relocation of the county road, it was difficult to erect a building near the base of the hillside. According to one source, before the Stone House could be built, some blasting was required in order to remove a large rock which extended to the edge of the county road.⁶

The Chesapeake and Ohio Canal was delayed in reaching the Dam 3 Area opposite Harpers Ferry because of a series of injunctions obtained by the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad in 1828. It was not until early 1832 that the canal company was finally given the green light to proceed with its construction north from the Point of Rocks.⁷ On January 7 of that year, the board of directors of the canal company ordered the company's land agent to take immediate steps to acquire the land needed for construction between the Point of Rocks and the proposed dam above Williamsport.⁸

The first land condemned by the canal company in the vicinity of Maryland Heights was the Wager Family's strip near the Wager Toll Bridge. According to Walter Sanderlin's history of the canal, one of the Wager brothers (~~GERARD~~ B. Wager) was "a bitter opponent of the canal company" and the family sought the highest possible damages. An inquisition was held on

6 The statement concerning the blasting of rock appears in Elgin to President and Board of Directors, August 5, 1873, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co. The reader should note that this letter was written by James H. Elgin some forty years after the Stone House was supposedly built.

7 For a review of the struggle between the canal and the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, see Walter S. Sanderlin, The Great National Project: A History of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1946), pages 83 and 88.

8 Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors, C, 49-50.

the property on June 29, 1832. The jury awarded the Wager Family \$5,500. The canal company immediately filed an objection to the certification of the inquisition. The company argued that the value of the Wager Tavern, which stood on the condemned land, had been grossly over-rated by the Wagers and by the jury. The court, however, affirmed the inquisition on April 6, 1833.⁹

By mid-October of 1833, that section of the canal which included Lock 33 had been completed.¹⁰ By the end of October all of those sections between Dam 3 (opposite Harpers Ferry) and the Point of Rocks had been completed. On November 1, 1833, the Superintendent of the new Harpers Ferry Division of the canal informed the Board "that the water had been admitted into the Canal at Harper's ferry" and that it had "nearly reached Rushville [Seneca]." ¹¹

The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad reached the vicinity of Maryland Heights a year after the canal had been opened to that point. A temporary station was established near the entrance to the Wager Toll Bridge. The "first regular passenger train" pulled "up to the temporary station"

9 Legal Records, ca. 1828-1900, C & O Co. See also Washington County Land Records, Liber 20, folio 43; Deeds and Other Records Concerning Land, 1828-1873, C & O Co; Notebook entitled "Lands in Washington County Maryland," page 11, located in Deeds and Other Records Concerning Land, 1828-1873, C & O Co; and Sanderlin, The Great National Project, page 91. The Wager Family apparently had been renting their tavern to someone in the local area.

10 Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors, C, 401-02, 433, 438, 442, 447.

11 Ibid. D, 3.

on December 1, 1834.¹² The railroad company eventually built a new bridge across the canal and river to Harpers Ferry. The railroad ~~bridge~~ ^{MULEWALK} carried both railroad and vehicular traffic. A ~~towpath~~ was also attached to the bridge so that boats could be towed between Harpers Ferry and the canal.¹³

The arrival of the canal (and later the railroad) brought increased commercial activity to the area adjacent to Maryland Heights. As early as August 1834, G.B. Wilson and Company of Baltimore sought to lease a piece of ground near the Wager Toll Bridge for the establishment of a warehouse. The Canal Board, however, declined Wilson's application on the grounds that the canal company owned only enough land near the bridge "for its own purposes."¹⁴ In October of the same year, however, the Canal Board did grant one Patrick O'Byrne permission to erect a temporary warehouse "on a small parcel of land on the towpath side of the canal immediately above the Harpers Ferry Bridge." O'Byrne's warehouse was therefore probably the first warehouse erected along the canal near

12 Edward Hungerford, The Story of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, 2 vols. (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1928; reprint ed., New York: Arno Press, 1973), I: 146-47.

13 Ibid., I: 150. See also Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors, E, 139, 291.

14 Wilson to President and Directors, August 11, 1834, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co. See also Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors, D, 148.

Lock 33.¹⁵

In 1839, the Canal Board allowed a warehouse to be erected over the flume at Lock 33. This was probably only the second warehouse to be erected in this area. The warehouse was erected by James H. Elgin.¹⁶ Thirty-four years later this same James H. Elgin would claim that he had also erected the stone house at the base of Maryland Heights in 1840-41.¹⁷

James H. Elgin was born into a prominent Loudoun County, Virginia family around 1815. His father, William Elgin, was a hotel keeper in Aldie, Virginia and also owned a number of slaves.¹⁸ James H. Elgin and a brother named William S. Elgin, became involved with the canal company during the 1830s. In November 1837, James H. Elgin was awarded a contract to complete Lockhouse 38. He completed the house in October of 1838. In 1838-39, James H. Elgin was in partnership with Franklin Blackford of Ferry Hill Plantation. They owned and operated a fleet of packet boats

15 O'Byrne's warehouse was apparently "located on the towpath side of the Canal immediately opposite the lock." By early 1835 O'Byrne had formed a partnership with Gerald B. Wager. See Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors, D, 152, 178, 364. See also O'Byrne to President and Directors, April 30, 1835 and Wager to Washington, April 30 / June 1, 1835 in Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

16 Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors, F, 54-55, 59, 63. See also Elgin to President and Directors, April 23, 1839 and Elgin to President and Directors, May 18, 1839, in Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

17 Elgin to President and Directors, August 5, 1873, in Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

18 Portrait and Biographical Record of the 6th Congressional District Maryland (Chicago: Chapman Publishing Company, 1898), pages 256-57.

on the canal. In 1838, James' brother, William, held four positions with the canal company. He was: Superintendent of the Harpers Ferry Division of the canal; Keeper of Lock 33; Keeper of the Shenandoah River Lock; and Collector of Tolls at Harpers Ferry. By 1840, the two Elgin brothers were in business together. In addition to operating the packet boats and James H. Elgin's warehouse over the flume at Lock 33, the two men also operated a retail store (somewhere near Harpers Ferry) and another "warehouse on the Loudoun side of the Shenandoah."¹⁹

James H. Elgin's early ownership and occupancy of the stone house opposite Lock 33 cannot be clearly documented. The three letters, which state that Elgin built the house, were written many years after the house was actually built. One letter was written by Elgin himself, and the other two were written by his friend, Attorney Henry Kyd Douglas. Elgin's letter was written to the canal company on August 5, 1873. He stated that back in 1840, he had obtained permission from his brother, Superintendent William S. Elgin, and from Chief Engineer Charles B. Fisk, "to build a stone house on the lands of the Ches. & O Canal Co. near Lock 33." He also stated that his brother and Fisk had assured him that the canal

19 Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors, E, 332, 336, 511. See also John Blackford, Ferry Hill Plantation Journal January 4, 1838-January 15, 1839 edited with an Introduction and Notes by Fletcher M. Green (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1961), pages xiv, 10, 14-15, 21, 26-27; and Elgin to Thomas, February 6, 1840, Elgin to Ingle, April 8, 1839, Wager to Grove, August 13, 1840, and Wager to Thomas, August 14, 1840, in Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

company would eventually give him a deed to the house site, since the land was of no value to the company. The house, according to Elgin, was built during the fall and winter of 1840-41. Because of "forgetfulness & neglect," however, Elgin never "applied to the Company for a deed" and consequently a deed was never given to him. He had continued to hold and lease out the house, however, until near the end of the Civil War. In April of 1865, according to Elgin, the Union Commander at Harpers Ferry ordered the removal of Elgin's tenant from the house. The house was then turned over to a canal employee named John H. Reed. Reed, according to Elgin, had occupied the house rent free since the end of the War. Elgin accused Reed of neglecting the house and thereby allowing it to fall into a "dilapidated condition." Elgin also accused Reed of running "a drunken" and disreputable house. The reputation of the house was so bad under Reed's occupancy, according to Elgin, "that many Respectful families" were "afraid to pass the house." Elgin begged the Canal Board to give him a deed so that he could "despose /sic/ of Mr. Reed & remove the nuisance" which had been imposed upon the community. Elgin concluded his letter by giving a more precise description of the location of the Stone House. The house was located, according to Elgin, "on the Edge of the County Road where a large rock" had once been. Elgin claimed that he had blasted away the rock and built the house.²⁰

20 Elgin to President and Directors, August 5, 1873, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co. Elgin stated that the Chief Engineer and the Division Superintendent had both assured him that the rocky site was "of no value to the Canal," and that the company would only require the use of the "material around the building for repairing the Canal." For the complete text of the letter, see Appendix B of this report.

Elgin's letter was read by the Board on August 8, 1873 and referred to President Gorman. On December 4, 1873, Gorman reported "that the records of the Company" did not show "that any agreement was made as claimed." He therefore recommended that Elgin's application be rejected. The Board adopted the President's report and the application was rejected.²¹

Nearly a year after his claim had been rejected by the Canal Board, Elgin received the support of the well-known Washington County Attorney, Henry Kyd Douglas. Although Douglas was much younger than Elgin, the two men had probably known each other for years. Douglas' stepmother, Helena Blackford Douglas, was the sister of Franklin Blackford. Elgin had long been a close friend of the Blackford Family and had been a business partner with Franklin Blackford in the late 1830s.²² On May 27, 1874, Douglas wrote a letter in support of Elgin's claim. Although Douglas could not state unequivocally that Elgin had built the house, he could testify to Elgin's character. Elgin was described as being "a man of responsibility and character," and Douglas did not doubt the correctness of his claim. Most of Douglas' letter was simply a repeat of Elgin's letter. Douglas did, however, mention one possible aspect of the building's

21 Elgin to President and Directors, August 5, 1873, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co. See also Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors, M, 122, 135.

22 Blackford, Ferry Hill Plantation Journal, pages xiv, 10, 63n. For a brief history of the Blackford and Douglas Families at Ferry Hill Plantation, see also Robin Ziek, Archeological Survey at Ferry Hill (Denver: NPS, February 1979), pages 6-7.

history that had not been mentioned in Elgin's letter. Douglas thought that the house had been taken by the Union Army and used "at first for a hospital." It then passed into the hands of John H. Reed. Douglas was convinced that Reed could make no reasonable claim to the property. The problem, according to Douglas, was clearly a matter between the canal company and Elgin. He urged the Board to reconsider Elgin's claim. Douglas' letter was read by the Board on June 16, and referred to the Committee on Leases. The canal company's records do not indicate what recommendations this committee made in response to the letter.²³

Almost a year later, Douglas wrote a second letter in support of Elgin's claim. Along with this letter, Douglas also enclosed a letter of support from James C. Clarke. Elgin had apparently hired Clarke to make a survey of the canal company's boundaries in the vicinity of Lock 33. Clarke's letter indicated that the Stone House was found to be on canal property just as Elgin had said all along. Douglas again concluded that John H. Reed was a trespasser and therefore had no right whatsoever to the house. He urged the Board to either take possession of the house or give it to Elgin.²⁴

23 Douglas to President and Directors, May 27, 1874, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co. For the complete text of this letter, see Appendix C of this report.

24 Douglas to Gorman, March 18, 1875, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co. For the complete text of this letter, see Appendix D of this report. The letter from James C. Clarke could not be found.

The canal company's records do not show how Douglas' second and last letter was handled by the Board. It is highly probable, however, that the letter was simply ordered to be filed. The letter indicated that some canal officials may have felt that the house was not on canal lands. Douglas had evidently enclosed Clarke's letter in an effort to convince the Board that the house actually was on canal company land. It is quite possible, however, that the Board simply refused to acknowledge that the house was within the canal company's boundaries. We do know that John H. Reed was never ejected from the house. We also know that the canal company never gave either Elgin or Reed a deed to the house. Reed remained in possession of the house until his death in 1889.

Although the Canal Board apparently took no action regarding the Stone House, it is quite likely that Elgin did build the Stone House back in 1840-41. The house was situated directly opposite Elgin's warehouse which had been built over the flume at Lock 33 in 1839. In addition, Elgin's brother, William, was Superintendent, Collector and Lockkeeper in 1840, and was therefore in a good position to help obtain the Stone House Site. In early February of 1840, William S. Elgin had complained to the Board about the scarcity of houses in the vicinity of Lock 33 and Harpers Ferry. He protested against a recently passed Board resolution which ordered all "superintendents to vacate the Lock Houses and appoint Lock Keepers." At that time Elgin was living in Lockhouse 33, which was the

only house near the lock. He begged the Board to allow him and his family to remain in the lockhouse. He said:

I occupy the Lock House at Lock No. 33, and have had the register of Tolls kept Besides the Shenandoah Lock with Lock No. 33 - since Sept 1-/37 & Should like to still keep the same on account of their / sic / being few Houses at this place owned by individuals and they are occupy / sic /. The Government Property are rented to no person Except they Belong to the U.S. Armory, and I do not know of any House along the Line of Canal which I can get without Being to far from my Business. I also have Several children at School which If I have to move from this place will be deprived of the advantage of a good school.

Elgin also suggested that the new lockkeeper (should one be appointed) be a young, unmarried man who could board with the Elgin Family at the lockhouse. Elgin also reminded the Board that as Superintendent and Collector, he had to "have some place to keep" his "Books, papers, etc." The company could therefore avoid renting additional office space by simply allowing him to work out of the lockhouse.²⁵ William Elgin was eventually relieved of three of his positions (Keeper of Lock 33, Keeper of the Shenandoah River Lock and Collector of Tolls).²⁶ He continued, however, to serve as Superintendent of the Harpers Ferry Division for a number of years. It is quite possible that he aided his brother in obtaining the Stone House Site because housing in the area was so scarce. The Stone House would have

25 Elgin to Thomas, February 6, 1840, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

26 Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors, F, 175-76, 254.

been conveniently located near the two Elgin warehouses and would have made a perfect residence for the Superintendent of the Harpers Ferry Division.²⁷

As can be seen from the preceding discussion, the earliest documentation we have on the Stone House dates from the early 1870s. The pre-Civil War and Civil War history of the house as detailed in James H. Elgin's letter, cannot be substantiated by further documentation. We do know, however, that the two Elgin brothers became large landowners in the Sandy Hook/Maryland Heights area and spent much of their lives in that section of the county. William remained in the service of the canal company and was probably much more mobile than his brother. At the time of his death (sometime between the Civil War and 1874), however, he owned a large farm adjacent to his brother's farm in the vicinity of Sandy Hook.²⁸

James H. Elgin continued to operate his warehouse over the flume at Lock 33 until around 1855.²⁹ By that time he had probably already established himself as a well-to-do farmer in the Sandy Hook/Maryland Heights area. The Washington County Land Records of 1847 show that in that year Elgin brought into the county a young Negro slave from the state of Virginia.

27 No evidence was found to show that William S. Elgin ever lived in the Stone House.

28 For details of the Elgin farms in the vicinity of Maryland Heights and Sandy Hook, see Papers Relating to the Claim of James H. Elgin (and the Elgin Estate) for Quartermaster and Commissary Stores (1874-90), E-812-Vol. M-49, in Old Military Records, Record Group 92, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

29 Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors, I, 208. In 1855, Elgin leased the warehouse to R.S. Blackburn & Company, and Blackburn in turn sublet the warehouse to John Preacher.

According to one contemporary source, Elgin owned a number of slaves at the outbreak of the Civil War.³⁰ At the outbreak of the Civil War, James H. Elgin lived "in Pleasant Valley, Washington Co. Md. about one mile from Sandy Hook." He owned two farms. The smaller farm was known as the "Home Farm" and contained ninety-five acres of land. The larger farm was located "very near the 'Home Farm'" and was known as the "Lower Farm." According to one source, the farms were "situated at the foot of Maryland Heights." Another source says that the "Lower Farm" was near Sandy Hook. Elgin also owned "a tract of timber running from the base to [the] summit of Maryland Heights" on the east side of the mountain. Since Maryland Heights overlooked "the Key of Virginia" (the mouth of the Shenandoah), Union troops were encamped in that vicinity all during the War. Union troops were encamped on Elgin's lands "more or less from the time the War commenced until June or July 1865." A "'Remounting Camp' was established on his premises in June or July 1864, & continued until [the] end of [the] war. Thousands of soldiers were at times in this camp." According to Elgin, all of his outbuildings were "occupied during the war by U.S. Soldiers." A considerable amount of his produce and some of his farm animals were confiscated by the troops. The soldiers also destroyed his fences and cut down much of his timber on Maryland Heights. The timber was cut in 1863 "to impede the progress of the enemy up Md.

30 James H. Elgin, List of Slave, Recorded May 17, 1847, in Washington County Land Records, Liber IN2, folio 560. See also Portrait and Biographical Record of the 6th Congressional District Maryland, page 256.

Heights & [to] give range to the guns in the Stone Fort." Afterwards, it was "hailed to camps on his [Elgin's] farm & burned for fuel." All of the damage to Elgin's property was caused by Union troops. Confederate forces never occupied his lands for any considerable period of time. On August 14, 1874, Elgin filed a claim with the Quartermaster General's Office for damages in the amount of \$11,176.25. His claim was rejected on October 22, 1878 because some testimony indicated that he had sympathized with the southern cause during the War. Elgin's claim was apparently reviewed again during the 1880s but the records do not suggest that any damages were awarded.³¹

31 Papers Relating to the Claim of James H. Elgin (and the Elgin Estate) for Quartermaster and Commissary Stores 1874-90. The Stone House opposite Lock 33 was not mentioned anywhere in these papers. Even if the Stone House had been damaged, Elgin probably would not have filed a claim since he did not have a deed to the house.

CHAPTER 2: The Stone House under John H. Reed and Family, 1865-1893.

If we accept James H. Elgin's history of the Stone House, the building was turned over to John H. Reed by the Union Army in April of 1865.

According to Elgin, Reed was an employee of the canal company at the time the house was turned over to him. The Washington County Land Records do not show that Reed was ever given a deed by the canal company.

Nothing is known about John H. Reed prior to the year 1858. On May 5, 1858, Reed was appointed keeper of Guard Lock 3 at Dam 3.¹ The Washington County Land Records of 1858 show that Reed sold a canal boat called the Elizabeth Reed to one Henry T. Weld. In the same year, Reed also sold "a sow" and other miscellaneous farm items to one Robert Cushen. The next year, Reed purchased a boat and a variety of miscellaneous articles from Samuel R. Edmunds. In 1865, 1866, and 1867, Reed bought or sold several pieces of real estate and other merchandise. In 1865, for example, he purchased ten acres of land that were a "part of Lot No. 26" on the Antietam Iron Works Plat. The deed described Reed as being a resident of Frederick County. In 1867, John Reed, then of Washington County, purchased the following property from John J. Norman:

one Horse one spring waggon one set of Harness
one 2 year old Bull, one Sow, / and / also one
building used as a store on Lock 37 on the
Chesapeake and Ohio Canal. . . .²

1 Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors, K, 19.

2 Mortgage, John H. Reed to Henry T. Weld, 1858, in Washington County Land Records, Liber IN13, folio 303; Bill of Sale, John H. Reed to

The canal company records do not show how long Reed remained as keeper of Guard Lock 3 after his appointment in 1858. During the nineteenth century, most lockkeepers were not allowed to stay in one place very long. On March 14, 1862, Reed was appointed to keep Locks 35 and 36. He was removed from that position on December 17, 1863. The canal company records do not mention Reed again as an employee.³

By 1869, Reed had definitely established himself as a permanent and influential resident of the Sandy Hook Election District of Washington County.⁴ In that year, Governor Oden Bowie appointed Reed to be the Justice of the Peace for the Sandy Hook District. It is interesting to note that Reed replaced James H. Elgin. Elgin had been appointed earlier, but had failed to qualify for the position. Reed was to serve out Elgin's remaining tenure of office. Elgin was probably disqualified because of questions concerning his loyalty during the War.⁵

Robert Cushen, 1865 (recorded 1867), in Washington County Land Records, Liber IN12, folio 734; Bill of Sale, Samuel R. Edmunds to John H. Reed, 1859, in Washington County Land Records, Liber IN14, folio 243; Deed, Jonas and Catherine Bell to John H. Reed, March 18, 1865 (recorded April 25, 1867), in Washington County Land Records, Liber LBN2, folio 79; and Bill of Sale, John J. Norman to John H. Reed, March 21, 1867 (recorded April 15, 1867), in Washington County Land Records, Liber LBN2, folio 49. See also Washington County Land Records, Liber IN18, folio 506; Liber IN19, folios 603, 655, 714; Liber LBN1, folios 416, 419; Liber LBN2, folios 66, 79, 532, 800.

³ Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors, K, 284, 360.

⁴ The Sandy Hook Election District was District Number Eleven.

⁵ Commission, State of Maryland to John H. Reed, May 7, 1869 (recorded June 7, 1869), in Washington County Land Records, Liber McKK1, folio 560.

In April of 1874, John H. Reed made an application to the canal company to be allowed to lease a piece of land at Lock 34. He desired to erect "a grocery and Feed Store" on the site in order to service boatmen and others on the canal. Reed's application was rejected three months later.⁶ It is possible that Reed was already using the Stone House for a store and simply wanted to expand his business up to Lock 34. James H. Elgin indicated that Reed was running some type of drinking establishment at the Stone House in 1873.⁷

An 1877 map of the Sandy Hook District shows that in 1877 Reed was using the Stone House as a store. Although the map simply referred to the Stone House as J.H. Reed's store; the store probably also served as a drinking establishment. James H. Elgin's complaint in 1873 that Reed "kept a drunken" house, probably had some validity to it. Reed and his family probably used the upstairs portion of the house for living quarters.⁸

The Reed Family continued to hold the Stone House until the early 1890s.⁹ According to Thomas Hahn's Towpath Guide to the Chesapeake and

6 Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors, M, 159, 172. See also Reed to President and Directors, April 22, 1874, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

7 Elgin to President and Directors, August 5, 1873, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co. This letter appears in Appendix B of this report.

8 An Illustrated Atlas of Washington County, Maryland; Compiled, Drawn and Published from Actual Surveys by Lake, Griffing & Stevenson (Philadelphia, 1877), page 56. a copy of this map appears in Appendix E of this report. For Elgin's reference to the "drunken house," see Elgin to President and Directors, August 5, 1873, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co. See also Appendix B of this report.

Ohio Canal, the Reed Family had "several buildings" on the riverside of Lock 33 from which they "sold feed for mules and groceries to canallers for at least two generations."⁹ The canal company records, however, do not mention any leases to the Reed Family in this area.

John H. Reed died in 1889. While upon his sickbed, he willed all of his real estate to his son, Winfield S. Reed. The real estate consisted of three tracts. The first tract apparently contained the Stone House, although the Stone House was not specifically mentioned in the will. The tract was described as being "A tract north of [the] Harpers Ferry Bridge at the Maryland end of Maryland Heights consisting of about 2¼ acres of land." The second tract was described as being "A tract of land on the West side of Maryland Heights, formerly one of the lots belonging to Briens Iron Works." The third tract was described as being "a tract of land in the Potomac River, West of Harpers Ferry, W. Va. and bounded by the Ches. & Ohio Canal, the Canal feeder and the Potomac River, comprising 4¼ acres and known as Reeds Island."¹⁰

Shortly after his father's death, Winfield S. Reed sold a very small part of the Stone House Tract to Albertus Spencer. The portion which

9 Thomas F. Hahn, Towpath Guide to the C & O Canal, Section Three: Harpers Ferry to Fort Frederick (Gobblers Ridge, West Virginia: Thomas F. Hahn Publisher, 1972), page 9.

10 Will, John H. Reed, May 29, 1889 (probated August 2, 1892), in Washington County Register of Wills, Liber H, folios 452-453.

was sold at this time was "situated in the public road. . . near the North end of [the] Harpers Ferry Bridge." The Stone House was not included in this sale.¹¹

By August of 1892, Winfield S. Reed had become indebted to Albertus Spencer. The exact cause of the indebtedness is not known. The Washington County Court Records do reveal, however, that the amount of the indebtedness was \$274.63. In December of 1892, Spencer won a judgment against Reed for the debt. Reed apparently could not pay off the debt in cash, so the Court ordered the Sheriff to sell the remainder of the Stone House Tract which included the Stone House itself. The Sheriff was also ordered to sell Reed's "second tract" which was located "on the West side" of Maryland Heights "about a half mile West of" the Stone House. The "Sheriff's Sale" was to be held on Tuesday, March 21, 1893. The sale was apparently held, but no money was exchanged. Albertus Spencer apparently agreed to accept the Reed properties in place of the money owed him.¹²

11 Deed, Winfield S. Reed and Mary C. Reed his wife, to Albertus Spencer, December 20, 1889 (recorded May 8, 1890), in Washington County Land Records, Liber 95, folio 72. Spencer paid \$50 for this portion of the Stone House Tract.

12 Judicials, February Term 1893, in Washington County Court Records, Docket February - May and August - November 1893. See also Washington County Judgment Records, Liber GBO22, folios 459-461; and Deed, Sheriff J. N. Brumbaugh to Albertus Spencer, July 14, 1893 (Recorded same day), in Washington County Land Records, Liber 100, folio 605. Reed's "second tract" was lot number 142 on the Antietam Iron Works Plat.

CHAPTER 3: The Stone House under the Spencer and Weaver Families,
1893-1947.

Little is known about the very early years of Albertus Spencer's life. His name first appeared in the records of the canal company following the Johnstown Flood of May/June 1889. This flood did extensive damage to the canal and forced the company into receivership. The second report of the receivers (filed June 9, 1890) listed all canal real estate and outlined the damage caused by the late flood. Under the heading, "Lock 33, Harper's Ferry," the report listed the following parcels that had been leased to Albertus Spencer before the flood:

Lot No. 167 -- Storehouse berme side, swept away; --
lease to A. Spencer, expires 1897; rent ---
per an. 36.00

Lot No. 167½ -- One acre land, more or less; A. Spencer,
rent unknown.

As can be seen from the above list, by 1889, Spencer had leased a sizable amount of land (considering the narrow strip along the canal near Lock 33) near Lock 33 and was obviously conducting a steady business. He probably sold groceries and animal feed at his "storehouse" near the lock. The sale of liquor was generally forbidden on canal property.¹

1 Second Report of Maryland Receivers, June 9, 1890, in C & O Canal Restoration Group files, Seneca, Maryland. The location of these manuscripts will be cited hereinafter as Report of Maryland Receivers. For an example of the canal company's prohibition against the sale of liquor on canal lands, see prohibition against the sale of liquor at James H. Elgin's former warehouse, in Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors, I, 208.

Soon after the loss of his store, Albertus Spencer purchased a portion of the Stone House Tract from Winfield Reed.² Since the canal was in ruins and its future uncertain, Spencer probably purchased this small parcel of land with the intention of placing a store on the site. Local folklore holds that Spencer moved his business to the opposite side of the county road soon after the flood.³ It is unlikely, however, that he actually did build a new store in 1889. On the other hand, it is quite possible that he simply leased the Reed Family's Stone House which had been used as a combination store and saloon for many years.

After Spencer received a deed for the Stone House in 1893,⁴ he continued to operate a combination store and saloon in the building for at least two more decades. Some of the older residents of Western Maryland remember "Bert" Spencer and this period of the building's history. One native Harpers Ferrian whose father owned a barber shop, remembers that Bert Spencer was a regular customer at the shop. This same source, also remembers that the Stone House was "Bert Spencer's place." Spencer's place was considered off limits by all the churchgoing people in the area.⁵ A former mule driver on the canal remembers the Stone House during

2 See footnote 11 of Chapter 2 of this report.

3 Interview with 66 year old Edgar Marion Weaver, Pleasantville, Maryland, February 5 and 19, 1980. Mr. Weaver is the great nephew of Albertus Spencer.

4 See footnote 12 of Chapter 2 of this report.

5 Interview with 87 year old Thomas Herrod, Washington, D.C., March 17, 1980.

the early twentieth century. This source recalled that when he first passed the house in 1908 music and singing could be heard and the drinks were obviously flowing freely inside. There were six intoxicated men on the porch. Three were asleep and the other three were carrying on a lively argument. Before his boat could get through the lock, a fight broke out between the three men who had been arguing. The former mule driver claims that he later passed the house many times, and on most occasions there would be "some disturbance" at the Stone House.⁶

In 1917, a majority of the residents of Washington County voted to prohibit the sale of liquor in the county. In the following year, the state legislature ratified the Eighteenth Amendment which was to prohibit the sale of liquor throughout the country.⁷ According to local folklore, however, Albertus Spencer's saloon had been forced to close sometime prior to 1917. Spencer's license was apparently revoked because of a tragic incident which occurred near his establishment. On a sunny Fourth of July day sometime prior to 1917, a fight broke out somewhere north of Spencer's saloon. The combatants in the fight were a group of Italians from Millville and a black resident of Harpers Ferry.

⁶ Interview with 86 year old Geroge W. "Hooper" Wolfe, Williamsport, Maryland, March 4, 1980. Wolfe was quite ill at the time of this interview. See also Wolfe, I Drove Mules on the C & O Canal, page 67. Wolfe apparently assumed that the Stone House was called the "Salty Dog Saloon" during the early twentieth century. Edgar Marion Weaver disagrees with that assumption.

⁷ Richard Walsh and William L. Cox, eds., Maryland: A History, 1632-1974 (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 1974), page 654.

known as "Goose" Jackson. Jackson received a fatal cut to the stomach, but was able to stagger to Spencer's place where someone gave him a gun. Then, still holding his stomach, Jackson returned to the scene of the fight and killed or wounded several of the Italians. Following this tragic incident, many residents of the area mounted a petition campaign to have Spencer's place closed down. The petition movement was successful.⁸

At about the time that nationwide prohibition became the law of the land, Albertus Spencer built a two-story frame house adjacent to the Stone House.⁹ Spencer established his store in the new frame house and a museum was established in the Stone House. The Stone House would not be used as a store or saloon again. The museum contained an assorted collection of guns, swords, flags and other interesting articles. On the first floor in the center of the room was an old stove known as "John Brown's Cook Stove." Albertus Spencer's great nephew, Edgar Marion

8 Interview with Edgar Marion Weaver, Pleasantville, Maryland, February 19, 1980. Interview with Thomas Herrod, Washington, D.C., March 17, 1980. See also Hahn, Towpath Guide to the C & O Canal, Section Two, page 64.

9 Edgar Marion Weaver believes that the two-story frame house was built well before his birth in 1913, and that it was being used as Spencer's saloon at the time that Spencer was forced to close down. On the other hand, two elderly individuals (George W. "Hooper" Wolfe and Thomas Herrod) who were familiar with the area during this period have stated that they remember only the Stone House being on the site. The native Harpers Ferrian, Thomas Herrod, did not leave the Harpers Ferry area until 1917. He remembers only the Stone House.

Weaver, has an old photograph of the stove. On the back of the photograph, in longhand, appears what is purported to be the true history of the stove. It says:

The old Cook Stove, made by Hayward Bartlett & Co. Light St. Baltimore Md., and now in Alburthus Spencers Museum Harpers Ferry W-Va is identical Stove my Father (George W. Nichols) and Brother (David Franklin Nichols) took from John Browns House (Dr. Kennedy farm) four and one half miles N.W. of Harpers Ferry, Samples Manor Washington Co. Md. on Wednesday Oct 19th 1859. I sold said Stove to Alburthus Spencer in 1882. My P.O. address is Alburton, Baltimore Co. Md.

Geroge H. Nichols

The authenticity of this history has not been documented.¹⁰

In 1923, Alburthus Spencer's wife, Mary E. Spencer, died. Back in 1915, Alburthus had placed all of his real estate in trust and then had his trustee convey it all to Mary. Before her death, Mary willed the Stone House (which contained the museum articles) to her sister, Elizabeth A. Stockman. The remainder of her real estate was willed to her nephew (Elizabeth A. Stockman's son), Edgar Spencer Weaver.¹¹

¹⁰ Photograph in the possession of Edgar Marion Weaver, Pleasantville, Maryland. See also Plat 1 in the Illustrations section of this report.

¹¹ Deed, Alburthus Spencer and Mary E. Spencer to Charles A. Little, Trustee, January 16, 1915 (recorded February 2, 1915); in Washington County Land Records, Liber 146, folios 26-27. See also Deed, Charles A. Little, Trustee, to Mary E. Spencer, January 21, 1915 (recorded February 2, 1915), in Washington County Land Records, Liber 146, folios 27-28; and Will, Mary E. Spencer, July 19, 1923 (probated November 27, 1923), in Washington County Register of Wills, Liber 15, folios 156-57. Shortly after Mary's death, Alburthus Spencer gave deeds to his sister-in-law,

Between 1924 and 1927, Elizabeth A. Stockman lived upstairs in the Stone House and continued to operate the museum on the first floor of the house. In 1927, Elizabeth decided to move the museum articles to Frederick to start a museum in that town. Once the articles were removed, Elizabeth gave her son, Edgar Spencer Weaver, a deed to the house.¹²

For a brief period during the late 1920s, Edgar Spencer ("Spence") Weaver rented the Stone House to members of the Goodhart Family.¹³ At the same time, Spence Weaver and his family were living next door in the two-story frame house. According to Spence Weaver's son, Edgar Marion Weaver, the two houses were so close together until they almost looked like one continuous building. Albertus Spencer was still living in 1927.

Elizabeth A. Stockman, and to her son, Edgar Spencer Weaver. In these deeds, Spencer surrendered any rights or interests he may have had in the property which was willed by his wife to Elizabeth A. Stockman and Edgar Spencer Weaver. See Deed, Alburtus Spencer to Elizabeth A. Stockman, February 9, 1924 (recorded February 14, 1924), in Washington County Land Records, Liber 167, folio 453. See also Deed, Alburtus Spencer to Edgar Spencer Weaver, February 9, 1924 (recorded February 14, 1924), in Washington County Land Records, Liber 167, folios 453-54. By 1924, Spencer's first name was being spelled "Alburtus" rather than "Albertus."

12 Deed, Elizabeth A. Stockman to Edgar Spencer Weaver, February 12, 1927 (recorded February 15, 1927), in Washington County Land Records, Liber 176, folio 354. Interview with Edgar Marion Weaver, Pleasantville, Maryland, February 5, 19, 1980. Although Edgar Spencer Weaver was Elizabeth's son, he had been reared by his aunt (Mary E. Spencer) and her husband, Albertus Spencer.

13 Interview with Edgar Marion Weaver, Pleasantville, Maryland, February 19, 1980. Spence Weaver was a close relative of the Goodhart Family.

He ran a store and restaurant downstairs in the frame house while the Spence Weaver Family lived upstairs. Albertus Spencer died sometime between 1927 and 1930.¹⁴

The Stone House was occupied by members of the Goodhart Family for only a brief period after 1927. It was then left vacant.¹⁵ On the other hand, Spence Weaver and his family continued to live upstairs in the two-story frame house until 1930. In that year, Spence Weaver moved his family into a new house up the mountain from the Stone House Tract. Weaver, continued, however, to operate the store and restaurant in the frame house. Spence Weaver suffered a heart attack in 1931 while driving along in his car near the Stone House. The car went out of control and plunged into the canal. Weaver died later as a result of the heart attack.¹⁶

Following Spence Weaver's death, his widow, Hester Gertrude Weaver, rented the two-story frame house out as a private residence. After

14 Ibid. To get an idea of the closeness of the two houses, see Plat 2 of the Illustrations section of this report.

15 For a brief period around 1930 Edgar Marion Weaver and other young men did have a pool table in the Stone House. This was for private use, however, and was not open to the public. Interview with Edgar Marion Weaver, Pleasantville, Maryland, February 19, 1980.

16 Interview with Edgar Marion Weaver, Pleasantville, Maryland, February 5, 19, 1980. One secondary source maintains that Spence Weaver had been "drinking" his own imported moonshine and that he "backed his car into the canal in front of the Salty Dog and drowned." This same source maintains that Spence Weaver was deeply involved in the sale and distribution of moonshine during the Prohibition Period. See Hahn, Towpath Guide to the C & O Canal, Section Two, page 64.

prohibition came to an end in 1933, however, Hester Gertrude Weaver rented the two-story frame house to various individuals who used it as a beer joint. It was during this period (ca. 1933-43) that the name "Salty Dog Saloon" was applied to the two-story frame house. The house was given the name because the recording "Salty Dog" became a favorite of the patrons at the saloon. According to Edgar Marion Weaver, the song was literally "played to death." During this entire ten-year period, the adjacent Stone House (which was later misnamed the Salty Dog) remained either vacant or was from time to time rented out as a private residence.¹⁷

During the late 1930s and early 1940s, the two-story frame house (the Salty Dog Saloon) earned a reputation as a lusty and riotous establishment. Some present-day commentators have indicated that the Salty Dog was actually a house of prostitution. This is an oversimplification of what the place really was. It is true that one of the saloon's operators did get some young women to "hang around" the place. In addition, like all rural beer joints at that time, the Salty Dog was a place where the unchurched elements of society "hung out." Many men and women no doubt came to the saloon specifically in search of romance. Loevemaking, however, probably took place out in the cars, rather than in the saloon itself.¹⁸

17 Interview with Edgar Marion Weaver, Pleasantville, Maryland, February 5, 19, 1980.

18 Ibid.

The "automobile" eventually caused the Salty Dog to be closed down. Because of the absence of sufficient parking space, automobiles made the place a nuisance for the whole surrounding community. On weekends, saloon patrons would simply park in the county road and thus tie up all through traffic. The county eventually refused to renew the saloon operator's license because there was insufficient parking. The two-story frame house ceased to be a saloon in the early 1940s.¹⁹

19 Ibid. According to Edgar Marion Weaver, the successive operators of the saloon were: Lyle Grove (Grove actually ran it for James Grimes who held the lease from Mrs. Weaver); Bill Durben; and Everett "Ed" Norris. According to Mr. Weaver, it was during Durben's and Norris' time, that the place really got a bad reputation. During that time, there were some pretty bad fights at the saloon and one of the operators generally had young women to "hang around" the place. Mr. Weaver said that he worked at the saloon during the time that Bill Durben was the operator. Mr. Weaver left the Maryland Heights area to work with the railroad at Brunswick in 1941. He does not remember the exact year that the Salty Dog was closed down. Information on the operators of the Salty Dog was also obtained from 87 year old Robert Waters, in an interview at his home in Dargan, Maryland, February 5, 1980.

CHAPTER 4: Owners of the Stone House since 1947.

The Stone House and the two-story frame house remained in Hester Gertrude Weaver's ownership until 1947.¹ In that year, Hester sold all of the Stone House Tract to Patrick John O'Brien of Washington County, Maryland. O'Brien rented out the Stone House and the two-story frame house as private residences.² In 1953, O'Brien sold all of the Stone House Tract to Richard and Marie Torres of Washington, D.C. It is not known how the houses were used under the ownership of the Torres Family. In 1958, Richard and Marie Torres sold the Stone House Tract to the Maryland Department of Forests and Parks. The Maryland Department of Forests and Parks in turn deeded the tract to the United States in 1963. At that time the tract became a part of the Harpers Ferry National Monument.³

1 After the Salty Dog was closed down, Hester G. Weaver probably rented out the two-story frame house as a private residence until she sold it in 1947. It should also be remembered that during this time she was also renting the Stone House as a private residence. Interview with Edgar Marion Weaver, Pleasantville, Maryland, February 5, 19, 1980.

2 Deed, Hester Gertrude Weaver to Patrick John O'Brien, December 10, 1947 (recorded same day), in Washington County Land Records, Liber 245, folios 7-8. Interview with Edgar Marion Weaver, Pleasantville, Maryland, February 5, 19, 1980.

3 Deed, Patrick John O'Brien to Richard and Marie Torres, April 27, 1953 (recorded April 28, 1953), in Washington County Land Records, Liber 275, folio 135. See also Deed, Richard and Marie Torres to the Department of Forests and Parks, State of Maryland, December 18, 1958 (recorded December 24, 1958), in Washington County Land Records, Liber 342, folio 770; and Deed, Department of Forests and Parks, State of Maryland, to the United States of America, February 13, 1963 (recorded February 1, 1965), in Washington County Land Records, Liber 419, folios 65-71.

By 1963, the two-story frame house had almost collapsed. Since that time, it has disappeared. Today, only its foundation can be seen.⁴ The Stone House had also been allowed to deteriorate before 1963. The house was allowed to deteriorate further under the National Park Service after 1963. During the mid-1960s, the Stone House was badly damaged by fire. Today, the Stone House is merely a shell. Its roof, windows and doors have all disappeared.⁵

4 . Phone interview with C & O Canal Maintenance Division Chief, George Hicks, February 25, 1980. Mr. Hicks says that when he first joined the canal staff in 1961, the walls of the two-story frame house were still standing although the roof had already disappeared.

5 Phone Interview with C & O Canal Maintenance Division Chief, George Hicks, February 25, 1980. Mr. Hicks says that when he first joined the canal staff in 1961, the roof of the Stone House was still intact.

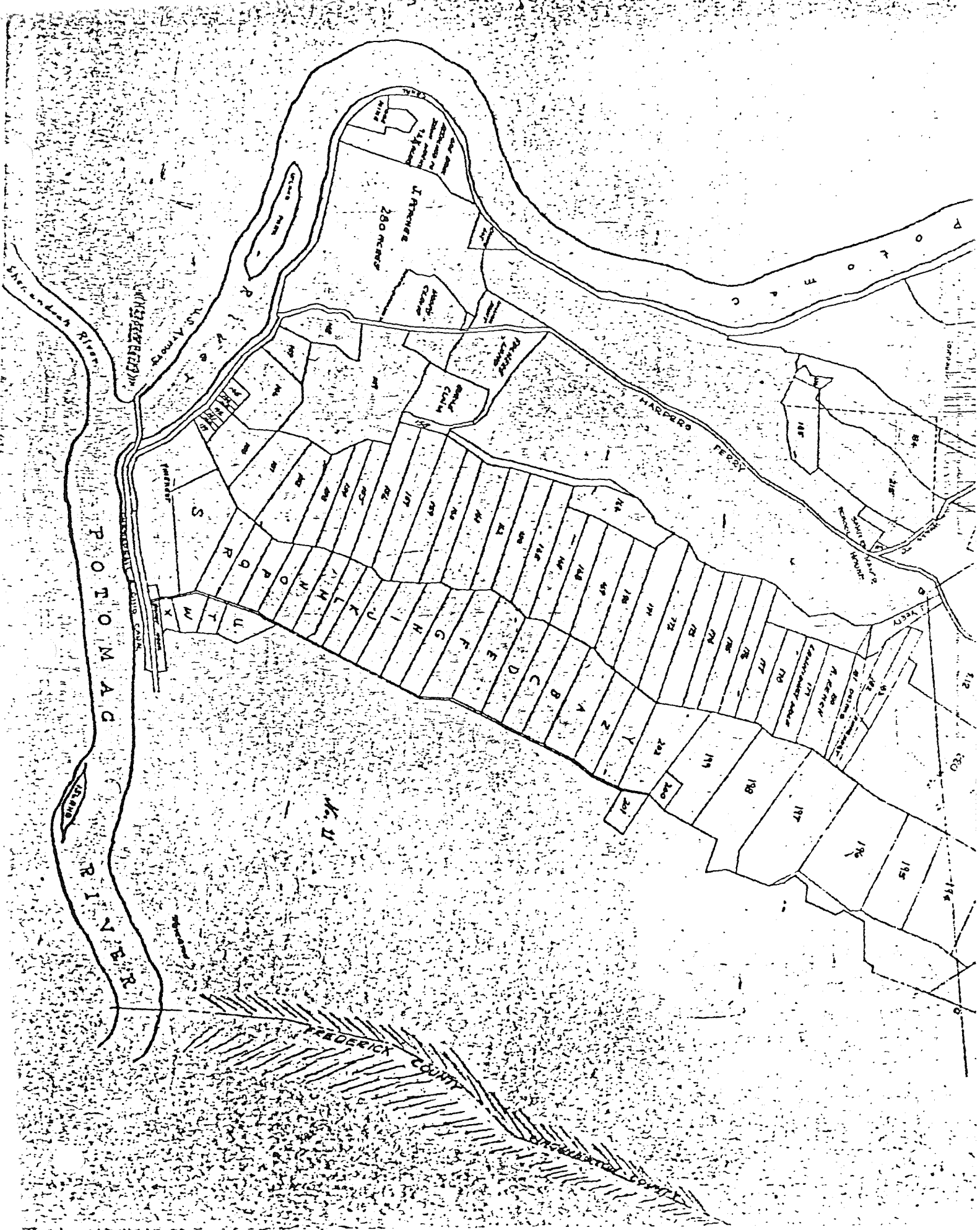
RECOMMENDATIONS Regarding Further Historic Research

The author has thoroughly investigated the records of the canal company for this report. Primary and secondary sources relating to the history of Harpers Ferry and the Dam 3 Area of the canal were also examined at the Library of Congress, the Harpers Ferry National Historical Park Library, the Washington County Free Library, the Washington County Courthouse, and the Department of the Interior Library. The author has also interviewed several long-time residents of the Harpers Ferry/Dam 3 Area. The author therefore feels that no further historical research is needed on the Stone House opposite Lock 33.

Appendices

Appendix A

Antietam Iron Works Plat made by S.S. Downin
in 1858 and recopied by E.E. Piper in 1883;
located in the Plat Files, Washington County
Courthouse, Hagerstown.



Appendix B

Elgin to President and Directors, August 5,
1873, in Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

Keep Copy

Washington Co Md

Aug 5th 1873

To the Honorable Body,

The Pres^t & Directors of the
Ches & Canal

Gentlemen,

I beg leave to report to
your honors that in the Year of 1840
I had permission from Chas B.
Fisk, Chief Engineer of the Ches.
& Canal & W S. Elgin Supt. to
build a stone pier on the lands
of the Ches & Canal Co. near Lock
No 33. opposite Harpers Ferry Rd and
that they would see that the Canal
Co would give me a deed for the site
on which I built, and that in the
fall of 1840 & Winter & Spring 1841 & 1841
I did build said stone pier and by

forgetfulness & neglect, never applied
to the Company for a deed, consequently
I never got one.

I will further report
to your Honors, that during the War
in March or April 1865, by some
misrepresentation to General Sherman
the Commanding Officer at Harpers
Ferry, he ordered the Provost Marshall
to dispossess my tenants from said house;
& gave John W. Reid possession of the
same, who was at that time employed
on the Canal, & since that time, he
has retained possession of it. Paying
me no Rent & refusing to give possession
of the property & has given the property
in repairs. Consequently the Roof &
Porch, are in a very dilapidated
condition. He has always kept
a drunken & dissipated house. So
that many Respectful families are

...afraid to jump the house,

I now beg your Honors to grant me
a deed for the premises which will
enable me to dispossess Mr. Reid
& remove the nuisance which has
been imposed upon our community
during the time he has occupied
the premises.

I will also state
that the Slender on the Edge of the
County Road where a large rock-
did extend out on the Edge of the
Road which I blasted & removed,
this spot was said to be of no value
to the Canal by Mr. Risk & also
the Company could acquire wood
to the material around the building
for repairing the Canal,

If your Honors
should favor me with a deed
You may be compensated by

Appl of J. H. Elger
for a deed for Stone
House near Harpers
Ferry Bridge
J

enclosing the Canal Co with \$30
thirty six dol. which has amount
has been due me from the Co since
1862,

You will please be kind
enough to let me hear from you
at your earliest convenience.

Very Respectful Dear friend
Dec. 4 - 1873 J. H. Elger
Read & adapted
R. Harwell

August 8 - 1873
Read & referred to
the President
Bray Jewell

I have the honor to report
that the Records of the Company
donat. show that any agent
has made as claimed. I therefore
respectfully recommend that the application
be rejected.

A. G. Forman
Pres. C. & C. Co.

Appendix C

Douglas to President and Directors, May 27,
1874, in Ltrs. Rcd., C & O Co.

11
Hagastown. 27. May 1874.

To the President & Directors of the Lakes & Ohio Canal Comp:.

Sirs: In August 1873, Mr. James H. Elgin a very
worthy respectable gentleman of our County, addressed a
letter to yr. Board in regard to a House & property, which
he claimed title for which is at present in the occupa-
tion of Mr. Chas. Reed, near Stagers Ferry. Mr. Elgin
says that about the year 1840. when he had a warehouse
was doing business on the Canal he obtained permission
to erect the House in question & did so; and afterwards
the Canal authorities, promised to make him a deed.
The property remained in his possession under claim of
ownership until the war broke out, and sometime during
the war the passage was taken by order of Genl. Stephens and
I think at first for a hospital. It then passed into
the occupation of Mr. Reed, who now refuses to surren-
der it & dispute, Mr. Elgin's title. For further particulars
I would beg leave to refer you to Mr. Elgin's letter.

which was dated the 5th Aug^o 1873.

One thing is very certain - Mr Reed has no claim
to the property, whatever. It may be a matter between
Mr Elgin & the Canal Company. Mr Elgin is a man
of responsibility & character and I have no doubt of
the exactness of his statement. He is anxious and
to secure a deed for the House from the Company and
if his statement is correct he ought to have one.
I am sure there will be no disposition to deprive him
of any right claim he may have.

I would ask that the Board cause such
Enquiry into this matter as may be necessary to
ascertain the facts, so that they may determine whether
or not Mr Elgin is entitled to the deed he asks for
from the Company. I am, Gentlemen,

Very Respectfully,
H. J. Douglas

H. J. Douglas
in Conn. of
Claring Elgin

Jan 16 1874
Recd. of Mr. Reed
Comm. of the Canal Co.

Appendix D

Douglas to Gorman, March 18, 1875, in Ltrs.
Recd., C & O Co.

- run for
Stone all
Marino Street

Magistown, Ill^d

18th March 1875.

Hon A. P. Gorman. Pres^d.

D^r Sir. In the matter of the claims of

W. J. H. Elgin in regard to the house now occu-
pied by Mr. H. Reid & concerning which I wrote
to you Mr. Elgin some time ago, he has handed
me the enclosed letter of Mr. Jas. C. Clarke. Elgin
has always said that the house was upon the
ground of the Canal Company & that he built the house
with the understanding that they would give him
a deed for it. It appears by the enclosed that by
the survey made under Mr. Clarke the house
was found to be on the Canal property. As the
present occupant Reid is a mere trespasser
they are not to the possession of the property
which Elgin built, if the Canal own the property
they ought either to take possession of it, or give
it to Elgin.

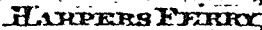
Y^r Truly

Wm. H. Douglas

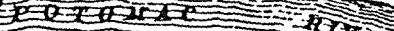
Appendix E

Map of Sandy Hook Election District, taken
from An Illustrated Atlas of Washington County,
Maryland (1877).

Scale 2 Inches to the



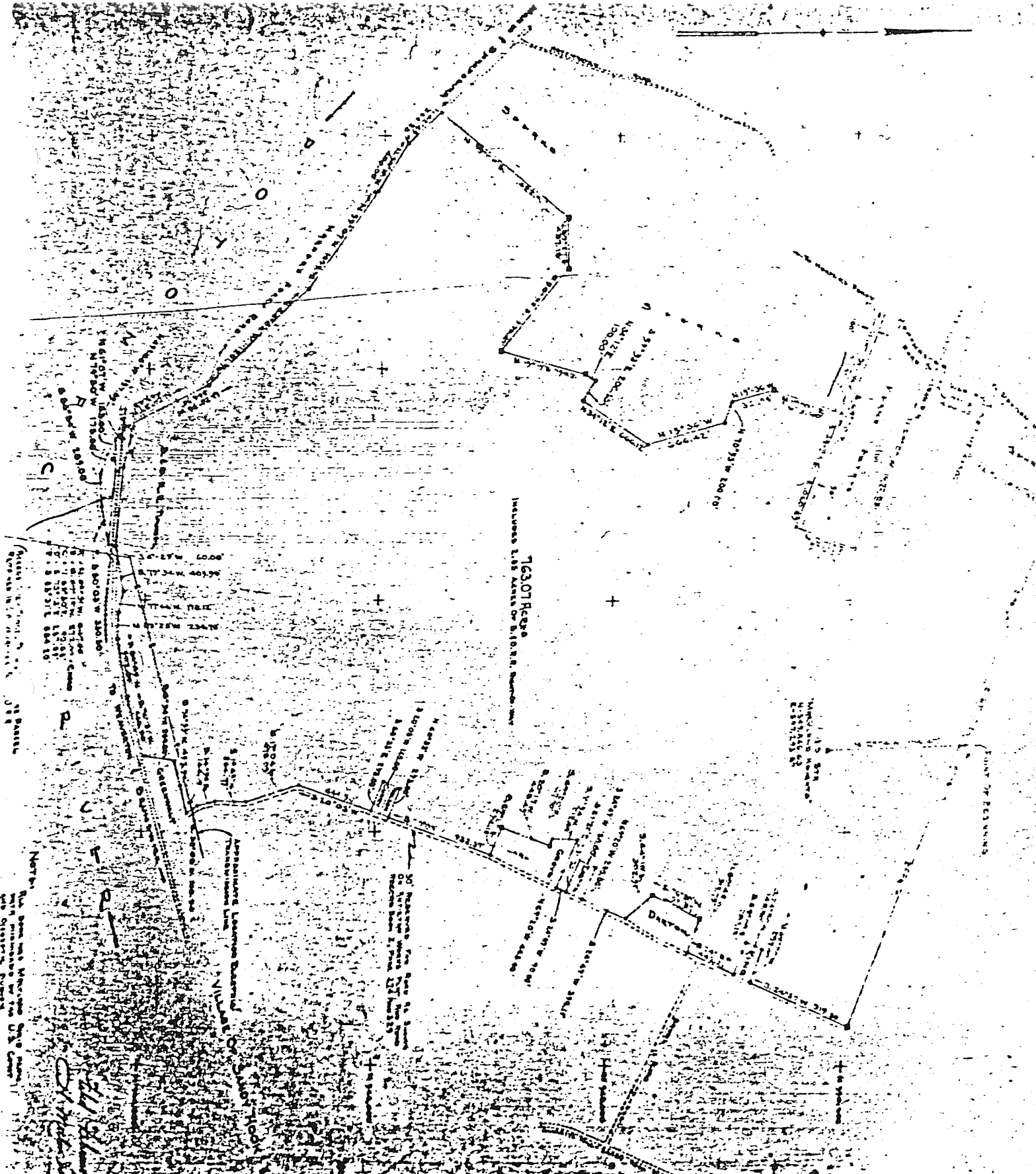
Sale of Road to an Inch



Dr. Wm. S. Stonbraker, Physician and
dentist and Office, near Waverston
Dr. R. H. E. Dotcher, Physician and
dentist and Office, on Magnolia Pl

Appendix F

Map of Harpers Ferry Monument: Portion Contributed by the State of Maryland, filed Washington County Courthouse February 1st, 1965.



HARPERS FERRY NATIONAL MONUMENT

PORTION CONTRIBUTED BY
THE STATE OF MARYLAND

BEARINGS

J.B. PORTERSON & CO. INC.
ENGINEERS
HARRISBURG - MARYLAND

AUG. 1958
BY J.B. PORTERSON & CO. INC.
REVISED - 10 Dec 61

NOTES:
This map was prepared from the original survey of the Harpers Ferry National Monument, Maryland, and is not to be used for any other purpose.

Appendix G

Copies of Letters from A. Spencer & Company to Paymaster of the C. & O Canal, January 22, 1903, and March 2, 1906; taken from Letters Received by the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Co. and the Canal Towage Co., 1900-1915. During this period, Albertus Spencer was either a disbursing agent for the canal, or a major creditor to canal employees in the Dam 3 Area. Note also the variety of articles and supplies sold at Spencer's store.

WHOLESALE AND RETAIL
DEALERS IN
FLOUR, GROCERIES, AND
CANAL SUPPLIES
IN GENERAL

— 0 —

SPECIALTIES:
WHISKIES,
BRANDIES,
APPLE JACKS,
WINES,
GINS,
BEER,
CEMENT,
DYNAMITE,
FIRE ARMS,
NOTIONS,
DRUGS.

A. Spencer & Co

HARPER'S FERRY, W. VA.

Jan 27th

Mr. Parree {
Dear Sir: {

Wm Reynolds
was drawn to Edw Reynolds
They came to me - saying &
would endorse it - I told
them
no it would make a con-
fusion in your records.

Wm Reynolds is with Allen
our Secy & Ed, Lock tender
Please send another Cheque &
simply erase Edw & substitute
Wm on Cheque.

Yours Resp
A. Spencer

chk corrected & returned

I Wm Reynolds Jan 23/1903.

WHOLESALE AND RETAIL
DEALERS IN
FLOUR, GROCERIES AND
CANAL SUPPLIES
IN GENERAL
—O—

SPECIALTIES:
WHISKIES,
BRANDIES,
APPLE JACKS,
WINES,
GINS,
BEER,
CEMENT,
DYNAMITE,
FIRE ARMS,
NOTIONS,
DRUGS.

BUY AND SELL FOR CASH ONLY.

A. Spencer & Co.,

HARPER'S FERRY, W. VA.

March 2^d 1906

Mr J Graham Pearce
Paymaster C & C Canal
Dear Sir:

Inclosed
please find orders from Oliver
Peacher (Mason) and Sidney Cross
Lock Tender, Lock 36 - Money advances
to Cross to buy Cow & to Peacher
to pay rent & purchased clothing.
Sidney Cross order for \$22.⁰⁰
Lock Tending January & February.
Oliver Peacher Masoning in
February \$20.⁰⁰

Thanking you in advance.
Yours Respectly
A. Spencer & Co.

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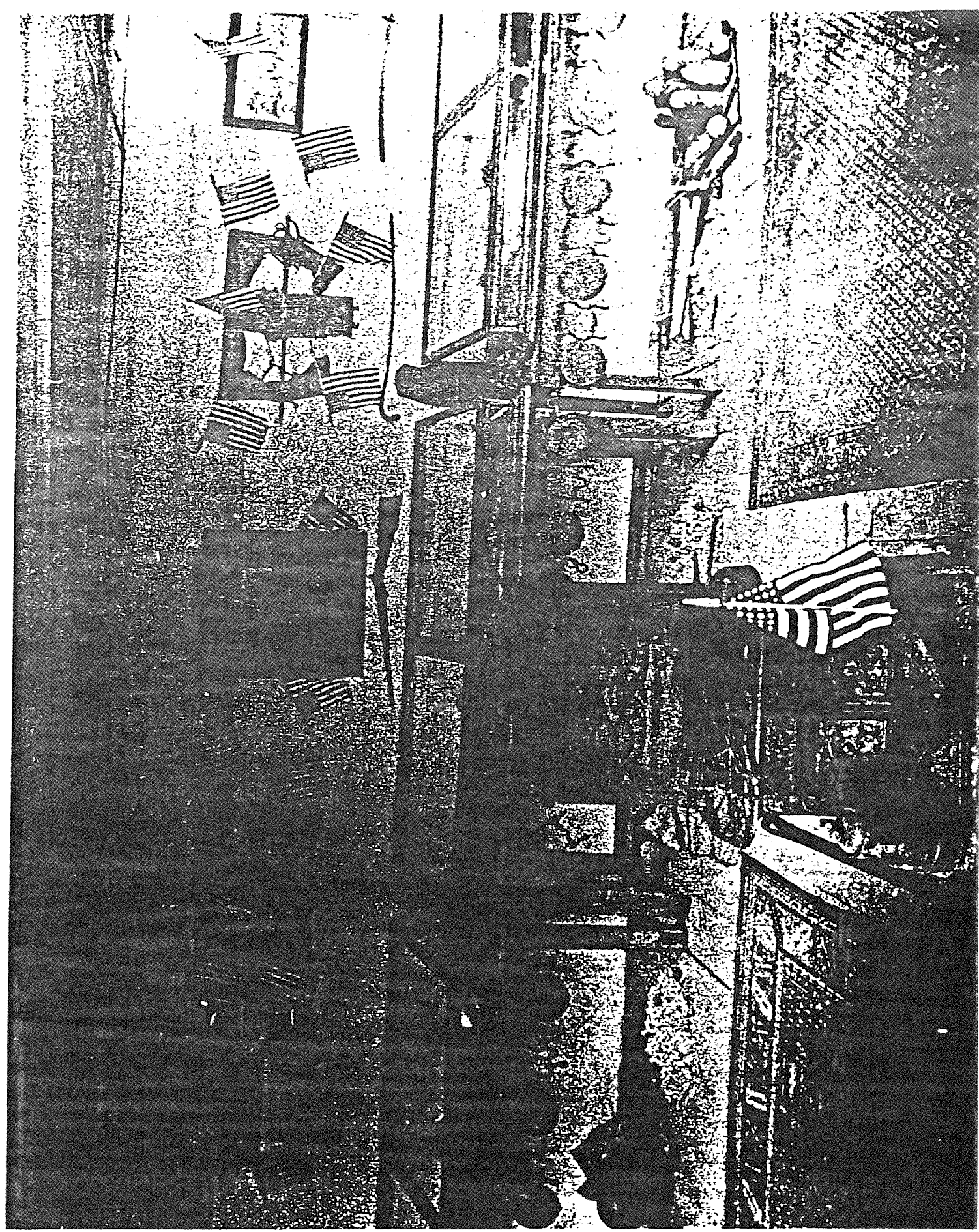
Illustrations

(For additional photographs of the Stone House,
see Edward D. Smith's Historic Resource Study,
Dam 3 Area: Shenandoah River Lock to Lock 36.
Denver: NPS, December 31, 1979.

Plat 1.

Undated photograph showing the inside of the Stone House when it was being used as a Museum. John Brown's Cook Stove stands in the center of the room.

Courtesy Edgar Marion Weaver.





Plat 2.

Undated photograph showing the two-story frame house (with the Esso pump on the porch) and the adjacent Stone House in the background.

Courtesy Edgar Marion Weaver. -

Plat 3.

Pre-1861 photograph of the Lock 33 area. Stone House can be clearly seen just left of center.

Courtesy Library of Congress.

