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JEFFERSON'S ROCK

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JEFFERSON' ROCK

Like George Washington, Thomas Jefferson was an enthusiastic, informed and observant traveller, with a sincere love for his country and its wild, primitive beauty. George Washington expressed his appreciation of the torrential rivers at Harpers Ferry by a practical recommendation to Congress that the tremendous water power be utilized for motivating the machinery of a National Armory. Jefferson penned his famous description after a visit to Harpers Ferry in October of 1783, when he reportedly sat on the Rock to observe the view and make the notations later expanded in his Notes on Virginia.

This rare little book is a publication of observations made by Mr. Jefferson during years of travel through Virginia, which he had noted in pencil on loose sheets of paper. In March of 1781, while Mr. Jefferson was still Governor of Virginia, a list of queries relative to the State of Virginia, part of a study of the States being made by M. de Marbois, Secretary of the French Legation, was presented to Mr. Jefferson for his attention.* With his usual exhaustive attention to detail, Mr. Jefferson not only rearranged his previous notes, but made special study trips to points of interest to answer M. de Marbois's inquiries. In October of 1783, in reply to Marbois' Query VI in re mountains, Mr. Jefferson reached Harpers Ferry, where he paused to describe the passage of the Potomac through the Blue Ridge. This impressive

*See Queries of Marbois, Appendix "A".

description, on pps. 23-24 of the published Notes, gave rise to the tradition of Jefferson's Rock, supposedly Mr. Jefferson's point of vantage.

At first, Mr. Jefferson intended the compiled Notes on Virginia solely for M. de Marbois' use. Several eminent friends, however, urged him to make his Notes available to other Virginia statesmen. Mr. Jefferson inquired the cost of their publication in America, but found it excessive. In July 1784, as newly appointed Minister Plenipotentiary for France, Mr. Jefferson sailed for Paris, and shortly after arrival found that his Notes could be more reasonably printed there. He ordered 200 copies printed, from which, according to his letters to Madison and other friends, he cautiously distributed a few copies to chosen friends, asking their advice as to its probable reception in America, somewhat fearful of questions raised in the book concerning the slavery problem. He retained the balance of the books for distribution to William and Mary College. (See Notes on Virginia, Appendix "A".)

However, a copy of the book, through death of its owner, came into the hands of a bookseller in Paris, who undertook the translation of the work into French. The resultant translation was so inaccurate and distorted that Mr. Jefferson decided to publish the original work for general distribution, and arranged for its publication by a London bookseller. In this way, the world became aware of Mr. Jefferson's view of Harpers Ferry:

> The passage of the Patowmac through the Blue Ridge is perhaps one of the most stupendous scenes in Nature. You stand on a very high point of land. On your right comes up the Shenandoah, having ranged along the foot of the mountain an hundred miles to seek a vent. On your left approaches the Patowmac, in quest of a passage also. In the moment of their junction they rush together against the mountain, rend it asunder, and pass off to the sea. The first glance of this scene hurries our senses into the opinion, that this earth has been created in time, that the mountains were formed first, that the rivers began to flow afterwards, that in this place particularly they have been dammed up by the Blue Ridge of mountains, and have formed an ocean which filled the whole valley; that continuing to rise they have at last broken over at this spot, and have torn the mountain down from its summit to its base. The piles of rock on each hand, but particularly on the Shenandoah, the evident marks of their disrupture and avulsion from their beds by the most powerful agents of nature, corroborate the impression. But the distant finishing which nature has given to the picture, is of a very different character. It is a true contrast to the foreground. It is as placid and delightful as that is wild and tremendous. For the mountain being cloven asunder, she presents to your eye, through the cleft, a small catch of smooth blue horizon, at an infinite distance in the plain country, inviting you, as it were, from the riot and tumult roaring around, to pass through the breach and participate of the calm below.... This scene is worth a voyage across the Atlantic. Yet here, as in the neighborhood of the Natural Bridge, are people who have passed their lives within a half dozen miles, and have never been to survey these monuments of a war between rivers and mountains, which must have shaken the earth itself to its centre.[1]

Although we have neither a picture of Thomas Jefferson seated on the Rock nor an exact statement from him that he climbed to its eminence for an overlook of the rivers, there are logical reasons for accepting the tradition that Mr. Jefferson chose the Rock to rest upon after his walk up the cliff behind the tavern. First, it was a prominent curiosity, a balanced capstone on a natural stone pedestal; second, it

1. Jefferson, Thomas, Notes on Virginia, Paris, 1784. See Notes on Virginia, Appendix A.

provided a better overlook of the rivers than the surrounding wooded hillside, and third, it was designated as "Jefferson's Rock" on a map as early as 1803, while Mr. Jefferson was still living. (See map in Appendix A.)*

Some references concerning the tradition of Jefferson's Rock exists in Mr. Jefferson's own writing. In a letter to Horatio Gates Spafford, early Virginia traveller and writer, dated from Monticello, May 14, 1809, the statesman displayed an understandable annoyance at an assertion of Spafford's that Mr. Jefferson had written about a view he had never seen.[2]

> The other passage, wrote Mr. Jefferson, respects the description of the passage of the Potomac through the Blue Ridge in the Notes on Virginia. You quote from Volney's** account of the U. S. what his words do not justify. His words are 'on coming from Frederick Town one does not see the rich perspective mentioned in the notes of Mr. Jefferson. On observing this to him a few days after, he informed me he had his information from a French engineer who during the War of Independence ascended the heights of the hills and I conceive that at that elevation the perspective must be as imposing as a wild country, whose horizon has no obstacles, may present.'
>
> That the scene described in the Notes is not visible from any part of the road from Frederick Town to Harpers Ferry is most certain - that road passes along the valley. Nor can it be seen from the tavern*** after crossing the ferry,

2. The Papers of Jefferson, 1651-1826, Vol. 187, No. 88, 291-292; Julian F. Boyd, Ed., Lyman H. Butterfield, Mina R. Bryan, Associate Editors, Princeton University Press, N.J., Microfilmed by the Library of Congress, HFNM Microfilm Reel #57.

* The drawing by Benjamin Latrobe, recently found by Mr. Charles Peterson of EODC is another early record (1810) of the Jefferson Rock legend. (See drawing on following page.)

** Volney, C.F. A View of the Soil and Climate of the U.S. of America, Phila., 1804, T. T. Perry Collection.

*** Harper House Tavern.

This interesting drawing, made by the famous early architect, Benjamin Latrobe about 1810, is the clearest and most accurate view existant of the original natural support for the capstone.

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& we may fairly infer that Mr. Volney did not ascend the height back of the tavern from which alone it can be seen, but that he pursued his journey from the tavern along the High road,* yet he admits that at the elevation of that height the perspective may be as rich as a wild country can give.

But you make him 'surprised to find by a view of the spot that the description was amazingly exaggerated' - but it is evident that Mr. Volney did not ascend the hill to get a view of the spot and that he supposes that height may present as imposing a view as such a country admits.

But Mr. Volney was mistaken in saying I had told him I had received a drawing of that from a French engineer, by an error in memory he has misapplied to this scene what I mentioned to him as to the Natural Bridge. I told him I had received a drawing of that from a French engineer sent there by the Marquis de Chastellux, who has published that drawing in his travels. I could not tell him I had the description of the passage of the Potomac from a French engineer because I never head any Frenchman say a word about it, much less did I ever receive a description of it from any mortal whatever.

I visited the place myself in October 1783, wrote the description some time after, and printed the work in Paris in 1784 and 1785. I wrote the description from my own view of the spot, stated no fact but what I saw, and can now affirm that no fact is exaggerated. It is true that the same scene may excite very different sensations in different spectators according to their different sensibilities. The sensations of some may be much stronger than those of others - and with respect to the Natural Bridge, it was not a description but a drawing only which I received from the French engineer. The description was written before I ever saw him.

It is not from any merit which I suppose from either of these descriptions, that I have gone into these observations, but to correct the impression of having given to the world as my own, ideas, and false ones too, which I had received from another, nor do I mention the subject to you with a desire that it should be otherwise noticed before the public than by a more correct statement in any future edition of your work.

* High Street.

This is a valuable letter in the interest of interpretation of Jefferson's Rock, substantiating the fact that Mr. Jefferson's point of observation was indeed a high point on the hill behind the Harper House Tavern, Harpers Ferry's only public hostelry in Mr. Jefferson's day. (See King and Harbaugh map, 1803, attached in Appendix A.) Coordinating this certain information with Jefferson's description of the view, noting the Shenandoah on his right, the Potomac on his left, the junction of the rivers and view of the gap, we feel justified in stating that Mr. Jefferson's own writing substantiates local tradition that he used the Rock as his point of observation.

Jefferson's detailed refutation of Spafford's accusation also serves to invalidate a similar comment of Mr. L. Barton Stout, in a letter written in April, 1860, to the Honorable Mr. Charles James Faulkner, United States Minister in Paris.[3] Mr. Stout stated that Jefferson declared to him that "he had never seen Harpers Ferry...but had given his description...in his Notes from the representations of others."

But according to Dr. Julian P. Boyd, Editor of The Papers of Thomas Jefferson, Princeton University:

> There is no doubt whatever that Thomas Jefferson visited Harpers Ferry in 1783. He stopped there on 25 October 1783 on his way back to Congress, a fact recorded in his Account Book in the Massachusetts Historical Society.[4]

3. Letter from L. Barton Stout to Hon. Mr. Charles James Faulkner, U.S. Minister in Paris April, 1860. Original letter in private collection of Maj. T. T. Perry, Charles Town, W. Va. May be reprinted only by permission of Maj. Perry. Transcript in Appendix B.

4. Account Book of Thomas Jefferson, 25 October, 1783, Massachusetts Historical Society, Research of Park Historial Alfred Mongin, 1960. Photos tat in Appendix A.

> This fact alone is sufficient to invalidate the assertion made by Stout that 'he had never seen either Harpers Ferry or the Blowing Cave.' As /the letter to Spafford/ shows, Volney was primarily responsible for conveying the impression that Jefferson had described something he had not seen. The germ thus planted has persisted, and Stout's letter is another evidence of it. On no point was Jefferson more sensitive than on that which touched on his integrity as an author, and the key to his elaborate explanation to Spafford is to be found in his desire 'to correct the imputation of having given to the world as my own, ideas, and false ones too, which I have received from another.'[5]

Summarizing the above excerpts from Jeffersonia, the writer submits that the tradition of Jefferson's visit is thus estabilished as historical fact.

Some confusion exists in local accounts of another tradition, that the great capstone itself was in early days tumbled down the hill by enemies of Jefferson, and was later carried back up the hill and mounted on its present stone pillars. Probably a more valid account of the incident is found in Joseph Barry's story of Harpers Ferry:

> At that time-1799-a bitter war existed between the Federalists and the Republicans, and a certain Captain Henry in General Pinkney's army is said to have taken his company one day to Jefferson's Rock and ordered them to overthrow the favorite seat of Jefferson, his political enemy. They succeeded in detaching a large boulder from the top which rolled down hill to Shenandoah Street, where it lay for many years, a monument to stupid bigotry. This action was the occasion for a challenge to mortal combat for Captain Henry from an equally foolish Republican in the same corps, but the affair having come to the ears of General Pinkey, he had both of the

5. Letter from Dr. Julian P. Boyd, Editor of The Papers of Thomas Jefferson, Princeton University, to Mr. Frank H. Anderson, Superintendent, HFNM, August 30, 1960.

> champions arrested before a duel could come off, very much to the regret of all the sensible people of the town who expected that if the meeting were allowed to take place there would be, probably at least, one fool the less at Harpers Ferry.[6]

Physically, Jefferson's Rock was a strange whimsy of Nature, a breath-takingly balanced huge slab of shale teetering on a natural stone pedestal. Local tradition insists that the Rock was originally so delicately balanced it could be moved by hand.[7] Whether this amazing balancing act was achieved by erosion or a sliding of rock is a matter of conjecture for qualified geologists. The writer would venture the theory that, surrounding and supporting rocks having been gradually loosened in rock slides, the firm heavy slab settled on its precarious perch, was caught and balanced despite wind and weather. Undoubtedly the original Rock was larger than its present dimensions. Joseph Barry, Harpers Ferry's intrepid early annalist, stated that

> it is supported now /1903/ by pillars placed under it by order of one of the old Armory Superintendents, the original foundations having dwindled to very unsafe dimensions by the action of the weather, and still more by the devastations of tourists and curiosity hunters.[8]

The 1810 Latrobe drawing shows the early rock pedestal in clear detail. The fact that in the 1830's Jefferson's Rock still perched on its natural pedestal is indicated by an engraving by J. T. Willmore of

6. Barry, Joseph, The Strange Story of Harpers Ferry, Martinsburg, 1903, p.18.

7. Ibid., p.6.

8. Ibid., P.8.

a drawing made in 1838 by W. H. Bartlett, published in American Scenery, Vol. I, by George Virtue, Ivy Lane, London, in 1840. This reasonably accurate drawing looking south on the Shenandoah from Jefferson's Rock shows the great slab balanced see-saw fashion on a rubble of smaller rocks atop a strata-marked stone base. The author of American Scenery,[9] Nathaniel P. Willis, described the scene briefly:

> This is one of the most harmonious combinations of mountain, vale and river, to be found in America; we know not whether to call it more beautiful or grand. Fine as is all the scenery of this neighborhood, however, it is not till very lately that the current of travel has turned hither, and but partially yet. Harpers Ferry will soon be a resort for admirers of nature from all nations, and it may well share the honors of pilgrimage with Trenton Falls and Niagra...." /See photo on page 11/

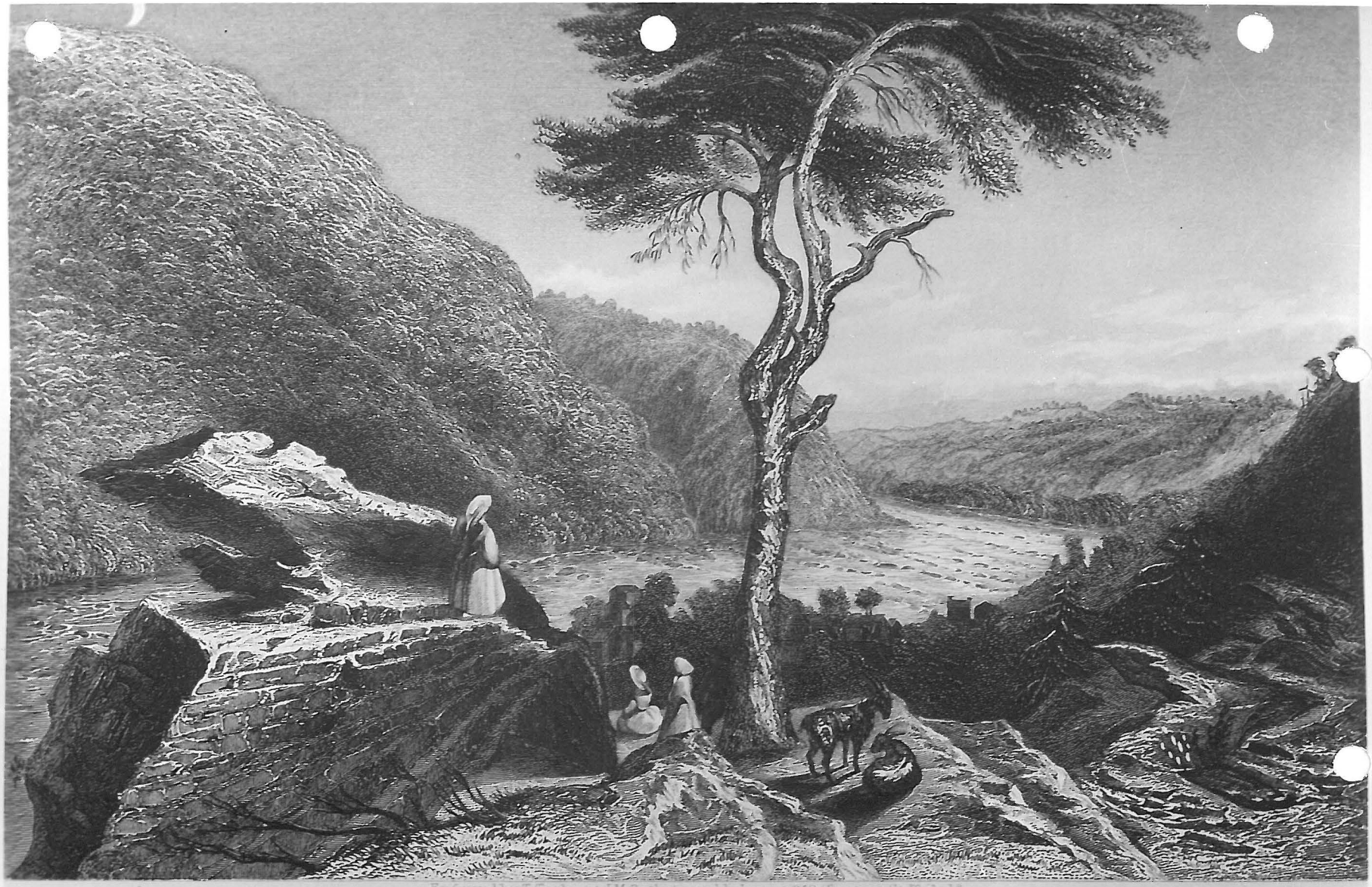
Two very careful, accurate and detailed drawings, composed about 1857, show Jefferson's Rock still perched on its natural stone pedestal. The first, (HF-490) is a view of the Island of Virginius, accurately detailed as to buildings and general background. Although the base of Jefferson's Rock is not shown, being obscured by foreground rocks, it obviously rests on a center stone rather than the four corner pedestals.

The second, an exceptionally fine drawing by Ed Beyer, (HF-249), clearly shows Jefferson's Rock balanced on its original stone pedestal. This drawing, lithographed in Dresden by Rau & Sons and published in Beyer's Album of Virginia in 1857, was made by Mr. Beyer on his trip through Virginia about 1855. /See photo on page 12./ A rare pamphlet describing the background

9. Virtue, George, American Scenery, Vol. I, London, 1840.

Jefferson's Rock, 1838, drawn by W. H. Bartlett, published in American Scenery, Vol. I, by George Virtue, Ivy Lane, London, 1840. The print shown is a copy, made by T. Taylor, Philadelphia, republished in Benson J. Lossing's American Centenary in Philadelphia in 1876.

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Engraved by T Taylor at J.M.Butler's establishment 242 Chestnut St Philad.ª

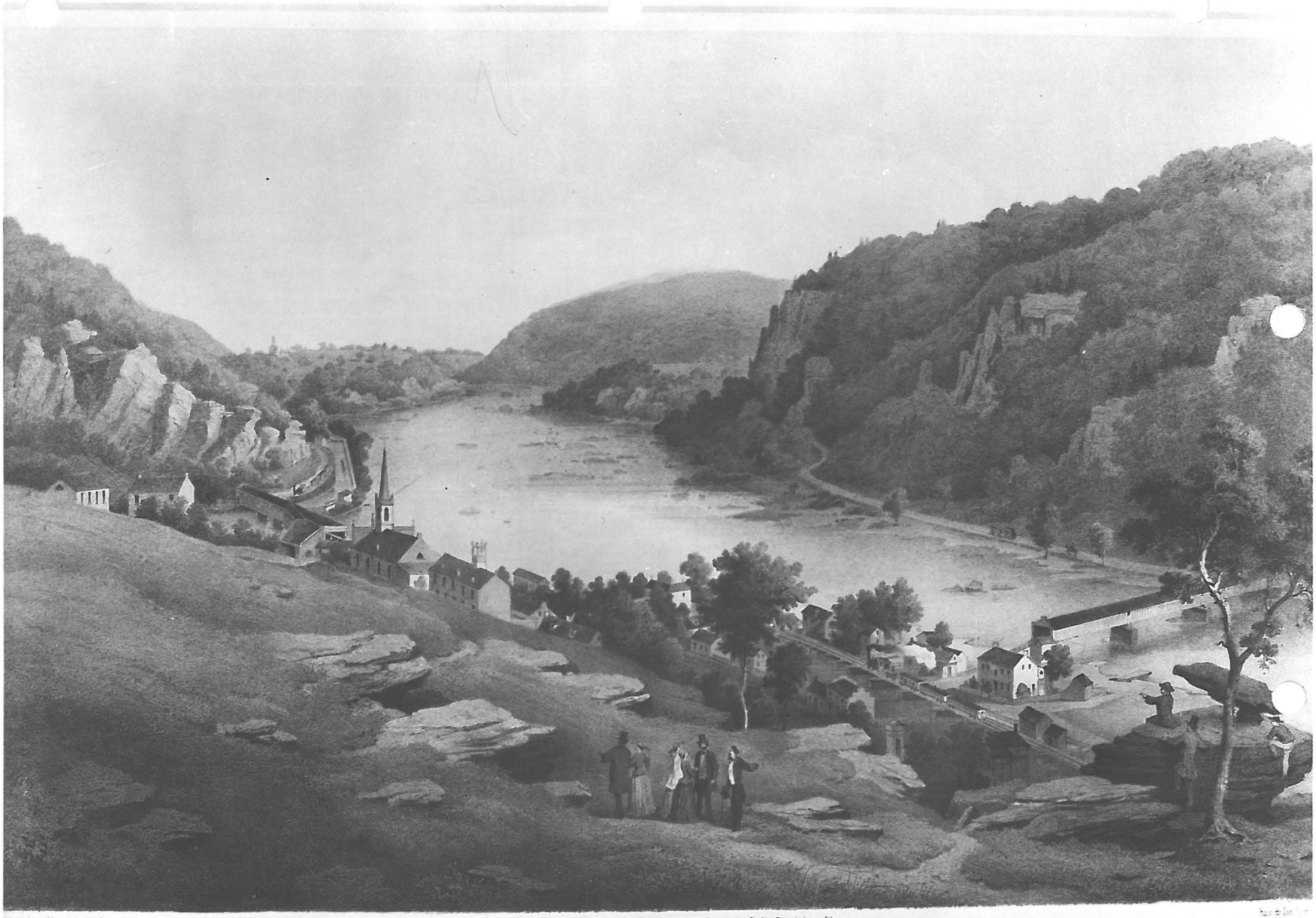
The Valley of the Shenandoah.

from Jefferson's Rock.

Harpers Ferry.

"Harpers Ferry From Jefferson's Rock", a Drawing by Ed Beyer, from Beyer's Album of Virginia, shows Jefferson's Rock still on its stone pedestal when the drawing was made in 1855.

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Taken from Nature by Ed. Beyer.

Entered according to Act of Congress in the year 1851 by Ed. Beyer in the Clerks Office of the District of Virginia

HARPER'S FERRY from JEFFERSON ROCK

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of his drawings establishes the fact that the pillars had not yet been set:

> The accompanying sketch was taken from the Rock which bears the honored name of Jefferson, and is located on the Western side of the Rivers, overhanging the town and their waters from two hundred to three hundred feet. This Rock was a favorite resort of Jefferson, affording a magnificent view of the junction of the two Rivers and of the thriving and beautiful village; and thence the eye wanders over the wide and woody plains, extending in the distance to the Alleghany Mountains....
>
> The top of this rock is flat, and nearly twelve feet square; its base, which does not exceed five feet in width, rests upon the top of a larger stone; its height about five feet. The whole mass is so nicely balanced that the application of a small force will cause it to vibrate considerably. On this rock reposed another, on which Mr. Jefferson inscribed his name; but unfortunately in the political excitement of 1798-99 between the opposing parties, a Capt. Henry who was stationed here, with a band of his men, threw off the apex of this stone....[10]

It is certain, however, that the pillars were in place by March 12, 1862. From the unpublished diary of Horace A. Smith, Co. "A", Van Allen's Regiment, 2nd Battalion, we read under the above date:

> It was quite a relief after riding 15 miles to dismount... Tired as I was, I could not resist the temptations of the splendid standing point which 'Jefferson's Rock' presented to view the surrounding country. I in company with many others climbed the steep and rocky sides and after a severe trial of patience we reached the summit-a distance of 250 feet above the river. It would not take a fastidious lover of nature to admire if he could not describe the beautiful scenery presented to every eye. My heart was filled with wonderment- Never did I dream of such grandeur. Beneath on the right lay the Poetical Shenandoah immortalized by Longfellow in his "Beauties of America"... The Potomac on our

10. Beyer, Ed., Description of the Album of Virginia, or The Old Dominion Illustrated, Richmond, Va., 1857, Vol. I, p.7-8. Rare pamphlet from collection of Maj. T. T. Perry, Charles Town, W. Va. Transcribed by permission of Maj. Perry. Transcription HFD-145.

left was no less grand as it swept through the deep channel of this mountainous region....

Jefferson Rock, on which tradition says Jefferson made his appeal to the rock alone for liberty - which is set on four pillars to prevent the snakes from making it base /?/ is 12 by 14 feet square. On its bed can be read the names of Ex-Governor Wise-now a leader in the Rebel army-an army that is as sacreligious as 'tis grand-Floyd the thief has left his name to be spit upon by Union troops-Davis the leader of the Southern confederacy has inscribed his traitorous name by the side of Irving, Washington and others....[11]

A Brady photograph, made in April or May of 1865, also shows the four supporting pillars in place. (See photo on following page.) No actual record, however, has been found to date concerning the work of stabilizing the Rock. Dr. Henry T. McDonald of Storer College made a series of inquiries from 1931-1934 in an effort to provide the answer to this question. On September 15, 1931, the Adjutant General of the War Department wrote, in response to Dr. McDonald's inquiry:

Nothing has been found of record in this office relating to Jefferson's Rock....[12]

On October 29, 1931, Dr. McDonald wrote to the Rt. Rev. Edward Tearney, D. D., of the Holy Cross Church, Lynchburg, Va.;

There is one event in the history of the rock which I presume you will be able to validate. I refer to the placing of the brown stone pillars, four in number, under the Rock.

11. Smith, Horace A., unpublished diary, from the private collection of Mr. Delf Norona, Moundsville, W. Va. Transcription by permission, HFD-70A.

12. Letter from Maj. Gen. C. H. Bridge, Adjt. Gen. Office, War Dpt., Washington, D.C., Sept. 15, 1931, to Dr. Henry T. McDonald, Storer College, Harpers Ferry, W. Va., Storer College Papers, HFNM Establishment, V.I, p.73.

Photo by Matthew Brady, illustrious Civil War photographer, in April or May of 1865, clearly shows sandstone pillars in place.

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> My understanding is that your father, the late Edward Tearney, did that work under contract with the U.S. Government. Is that a fact?....[13]

In reply, the Rev. Mr. Tearney wrote:

> I am very sorry that I cannot supply you with the historical data you ask for concerning Jefferson's Rock. All I remember is that everyone believed that Mr. Jefferson visited the Rock and gave it its name. I have no recollection of hearing or knowing that my father did any work to render the Rock firm and safe.[14]

Again in 1934, Dr. McDonald wrote the War Department in an effort to obtain records concerning the placing of the pillars, but received a negative reply:

> An exhaustive search of the War Dept records including those of the Chief of Ordnance and the Quartermaster General has resulted in failure to find any record concerning Jefferson's Rock at Harpers Ferry.[15]

However discouraging these negations may seem, they serve to record for the present generation traditions that existed in earlier days concerning the Rock. Old residents today confirm these traditions. In the remembrance of Mrs. H. T. McDonald, widow of the late Dr. H. T. McDonald, former President of Storer College, an elderly lady of Harpers Ferry

13. Letter from Dr. H. T. McDonald to Rt. Rev. Edward Tearney, D.D., Holy Cross Church, Lynchburg, Va., Oct. 29, 1931. Storer College Papers, HFNM Establishment, Vol. I, p.86-87.

14. Letter from E. M. Tearney, Holy Cross Church, Lynchburg, Va., to Dr. H. T. McDonald, Storer College, Nov. 3, 1931. Storer College Papers, HFNM Establishment, Vol. I, p.87.

15. Letter from James F. McKinley, Maj. Gen. Adjt. Gen. Office, War Dept., Washington, D.C., Oct. 16, 1934, Storer College Papers, HFNM Establishment, Vol. II, p.6.

named Miss Alvernon Cross told of her childhood recollection of watching the workmen lift the huge slab of Rock from its eroded pedestal to the new stone pillars. Since this anecdote was recounted to Mrs. McDonald in 1910 and Miss Alvernon Cross was then about 60, it would place this event at about 1855-60.[16]

Present old residents still aver that Mr. Edward Tearney, a stone-cutter and contractor of Harpers Ferry employed by the U.S. Government in work at the Armory, was the craftsman responsible for stabilizing the Rock.[17] Mr. Tearney is listed in the 1850 census as a stonemason, 39 years of age, and in the 1860 census as a Government Contractor, 49 years of age, born in Ireland, with six daughters and three sons, one being Edward Tearney, Jr. According to Mrs. Fred Steadman of Harpers Ferry, Mr. Tearney owned the quarry on Shenandoah Street during the 1850's, and made a comfortable income furnishing such stonework as the large paving stones for the sidewalk on Shenandoah Street. Mrs. Steadman stated that Mr. Tearney was the father of Mrs. Hurst, for whom Mr. Tearney purchased the Master Armorer's House (Bldg. No. 36 of HFNM) as a wedding gift.[18]

16. Interview of writer with Mrs. H. T. McDonald, Nov. 1, 1961.

17. Interview of writer with Mr. Joe Shipe, Nov. 5, 1961.

18. Interview of writer with Mrs. Fred Steadman, Nov. 7, 1961. Check of Court House records showed no deed to verify that Mr. Tearney owned Shenandoah Street quarry, listed on 1859 map as U.S. Lot #4. Nor a deed for Bldg. No. 36 to Mr. Tearney. Jefferson County Court House records are not entirely complete.

Some interesting ties seem thus to exist between the Master Armorer's Residence and Jefferson's Rock. Allowing the decade of the 1850's as the probable period during which the red sandstone pillars were placed under Jefferson's Rock, it is also noteworthy that the Master Armorer's Residence was built in 1858, and Mr. Tearney as Government Contractor for stone probably contracted the stonework for the Master Armorer's House as well as the fine cutting and fitting of red sandstone capping for the Armory wall, completed in 1851. Interestingly enough, the paving stones in the walk directly in front of the Master Armorer's residence are the painstakingly fitted red sandstone capstones from the Armory wall, fashioned of the same red Seneca stone as the Jefferson Rock pillars.[19] The writer would like therefore to present the theory that this red stone was brought by the canal from Seneca for the purpose of capping the Armory wall in 1850 (the wall was reported as having been just completed in the Jan'y 2nd 1851 Report of Major Symington)[20], and that the pillars were ordered by the Armory Superintendent to be cut from leftover stone to stabilize the Rock, which according to a local writer was "endangering the lives and properties of the villagers below."[21] Since by census record and tradition Mr. Edward Tearney was at this time a Government

19. Details re stonework by advice of Mr. Archie Franzen, EODC, Architect, Nov. 1961.

20. Report of G. Talcott, Col. of Ordnance, to Hon. C. M. Conrad, Sect'y of War, Jan'y 2, 1851, HFNM Microfil Vol. 20, No. 1, pp.67-68.

21. Storer College Papers, HFNM Establishment, Vol. 1, p.12, from Mountain Echo, publication of HF Woman's Club, Aug. 1919.

contractor in stone, we further submit that it seems reasonable that the local belief that Mr. Tearney was responsible for cutting the stone pillars for support of the Rock is well founded.

As to the date of the stabilization work on Jefferson's Rock, we find from the foregoing documents that at the time of Mr. Beyer's visit in 1855-57, the Rock balanced on its original stone pedestal. In 1862, by the diary of Mr. Horace A. Smith, it was firmly resting on its stone pillars. Since it is extremely unlikely that this type of construction would have been engaging the attention of Armory officials after the Government buildings were burned in 1861, we may safely assume that the pillars were cut and put into place sometime in the five year period from 1855-60. This date is substantiated by local tradition, as noted.

On January 17, 1855, Henry W. Clowe, a "worthy mechanic", assumed the duties of Superintendent of Harpers Ferry Armory. By Joseph Barry's account, he was

> a man of impulsive nature, but...generous to a fault, and never did the place enjoy greater prosperity than under his administration.... It is probably, however, that his greatest trouble arose from the intrigues of politicians....[22]

The appointment of Mr. Clowe had been a victory for exponents of civilian superintendency of the National Armories, and won the emnity of the military and those advocating military superintendency. He had the warm friendship and support of the Hon. Charles James Faulkner,

22. Barry, Joseph, The Strange Story of Harpers Ferry, Martinsburg, 1903, p.37.

Member of Congress from this district, a strong proponent of civilian rule. Unfortunately, Mr. Clowe discharged for alleged insubordination and inefficiency a Foreman who had supported Mr. William Lucas, Mr. Faulkner's opponent in the Congressional election. This action gained for Mr. Clowe the disfavor of Lucas's political friends, who brought about Mr. Clowe's discharge in January 1859, on charges of his membership in the Know-Nothing Council of Harpers Ferry, and partisanship in dealing with Armory workers.[23]

It is therefore doubly interesting to find the following letter among the Hon. Mr. Faulkner's papers from Major T. T. Perry's private collection in Charles Town, West Virginia:

October, 1858

Mr. Faulkner:
I was called on by Mr. Edward Tearney of Harpers Ferry, on yesterday, to aid him if I could do so consistently with my sense of propriety, in obtaining the contract for erecting the Dam across the River at Harpers Ferry, about to be constructed by the Government, and for which, he informs me, proposals are already invited by publication (by the Superintendent Col. H. C. Clowe). I understand that the contract will be given, not as a matter of course to the lowest bidder, but to the proposer of the best offer, having regard to the character, etc., etc., of the bidder. And this should be so, for the same reasons what you and I would not rent out our farms to the lowest bidder, without regard to other important considerations. Mr. Tearney, I believe, has been Master Mason at Harpers Ferry for some 12 or 15 years; and has done the principal part of that description of work for Gov't at that place for many years and given great satisfaction. I know he had the confidence of my brother, the late paymaster. He always spoke very highly of him, and of

23. HFNM Microfilm Reel 26, Vol. 6, pp.587-600, Letter from Col. H. C. Craig, Col. of Ordnance, to Hon. John B. Floyd, Sect'y of War, with attachments, Oct. 5, 1857. Photostats in Appendix B.

> the satisfactory manner in which he performed his contracts with the Gov't. Always prompt & within time, &c, according to contract. He is more over a very intelligent & efficient man in business matters, and has no superior, I believe, in his line of occupation.... I hope that you will do all you can consistently and properly do, in behalf of Mr. Tearney.... (Signed) William Lucas[24]

Either Mr. Lucas was magnanimously overlooking the differences between himself and Mr. Faulkner cited in the complaints against Mr. Clowe, or he was taking this means of informing Mr. Faulkner of Mr. Clowe's preferential treatment of contracts.

For the purposes of this report, the letter is most useful in establishing Mr. Edward Tearney as Master Mason, in official and political favor, during the 1855-60 period when the pillars must logically have been placed under Jefferson's Rock.

The Master Armorer's House (Bldg. 36) was reported by Mr. Clowe on September 27, 1858, as "rapidly approaching to completion."[25] Although Mr. Faulkner recommended Mr. Tearney and three other constituents to the Secretary of War as worthy contractors for the dam, November 18, 1858,[26] the contract was awarded under Mr. Clowe's successor, Alfred Barbour, to a Baltimore firm, J. A. Snoval & Co., February 18, 1859.[27]

24. Letter from File #10, Faulkner Papers, private collection of Maj. T. T. Perry, Charles Town, W. Va. Transcribed by permission of Maj. Perry, for reference only, HFNM Faulkner Letters, Vol. 1, p.88.

25. Supt. Henry W. Clowe to Col. Henry K. Craig, Chief of Ordnance, Sept. 27, 1858.

26. Charles J. Faulkner to Sec. of War Floyd, Nov. 18, 1858, HFNM R.27, V.1, p.93.

27. Craig to Patterson, Feb. 17, 1859, HFNM R.19, V.11, p.1015.

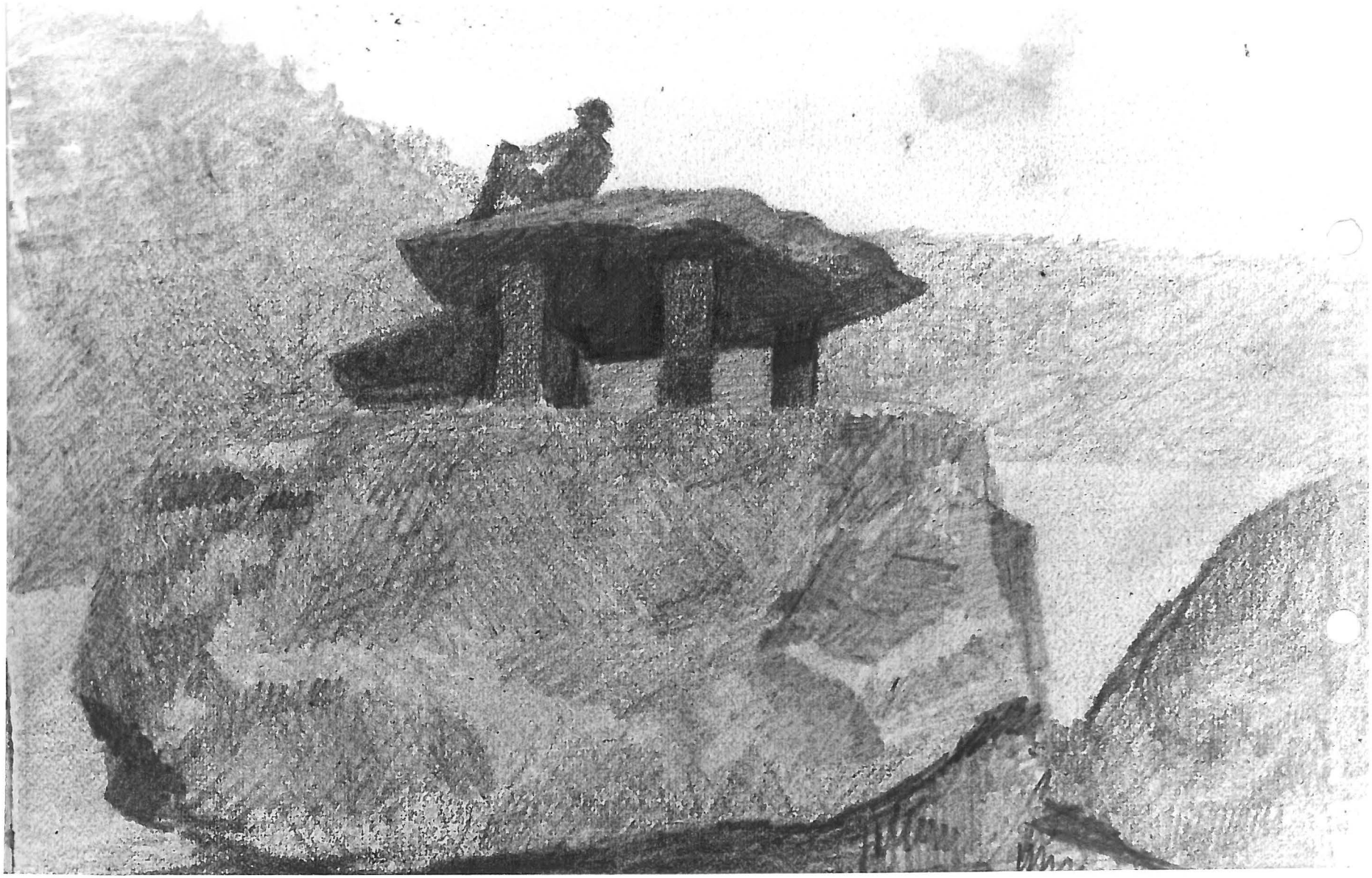
Careful consideration of all the foregoing documents leads the writer to venture that, rather than Jefferson's Rock having been stabilized in the early 1800's for reasons of safety as previously assumed, this work was ordered by Superintendent Clowe during the 1850's, both because of possible hazard and as a tribute to Jefferson. If any written contract is ever discovered concerning this work, it is likely to be found that Mr. Tearney cut and set the stones in 1858, when work was completed on the Master Armorer's residence.

As previously indicated in this report, Jefferson's Rock became during the Civil War a high point of interest to visiting troops, who added their own initials to those of Washington Irving, Jefferson Davis, ex-Gov. Wise and other luminaries cited by Horace A. Smith as having marked the famous stone with their names. The eminent Civil War photographer, Matthew Brady, paused in the spring of 1865 to take a mutely symbolic photograph of the Rock brooding in lonely vigil over a desolate war-torn hillside. (See photo on page 15).

In the decade after the War, curiosity brought an influx of visitors to view the scene of the John Brown Raid and the Armory ruins. The B&O ran excursion trains, advertising the "Picturesque Road of the B&O," canal boat excursions became fashionable and stereoptican slides on thousands of parlor tables extolled the famous view from Jefferson's Rock (see photos on following pages). In 1872, William Cullen Bryant deemed the view from the Rock worthy of an elaborate wood-cut (unfortunately inaccurate of detail), in his dignified work Picturesque American or the

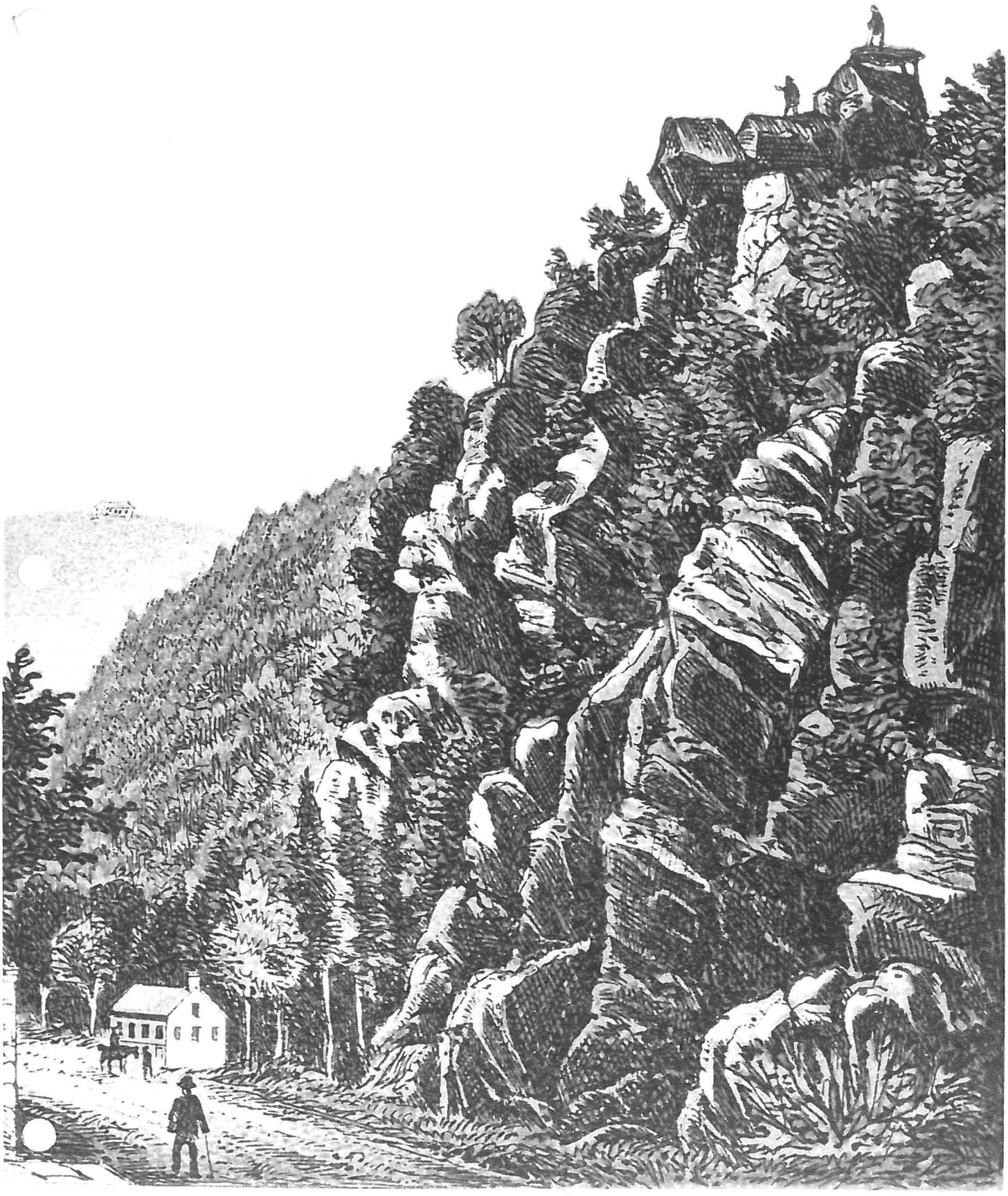
This sketch by Thomas Anschutz in 1877, ilustrates the pleasure of visitors, after a laborious climb, to rest by reclining on the famous rock, feasting their eyes on the broad view.

HF-508



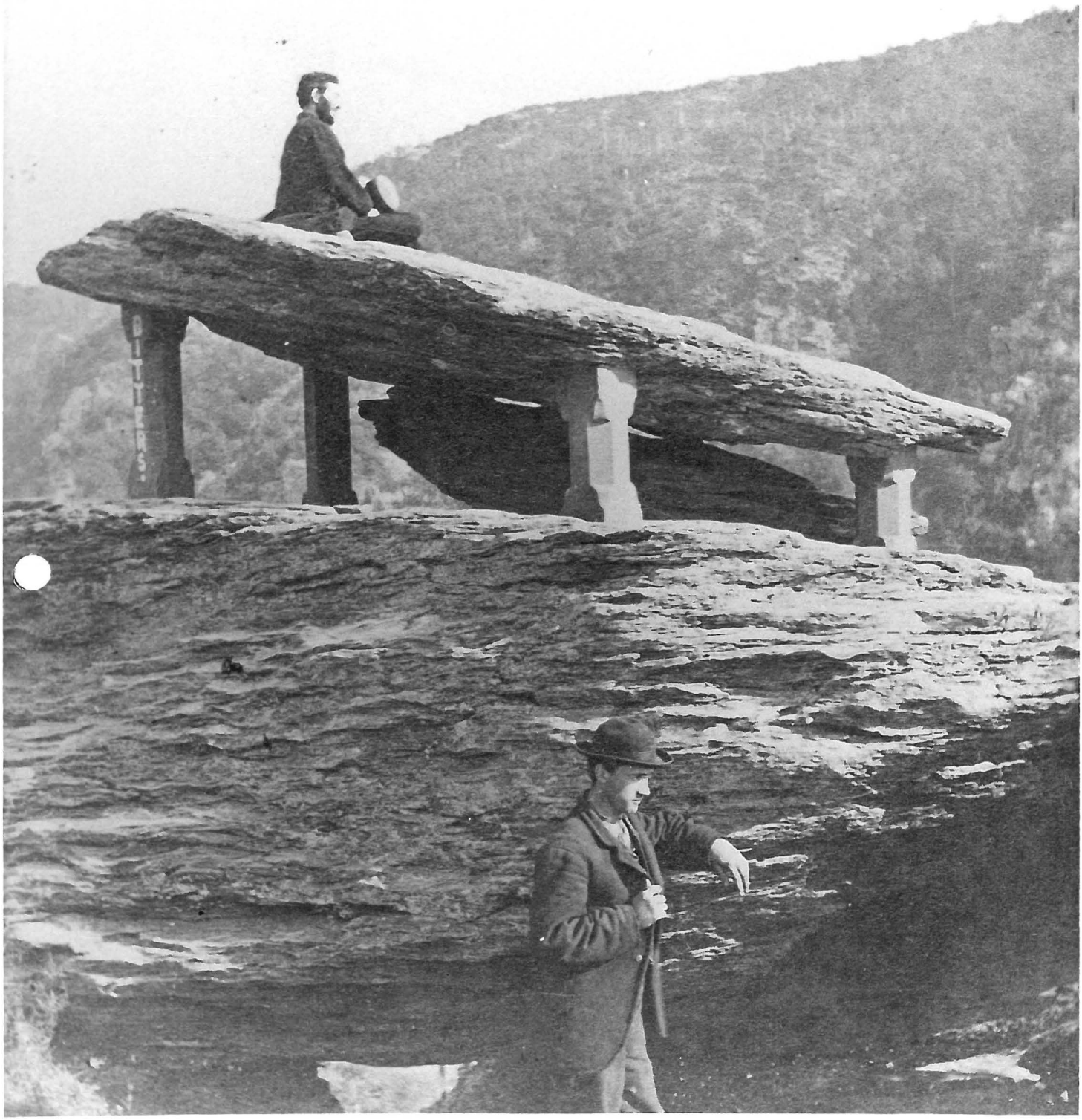
This typical stereoptican picture of the 1870's, shows Jefferson's Rock on its stone pillars. The drawing is reprinted from a slide in the collection of Major T. T. Perry, Charles Town, by his permission.

HF-672



This typical stereoptican picture of the 1870's shows Jefferson's Rock on its stone pillars. The drawing is reprinted from a slide in the collection of Major T. T. Perry, Charles Town, by his permission.

HF-683



"View from Jefferson's Rock", wood print, published in William Cullen Bryant's, Picturesque America or the Land We Live In, N.Y., 1872.

HF-250

The Shenandoah view is wider but could be further improved.

NHF-981



View from Jefferson Rock.

Land We Live In, and included an extensive discourse on Harpers Ferry, describing Jefferson's Rock:

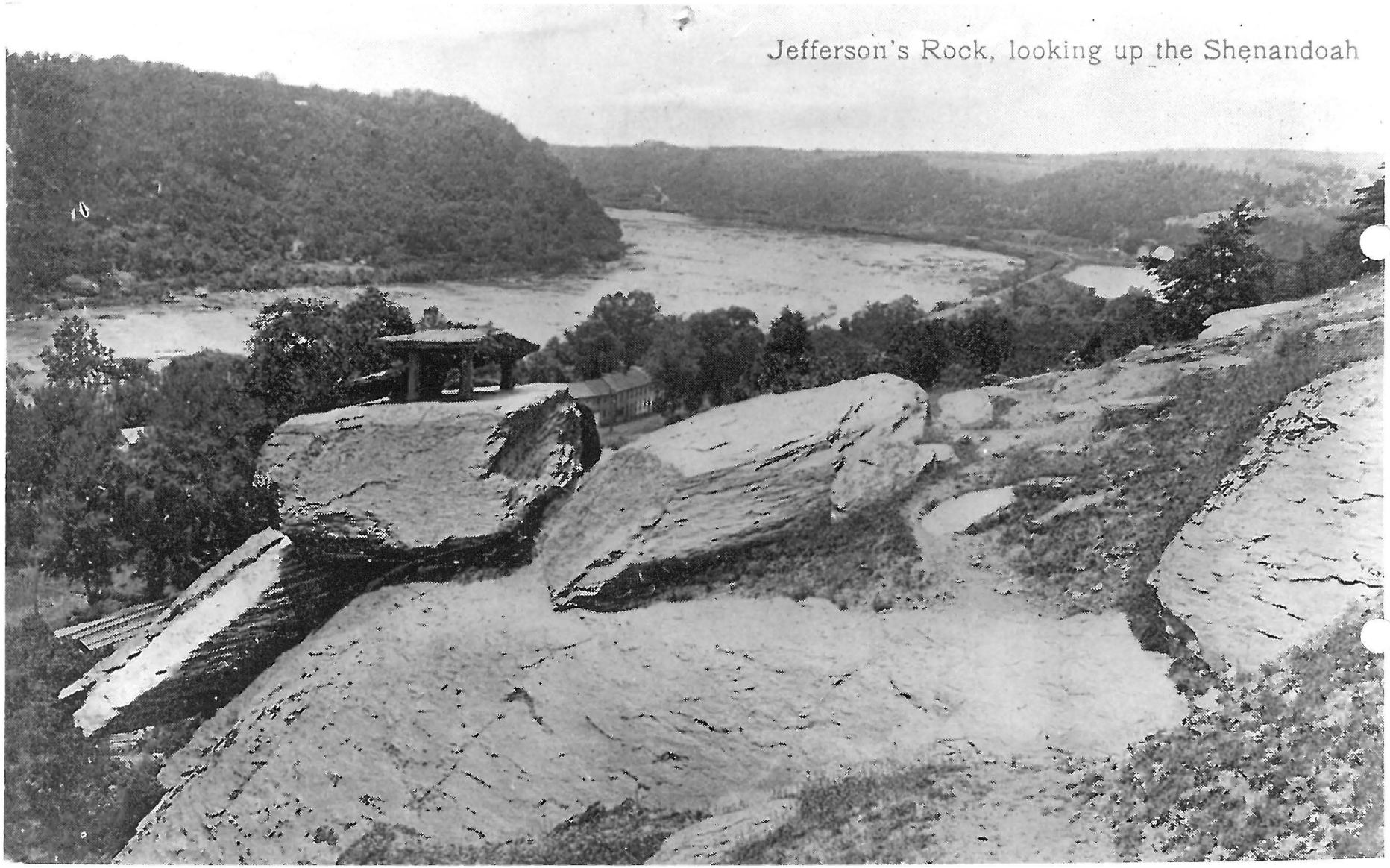
> a remarkably stratified formation that rises abruptly from the street below. It is the pride of the town, and among the townspeople, is almost 'a name to conjure by'. Here we have the best view attainable of the mountains from their base and of the meeting of the waters. Beyond the town loom up the Maryland Heights; to the left, Loudoun frowns, crowned with its wealth of shaggy foliage.... In the gap between these two mountains the Shenandoah...and the Potomac ...meet.... There is no grandeur in the scene- none claimed for it. Life and brightness and quiet beauty distinguish it....[28]

In the heyday of Canal boat excursions, B&O travel lures and elaborate summer residences at Harpers Ferry, during the Victorian period of 1870-90, picnics at Jefferson's Rock became fashionable, according to local tradition, and more than one wedding was purportedly solemnized there. Several visitors at Harpers Ferry since the Monument started have claimed that a grandmother or mother was married at Jefferson's Rock or in the middle of the Potomac Bridge. A series of photographs through these years, carefully preserved in Harpers Ferry libraries and attics, are now our best visual evidence of the established tradition of making the arduous climb on foot up the stony trail, to rest and meditate and open one's picnic basket at Jefferson's vantage point. (See photographs on following pages.) During the early 1900's, an enterprising local business man, Mr. Walter Dittmeyer, published a series of post-cards that became widely circulated. An embarrassment of riches has resulted for Harpers Ferry National Monument in treasured copies of

28. Bryant, William Cullen, Picturesque America or the Land We Live In, Vol. 1, D. Appleton & Co., N.Y., 1872, transcript HFNM, HFD-69.

"Jefferson's Rock, looking up the Shenandoah"
A typical postcard of the early 1900's enticing visitors to climb the stony trail to Jefferson's Rock. Postcard by W. L. Erwin.

HF-478


Jefferson's Rock, looking up the Shenandoah

"Jefferson Rock. Harper's Ferry, W. Va."
A typical postcard of the early 1900's, enticing visitors to climb the stony trail to Jefferson's Rock. Postcard by W. E. Dittmeyer.

HF-427-2

Jefferson Rock. Harper's Ferry, W. Va.



these post-cards proudly presented by local residents. W. L. Erwin also published a series of cards in 1908, showing Jefferson's Rock from various angles.

All through these years, the trail to Jefferson's Rock remained an unimproved path up the rocky cliff. During 1934, however, some work of improvement was apparently accomplished by the CWA, making the Rock more conveniently accessible. At this time, Dr. H. T. McDonald of Storer College wrote Mr. Daniel Willard, President of the B&O Railroad, informing him of this improvement and suggesting that the B&O undertake a complete study of the history of Jefferson's Rock, to document its legend for use in their advertising brochures. Mr. Willard declined the suggestion, with regrets.[29] By 1936, preliminary investigation was being conducted on the National Park Project for Harpers Ferry. Charles S. Marshall, Junior Historian, Morristown National Historical Park, in a memorandum to Mr. Spalding, November 12, 1936, noted:

> The Town of Harpers Ferry is the acknowledged owner of the following lots: /"Market House Lot', 'Jefferson's Lot', the 'Harper Stone Steps', and'Public Square'/
>
> So far as I have been able to ascertain the Town of Harpers Ferry has never received a deed to these properties and consequently they do not have a title to this land which would be acceptable to the Government. This, however, is a moot question as all this area originally belonged to the Federal Government under the administration of the War Dept, consequently the legal title to this land, subject to the rights of the town, is in the United States.[30]

29. Willard, Daniel, President B&O Railroad, to H. T. McDonald, July 9, 1934, Storer College Papers, HFNM Establishment, Vol. II, p.3.

30. HFNM Estalishment, 1934-40, p.21.

To clear this vague title, while maintaining good public relations, the United States Government on April 25, 1953, requested and received a deed from the Common Council of Harpers Ferry, granting the Jefferson Rock Lot, carefully measured in metes and bounds, to the State of West Virginia, which agency was at that time purchasing the land for Harpers Ferry National Monument. This deed, recorded in DB192, p.555, Jefferson County Court House, is attached in Appendix C. In 1954, the Jefferson's Rock Lot passed with the entire package of land from the State to the Federal Government.

Discussion of a graded, engineered trail to Jefferson's Rock began in September 1954. In 1956-57, a trail crew under direction of Ranger Ray Ives put extensive work into improving the entire trail up the Stone Steps, repairing the steps where necessary. Where the grade of the trail was particularly steep, new steps were laid of stone, particularly approaching the Episcopal Church Ruins, and logs were imbedded at intervals along the trail to prevent erosion. Trail cutting and vista clearing somewhat improved the badly obscured view, and interpretive signs were installed on the trail and at Jefferson's Rock. (See photos on following pages.)

In the spring of 1958, under direction of Ranger James Devenport with the advice of Engineer Joe Monkowski, the Jefferson Rock Trail was extended beyond the Rock to follow the steep hillside, descending to the bridge opening to provide continuous passage to the Loudoun Heights

This photograph shows the new highway approach to bridge across the Shenandoah River from Jefferson's Rock. 1956

NHF-718



This photograph was taken in 1957 from the rock and shows trail work in progress on the upper trail leading from the rock to Harpers' Graveyard.

NHF-912



This 1957 photograph shows clearing and trail work surrounding the rock.

NHF-909



Trail across the Shenandoah. On May 29, 1958, installation of wooden handrails on the Stone Steps leading to Jefferson's Rock was ordered.[31]

The historic Rock is still a lodestone which draws thousands of avid sightseers annually to toil up the steep Stone Steps and rocky hillside hoping to be thrilled with the view that Jefferson considered worth a perilous trip by sailing vessel across the Atlantic.

At this writing (1961) the vista from Jefferson's Rock is a disappointment and source of ill-feeling. Trees and shrubs on the hillside below the Rock have overgrown to the point where the far-famed view of Mr. Jefferson's day is no longer visible, the present vista at the height of foliage in the summer being merely a small glimpse through obscuring trees of the top of the Catholic Church steeple and a tantalizing limited sight of the greater Potomac at the Gap. There is a slightly wider view of the Shenandoah below Jefferson's Rock, but the dramatic meeting of the waters and picturesque historic lower town are obscured. (See comparative photographs, 1840 and 1960, on the following pages.)

31. HFNM File D-30.

This Potomac view from Jefferson's Rock, shown in September, 1890, achieved a far-spread fame which still draws visitors to Harpers Ferry. Photo from Appleton Wilson Collection, Maryland Historical Society.

HF-568



During the summer months only this fleeting glimpse can be sighted by visitors climbing the rock. 1960

HF-1639





APPENDIX A

A Brief History of Jefferson's

Notes on Virginia

JEFFERSON'S NOTES ON VIRGINIA

From the Autobiography of Thomas Jefferson, 1821, G. P. Putnam's Sons, the Knickerbocker Press, N.Y., 1941, p.94.

Before I had left America, that is to say, in the year 1781, I had received a letter from M. de Marbois, of the French Legation in Philadelphia, informing me that he had been instructed by his government to obtain such statistical accounts of the different states of our Union as might be useful for their information, and addressing to me a numberof queries relative to the State of Virginia. I had always made a practice, wherever an opportunity occurred, of obtaining any information of our country which might be of any use to me in any station, public or private, to commit it to writing. These memoranda were on loose paper, bundled up without order, and difficult of recurrence when I had occasion for a particular one. I thought this a good occasion to embody their substance, which I did in the order of M. Marbois' queries, so as to answer his wish, and to arrange them for my own use. Some friends, to whom they occasionally communicated, wished for copies, but their volume rendering this too laborious by hand, I proposed to get a few printed for their gratification. I was asked such a price, however, as exceeded the importance of the object. On my arrival at Paris, I found it could be done for a fourth of what I was asked here. I therefore corrected and enlarged them, and had two hundred printed under the title "Notes on Virginia". I gave a very few copies to some particular persons in Europe, and sent the rest to my friends in America. An European copy, by the death of its owner, got into the hands of a bookseller, who engaged its translation, and when ready for the press, communicated his intentions and manuscript to me, suggesting that I correct it without asking any other permission for the publication. I have never seen so wretched an attempt at translation, interverted, abridged, mutilated, and often reversing the sense of the original. I found it a blotch of errors from beginning to end. I corrected some of the most material, and in that form it was printed in French. A London bookseller, seeing the translation, requested me to permit him to print the English original. I thought it best to do so, to let the world see that it was not really so bad as the French translation had made it appear. And this is the true story of that publication.

HFNM Microfilm Reel 53, p.6006.

Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, Ford Edition, IV, 46, May, 1785.

I had two hundred copies printed, but do not put them out of my own hands, except two or three copies here and two which I shall send to America, to yourself and Colonel Monroe.... I beg you to peruse it

carefully, because I ask your advice on it, and ask nobody's else. I wish to put it in the hands of the young men at the College /William and Mary/ as well on account of the political as the physical parts. But there are sentiments on some subjects which I apprehend might be displeasing to the country, perhaps to the Assembly or to some who lead it. I do not wish to be exposed to their censure nor do I know how far their influence, if exerted, might effect a misapplication of law to such a publication were it made. Communicate it then in confidence to those whose judgements and information you would pay respect to, and if you think it will give no offense, I will send a copy to each of the students of William and Mary College, and some others to my friends and to your disposal; otherwise I shall send over only a very few copies to particular friends in confidence and burn the rest. Answer me soon and without reserve. Do not view me as an author attached to what he has written, I am neither. They were at first intended only for Marbois. When I had enlarged them, I thought at first of giving copies to three or four friend. I have since supposed they might set our young students into a useful train of thought, and in no event do I propose to admit them to go to the public at large....

HFNM Microfilm Reel 53, p.6008.

Thomas Jefferson to James Monroe, Ford Edition, Notes on Virginia, p. 1785, IV, 53, 1347.

I send you a copy of the Notes on Virginia.... I have taken measures to prevent its publication. My reason is that I fear the terms in which I speak of slavery and of our /State/ Constitution may produce an invitation which will revolt the minds of our countrymen against reformation in these two articles, and thus do more harm than good....

HFNM Microfilm Reel 53, p.6009.

QUERIES OF M. de MARBOIS CONCERNING VIRGINIA

(Before November 30, 1780)

Articles of which you are requested to give some details:

1. The Charters of your State.

2. The present Constitution.

3. An exact description of its limits and boundaries.

4. The Memoirs published in its name, in the time of its being a Colony and the pamphlets relating to its interior or exterior affairs present or ancient.

5. The History of the State.

6. A notice of the Counties Cities Townships Villages Rivers Rivulets and how far they are navigable. Cascades Caverns Mountains Productions Trees Plants Fruits and other natural Riches.

7. The number of its Inhabitants.

8. The different Religions received in that State.

9. The Colleges and public establishments. The Roads Buildings etc.

10. The Administration of Justice and a description of the Laws.

11. The particular Customs and manners that may happen to be received in that State.

12. The present state of Manufactures Commerce interior and exterior Trade.

13. A notice of the best Sea Ports of the State and how big are the vessels they can receive.

14. A note of the commercial productions particular to that State and of those objects which the Inhabitants are obliged to get from Europe and from other parts of the world.

15. The weight measures and the currency of the hard money. Some details relating to the exchange with Europe.

16. The public income and expences.

17. The measures taken with regard of the Estates and Possessions of the Rebels commonly called Tories.

18. The condition of the Regular Troops and the Militia and their pay.

19. The marine and navigation.

20. A notice of the Mines and other subterranean riches.

21. Some samples of these Mines and of the extraordinary Stones. In short a notice of all that can increase the progress of human Knowledge.

22. A description of the Indians established in the State before the European settlements and of those who are still remaining. An indication of the Indian Monument discovered in that State.

From the Papers of Thomas Jefferson, Vol. IV, Julian Boyd, Editor, Lyman H. Butterfield and Mina R. Bryan, Assoc. Eds., Princeton (N.J.) University Press, 1951, HFNM Microfilm Reel 54.

These Queries were composed in 1780 by M. de Marbois, Secretary to the French Minister La Luzerne. Marbois had been "instructed by his government to obtain such statistical accounts of the different states of our Union as might be useful for their information."[1] The list of queries was presented to Thomas Jefferson, then Governor of Virginia, by the hand of Joseph Jones, Member of Congress and Delegate to the Assembly in Richmond, October, 1780.[2] At the same time he asked Jones to furnish answers for Virginia, Marbois had requested John Sullivan to likewise for New Hampshire. Sullivan's answers are in a letter to

1. Autobiography of Thomas Jefferson, Ford Edition, Vol. I, p.85, LC.

2. Jones to Madison, Oct. 1780, Letters of Joseph Jones, Washington, 1889, p.40, LC.

Marbois dated Philadelphia Dec. 10, 1780.[3] John Witherspoon, requested to furnish answers for New Jersey, prepared a partial list of answers published in his Works.[4] When Joseph Jones returned to Congress at the end of Jan. 1781, he told M. de Marbois that the Queries for Virginia had been turned over to Mr. Jefferson; Marbois wrote Jefferson on Feb. 5th,[5] and Mr. Jefferson replied on March 4.[6] The compiled notes of the several contributors were edited and delivered Dec. 20th, 1783, as "The Report of Mr. Jefferson Mr. Gerry Mr Williamson on the letters from the U. S. Ministers at Paris."[7]

Thomas Jefferson to M. De Marbois
Richmond, March 4, 1781
Papers of Thomas Jefferson, V.V.

Sir:

I have been honored with your letter of Feb. 5. Mr. Jones did put into my hands a paper containing sundry enquiries into the present state of Virginia, which he informed me was from yourself, some of which I meant to do myself the honor of answering. Hitherto it has been in my power to collect a few materials only, which my present occupations disable me from compleating. I mean however, shortly, to be in a condition which will leave me quite at leisure to take them up, when it whall certainly be one of my first undertakings to give you as full information as I shall be able to do on such of the subjects as are within the sphere of my acquaintance. On some of them however I trust Mr. Jones will engage abler hands, those in particular which relate to the commerce of the

3. Sullivan Papers, N.H. Historical Society Collections, XV, p.229-39.

4. Jones, Joseph, Works, Phila., 2nd ed., 1802, IV, 403-412.

5. Letter missing.

6. See letter and note attached.

7. Above information from research in LC by Park Historian A. Mongin.

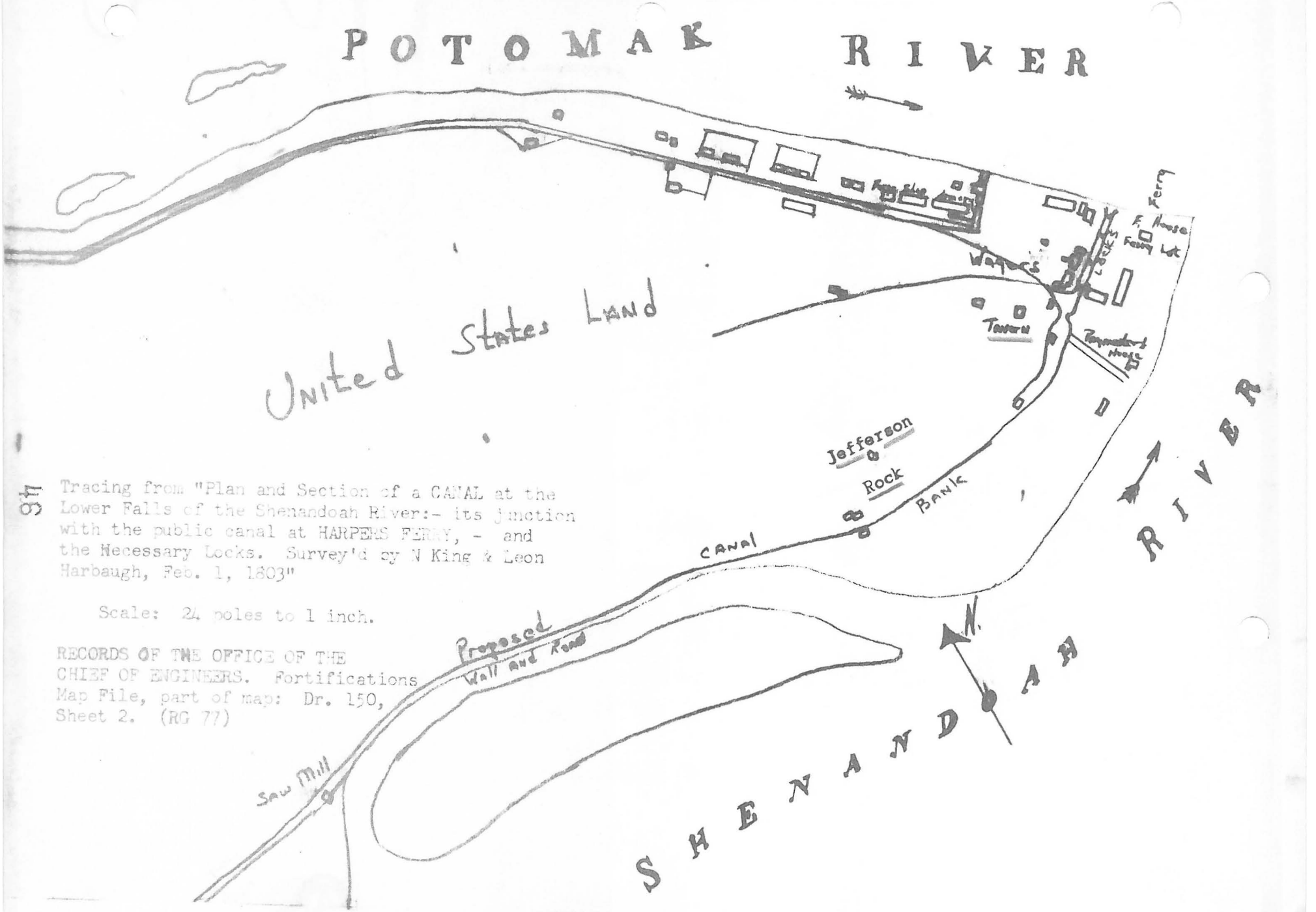
state, a subject with which I am totally unacquainted, and which is probably the most important in your plan.

I have the honor to be with sentiments of the highest esteem & respect Sir your most obedient & most humble servant,

Th Jefferson

Letter inscribed by Marbois,

"M Jefferson Presidt Virg relativt a une Serie de questions qu. je lui addressai et qui donnerent occasion a son livre Notes on Virginia. Monsr de Marbois Secretary to the embassy of his most Xn majty at Philadelphia."



9H

Tracing from "Plan and Section of a CANAL at the Lower Falls of the Shenandoah River:- its junction with the public canal at HARPERS FERRY, - and the Necessary Locks. Survey'd by N King & Leon Harbaugh, Feb. 1, 1803"

Scale: 24 poles to 1 inch.

RECORDS OF THE OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF ENGINEERS. Fortifications Map File, part of map: Dr. 150, Sheet 2. (RG 77)

1783.
1 10. on settlement with D^r. Walker was £ 11-5-3½ in his D^r
for which gave bond.
gave m^rs. Nicholas my [illegible] at Sam old order
of James Marks: for £ 20 still allowed from spring 1773.
11 Attended Jefferson. 12 bottles.
measured horses
Assaragoa 6/. 3/8 I. high
Odin 4/-11½.
the grey 4/-9 I.
13. rec^d of miss L. Lewis to get a Doll 5/6
p^d for the hire of Giovannini 6/ -
14. p^d Stephen Hughes for pitch 26/
15. p^d J^o Wilkinson for Peyton & gave him note for balance £ 25-8-5
16. left Monticello for Congress.
p^d for oats at Fretwell's 5/3
17. p^d at Hayes's 16/4
18. gave Early at the cave 6/
19. gave serv^t at mr Jones's 3/ — p^d for oats 3/6
20. p^d at Rob Moore's 12/ — at Savage's in Woodstock 8/9
24. gave in charity 3/ — p^d M^cguire's Winchester 3/4
25. p^d at Harper's ferry 32/ — silversmith 2/
——— " ——— " ——— " ———
Maryland & Pennsylvania currency.
p^d at Yesterday's 3/6
26. p^d Morris's (Catawba King) Frederick town 41/7 — breakfast 1/4
p^d at Downey town 5/
27 p^d at Forsythe's (Horse) M^cAllister's Lititz 29/
p^d for oats & mend^g axle 7/6 — charity 2/3 — forge C^o [illegible]
28. p^d at Jeffery's Susquehanna. 25/8. — Rykhard's (Bear) Lancaster 9/2
barber 1/8 — pins C^o 2/8 — shoeing horse 1/10 — oats at Chris^t: 2/8
29. p^d at Valentine's (Ship) 36/8 — charity 7/6 — forge Schuylkill 17^d.
p^d at Thompson's (2^d Queen) Philadelphia 25/ barber 20^d.
30. p^d for file 9^d. — book 17/6 — Grant for ink pot 12/3 Pritchard books
31. coach hire 2/ — ink stand C^o £ 4. — Pritchard books rec^d
p^d windy instrum^t maker 30/1 — p^d for trifles 3/6.
Nov 1. p^d Pritchard 7/6 — Grant 5/ — Barham apothecary 3/6
p^d Bell for books £ 3-1-3 — p^d for Thermometer 52/6 — Peter 3/9
p^d for shoes & stocking for boys. 22/6.
2. p^d for ship 17/9 — gave Jame for passage in stage 17/6
borrowed of Mr. Madison 90 Dollars.

46a

APPENDIX B

Letters re Superintendent Clowe,

Harpers Ferry Armory

Ordnance Office
Washington, Oct. 5, 1857.

Hon: John B. Floyd

Secretary of War.

Sir:

I would respectfully beg leave to call your attention to certain matters connected with the Harper's Ferry Armory and alluded to in my Inspection report of that Armory, of the 2d instant; and also explained by the accompanying letter from T. K. Laley with two affidavits attached.

In the month of August last, the Superintendent dismissed, from employment at the Armory, Foreman T. K. Laley, and in compliance with Ordnance Regulations, made reports to this Office as to the causes of discharge, which Reports, marked A. & B. are herewith enclosed. After his discharge Mr. Laley forwarded to this Office three charges against the Superintendent, Mr. H. W. Clowe, which I deferred laying before you until I could make enquiries and form an opinion with regard to some of the allegations; which I did during my late inspection of that Armory.

It appears that the Superindentent in his second letter (B.) to this Office, in assigning his reserved reason for the discharge of Foreman Laley, failed to communicate the fact that the latter had been greatly irritated by insulting language in presence of the Superintendent which, although, it did not justify the threatened violence of Laley, should have been communicated when his offence was made known to this Office, more particularly as for some reasons, the Superintendent communicated, to two individuals, conflicting accounts of the impressions made on his mind by the conduct and bearing of Mr. Laley, on the occasion referred to, as will appear by the affidavits accompanying his letter, which is also herewith enclosed, marked C. One of the affirmants is a first class workman at the Armory - the other an Agent of the Post Office Department - both respectable men. The charge of having interfered in the late Congressional election, by the exercise of his Official influence, I believe, can be sustained against Mr. Clowe. The instance mentioned in Laley's letter was confirmed to me by Tacey, the Contractor, who was ordered by the Superintendent to discharge a man in his, Tacey's service, who had voted for Mr. Wm. Lucas, the opposing Democratic Candidate: I believe many such instances of interference have occurred.

For such alleged interference, on the part of an Armory official, a few years since, on the complaint of the Hon. Mr. Faulkner, Acting Master Armorer Burton was, in effect, dismissed from the Harpers Ferry Armory. He was an excellent Officer, and his value was speedily discovered by Agents of the British Government. He now occupies a confidential and important situation, at a high salary, in the Government Armory at Enfield. The charge of improper purchase of Coal, I do not think can be sustained. With regard to losses of Components by bad workmanship, some of which had been paid for, I have to remark, that, on the introduction of a new model arm, losses of the kind are to be expected; some of them the result of want of skill in workmen, which are or should be, charged to them - others caused by errors in Tools and bad materials which become the loss of the Armory - Losses from these causes have occurred to an extent that indicates great want of watchfulness over the operations of the shops which rigid inspections would have obviated, and these it is the duty of the Superintendent to have ever enforced. To a large portion of Mr. Laley's letter I think it unnecessary to invite your attention; but I cannot conclude this report without expressing the opinion that the political partizanship of of Mr. Clowe, which I think has been already proven unfits him for the discharge of the duties of superintendent, usefully to the Government, by inducing the persecution of skilful workmen who may be inimical to his favored candidate; and by the patronage of Bunglers who support him by their votes. In the discharge of his duty the Superintendent ought to be free from all political bias; for the skilful artizan is more apt to be an independent and jealous voter than the Botcher, who is ready to keep peace at the sacrifice of truth and independence.

With much Respect
Your Obt. Servt.
H. K. Craig

HFNM Microfilm Reel 26, Vol. 6, pp.587-590.

(6.)

1.

Harpers Ferry
August 13th 1857

To
Col. S. K. Craig
Chief of Ordnance
Washington. DC

Sir.

I beg permission to make this communication to you, with the purpose and view of seeking redress for grievances to myself, and to enlighten the Department under your control, as to the true position of affairs at the Armory, at this place.

I have been summarily dismissed from service at the Armory, as the Chief Foreman of the Rifle Factory, by the Civil Superintendent of the Armory Mr. Henry W. Howe, without any explanation or given reason, and as I assert without any sufficient one. And I do here affirm that I am entirely unconscious of having done anything officially or personally, which is deserving of punishment or censure; hence innocent as I know myself to be in my conduct, either of my social or official duties, with a sound retrospect of my past life and with becoming resolution to maintain my reputation for my Children, I do herein claim protection from the Superior Officers of that branch of the public service, I have so long served, and ask that a tender regard for Character be by them entertained in this respect and justice be done, in the matter I shall in this communication bring to their notice.

The strong feelings excited throughout this community by my unreasonable dismissal from the employment of the United States at the Armory, a true Mechanic and as such, by no person supposed to come within the casting of political Offences, for good or evil comes to my great gratification, the Estimation in which I am held by my fellow Citizens, and at the same time may show to the Government, the disposition of the people to correct the dangerous developments being now made, in the administration of the affairs of the great National Establishment at this place, destructive to the best interests of the people immediately and directly or inferentially and Collaterally connected

with it, in a business point of view. Rarely have the people united so generally, and with so strong manifestations of sympathy as in my behalf; rarely has any community had such an so many causes for deploring the condition of society and the unhappy state of affairs subsisting among them, and so much reason to censure their government for producing it, by maintaining in its midst a high officer of its own selection and appointment who so worthily prostitutes his position, replete with power and authority as it is, to such selfish ends and purposes, that this state of things is unavoidable.

In approaching this great character in his official aspect, I feel like the traveler who draws near to some apparently stupendous curiosity of Nature, whose towering loftiness makes him giddy, and whose amplitude bewilders. The world fain conceive the image to be as towering and splendid as he beheld it. But when he begins the description, warmed as he may be by the glowing image stamped on his mind, yet at last he discovers his senses to have been imposed upon by a delusion, he leaves the picture in despair, conscious that many a feature is wanting that nobly supported the original and many an arch that contributed to its grandeur.

However mutilated soever may appear the character I am contemplating, when its several parts are detached from the fabric in which they are united in so much incongruity, still I shall be conscious of executing a just task, should I be successful in exhibiting each of them in its own proper dimensions.

Mr C. W. Lyne was cast by nature in a mould which was never used but in this single instance and he is not to be described otherwise than by concentrating in his character all those aptitudes of descriptive imagery peculiar to a Hogarth, for in one word, he is the base ideal of a perpetual Mule, the personification of blessed ignorance and impudence. In this description of the representative of the United States, enjoying half the pay and emoluments of a Cabinet Officer of the Government, if there be no gleam, ornament or point, I know there is some point and truth. I forbear however this train of thought, and proceed at once to the object of my communication - And first, Although I admit that my motive derives much of its impulse

from wounded pride and a desire for personal redress, I must also claim be actuated by and moved to this prosecution from a sense of shame a disgust at seeing the Government imposed upon by this pretender to a honors & the disgrace he has brought upon mechanics in their claim participate in the management of Official Matters, by the prodigy failure he has wrought out in this case.

In pursuance therefore of my intention, I do hereby charge the the said Henry W. Clowe is disqualified for the Office of Superintend of the Harpers Ferry Armory, for the following reasons, and they are such, as if true, to justify his dismissal by the President of the U States, and I challenge and court an investigation into their truth or falsehood.

1st. That Mr. Clowe, having an Education and from the nature of his associations in life, from boyhood up to January 1853, very little comm. with the amenities and courtesies respectively due from gentlemen, in the conventional relations of Society, was then and now is, from this cause utterly unfitted to the task of regulating the grave and varied interests of a great National Establishment, either to the improvement of the interests of the Government or those of its employees. I allege that his deportment is variously undignified, his conversation low and insipid, indecorous and ignorance and want of information on all subjects, startling to strangers, and humiliating to his friends and official associates and his language so vulgarly profane as to be exceedingly offensive to the ears of the refined or Christian gentlemen.

2nd. That with a thorough knowledge in his heart of his own deficiencies in respect to his want of capacity to discharge personally his Offices duties, he boldly accepted the Office he now holds, with the mental reservation and expectation, of being able to use and dispose, for his own benefit, the knowledge and business experience of his associates in subordinate positions at the Armory, to conduct the business of the Government thereat both practically, Officially and financially. This I allege he has done, to an extent unworthy of a gentleman has a proper appreciation of his high position, thereby imposing himself upon the Government as an Officer "Capable & Efficient" when in fact he is incapable and inefficient.

3d. I charge that he procured the appointment of Civil Superintendent in January 1855 under false pretenses, either by the suggestion of a falsehood or by the suppression of the truth. A regularly initiated member of the American or K. N. Council at Harpers ferry, during the months of 1854-5, just prior to the date of his appointment, he was at the time thereof, a member of said Council, notwithstanding all which he did solemnly, as I understand, swear and affirm to the Executive of the U.S. (who was conducting an Administration utterly at war and most bitterly opposed to said party and its members, refusing them any participation in the public Offices of the County with scorn and turning them out of such, when brought to the knowledge of the Executive) or to such person as in this case represented the Executive, that "he was not a Know Nothing" or words to that effect, while he was truly such, as he represented himself not to be, intending thereby to deceive the appointing power into the belief that he never had been a member of such order, and he succeeded with the aid of friends who were in like manner deceived. It is true that after his appointment he was expelled the Order by a vote of the Council at this place. Therefore, in this, I allege, he was guilty of Conduct unbecoming an Officer and gentleman.

To show further the desperate character of the means adopted by him to cover up this fraud upon the Democratic Party and social offence it appears that the place on the register of names of members of the Order, on reference now to the same and by a like reference even after he received his appointment, where his name originally stood, has been erased, and the name of Henry W. Kent interpolated. No such person is known in all this County. The Secretary of the Council it is believed, assented to this mutilation of the record for corrupt purposes, at the instigation of Mr Clone or his friends, and the evidence of this belief and corroboration therefor, is to be found in the fact that the said Secretary has at all times since received remarkable favors & advancement in the Armory. And further to establish this corrupt intrigue the Conduct of the Affairs, in its personel, shows that he bestowed favors with an unsparing hand and many unmerited ones, upon all those who continued from the Council or Order, and exhibited the most bitter hatreds of all such as did not withdraw

– looking upon them as enemies cognizant of his crimes and who could at any time make it known to the merited indignation of his fellow Citizens – hence his constant efforts to crush them and drive them from the place, so that the memory of his treachery and disgrace might be lost.

4th. Mr Close is justly chargeable with the high Offence of introducing politics into the business of the Armory, whereby wounds have been and are still being bestowed on political partisans and punishment of men engaged in the Armory conflicts for political independence. Growing out of this evil, the most bitter hostility has been engendered among the Workmen, and the whole face of society at this place poisoned and inflamed by the interested tale bearers and slanderers, who have the willing Ear of the Superintendent, altogether for evil. The result of all which is, that Mr Close has quarrelled with very many Officers of the Armory, and this for the most trivial cause, arising from his peculiar suspicions and jealous temperament and these peculiarities have become so notorious as to afford food for nothing but merriment to all persons connected with the Armory.

5th. The Commercial, productive and agricultural business of the village of Harpers Ferry and its vicinity is most seriously compromised, and its permanency and stability in all aspects endangered, and the value of property uncertain and fluctuating, by a want of Confidence growing up among business Men, as to the Estates of all persons connected with the Armory, as one knowing at what inauspicious time, a friend, neighbor or debtor may not without sufficient, or any cause at all be dismissed from his employment at the Armory, disarranging at all points, judicious plans laid out on the basis of Labor and its reward, by one or the other.

6th. The true and judiciously ascertained interests of the Government, commercially considered are not contemplated in any project for rewarding a political friend or punishing a political enemy. Hence appointments to office and for work are made which are not fit to be made. Politics and its influences control the destinies of the Armory, whereas only is it that Mr Close should procure supplies of Coal for the Armory from a man residing in Charlestown, eight miles distant, out of the way of the Coal region or the facilities of transportation.

I do not know the terms of such contract if there be one at all, but I have heard there was. It looks however of having been in pursuance of some agreement to the effect & in consideration of political favors granted to Mr Close

7th I charge Mr Close, the Superintendent with having in terms & in fact brought the patronage of his office in conflict with the freedom of the elective franchise. While an employee of the Government for slating the roofs of certain houses now in progress of construction at the Armory was engaged at his work, for which he is paid by the piece, finding his own assistants or helpers, Mr Close observing a particular person employed as a laborer, in carrying slate to the roof, protested in vulgar and unmanly terms to the Contractor against his employment, stating at the time his objections to him, which were that he was opposed to Mr Faulkner and voted against him, and he required the Contractor to discharge him at once - On the Contractor remonstrating against the injustice of such proceeding, and the impoverished condition of the man depending for a livelihood for himself and family on his own precarious labor, and the industry of his family in culling berries from the fields for their support, replied with a vulgar oath that he should then go to "Mr Lucas" (meaning Mr Faulkner's opponent in the late Congressional Election in this District) who might pay him for picking berries.

I might recite many instances of similar purport, did I deem it necessary, and such as can be proven at any time: but it is as notorious as the sun at Noon, that Mr Close has used the whole power and patronage of his office to cajole and intimidate the votes of the Armorers and others, for the benefit & support of his Candidate Mr Faulkner. He has done this not only in direct opposition to the principle of our institutions, but to the discredit of those sincere advocates of the Civil System whose chief apprehension and fear, for the change they sought arose from this very anticipation.

8th I charge that the Foreman of the forged work at the Armory factory, with the knowledge of the Superintendent passed as good about 1600 Lock plates, forged by John McClellan Jr, without inspection and put the same on the pay roll of the Armory and they were so paid

for: The said work having been subsequently inspected was condemned for want of proper dimensions & rejected, to be put with scrap iron. this being in violation of regulations and an attempt to impose upon the Government & to screen a favorite foreman from just condemnation.

9th I charge, that to the injury of the Government interests, that instead of a cordial and friendly co-operation between the Capt & M. Armorer, there exists a daily controversy between these two Chief Officers of the Armory, as to the working operations and the working men of the Armory, Each detracting where possible from the reputation of the other and imposing upon Each other blame and censure, where any fault is committed in any respect.

The orders of the M. Armorer, with regard to the details of the business have been suspended by the Capt from no cause other than personal ones, and the declaration made that the Foreman should "mustify" the Master Armorer, who had ordered it — this even in a case where certain work was being executed by a man, in pursuance of the M. Armorer's orders, and the work wanted; but the workmen did not please the Capt — Hence while such feelings exist between these Officers the probability is that few arms will be manufactured, or if fabricated, they will be without the quality so essential of interchanging in all their parts. There has always been an antagonistic feeling subsisting between them inclined of harmony; they can best explain the reasons. I do not seek to tender gratuitously my theory of it.

To the above cause may be attributed in a great measure the fact of no arms having yet been fabricated. The apology of the want of tools and machinery is a fallacious one — there being a sufficient number of both with some exceptions to fabricate arms in a moderate way, and if the administrative and executive qualities of the Superintendent were equal to the task of directing and controlling the necessary work and the operatives of the Armory embarrassed by political motives and misinfluenced by such, the Harpers Ferry Armory could soon compete successfully with the Springfield Armory in all respects. Very Respectfully

Yr. Obt. Servt. Wm. G. Lacey

APPENDIX C

Deed for Jefferson's Rock Lot

The Common Council of Harpers Ferry
To: Deed of Correction
State of West Virginia

This deed of correction made this 25th day of April 1953, between "the Common Council of Harpers Ferry" a Municipal Corporation, party of the first part, and the State of West Virginia, by the Conservation Commission of West Virginia, a public corporation, by the Director of Conservation, party of the second part.

Whereas, by a deed dated the 2nd of February, 1953, of record in Deed Book No. 192, at page 175, in the office of the Clerk of the County Court of Jefferson County, West Virginia, the party of the first part conveyed to the party of the second part a certain parcel of real estate therein described as the Second Tract, the description of which is erroneous, and the parties thereto now desire to correct the same,

Now therefore this Deed Witnesseth that the party of the first part doth hereby grant, with special warranty, to and unto the party of the second part that certain parcel of real estate, situate in the corporation of Harpers Ferry, Jefferson County, West Virginia, more particularly described as follows:

"Beginning at a point S 69 degrees 00' E 178.08 Feet and thence S 75 degrees 55' E 62.32 feet from the intersection of the east side of York Street and north side of Shenandoah Street; thence S 83 degrees 45' E 130 feet to a point, thence N 86 degrees 10' W 212 feet to a point on the South side of Cliff st., thence N 84 degrees 00' W 47 feet to a point; thence S 10 degrees 21' W 285 feet to the place of beginning."

Witness the signature of the Common Council of Harpers Ferry, a Municipal Corporation, by Gilbert E. Perry, its Mayor, and its seal duly affixed the day and year first above written. (Corporate Seal)

Attest: Harry C. Dahlin, Recorder

The Common Council of Harpers Ferry a Municipal Corporation

By Gilbert E. Perry, Mayor

Jefferson County Court House, Charles Town, West Virginia, Deed Book 192, p.555.