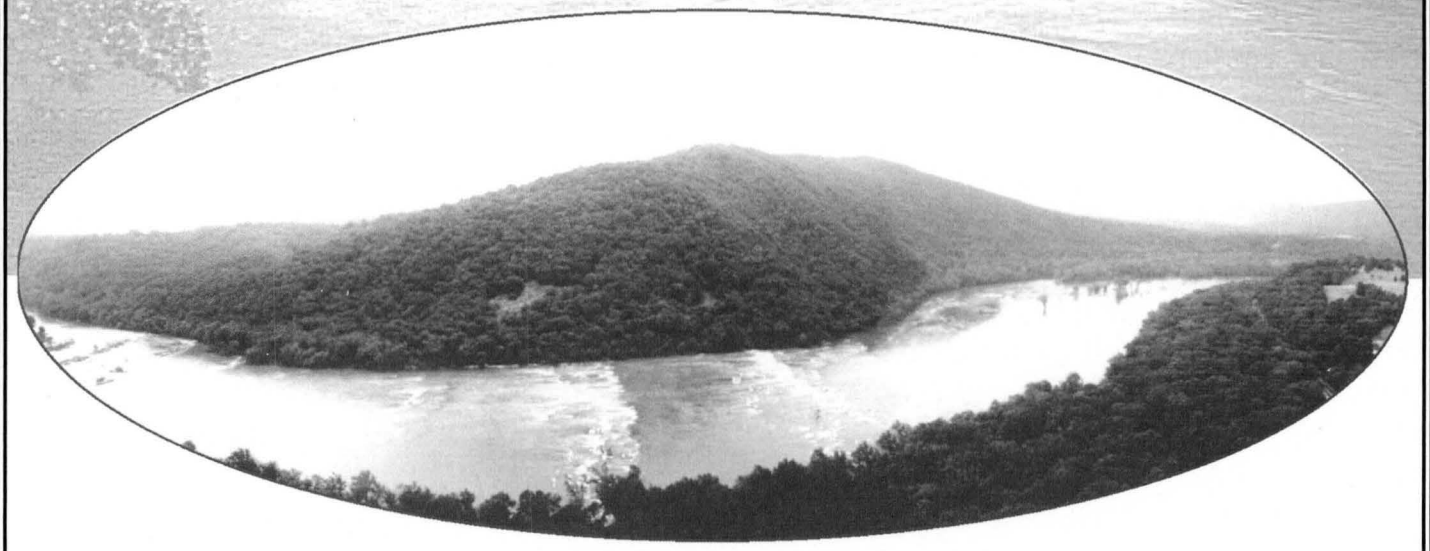
Historic Resource Study

Short Hill Tract

Harpers Ferry National Historical Park



Andrew S. Lee, Archeological Technician

Archeology Program

Harpers Ferry National Historical Park

2003

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Harpers Ferry National Historical Park

Prepared by Andrew S. Lee, Archeological Technician
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Harpers Ferry National Historical Park
Archeology Program
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Preface

The goal of this study is to provide a comprehensive historical overview of the Harpers Ferry National Historical Park's Short Hill tract. When the National Park Service first acquired the Short Hill property in 1981, it was considered significant primarily because federal ownership ensured the preservation of the view from Harpers Ferry. Knowledge of the cultural resources that existed at Short Hill was incomplete and only a basic understanding of their significance existed. Hopefully, this report will contribute to a better understanding of the cultural resources and further the Park's mission to manage and protect them.

Part One of this report consists of seven essays, each covering a different aspect of Short Hill's history. Topics addressed are the Native American past, colonial settlement, George Washington, transportation, industry and agriculture, the Civil War, and the National Park Service acquisition and stewardship. Naturally, there are some points of overlap among the topics, but these themes were selected because they best represent the broad forces, times, and events that shaped the Short Hill landscape. Developments that occurred within the boundaries of the current NPS tract are the primary focus of Part One, but since no history can be understood in a vacuum, there is some attempt to place that history into a broader, regional context.

Part Two presents the chain of title for the Short Hill tract. It follows the ownership of the 370 acres over time, from the early 1800s to its ultimate inclusion as part of Harpers Ferry National Historical Park in the 1980s.

The NPS Short Hill tract is best viewed as the combination of two tracts, each having evolved separately from the other. The larger of the two is herein designated the "Stubblefield Tract" and is made up of 320 acres on the west side of Short Hill. The other is the "Mill Tract" and it encompasses 50 acres along Falls Branch and the northern tip of Short Hill. It is important to note that these names are artificial constructions; they are not found in the historical record.

This history of land ownership presented in Part Two contains the real "nuts and bolts" of this resource study. It contains the names of all owners and known tenants and is supplemented by biographical information gathered from census records, will books, and other sources. It also includes details of the transactions that are found in deeds, land tax records, newspapers, and court orders. The amount of information available on each owner and property varies. The goal of this section is to convey all the details that were found regardless of whether or not they fit neatly into a structured story. Future, more tightly focused research can be conducted to fill in any gaps. Even the smallest bit of information presented here may lead to a more productive avenue of research in the future.

Acknowledgements

No project of this kind can be successfully completed by a single person without the support, assistance, and previous hard work of many others. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the following people: Gary Scott, Chief Historian (National Capital Area); Superintendent Donald W. Campbell (Harpers Ferry National Historical Park); Matt Graves, Chief of Interpretation & Cultural Resource Management, (HFNHP); Mia Parsons, Supervisory Archeologist (HFNHP); Bill Hebb, Natural Resources Manager (HFNHP); Nancy Hatcher, Museum Specialist (HFNHP); and the staff in the file room of the Clerk's Office at the Loudoun County Courthouse, Leesburg Virginia.

I would also like to acknowledge the special contributions of two individuals: Rob Brzostowski, for volunteering his time and skills to produce many of the excellent photographs that appear herein; and John Ravenhorst for the fine job he did formatting the drafts and final version of the report.

Finally, I owe a debt of gratitude to the many local and regional historians whose work I have drawn upon, particularly Eugene M. Scheel, Craig H. Trout, and all the indexers and abstracters who have paved the way for all researchers of Loudoun County history.

Part One: Historical Background

Introduction

The Short Hill portion of Harpers Ferry National Historical Park consists of slightly more than 370 acres in the northwest corner of Loudoun County, Virginia (Figure 1). It is located about two miles downriver from the confluence of the Shenandoah and Potomac Rivers and the town of Harpers Ferry, West Virginia. The tract is mostly made up of the steep and rugged western slope of Short Hill Mountain, but it also includes some bottomland as well as lands straddling the mouth of Falls Branch, a small tributary of the Potomac at the northern tip of the mountain. The Short Hill tract contains the ruins of several historical structures including at least four dwellings, a mill, a millrace and dam, a limekiln, several stone fences, and road traces (Figure 2).

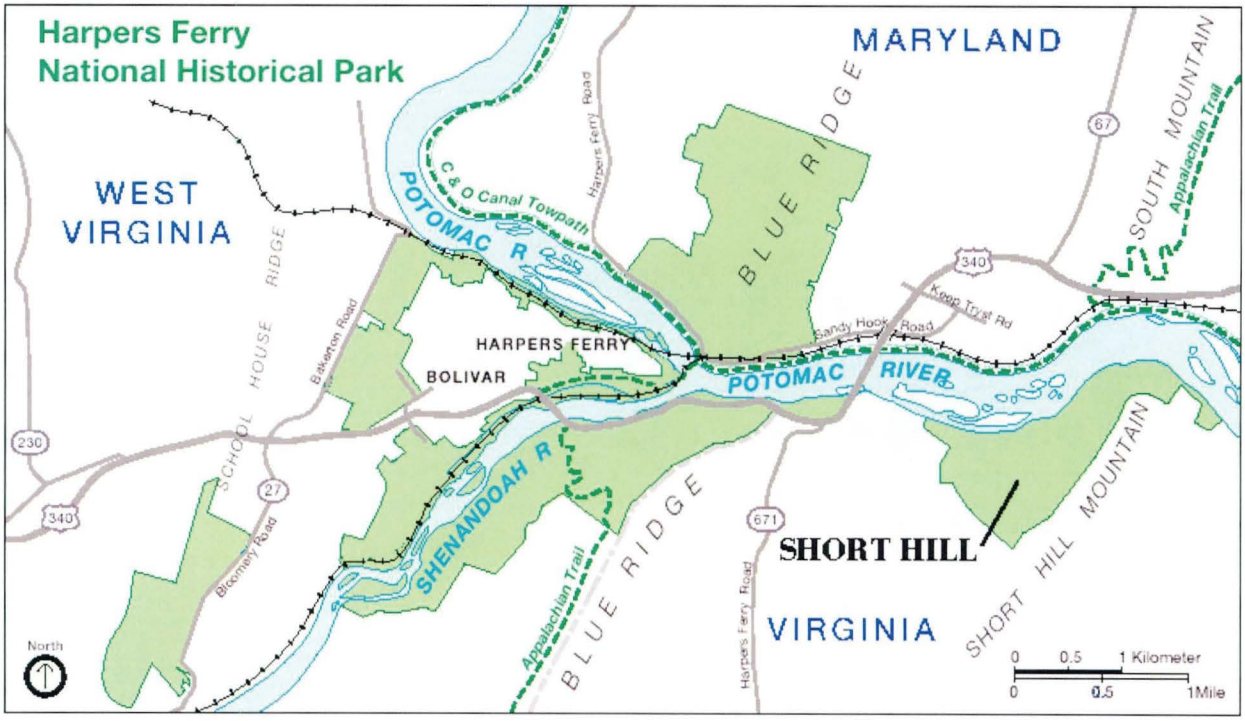


Figure 1. Map of Harpers Ferry National Historical Park showing the Short Hill portion, consisting of slightly more than 370 acres in the northwest corner of Loudoun County, Virginia. (NPS)

The history of these resources has many parallels and connections to the better-known story of Harpers Ferry. In fact, several prominent men from Harpers Ferry speculated in ownership of this land and its resources. Water powered industry was present here also. Likewise, transportation developments such as ferries, turnpike roads, canals, and railroads affected the history of the Short Hill tract much as they did at Harpers Ferry.

There are significant differences, however, that give the Short Hill tract its own unique history. For example, while the town of Harpers Ferry was, in its day, both a regional industrial center and strategic military location, Short Hill was decidedly not. At best, these lands were viewed

by most as valuable for their potential. The timber and water rights were as valuable to its owners and occupants as the land itself.

Acquired by the United States government from The Nature Conservancy in 1981, the tract was added to Harpers Ferry National Historical Park to protect the view from Harpers Ferry made famous by the writings of Thomas Jefferson. The view from Harpers Ferry, Jefferson wrote, was worthy of a journey across the Atlantic. Though Jefferson may have overlooked Short Hill Mountain as he gazed eastward upon the Virginia piedmont, its history is there for all who take the time to discover it.

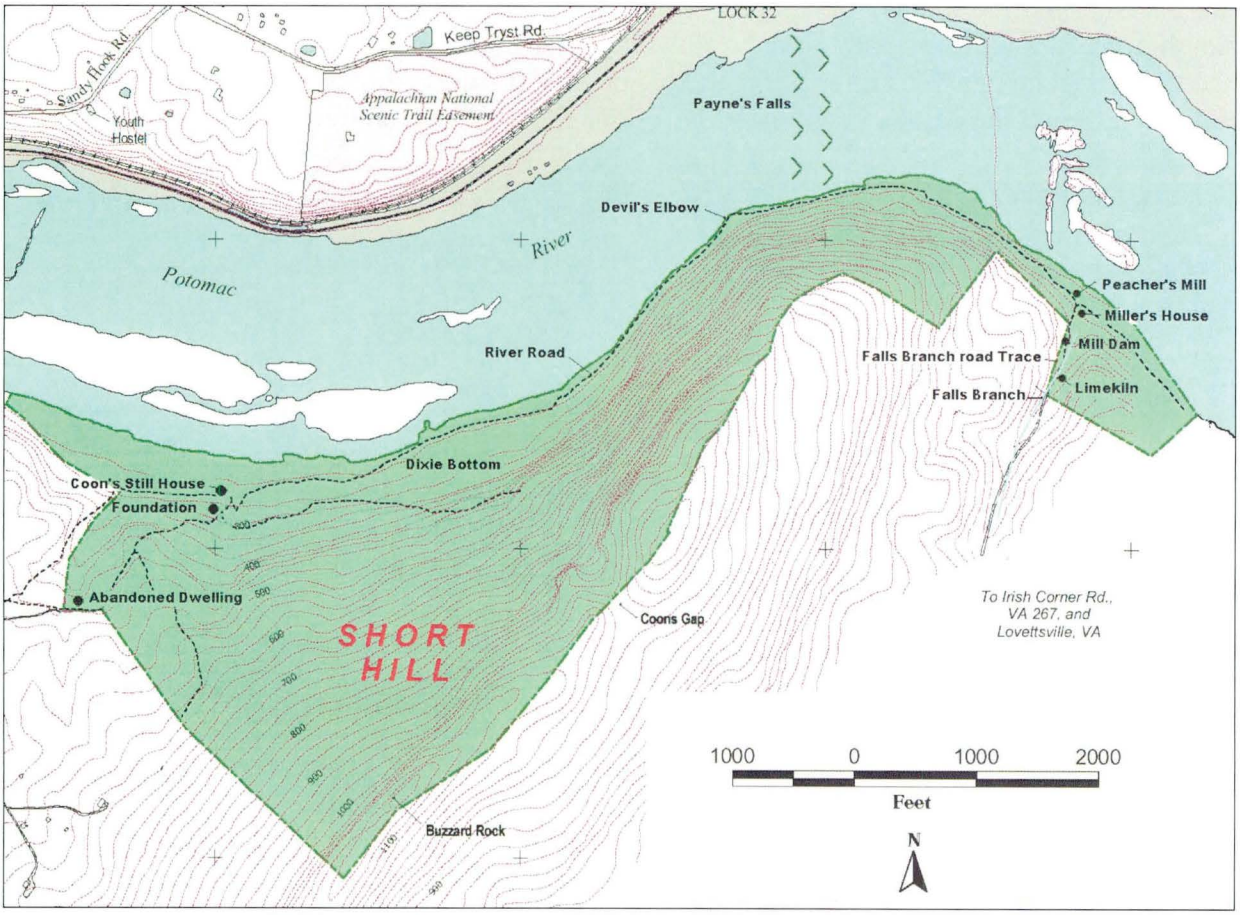


Figure 2. Short Hill tract landmarks. Showing from right to left: Falls Branch and features associated with the Peacher's Mill complex (1825); limekiln (ca.1870); River Road (ca.1832-1936); the northern tip of Short Hill Mountain and the rocky point known as Devil's Elbow; the low land area known generally as Dixie Bottom; and structures associated with the Still House Farm. The series of rapids located near Devil's Elbow was known as Payne's Falls and was also the site of the Everhart brothers' colonial fish dam. Payne's Ferry of 1760 was located near present day Knoxville, Maryland. "Between the Hills," an early name for the valley between Short Hill and the Blue Ridge is to the west. The Town of Lovettsville, Virginia is approximately three miles east of Short Hill Mountain. (NPS graphic by John Ravenhorst)

Short Hill as Native American Territory

When Europeans colonized Virginia in the early 17th century, what is now Loudoun County was on the northern fringes of the Manahoac territory. The Manahoacs, with an estimated population of around 1,500, inhabited the portion of northern Virginia from the mountains to the fall line, and from the Potomac to the North Anna River. Their primary villages were on the falls of the Rappahannock River. They were friends of the Monocans to the south and enemies of the Powhatans to the east and the Iroquois to the north. A century later, when significant numbers of European Americans first entered the areas around Short Hill during the first quarter of the 18th century, what they found was a virtual "no-man's land." There were no resident Native Americans, only occasional groups travelling through in small-sized parties.

What happened to the Manahoacs is not known. It is theorized that competition for resources and inter-group hostilities among Native Americans led to their abandonment of these rich lands. Iroquois raids, contacts with colonists, and disease may have pushed the remaining Manahoacs south to join the Monocans.[1] Archeological evidence in the form of stockaded villages found throughout much of the Middle Atlantic region indicates that by 1500 AD intertribal warfare was widespread. This was particularly true in the upper Potomac and northern Shenandoah Valley. One of the chief sources of friction between the neighboring Native American groups was the fur trade that was quickly developing with the European colonists. By various circumstances, certain groups of Native Americans occupied favorable positions in this trade and came to dominate it.

The earliest group to achieve preeminence and assume control of the region containing Short Hill was the Susquehannocks. Sometime before their meeting with explorer Captain John Smith in 1608, these Iroquoian-related peoples were living in the lower Susquehanna River valley of Pennsylvania. They achieved dominance over a large area that included much of the Potomac. Other Iroquois tribes, seeking to enhance their own economic and political influence, formed a confederacy and waged war on their neighbors, including the Susquehannocks. After the defeat of the Susquehannocks in the mid-17th century, the League of the Iroquois became the dominant force. The result was total Iroquois domination of a vast area, encompassing territory east of the Ohio and north of the Potomac.

As the supply of beaver and other fur-bearing animals dwindled in the Northeast, the Iroquois sought to extend their influence. They renewed hostilities against their southern neighbors and by 1680 the Manahoacs and remnant Susquehannocks were no longer a factor in the region along the Potomac. One of the policies of the League of the Iroquois was the depopulation of large areas with the reversion of the land to hunting territories. Periodically burning the wooded hills and valleys helped sustain areas of grassy meadows that supported white-tailed deer, wild turkey, black bear, and other game. These highly valued hunting territories also supplied the Iroquois with furs and hides to trade to both the English and French. One of the areas that was

[1] Keith Egloff and Deborah Woodward, *First People: The Early Indians of Virginia*, (University Press of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia, 1992), 48.

depopulated was the northern Shenandoah Valley, thus explaining why, after 1700, Europeans entered an empty landscape there.

The final episode in Short Hill's Native American story was concluded in 1722. In 1720 Governor Spotswood of Virginia initiated peace talks with the League of the Iroquois, hoping to end their hostilities with the southern tribes and bring stability to the region (Figure 3). It was also apparent that an alliance with the Iroquois would prove beneficial to the English as they tried to gain an advantage over their other colonial rivals, the French. With these factors in mind, Spotswood arranged the Treaty of Albany. The treaty stated that neither the Iroquois nor their allies were to cross the Potomac River or the Blue Ridge Mountains without the consent of the proper political authorities. Ratified in 1722, the Treaty of Albany greatly enhanced the safety of the Virginia frontier and within a decade the first permanent German and Quaker settlements were established in the area.



Figure 3. Alexander Spotswood, Governor of Virginia. Spotswood negotiated the Treaty of Albany with the League of the Iroquois in 1722, which brought stability to the Virginia frontier. (West Virginia State Archives)

The Everhart Fish Trap and other Native American Vestiges

While there was no resident population of Native Americans in the Short Hill area, early settlers found unmistakable signs of their past habitations. One aspect of Native American occupation that settlers encountered was the numerous fish traps located along the upper Potomac River. The traps were V-shaped piles of boulders stacked to a height of about three to four feet, with the "wings" extending from the shore and the apex of the "V" facing downriver. Fish were swept into the "V" and wound up at the apex where they were easily scooped out with baskets or forced into an enclosed collection point such as a weir.

In 1969, archeologists Carl Strandberg and Ray Tomlinson identified thirty-six such fish traps between Harpers Ferry and Point of Rocks, four of which are very near to Short Hill. In 1999 archeologist Dan Guzy counted fifty-four such fish traps along the shores of Loudoun County.[2] Some of the remains of traps that are seen today were Native American traps that were repaired and built up by colonial settlers. The settlers, finding the practice still an easy way to catch fish, also constructed traps of their own.

One of these fish traps was located at "Payne's Falls," a naturally rocky ledge extending from the tip of Short Hill across the river to Weverton (Figure 4).

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[2] See Carl H. Strandberg and Ray Tomlinson, "Photoarcheological Analysis of Potomac River Fish Traps," in *American Antiquity*, July 1969 and Dan Guzy, "Fish Weirs in the Upper Potomac River," in *Maryland Archeology*, 35, No. 1, March 1999.

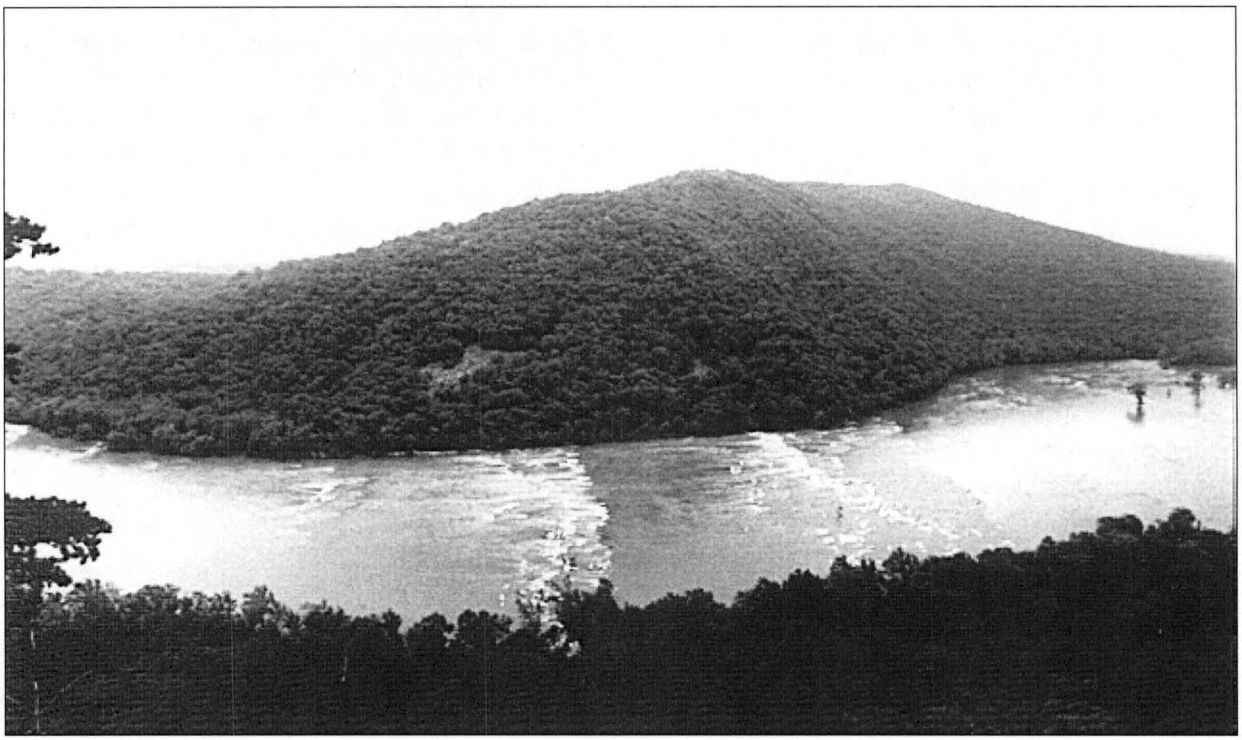


Figure 4. Payne's Falls, as seen from South Mountain. Native Americans and early European-American settlers built fish traps on the rocky ledges of the river. (Photo by Rob Brzostowski)

The rock outcropping there supported a fish trap operated by the brothers Jacob, Joseph, and John Everhart during the early 1800s. When the Everharts sold ten acres of their Short Hill land to the miller John Peacher, they granted "*the privelege of erecting a Mill or any other kind of Machinary*" Peacher thought proper, but they stipulated that his mill was "*not to interfere with said Everharts fish dam.*"[3] Strandberg and Tomlinson's analysis, which involves studying the shape of the trap's wings, suggests that the Everhart brothers' fish trap had prehistoric origins.

Colonial sentiments concerning these fish dams were mixed. While the Everharts clearly valued the fish traps, to others they were seen as obstacles. The openings in the dams were not wide enough to accommodate flatboats on their way down the river. In June 1768, the Maryland colonial authorities declared "*all ffish Dams and other Devises for catching of ffish already made or hereafter to be made in the River Patowmack...are hereby deemed and declared Nusances and may be by any Person or Persons pulled down prostrated and abated.*"[4]

Many of the Potomac fish dams were still present in 1789 when George Washington's Patowmack Company began navigational improvements on the river. Washington viewed the fish dams as a hindrance and noted in his diary: "*The Fish pots, of which there are many in the*

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[3] Loudoun County Deed Book (LC DB) 3W:230, dated March 20, 1824.

[4] Eugene Scheel, *Loudoun Discovered: Communities, Corners & Crossroads*. Vol. 5: *Waterford, The German Settlement, and Between the Hills*. (The Friends of the Thomas Balch Library, Inc., Leesburg, Virginia, 2002), 5.

River, serve to clog the Navigation, and to render the passage more difficult upon the whole."[5] He ordered work crews to remove as many from the river as possible. George Pointer, foreman of the company's wrecking crew, oversaw the removal of forty-four of the dams. Pointer remarked that the settlers who opposed the destruction appeared dangerous, and that he did the job *"at the Risk of losing my life by the inhabitants."*[6] The fish dams are remarkably resistant to flood damage and during periods of low water are easy to see. Though the Everharts' fish dam was condemned in 1847 to make way for the Weverton dam, others continued to be used until 1924, the year their use was outlawed by the Maryland legislature.[7]

In addition to the Potomac River fish traps, landowners on Short Hill have found other evidence of the Native American past. On a property adjacent to the National Park known as the "Old Distillery House," Mr. William Painter reported there was a ledge of hard rock around which he had recovered numerous *"arrowheads and uncounted stone chips."* While some of the projectile points were said to be perfect specimens, many others were half made or had other imperfections.[8] Painter's description suggests the site functioned as a Native American quarry and stone tool manufacturing site.

According to the late Charles Painter (William Painter's father), there was a certain place on the same property that he believed to be a Native American burying ground. The site is distinguished by piles of stone all lying contiguous to each other, each about the length and width of a grave.[9] Though there is potential for the presence of prehistoric cultural resources within the boundaries of the Short Hill portion of Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, until a comprehensive archeological survey is undertaken, the full extent and nature of those resources will remain unknown.

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[5] John C. Fitzpatrick, *The Diaries of George Washington, 1748 – 1799*, (Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, Massachusetts, 1925), 403.

[6] Scheel, *Loudoun Discovered*, 5.

[7] *Farmer's Advocate*, January 24, 1925, p1c2.

[8] Yetive Rockefeller Weatherly, *Lovettsville: The German Settlement.* (The Lovettsville Bicentennial Committee. Lovettsville, Virginia, 1976), 4.

[9] Weatherly, *Lovettsville: The German Settlement*, 5.

Early Exploration, Settlement, and Land Ownership

The land comprising the Short Hill portion of Harpers Ferry National Historical Park was long ago part of an immense colonial land grant of about 6 million acres. In 1661, the King of England, Charles II, issued the grant to seven of his loyal noblemen. All the territory lying between the Rappahannock and Potomac Rivers to their still unknown headwaters was included in this grant (Figure 5). Known as the "Northern Neck Proprietary," the grant encompassed the land now covered by Northumberland, Lancaster, Westmoreland, Richmond, Stafford, King George, Prince William, Fairfax, Loudoun, Fauquier, Rappahannock, Culpeper, Madison, Clarke, Warren, Page, Shenandoah, and Frederick Counties in Virginia and Hardy, Hampshire, Morgan, Berkeley, and Jefferson Counties in West Virginia. Though the King's patent issued land rights to the noblemen, it was an unexplored and unsettled territory.

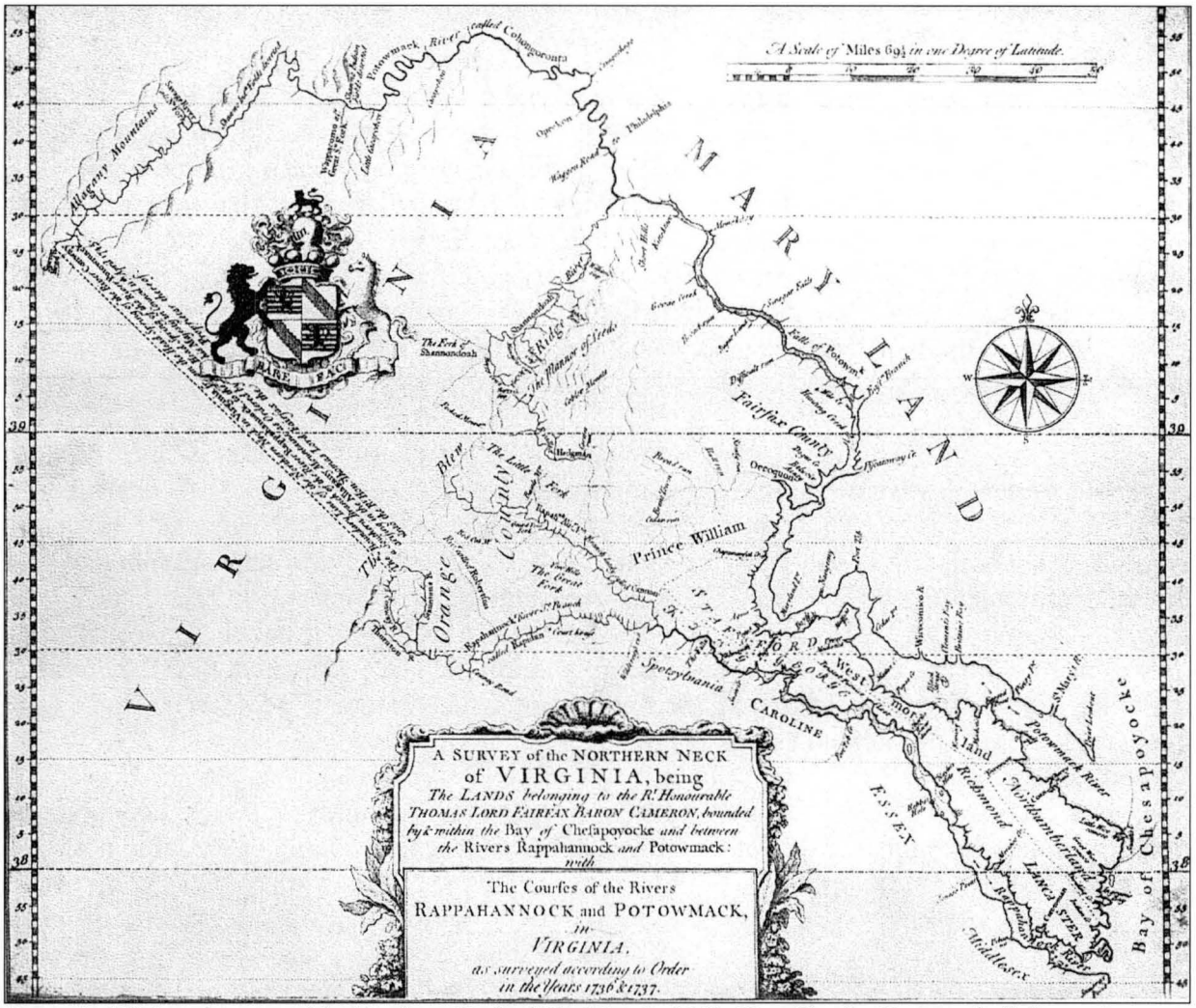


Figure 5. 1736 survey map of the Northern Neck of Virginia. In 1661, King Charles II granted all the territory between the Rappahannock and Potomac Rivers to their headwaters to seven of his loyal noblemen. (Library of Congress)

European exploration of the area around Short Hill began shortly after 1700. By 1707 the Swiss prospector, Louis Michel established a small outpost on the "*forks of the Potomac*" in the vicinity of present day Harpers Ferry, scouting land and exploring its mineral resources. Michel produced a crude yet unmistakable map of the Potomac-Shenandoah area, venturing along the Shenandoah possibly as far south as present day Edinburg, Virginia.[10] Everywhere he went, Michel inquired about the most suitable locations where Swiss emigrants might establish a colony. Though nothing ever came of this colonizing attempt, Michel's reports about the abundant and largely empty lands did not go wholly unnoticed and other permanent settlers soon followed.

Beginning in the mid-1720s, after the Treaty of Albany had ensured the safety of the frontier, the first great land boom on northern Virginia's piedmont occurred. A large number of German, Quaker, and Scotch-Irish settlers flowed into the area in search of new agricultural and commercial opportunities. Within the next few decades, these pioneers made permanent settlements in the areas immediately around Short Hill.

By far the greatest number of migrants to the area were Germans from Pennsylvania. In the late 17th century, thousands upon thousands of Germans emigrated to Pennsylvania and occupied the fertile agricultural lands around Philadelphia. As choice lands were taken up, they settled on the far western frontier of Pennsylvania. There they formed a buffer between the increasingly restless Native-American population and the colony's Quaker settlements. As their numbers grew, settlement proceeded in a southwesterly direction until by 1720 it reached the Susquehanna River. When land prices rose, they pressed further southward, spreading through western Maryland and down to the Potomac River.[11] This continuous movement of German settlers tended to follow the natural valleys that were long used by Native Americans in their north-south movements.

The main group of Pennsylvania Germans crossed the Potomac into Virginia at Pack Horse Ford just above present day Harpers Ferry. Near there some established the town of Mecklenburg (now Shepherdstown) in 1728. Others filtered into the valleys of the South Branch of the Potomac and its tributaries. Although the main thrust of settlement was southward into the Shenandoah Valley, a small group of Germans had followed the Monocacy trail through Maryland, crossed over the Potomac and settled between Catoctin Creek and the Blue Ridge in present day Loudoun County. About sixty farming families made a settlement near the Potomac at present day Lovettsville, just east of Short Hill Mountain.[12] For many years their village was known simply as "The German Settlement."

Across the river from The German Settlement, a trader named Abraham Pennington operated a trading post and ferry on a portion of land called "Coxon Rest."[13] Pennington's trading post,

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[10] Klaus Wust, *The Virginia Germans*, (University Press of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia, 1984 [1969].), 18-19..

[11] Wust, *The Virginia Germans*, 28-29.

[12] Weatherly, *The German Settlement*, 9.

[13] Mary McMurry Margrabe, *Brunswick: 100 Years of Memories*, (Brunswick History Commission, Brunswick, Maryland, 1990), 12.

operating during the 1720s, was in the vicinity of present day Brunswick, Maryland, about two miles downriver from Short Hill. To the west of Short Hill, at the confluence of the Shenandoah and Potomac rivers, a simple canoe ferry was established by trader Peter Stephens in 1733. Stephens' operation was later taken over by Robert Harper and the site grew into the town known as Harpers Ferry.

Following close upon the heels of the Germans, Quaker settlers arrived in the area. The Quakers settled west of the Catoctin mountains and formed the communities of Waterford, Goose Creek (now Lincoln), Harmony (now Hamilton), and Union (now Unison). Like the German settlers, the Quakers came from Pennsylvania to northern and western portions of Loudoun County to take up small farms.

During the same period, English settlers from tidewater Virginia moved into eastern and southern Loudoun County. These planters established large tobacco plantations like the ones they had known back east. A number of Irish settlers could also be found among the communities west of Catoctin Mountain. Due to the diversity of the county's colonial stock – German, Quaker, English, Irish – and the geographic distribution of their settlement, Loudoun County had a distinctive cultural heritage.

Whatever their cultural origins, all of the settlers desired land. Cheap and abundant, land was the primary form of wealth in 18th-century Virginia. As soon as it became known that lands were being settled at and beyond the Blue Ridge, wealthy planters in eastern Virginia became aware of the tremendous opportunities that awaited them in the West. Speculators made land their principal vehicle of investment and they eagerly applied for grants from the land's owner, Thomas 6th Lord Fairfax (Figure 6).

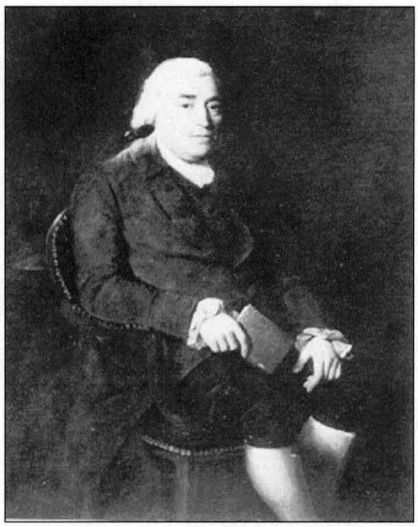


Figure 6. Thomas 6th Lord Fairfax. By 1720, Lord Fairfax became the sole owner of the vast Northern Neck Proprietary. (Alexandria-Washington Lodge #22)

By 1720, through a complex series of marriage and inheritance, Thomas 6th Lord Fairfax became the sole proprietor of the entire "Northern Neck," or as it soon came to be called, the "Fairfax Proprietary." As has been noted, by the time Lord Fairfax arrived to take possession of the vast domain he had come to own, settlement had already been firmly established. The early German and Quaker settlers came into the area around Short Hill caring little for colonial boundaries or the alleged owners of wilderness land titles.

For those wishing to take legal possession of the land, however, a visit to Fairfax's Proprietary Office was necessary. There, after agreeing to terms, Fairfax's appointed agent would issue a grant. Among the early speculators of land around Short Hill were Robert Booth and George Atwood. In 1731, Robert Booth was granted an 840-acre estate at the base of the eastern slope of Short Hill, lying between Falls Branch and Dutchman Creek. Some of Booth's original property lines are still evident today.

George Atwood received a grant in 1732 for 2,340 acres that included land to the south and west of the Short Hill tract (Figure 7). Portions of Atwood's grant later became known as the "William Dudley Diggs Short Hill Tract." (The island just off the shore of the Dixie Bottom portion of the NPS tract is known locally as "Digg's Island"). The Booth and Atwood grants were both large tracts. As time went by, the average size of the Fairfax grants decreased. By 1765, only one in five landowners in Loudoun County had more than 500 acres; two-thirds of all land holdings were smaller than 200 acres.[14]

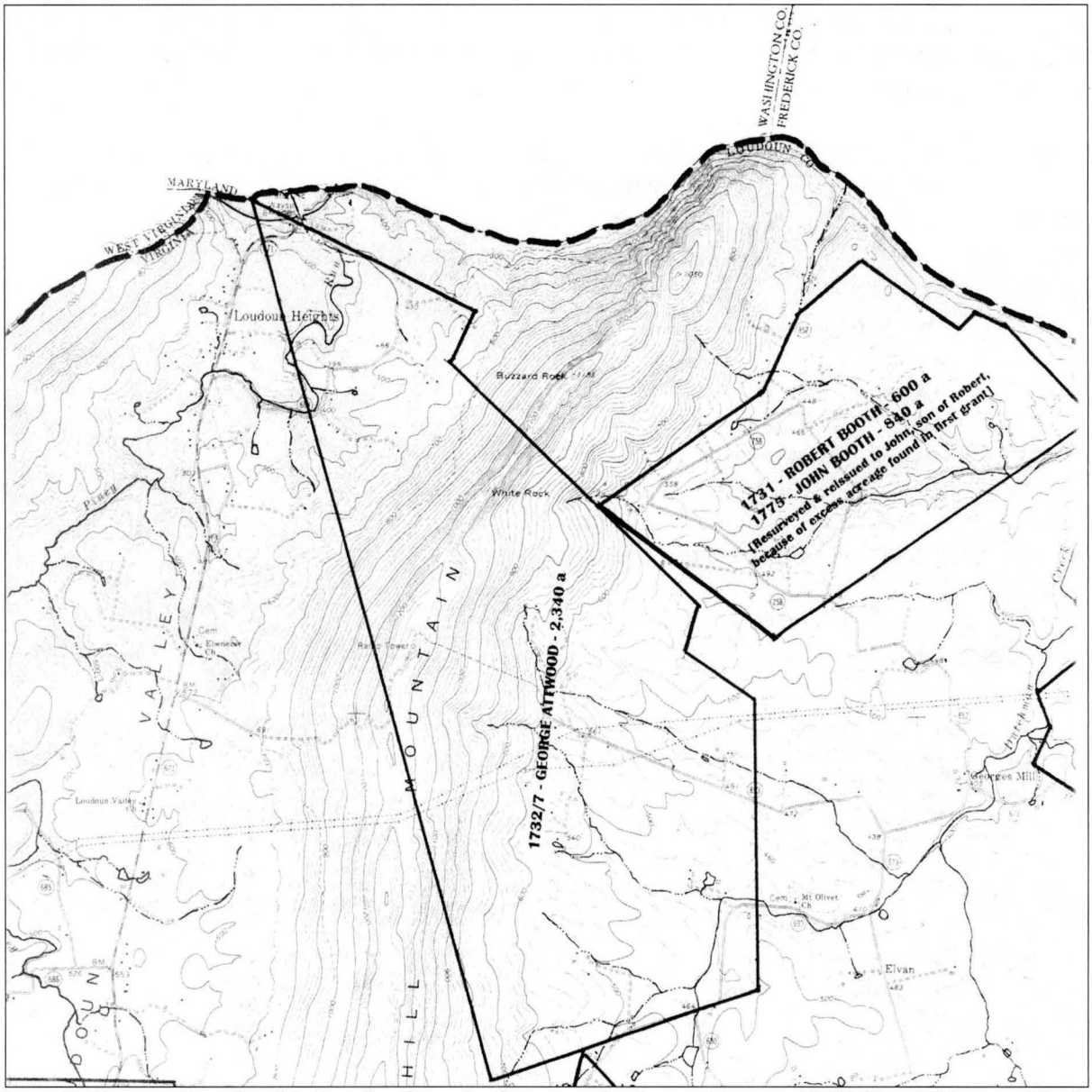


Figure 7. George Atwood and Robert Booth received grants to land near the current NPS Short Hill tract. (Netti Schreiner Yantis)

[14] John T. Phillips, II, *The Historian's Guide to Loudoun County, Virginia: Colonial Laws of Virginia and County Court Orders 1757-1766.* Volume I. (Goose Creek Productions, Leesburg and Middleburg, Virginia, 1996), 246.

The Shannondale and Piedmont Tracts

Lord Fairfax became dissatisfied with the management of his Proprietary and recruited his cousin, Colonel William Fairfax, to be his new agent. Among the first things Colonel Fairfax did as agent was to form a partnership with John Colville, a prominent merchant from Prince William County. Colville was an active land speculator in both Virginia and Maryland. Among his holdings was a 6,300-acre tract called "Merryland Manor" that included lands around the southern end of South Mountain, just across the Potomac River from the Short Hill tract. Together Fairfax and Colville bought out many of the smaller landholders in the Potomac River area between Catoctin Ridge and the Shenandoah Valley.

By buying the claims to many small tracts, Fairfax and Colville were able to consolidate their holdings into large manors, some of which included between 15,000 to 20,000 acres. Upon dissolution of the Fairfax-Colville partnership in 1740, Colonel Fairfax took as his share 44,446 acres on the Potomac River between Catoctin Creek and the Shenandoah River, an area encompassing much of the northern portion of present day Loudoun County. This tract included, among other tracts, the 19,170-acre "Shannondale Manor" tract and the 17,296-acre "Piedmont Manor" tract.

Shannondale Manor straddled the summit of the Blue Ridge and lay along the Shenandoah and Potomac Rivers in the valleys south of present day Harpers Ferry. Piedmont Manor was situated on the Potomac and Catoctin Creek. The crest of Short Hill Mountain served generally as the dividing line between the two manors. Ownership of the tracts can be traced down through the Fairfax family. Colonel Fairfax conveyed both manors to his eldest son, George William Fairfax, in 1753. George William Fairfax in turn bequeathed the land in 1780 to his nephew Ferdinando Fairfax. Ferdinando Fairfax and his wife, Elizabeth Blair Fairfax, were the last owners of the Piedmont and Shannondale Manors before its outsale and subsequent divisions and recombinations.[15] The current NPS Short Hill tract has its origins in the Piedmont Manor.

Not all of the Fairfax land was put up for sale. Some of the lands in Piedmont and Shannondale were leased and it was Colonel Fairfax's intent that the profits generated from the development of these manors would support "Belvoir," the Fairfax family seat. The most common instrument by which one could rent a property was called a "three-life lease." The three-life lease was a quasi-feudal practice of land management and development that was continued on the western Virginia frontier. The lease agreement remained in effect for the duration of the lives of three named people, usually a man, his wife, and their oldest son.

The leasing system as practiced in the Piedmont and Shannondale Manors helped stimulate development of the Short Hill area because provisions in a typical three-life lease required the renter to make substantial improvements to the property. The lease included specific instructions, for example, on the types and sizes of structures. It also frequently required the

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[15] See Stuart E. Brown, Jr., *Virginia Baron: The Story of Thomas 6th Lord Fairfax*. Chesapeake Book Co., Berryville, Virginia, 1965.

planting of orchards. Other covenants might prohibit the extraction of valuable minerals and ores or restrict hunting privileges.

Another factor encouraging development was affordability. Annual rents, payable either in commodities or British currency, were modest, but increased steadily during colonial times. To illustrate the contrast between the costs of Short Hill lands versus "urban" areas in 1760, the rent on a 50-acre Piedmont Manor farm was £1 per year, whereas it cost anywhere from £45 to £60 to rent a house in Williamsburg.[16]

The earliest documented settlement within the current NPS tract was the result of a three-life lease agreement. On March 20, 1785, Jacob Sullifrank (spelled variously Sullyfrank, Sunnifrank, Sunnefrank, and Sunnafrank) rented 85 acres from George William Fairfax.[17] The precise location of the acreage is not given; it is recorded only as "*situate...in the parish of Shelburne in the County of Loudoun Supposed to be on the Short Hills...*" Subsequent deeds, however, indicate its place is on the western side of Short Hill in the Dixie Bottom floodplain.

The term of the lease was for three lives: those of Jacob Sullifrank and his two sons, John and Abraham. The name Jacob Sunnafrank appears on a list of tithables for Shelburne Parish in 1774, 1779, and again in 1782.[18] Each entry shows he was only responsible for one tithe, indicating his children were under the age of 16 and that he did not own slaves. By the terms of the lease, Sullifrank was to Fairfax pay £2, 2 shillings on the first day of May each year. However, on October 17, 1786, the Virginia General Assembly officially did away with the colonial leasing system and the lands the Sullifranks had leased were now theirs to own. How long the Sullifranks remained on Short Hill is not known, but later deeds refer to the Abraham Sullifrank's tenancy, indicating that at least one son remained on after Jacob Sullifrank's death.

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[16] Phillips, *Historian's Guide...*, 246.

[17] LC DB P:187, dated March 20, 1785.

[18] Marty Hiatt and Craig Roberts Scott (compilers), *Loudoun County, Virginia Tithables 1758 – 1786*, (Iberian Publishing Company, Athens, Georgia, 1995), Vol.2:?; Vol.3:1057; Vol.3:1231.

George Washington and Short Hill

Perhaps the best known historical figure with connections to Short Hill and the Potomac River region is George Washington. Numerous scholars have studied the various aspects of his life and career as they relate to this area – as a surveyor and land speculator, a military man, and champion of industrial development. As a result of his many first-hand experiences, Washington became enamored with the region's potential and he dedicated himself to its improvement. Even though Washington's history of involvement with the area is well documented, there are some local legends associated with him that are not as widely known.

As a young man in the good graces of the powerful Fairfax family, George Washington first traveled to Virginia's Blue Ridge frontier as a land surveyor. In a country where land was the commodity most sought after, the services of a surveyor were essential and highly valued. As a boy, Washington learned the rudiments of surveying from tutors and he practiced with his father's surveying instruments. At the age of fifteen, he sharpened his skills by surveying his stepbrother Lawrence's turnip field. The following year, Washington was hired by Thomas 6th Lord Fairfax to assist in making land surveys in the Northern Neck Proprietary (Figure 8). In particular, Washington accompanied the survey team to the lower Shenandoah Valley around Harpers Ferry in March 1748. The first stop for the surveying party, at "*Captain Ashby's on the Shenandoah*," marked the beginning of Washington's long involvement with the area around Harpers Ferry.[19]



Figure 8. George Washington first traveled to Virginia's Blue Ridge frontier as a surveyor. (National Archives and Records Administration)

Washington's work as a surveyor not only provided him a good income, but it also served to familiarize him with the geography of the region and its abundant resources. He was evidently impressed by what he saw in the area. In 1750, with money he saved from surveying fees, Washington purchased his "Bullskin Plantation" in present day Jefferson County, West Virginia. He continued to add to his land holdings so that by 1752, he (along with stepbrother Lawrence) owned about 4,000 acres. This included the land later given to younger brother, Charles, the founder of Charles Town.[20]

According to widespread local legend, it was also during George Washington's early association with the region that he presided over the first meeting (1754) of Free Masons to assemble west of the Blue Ridge Mountains. The meeting place is said to have been a limestone cave situated

[19] Brown, *Virginia Baron...*, 110.

[20] Millard K. Bushong, *Historic Jefferson County*, (Carr Publishing Company, Inc., Boyce, Virginia, 1972), 25.

about two miles south of Charles Town.[21] Tradition says that George Washington's initials are inscribed among Masonic symbols upon the walls of the cave.

Later in life, Washington played an active role in the affairs of the Patowmack Company – founded in 1785 to improve navigation on the Potomac and its major tributaries (Figure 9). Washington was keenly interested in the commercial use of the Potomac River and the creation of a canal to join the port of Georgetown with the Ohio Valley and western frontier. He was elected the company's first president and, by all accounts, the canal became his pet project.

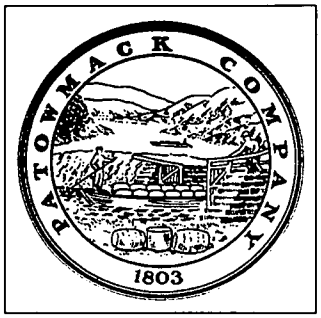


Figure 9. Patowmack Canal Company seal. George Washington's involvement with the company led him in 1785 to inspect the Potomac River at Short Hill. (NPS)

Washington traveled to Harpers Ferry in August of 1785 and for two days his party carefully inspected the river and its tributaries. Narrow passages, obstructions, rapids, and falls were all studied in detail. An entry in his diary records Washington's observations of the river near Short Hill Mountain:

> *Here we breakfasted* [at Harpers Ferry]*; after which we set out to explore the Falls below; & having but one Canoe, Colo. Gilpin, Mr. Rumsey...and myself, embarked in it, with intention to pass thro' what is called the Spout (less than half a Mile below the ferry). But when we came to it, the Company on the Shore, on acct. of the smallness, and low sides of the Vessel, dissuaded us from the attempt, lest the roughness of the Water, occasioned by the Rocky bottom, should fill and involve us in danger.*[22]

Continuing on, the party encountered smooth and even water for about one mile, until they reached:

> *a ridge of rocks which cross the river with Intervals, thro' which the Water passes in crooked directions...From hence to what are called Pain's falls* [sic Payne's Falls, site of Everhart's fish dam] *the Water is tolerably smooth, with Rocks here and there. These are best passed on the Maryland side. They are pretty swift, shallow, and foul at bottom, but the difficulties may be removed. From the bottom of these Falls, leaving an Island on the right...the easy and good Navigation below is entered.*[23]

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[21] Bushong, *Historic Jefferson County*, 49.

[22] Fitzpatrick, *The Diaries of George Washington*, 400.

[23] Fitzpatrick, 401.

Despite the menacing appearance of the Spout and rocky nature of Payne's Falls, it was decided that no special improvements were needed to bypass them.

According to Loudoun County historian Eugene M. Scheel, George Washington returned in June 1788 to re-inspect the Short Hill area that he had boated through in 1785. During this later visit, Washington is said to have scaled the 1,183'-high Buzzard Rock portion of Short Hill Mountain and inscribed the initials "GW" on a rock face.[24] As of this writing the initials have not been discovered. Though it is not known for certain, it may be that the initials were erroneously attributed to Washington. Instead, they may actually be a combination of the initials of George Atwood and William Fairfax, both early owners of Short Hill land. A deed dated 1740 states that the initials "GA" and "WFx" were carved on a sycamore tree and that "WFx" was carved on a "*large clift or Mountain of White Rocks of Stone*" by surveyors. These marks indicated property boundaries and corners. Was it later, perhaps, after the widespread hero-worship of the first president blossomed, that the surveyor's marks were misinterpreted and became associated with George Washington?

Helen Hirst Marsh reports another local legend that connects George Washington to Short Hill in her study of historic mills of Loudoun County. In March 1816, John Conard, Jr. entered into an agreement with Canrad Neer whereby Conard purchased all the rock suitable for making millstones on Neer's Short Hill property. Conard operated a mill on a bend of Piney Run about six-tenths of a mile from the Potomac and Neer's property lay at the foot of the western slope of Short Hill. Conard also secured the right to finish the millstones on Neer's lot and to cross property lines with his stone-hauling wagons.[25] Historian Marsh states that George Washington once purchased millstones from this quarry operation for a mill he was building. This is reportedly supported by an entry in Washington's diary that notes the purchase of some Short Hill millstones.[26] If the tradition is true, the Short Hill millstone quarry must have been in operation well before the recorded agreements of 1816, as Washington died in 1799.

Though the journal entry has not been located, there is indirect evidence that at least supports the possibility of Washington's millstone purchase. John Conard, Jr.'s father (John Conard, Sr.) was a noted stonecutter employed by the Patowmack Company. John Conard, Sr. arrived in the Short Hill area from Pennsylvania in 1762 and leased land from George William Fairfax. As an employee of the Patowmack Company in the 1790s, Conard cut stone and supervised its laying for many of the company's improvements in and around Harpers Ferry. During that time Conard must have met George Washington, for John Conard, Jr. remembered his father's description of Washington: "*A good-looking man in a general way, of grave countenance and of courtly social manners, rode a splendid horse and sat as erect and straight as an arrow in his saddle, and impressed one with admiration for his friendly ways, as well as awe of his majestic bearing.*"[27] It is possible that Washington purchased millstones from the elder Conard, a man whose quality stonework was already known to him.

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[24] Eugene M. Scheel, "Irish Corner Where Loudoun's First Irishmen Settled," HFD-396.

[25] LC DB 2U:161, 163.

[26] Helen Hirst Marsh, "Mills of Loudoun County," 26-27.

[27] Scheel, *Loudoun Discovered...*, 189-190.

Regardless of whether the local legends surrounding the Masonic cave, the initials on Buzzard Rock, and the millstones prove true or not, it is undeniable that Washington's influence on the Harpers Ferry area was enormous. His familiarity with the land and waterways and his vision of their potential convinced him that Harpers Ferry should be the site for a new federal armory and arsenal.

Long after his death, Washington's presence at Harpers Ferry remained almost tangible, a fact attested to by local resident and chronicler Joseph Barry. In his book, *The Strange Story of Harper's Ferry*, Barry gives a description of "Profile Rock," a rock formation on Maryland Heights:

> *One rock, on the Maryland side, is a tolerably well defined face with an expression of gravity, with some other points of resemblance, will remind one of George Washington, and, at almost any hour of the day, may be seen strangers gazing intently on the mountain in search of his likeness. Frequently, the Bald Eagle wheels in majestic circles immediately above this rock and, then, indeed, the illusion is too agreeable to be rejected by the most prosaic spectator. George Washington, chiseled by the hand of Nature in living rock, on the summit of the Blue Ridge, with the Bird of Victory fanning his brow, is too much poetry to be thrown away and common sense matter of fact is out of the question.*[28]

[28] Joseph Barry, *The Strange Story of Harpers Ferry*, (Thompson Brothers, Martinsburg, West Virginia, 1903), 8.

Short Hill and Transportation

In January 1837, the first B&O Railroad train rumbled over a new bridge and into Harpers Ferry, ushering in an era of rapid growth and industrial expansion. The local economy boomed as manufacturers could now get tools and machinery from their suppliers in the east. Merchants benefited, too, as they were able to offer a wider variety of goods at their establishments. Likewise, finished products and agricultural goods flowed in the other direction, reaching new and distant markets. Already a significant community because of its strategic location in the Potomac water gap, Harpers Ferry was now firmly cemented as the region's primary shipping center. Now more than ever, Loudoun County farmers from "Between the Hills" and those across Short Hill in Lovettsville looked to Harpers Ferry as the destination for their produce and goods.

While the arrival of the railroad certainly facilitated the movement of people and goods from one place to another, in fact, this development was just one in a series of gradual developments of a regional transportation infrastructure. River ferries and fords, roads and turnpikes, canals, and even footpaths all played a part in shaping the history of the Short Hill tract. An important aspect of the Short Hill tract is its many connections to this transportation network.

River Crossings

Ferries and fords played important roles in colonial Loudoun's transportation network. Fords, the shallow parts of a river that can be crossed by wading, allowed people to overcome the obstacles to migration and travel that large rivers presented. Important transportation routes incorporated the easy crossing places. Survey descriptions included in old land records often mention the location of major Potomac River crossings. For example, George Atwood's 1732 grant to land between Short Hill and the Blue Ridge identifies the floodplain area now known as Dixie Bottom as a place "*where people cross over the River*" (Figure 10). Accordingly, this site is one of the earliest identifiable fording places on the Potomac above Point of Rocks.[29]

Where the river could not be safely forded, ferry operations sprung up. The earliest known ferry in the vicinity of Short Hill was Abraham Pennington's ferry at Eel Pot Ford (now Brunswick, Maryland). Pennington's ferry, established sometime prior to 1728 and heavily used by the area's first settlers, was taken over by John Hawkins, Sr. around 1741. This ferry connected the village of Potomac Crossing, also known as German Crossing (other early names for Brunswick), to the Loudoun County shore. By 1822 this important river crossing was manned by Jacob Waltman, Jr., who operated a "heavy ferry." It was called a heavy ferry because it was capable of carrying a wagon, two horses, and several people.[30]

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[29] Phillips, *Historian's Guide...*, 276.

[30] Margrabe, *Brunswick...*, 12-13.



Figure 10. Dixie Bottom shoreline and fording spot. This spot was an important river crossing in the early 1700s. (Photo by Rob Brzostowski)

Likewise, Peter Stephens' ferry at "The Hole" (Harpers Ferry) was an essential part of the area's transportation network. Stephens, a squatter on Fairfax's land, operated a canoe ferry at the confluence of the Shenandoah and Potomac Rivers as early as 1733. Robert Harper, intrigued by the area's economic and commercial potential, took over and expanded the operation in 1747. Harper's ferry was not officially licensed until 1761, but he nevertheless provided a critical service for travelers and farmers. Hoping to attract neighboring farmers to his mill, Harper posted notices stating that "*farmers...over the Blue Ridge in Loudoun County...bringing grist to my mill...will be ferried over the...Shenandoah river...free of expense.*"[31]

Sometime prior to 1810, another ferry was established at Harpers Ferry, this one near the mouth of the Shenandoah (Figure 11). A November 9, 1810 notice in the *Farmers-Repository* newspaper states that Ferdinando Fairfax wishes to rent his ferry operations, as well as his store and warehouse on the southern shore.[32] By about 1814, the informal lane connecting the ferry landing to Shenandoah Street in Harpers Ferry was known as Loudoun Street, attesting to the ferry's importance to the Virginia county on the opposite shore. The federal government purchased the Shenandoah ferry rights in 1818 and maintained it for twenty-five years, until a toll bridge was finally erected there.

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[31] Phillips, *Historian's Guide...*, 269.

[32] *Farmers-Repository*, November 9, 1810, p3c4.

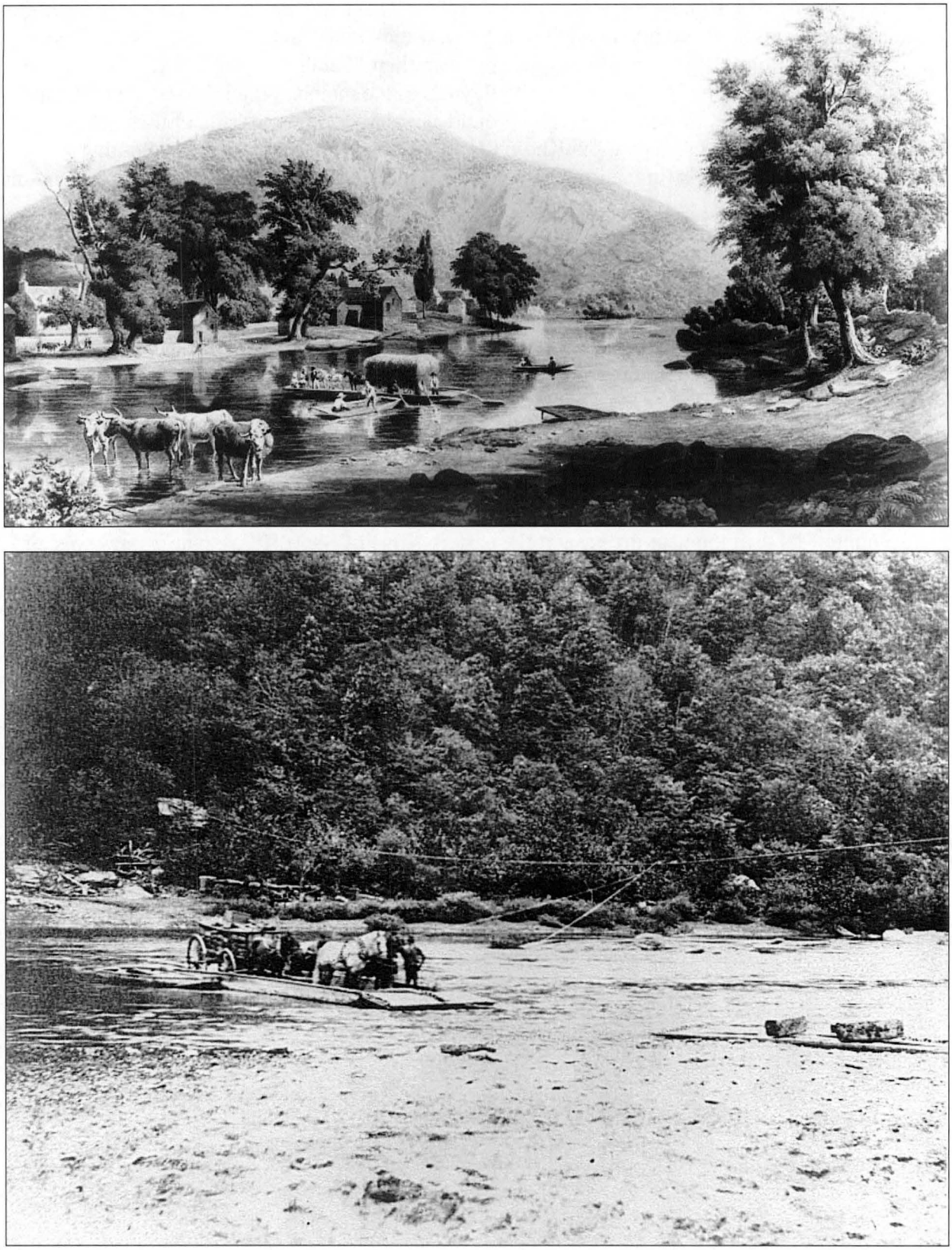


Figure 11. 1833 watercolor of the Shenandoah ferry. The Shenandoah rope ferry ca. 1880. (both NPS, watercolor courtesy Fine Arts Museum, Boston)

Even closer to Short Hill was "Frail Pain's [sic] Ferry." This early ferry, just downriver from the cluster of fish dams, was put into operation in 1760, when "Frail Pain" – actually Flayle Payne, Jr. – and brother John Payne provided a crossing from their "Pain's Delight" estate in Maryland to Stump's Landing on the Virginia side. The Payne's estate included the land upon which the town of Knoxville, Maryland was eventually founded. Many of the area's natural landmarks, such as Pain's Branch (a creek through Knoxville), Pain's Rock (a rocky point on South Mountain), and Pain's Falls (in the Potomac River), derive their names from Flayle Payne and his descendents.[33]

On the Loudoun shore, Stump's Landing was named after Thomas Stump, the first known ferryman at Payne's Ferry. Stump was married to Jane Booth, daughter of Robert Booth. Robert Booth was among the early (1732) land speculators around Short Hill. Stump, through his wife Jane, inherited and lived with his family on a 200-acre parcel of the Booth estate. Stump apparently had assistants for the ferry operation; a tithable list of September 1760 records one Patrick McKenzie as working with Thomas Stump at his landing above Dutchman Creek.[34] In terms of the precise location of Stump's Landing, Craig H. Trout, who has researched the nearby Peacher's Mill site in detail, places it approximately one-half mile downriver of the mouth of Falls Branch.[35] Flooding, however, has scoured away all physical evidence of the ferry landing.

On account of its location near the base of the eastern slope of Short Hill, Payne's Ferry was an important crossing for residents of the German Settlement (Lovettsville), The Gap in the Short Hill (now Hillsboro), and others scattered throughout the Piedmont Manor. Ferry operations continued there through the French and Indian War and the decade preceding the American Revolution.

References to Payne's Landing continue to appear in documents as late as 1830 and some Civil War-era maps show roads leading to the landings, but omit the word "ferry." On one of these maps, the road leading up Falls Branch is designated "Boonesboro Road," implying a ferry connection with roads running north through Maryland.[36] Another circa 1926 manuscript map in the papers of George W. Kernodle, a one-time owner of the land in question, labels the location "Hickory Landing."[37] Certainly Payne's Ferry was most active in the 18th century and probably received only intermittent usage, if any, after the mid-19th century.

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[33] Craig H Trout, "Peacher's Mill, Loudoun County, Virginia," (Unpublished manuscript on file at Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, 1998), 5.

[34] Hiatt and Scott, *Tithables...*, Vol.1, 3-4.

[35] Trout, "Peacher's Mill...", 5.

[36] Trout, "Peacher's Mill...", 7.

[37] Kernodle papers in the Savery Collection, Harpers Ferry National Historical Park.

Roads

Roads, too, were essential to connect settlements and provide access to mills and other commercial establishments. The quality of the roads in colonial times, even the primary routes, was usually not good. Overland travel was difficult and slow. Secondary roads, especially in remote areas such as northwest Loudoun, were often little more than unimproved pathways. In some cases, the location of the earliest roads was dependent on even earlier Native American paths, which, in turn, usually followed game trails.

By the 1730s, the various Indian paths traveled by pioneer families had been given English names. For example, the Carolina Road (forerunner of modern US Rt. 15), and further west, the Philadelphia Wagon Road (modern US Rt. 11), were significant regional north-south arteries developed from pre-existing Native American pathways. Of course, natural features such as mountains, gaps, valleys, rivers, and streams also were determining factors in the development of road networks.

Vestal's Gap Road (forerunner of modern VA Rt. 9), an east-west route over the Blue Ridge, appears on maps of the Northern Neck as early as 1754, but was almost certainly used by explorers, hunters, and settlers alike, long before this date. Another important road went from below Robert Harper's ferry on the Potomac River for several miles southward before intersecting the Vestal's Gap Road. This "Between the Hills" route was surveyed in August 1761, when Robert Yeldell and Nicholas Osborn "*looked over and marked out a way for a Road leading from Potomack River to ye Mountain Road betwixt ye Blue Ridge and Short Hill to the best of our skill and knowledge both for good ground and convenience of ye inhabiters.*"[38] Though Yeldell and Osborn's survey took place in 1761, again, it is likely that some type of road already existed in the valley between the Blue Ridge and Short Hill.

Nearly 100 years later, the Hillsborough & Harpers Ferry Turnpike Company constructed a road in this same vicinity. Completed in 1852, the Hillsborough and Harpers Ferry Turnpike was a 30' wide, 15-mile toll road from Hillsboro in Loudoun to a point on the Shenandoah River across from Harpers Ferry in Jefferson County (Figure 12). Influential businessmen from Harpers Ferry backed the project, including the Shenandoah Street merchant, Philip Coons, and the Virginius Island miller, Abraham Herr. Coons, who at the time also owned a large farm and distillery on Short Hill, served as the company's first president. With a few modifications, today's Virginia Route 671 follows the way of the old turnpike and remains a principal means of travel between the two counties.

Closer to Short Hill, a flurry of road building and improvement activities began in the 1760s. Court records suggest that roads leading to Stump's Landing/Payne's Ferry were built between 1760 and 1763. On March 11, 1760, the Loudoun County Court ordered John McIlhaney, Joseph Jones, and William Smith "*to view the most convenient way for a new Road from John Hough's Mill* [in Hillsboro] *to the mouth of Dutchman's Run*" on the Potomac River, east of Short Hill. The three men acting as road viewers reported back to the court, stating that the route

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[38] Road Case file No. 38, 1758 – 1763, Loudoun County Circuit Court, Leesburg, Virginia, as quoted in Costantino, 11.

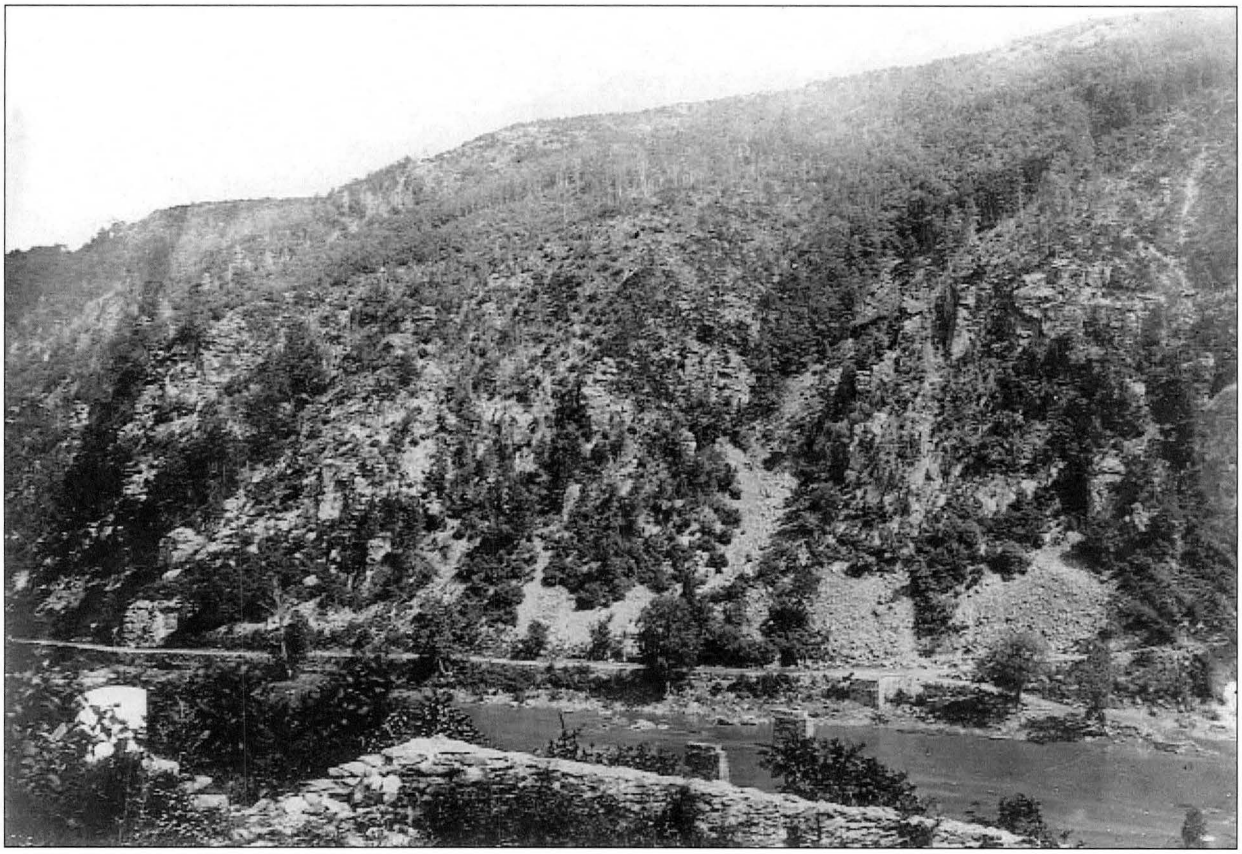


Figure 12. The Hillsborough and Harpers Ferry Turnpike ran "Between the Hills" to a point on the Shenandoah River across from Harpers Ferry. This 1863 view from the Harper Cemetery shows the road at the base of Loudoun Heights. (NPS)

to the mouth of Dutchman Creek would "*not answer for a Road neither can any Ferry be here kept.*" Instead they proposed a road "*running...under the short Hill to the River opposite John Payne's about a Mile above the mouth of the Dutchman...*"[39] Though no action was taken on this particular road order, this record indicates that road building activities to Payne's Ferry were at least being actively considered.

In 1763, the same Hillsboro miller, John Hough, petitioned the Court "*for a Road, from his Grist Mill on the North Fork of Kittockton Creek at the Gap of the Short Hills, to Potomack River opposite or near Frail Pain's.*"[40] Another report to the County Court in 1768 states "*The Great Road some time ago laid out from Frail Pains Ferry to Mahlon Janney's Mill*" is "*very much hurt.*" The petitioner, whose farm the road passed through, asked if he could relocate a portion of the road "*which will be no disadvantage to the inhabitants using the same, as it will run through more firmer ground.*"[41] A good road to Payne's ferry from nearby mills was obviously considered important.

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[39] LC Road Order Book A:301, 329.

[40] LC Road Order Book B:169, 227.

[41] LC Road Case file No. 40, 1768, ,as quoted in Costantino, 45.

The Short Hill road down Falls Branch, located partially on Park property, was built in 1825 (Figure 13). Though the legal rights for a road to be kept open and accessible to and from this mill lot had been conveyed since 1818, there is no clear evidence a road existed there until after John Peacher purchased the property. In order to provide easy access to his new flour mill, Peacher made a motion on May 9, 1825, to have a road approved from Georges Mill down Falls Branch to his mill site. The road case was finalized in September 1825 and construction likely soon began. In a motion filed on June 13, 1827, adjacent property owner John Booth requested a minor change in the route of the Falls Branch road to Peacher's Mill. Booth's comments indicate that within two years of Peacher's original motion, the route down Falls Branch was already heavily traveled.[42]



Figure 13. Falls Branch road trace, looking south. John Peacher had the road constructed in 1825 to provide easy access to his grist mill. (Photo by Rob Brzostowski)

For reasons not clearly understood, on September 30, 1830, John Peacher filed another road-related motion. This time he requested the Court to approve a road across private lands and down a deep ravine to "*Payne's Landing where there is at present a road marked and sometimes used.*"[43] Trout speculates that Peacher petitioned for this alternate route for use during times of minor flooding damage to the Falls Branch road.

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[42] Trout, "Peacher's Mill...," 33. See also LC Road Case file No. 299.

[43] LC Road Case file No. 308.

At about the same time the Falls Branch road was being constructed, another important Short Hill road was in the planning stages. This road, commonly called "River Road" or sometimes just "Around the Points," led from Harpers Ferry at the site of the Shenandoah rope ferry eastward to Conard's Mill on Piney Run. After crossing Piney Run, the road looped northeast through Dixie Bottom, passed around Devil's Elbow and the rocky northern tip of Short Hill Mountain, and proceeded on to Peacher's Mill (Figure 14). At Peacher's Mill, the River Road intersected the earlier Falls Branch road, as well as a short spur road that led to Stump's Landing and Lovettsville beyond.

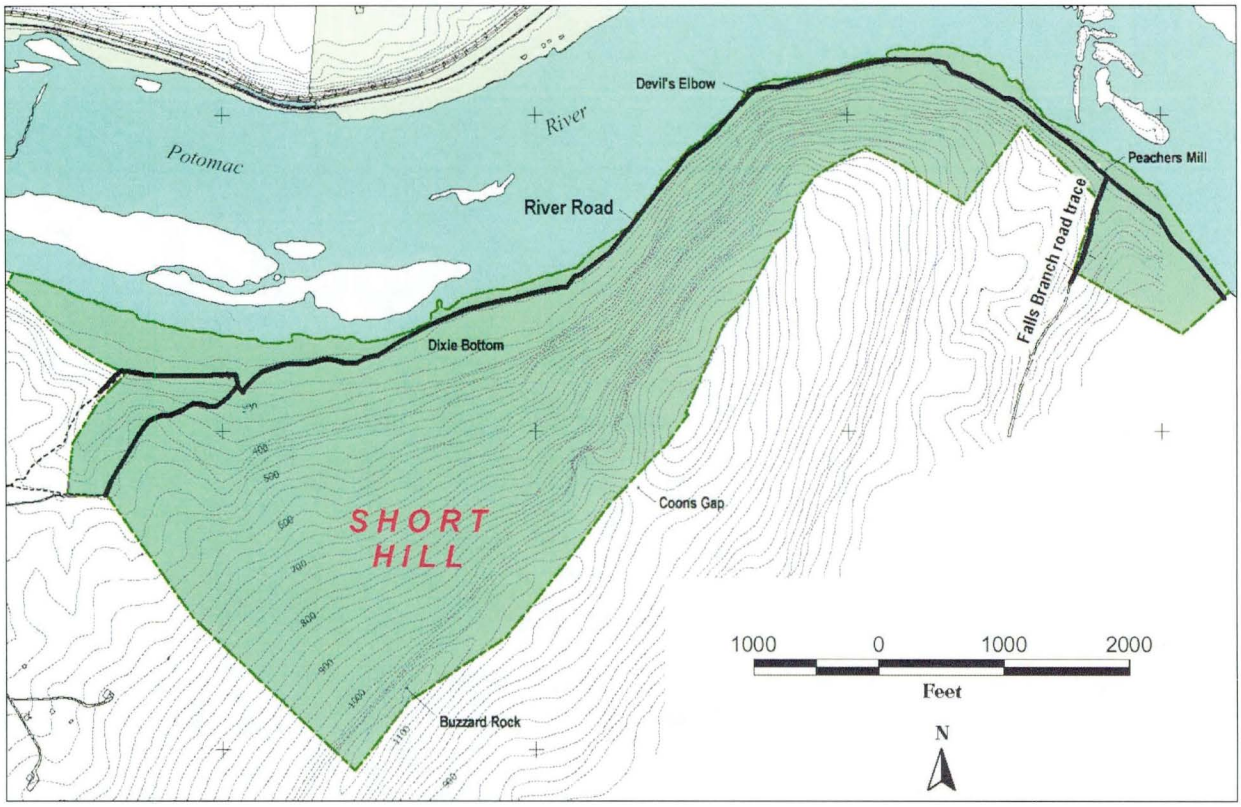


Figure 14. When completed ca. 1832, River Road became the fastest and most convenient way from Harpers Ferry to Lovettsville. (NPS graphic by John Ravenhorst)

The impetus for constructing River Road came from a number of private citizens who stood to gain most from its completion, chiefly the property owners along the proposed route. Among these men were James Stubblefield (superintendent of the federal armory at Harpers Ferry), John George, various members of the Everhart family (of the fish dam), and John Booth. On October 10, 1825, Stubblefield filed a motion in the Loudoun County Court and, as a result, road viewers were assigned to assess the most practical route from Peacher's Mill to Harpers Ferry. The men submitted a detailed report to the Court. The report contains estimates of how much black powder would be required to blast the rocks at the constricted northern point of Short Hill, and also lists the location, height, and length of several proposed retaining walls needed so as not to interfere with Peacher's millrace and headgate (Figure 15).

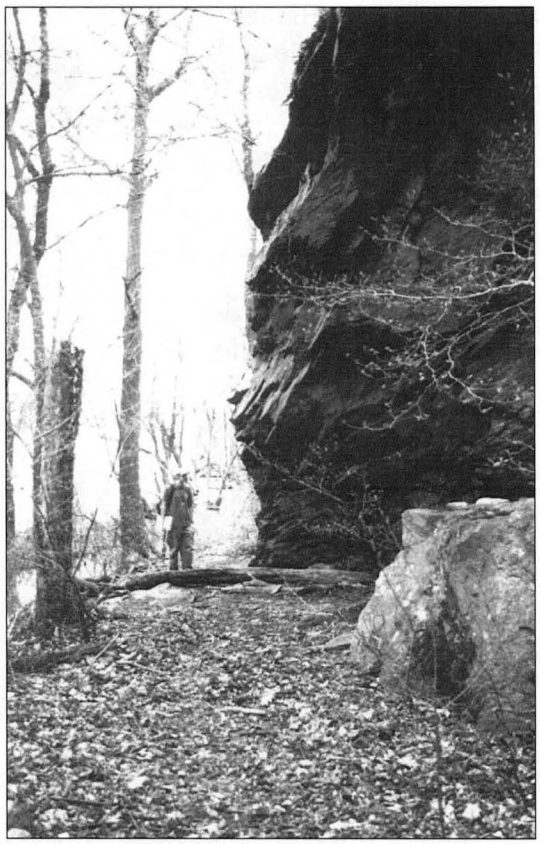


Figure 15. River Road near Devil's Elbow. (Photo by Rob Brzostowski)

The effort to open River Road progressed slowly, as is evidenced by the number of petitions and additional surveys that were filed with the Court over a four-year period. Later documents reveal that the private citizens partially financed construction of River Road at their own expense.[44] These private funds were eventually supplemented with public funding. In January 1832, the *Virginia Free Press* reported that a bill was pending in the Virginia General Assembly authorizing a lottery to raise the necessary money "*for removing obstructions*" at Short Hill and completing the road. The bill passed a month later and commissioners were appointed to oversee the work. Among the commissioners from Loudoun County were local property owners John Conard, George W. Shover, John Wenner, and John Everhart.[45]

With the necessary funds now in hand, the laborious process of clearing the rocky obstacles at Devil's Elbow began. The technology for blasting rock using black powder had been pioneered by the Patowmack Company in the construction of its locks and gates at Great Falls and was used at Harpers Ferry in association with the early canal construction along the Shenandoah River. The technique was also used to modify the landscape of Lower Town area of Harpers

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[44] LC Road Case file No. 369 (1839).

[45] For details see *Virginia Free Press*, January 5, 1832, p2c5 and February 23, 1832, p2c5.

Ferry, especially the rocky areas around the Harper House.[46] By this process, drill holes were made in the rock that were then filled with the powder and ignited (Figure 16). Along River Road, quarrying and blasting cleared the way for the roadbed, and probably also generated the raw materials used to build the road's retaining walls (Figure 17).

When construction of the road was completed, River Road became the fastest and most convenient way to travel and trade goods between Harpers Ferry and Lovettsville. The road was soon heavily traveled and needed maintenance. In 1839, John Everhart petitioned for $1,000 in improvements for the existing road. During the Civil War, River Road was a primary route for troop movements below Harpers Ferry. Finally, in March 1936, after a century of service, a devastating flood badly damaged River Road and it was closed for good. Nature has since reclaimed much of River Road, but the roadbed is still apparent in many places. In some places of exposed bedrock, wagon ruts purportedly have been worn into the rock and are visible yet.



Figure 16. Quarrying and black powder blasting was necessary to open parts of River Road. Drill marks such as this are evidence of the techniques used. (NPS photo by Andrew S. Lee)



Figure 17. River Road is supported by retaining walls at several places as it passes "around the points." (Photo by Rob Brzostowski)

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[46] Gilbert et al, "Cultural Landscape Report: Lower Town, Harpers Ferry National Historical Park", (Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, 1993), 3-24.

The Canal and Railroad

The C&O Canal Company and the B&O Railroad Company both initiated their respective internal improvement projects on the same day – July 4, 1828. But the date of the ribbon cutting ceremonies was not the only thing the two companies had in common. Both companies, in their earliest planning, had proposed to follow the north bank of the Potomac to a point as far west as Cumberland, Maryland. This led to a bitter legal dispute in 1832 and progress beyond Point of Rocks was delayed for both projects. The problem was one of space. From Point of Rocks to Harpers Ferry, the shoreline is at several places reduced to a very narrow strip of land by the sheer cliffs of the Catoctin Mountains. Along this narrow shelf, the projected routes for the works overlapped. Both companies claimed prior rights to the contested right-of-way.

After the legal conflict was finally settled in 1833 (by a compromise agreement quite favorable to the canal), the two competing companies resumed their race towards Harpers Ferry. At the same time the improvements were being made to open River Road around the northern tip of Short Hill, on the other side of the river the B&O and C&O were both securing right-of-ways and starting construction around Knoxville and the future sites of Weverton and Sandy Hook. Slowed by a deadly outbreak of Asiatic cholera that affected the available labor pool, the canal did not reach Harpers Ferry until November 1833. The railroad was completed to Harpers Ferry in December 1834.

The coming of the C&O Canal and B&O Railroad transformed Harpers Ferry from a small village to a major crossroads of 19th-century industry and transportation. Farmers and millers from the surrounding areas also reaped the benefits of these new modes of transportation as their corn, wheat, and flour could now be shipped to market faster and cheaper than ever before. The nearly simultaneous completion of the River Road in the Short Hill area and the arrival of canal and railroad in Harpers Ferry did much to strengthen the ties that already existed between the two places.

During the years prior to the Civil War, two other railroad companies were interested in using the Loudoun County shoreline around Short Hill to make a direct connection with Harpers Ferry, but neither of these proposed routes ever came to fruition. The Alexandria, Loudoun & Hampshire Railroad Company, incorporated in 1847 by the Virginia Assembly, wanted to run its railway "around the points." The plan continued to be discussed by interested businessmen in Harpers Ferry, a number of whom were also backers of the contemporary Hillsborough and Harpers Ferry turnpike, as late as 1853.[47]

Just as interest seemed to be flagging in a railroad alignment around Short Hill, the Virginia Assembly briefly revived the idea. In 1854 the Assembly proposed funding for a Loudoun Branch of the Manassas Gap Railroad. The proposed branch line would run north from Purcellville in Loudoun County along the east side of Short Hill and follow the alignment of River Road towards Harpers Ferry (Figure 18). Discussions were held the following year and in 1856 the act was approved. This was a renewal of an earlier effort that had gone bankrupt

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[47] *Virginia Free Press*, 20 March 1853, p3c1.

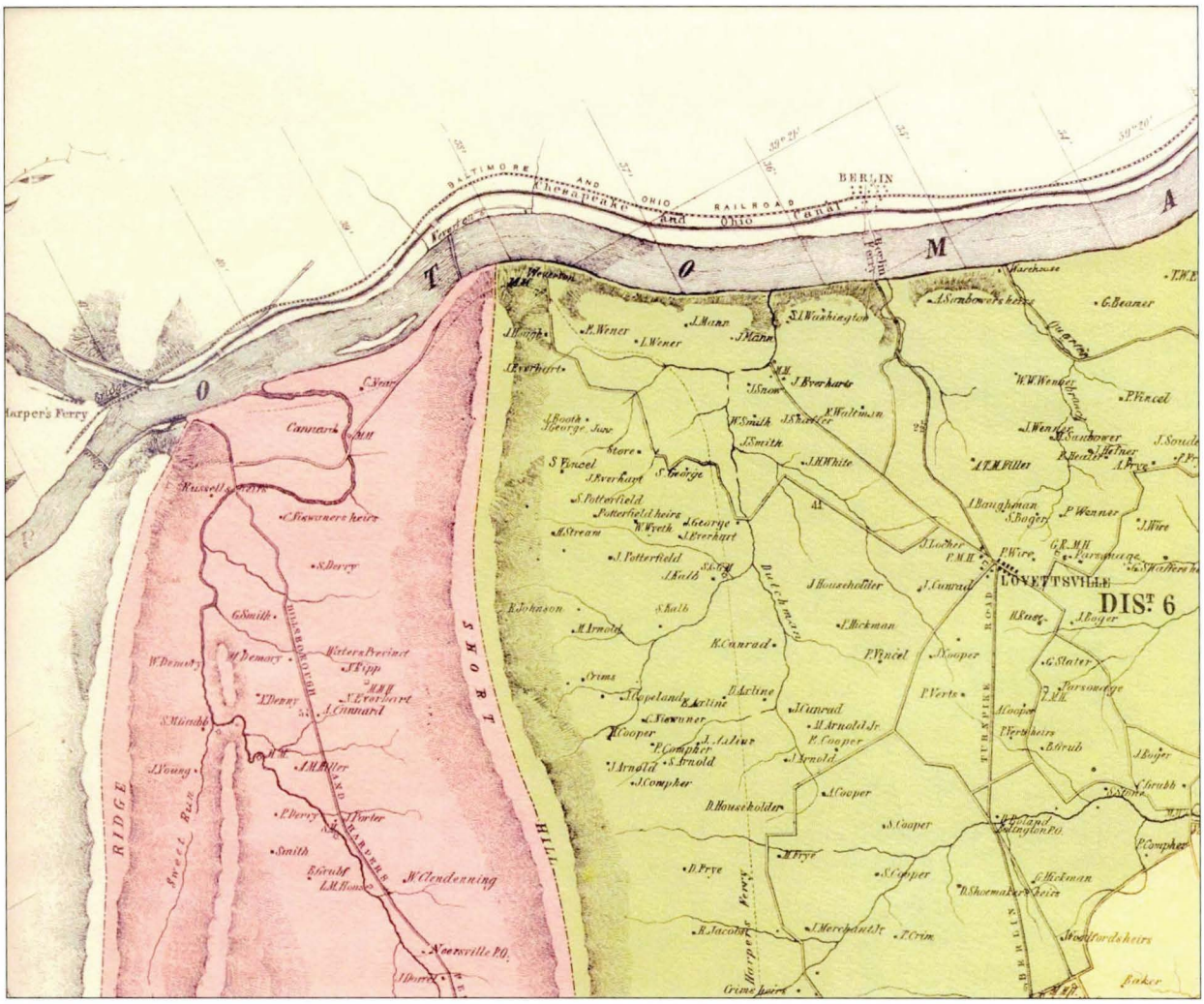


Figure 18. Detail of Yardley Taylor's 1853 map of Loudoun County. A dashed line around the northern tip of Short Hill represents the proposed alignment of the Loudoun Branch of the Manassas Gap Railroad. (courtesy Thomas Balch Library, Leesburg, Virginia)

several times before. Construction of the roadbed reached Purcellville in 1853, but no tracks were ever laid and the idea was soon abandoned.[48]

The Egg Path

Another local transportation route that deserves mention is the Egg Path, a narrow east-west trail across the steep slopes of Short Hill. Situated just south of National Park Service property, on the east side of the crest the trail begins at the end of present-day Long Lane. On the west side the trail descends to meet the road currently known as Snider Lane. In the past, a spur of the Egg Path extended north from Snider Lane to Conard's Mill on Piney Branch.

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[48] Trout, "Peacher's Mill...," 12.

According to Loudoun County historian Eugene Scheel, Mr. Abner Riley, a farmer who lived adjacent to the northern spur of the trail during the postbellum period, coined the name "Egg Path." Riley was a fixture on the trail; on horseback he often used it to cross over to the Lovettsville-area where he gathered eggs and butter. He would then put the produce into two baskets that hung from his horse, Patch Stripes, and bring it back to sell at stores and hotels in Harpers Ferry.[49]

Another local resident, Miss Catherine Stevens, remembered the Egg Path and its importance to the local economy. In a 1975 letter she wrote:

> *...some went across this mountain...either riding a horse, in a buggy or in a wagon. Those making the trip often visited relatives on their ways to or from taking eggs, butter, chickens etc. to market over at the stores in Harpers Ferry. Prices for such items were higher in Harpers Ferry than at the local stores...There was another way to go, and that was the Egg Path, wide enough to ride horseback or for a person to walk over the mountain. Someone told me a short time ago that Mr. and Mrs. Calvin Everhart, Charlie Everhart's mother and father, as well as Walter Frye's father were a few of the local people who used to take eggs, etc. across the mountain to sell in Harpers Ferry a number of years ago.*[50]

In addition to providing a short cut to the Harpers Ferry stores, the Egg Path was also used by attendees of the Ebenezer Church. The church was located on the west side of Short Hill Mountain on present day Snider Lane. By the 1880s, only a few church members were from the east side of Short Hill and the congregation began looking for a more convenient site along the main road. By this time the trail over the mountain was becoming less and less passable, and when the church was relocated in 1895, regular usage of the Egg Path seems to have ended.[51]

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[49] Scheel, *Loudoun Discovered...*, 126.

[50] as quoted in Weatherly, *Lovettsville...*, 97-98.

[51] Scheel, *Loudoun Discovered...*, 208.

Industrial and Agricultural Use of Short Hill

By the early 1800s, much of the Short Hill area's agricultural and industrial potential was beginning to be realized. Land transportation and ferry services had improved during the last half century and most of the natural resources that attracted early settlers were still abundant. Roads – particularly the "Between the Hills" Road and the routes leading to Payne's Ferry – led to active development of the Short Hill tract. Milling, which had long played an important role in the region's local economy, was the earliest industry to appear on the Short Hill tract. Peacher's Mill, constructed in 1825 at the mouth of Falls Branch, was the most significant local industrial development. Hand in hand with industrial development came small-scale agricultural-related activities such as the establishment of farms and orchards, distilleries, and timbering operations.

The presence of the Potomac River and its swiftly flowing tributaries contributed enormously to the proliferation of mills around Short Hill during the 1700s. The rushing water not only provided abundant power for machinery, it also served as a ready avenue for boating finished flour to the waiting markets of Georgetown and Alexandria. When one considers the readily available building supplies and local scope of community living, it seems practically inevitable that these mills should have appeared.

Of particular interest to the Short Hill tract prior to the construction of Peacher's Mill are Dodd's Mill (early 1760s) on Dutchman Creek and Conard's Mill (1806) on Piney Run. Dodd's grist mill was purchased by Jacob Everhart, Sr. in 1765. Everhart's descendants were among the early owners of the Short Hill river mill lot and eventually sold a portion of it to John Peacher. Conard's Mill, lying just west of the present park boundary, was the Dixie Bottom area's first known business. Situated on a westerly bend of Piney Run, John Conard, Jr. operated the successful grist mill until his death in 1841. His son Joseph Conard inherited the business, but soon the mill faced growing competition from the grist mills over in Harpers Ferry. A toll bridge built across the Shenandoah in 1844 provided local farmers a choice in where to take their business. Local tradition indicates Conard's Mill operated up until the mid-1870s. It could not compete with the Harpers Ferry mills that used more modern "roller mill" technology.[52]

Within the boundaries of the current NPS Short Hill tract, other properties were recognized as being suitable for mills. In a deed dated June 1, 1812, from Ferdinando Fairfax to Elijah Chamberlain's trustee, Chamberlain's purchase is described as including lands "*comprehending a range of Mill seats with a command of Water at & below a Considerable Fall on the River Potomack...*"[53] Whether or not he intended to develop the property is not known, but Chamberlain was among a group of citizens involved in "The Jefferson Company of Farmers, Mechanics, and Merchants." This company was founded in 1814 "*to encourage the spirit of improvement and enterprise in agriculture, commerce, manufactures, and the mechanic arts.*"[54]

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[52] Scheel, *Loudoun Discovered...*, 10.

[53] LC DB 2P:315, dated June 1, 1812.

[54] *Farmers-Repository*, June 9, 1814, p3c1-3.

No improvements were made, however, and in 1818 Chamberlain sold his lot to Jacob Waltman, Sr.

In the deed from Chamberlain's trustee to Waltman, Waltman acknowledges the receipt of the above "*river mill lots*" and the "*right for a road to be kept open to & from the mill seats on said mill lots.*"[55] The land, encompassing about sixty acres where Falls Branch meets the Potomac, was commonly referred to as "Waltman's river mill lot."

Waltman's lot was not the only area within the NPS Short Hill tract that was deemed potentially suitable for a mill. In 1819, Frederick Handshy sold all of his certain tract of land on the west side of Short Hill, "*reserving and excepting one acre in the upper bottom together with the use of the water if the sd* [said] *Hensha shall want the same for a mill.*"[56] Though a mill was never established on the property, Handshy's reservation reveals that it was valued for its industrial potential. Jacob Waltman's lot was much better situated for the seating of a mill and John Peacher was the man who would develop it.

Peacher's Mill

In 1816, John Peacher, a boatman working the Potomac River landings near the old Keep Tryst Furnace, advertised in the *Farmers-Repository* newspaper: "*To gentlemen millers and farmers. Am in boating this season. Warehouse on the Potomac ½ mile above old Furnace. Will deliver flour to Alexandria and Georgetown. John Peacher.*"[57] The following year Peacher purchased an island in the Shenandoah and relocated his boating stand there. The island, the lowermost one in the Shenandoah, soon was called "Peacher's Island" (later "Stubblefield's" and eventually "Virginius Island"). Sometime between 1820 and 1823, Peacher expanded his boating operations and went into the milling business. Not only did he build a "chopping mill" (grist mill) on Peacher's Island, he also assumed control of another mill back on the Keep Tryst Furnace tract.[58]

In 1823, in one of several business dealings with armory superintendent James Stubblefield, John Peacher sold Stubblefield a portion of Peacher's Island for $15,000.[59] Using the money realized from the sale, Peacher bought a 10-acre portion of "Waltman's river mill lot," the Short Hill tract that straddled the mouth of Falls Branch. He purchased the land from Jacob Waltman's in-laws, the Everhart brothers, who operated fish traps out in the river (Figure 19). The Everharts may have been reluctant to sell to Peacher for two reasons: first, Peacher's new grist mill would be in competition with their own family's mill on nearby Dutchman Creek; and Peacher's millrace

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[55] LC DB 2W:268, dated January 31, 1818.

[56] LC DB 2Y:29, dated April 1, 1819.

[57] *Farmers-Repository*, February 1, 1816.

[58] For details of Peacher's career prior to establishing his Loudoun County mill, see Trout, "Peacher's Mill...," 19-28.

[59] Jefferson County (WV) DB 13:28.

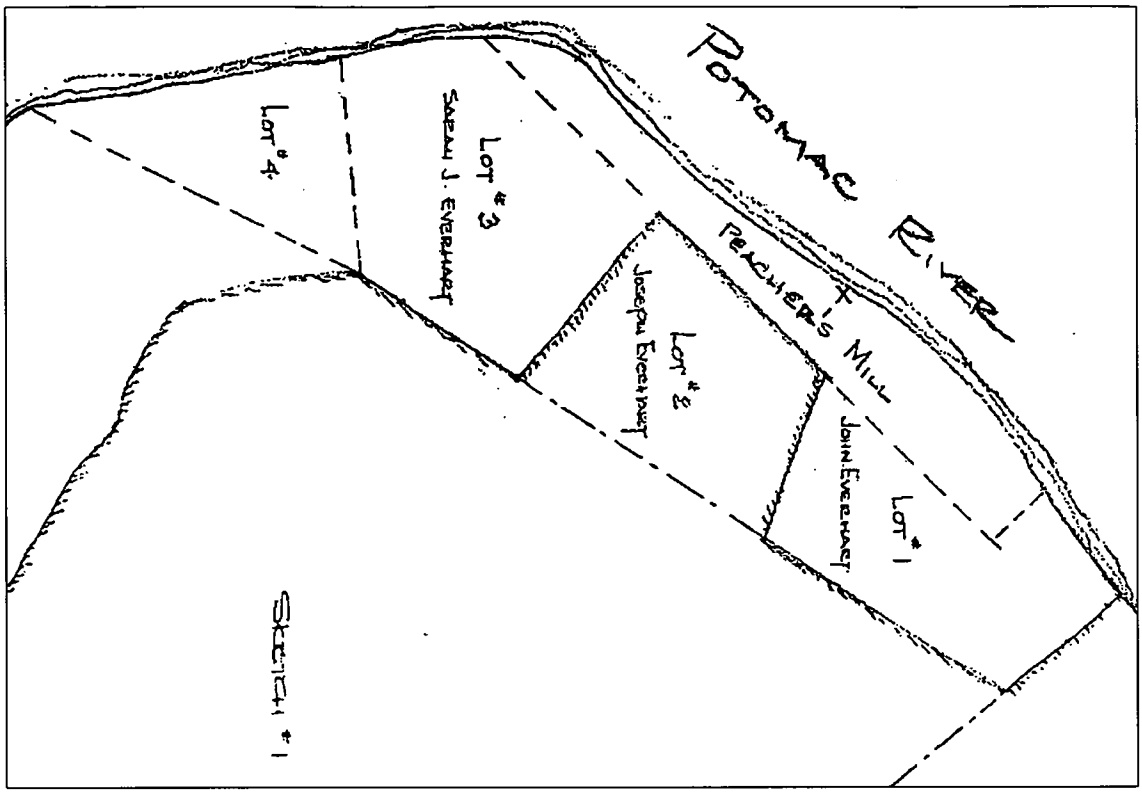


Figure 19. John Peacher purchased a 10-acre lot from the Everhart family in 1824. The sketch shows the relation of Peacher's Mill to the Everhart properties in 1831. (NPS sketch by Toni Hilliard)

might also interfere with their fish dam operation. After inserting a clause in the deed to protect the fish dam, the sale was made in 1824.

Peacher's shoreline property included a strip of land on the west side of Falls Branch long enough to accommodate a millrace and head gate. Work is believed to have begun on the mill, millrace, and head gate almost immediately. Peacher's millrace was unique; it was the only one in Loudoun County to draw water directly from the Potomac (Figure 20). Judging from the available fall of the river and estimated level of the mill's first floor, Trout suggests the millrace powered a wheel (or wheels) of the "undershot" design.[60] Because of the source of its waterpower, the mill was sometimes called "River Mill."

Construction of the mill complex was completed in 1825. The 2½-story mill building, possibly constructed of locally quarried stone, was approximately 55' long by 30' wide. The walls were substantial, built 30" thick so they would be capable of resisting the periodic floods that were sure to come (Figure 21). A warehouse or perhaps a frame elevator was attached to the mill's west wall; this would be a necessary feature to meet the storage needs associated with processing grain and selling finished flour. The structure had a basement, or "meal floor," that is currently exposed to a depth of only about 2'. The basement would have included the cog pit as well as bins for receiving the finished meal and flour from above. The first floor ("stones floor") housed

[60] Trout, "Peacher's Mill...," 31.



Figure 20. Peacher's Mill millrace. The millrace is currently clogged with dead wood and other flood debris. (Photo by Rob Brzostowski)

the millstones and was supported by three heavy timbers that were inserted into the wall (Figure 22). A corner fireplace suggests the mill office was located on the first floor as well (Figure 23). The second floor typically would have housed grain bins that fed unprocessed grain down to the millstones below, grist cooling apparatus, tools, cooperage supplies, and other lightweight items such as empty barrels and sacks. The second story loft or attic would have been where the gear shafts, pulleys, and conveyor belt systems terminated.[61]

Approximately 200' southeast of the mill on a small rise are additional ruins associated with John Peacher's milling operation at Short Hill. The stone foundation of what is generally considered the miller's house is 27' by 28' with an exposed half basement present on the northeast side (Figure 24). Adjacent to the miller's house are the stone foundations of two additional buildings, set end to end, the whole measuring 35' by 12'. Also nearby are the remains of a small outbuilding, possibly a springhouse, and numerous stone walls of varying heights. While the function of these various structures is nowhere indicated in the historic record, Trout points out that an operation the size of Peacher's might have supported a warehouse, a blacksmith shop, a cooper's shop, stables, or even a small saw mill. Archeological research is needed to determine the use of the buildings. Fortunately, given their elevation above the river, it is possible that the miller's house and its outbuildings have avoided much of the damaging effects of flooding.

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[61] Gilbert, *Where Industry Failed: Water-Powered Mills at Harpers Ferry, West Virginia*, (Pictorial Histories Publishing Company, Charleston, West Virginia, 1984), 16; Trout, "Peacher's Mill...," 31.





Figure 21. Peacher's Mill ruins. The 2½-story mill had walls 30" thick. (Photos by Rob Brzostowski)



Figure 22. Timbers were inserted into these square joist pockets to support the millstones on the first floor. (Photo by Rob Brzostowski)

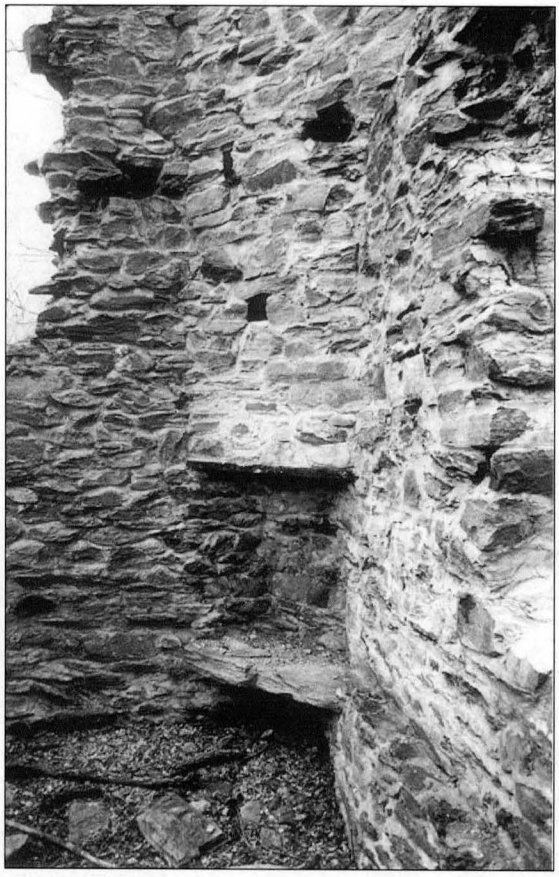


Figure 23. A fireplace in the southeast corner of the first floor suggests the mill office was located there. (Photo by Rob Brzostowski)



Figure 24. Miller's house foundation. (NPS photo by David Tucker)

About 450' up Falls Branch on the east side of the road trace is a dam of dry-laid stone (Figure 25). Though no documentation has been found on this feature, the dam almost certainly dates to 1825, the original period of construction of the Peacher's Mill complex. Based on the dam's distance from the mill complex below and its relative elevation, it may have provided water for an additional sluiceway that led either to the miller's house or the mill itself. The dam currently ranges from 5' to 8' tall and spans Falls Branch at 32' wide.

Further up Falls Branch, near the current NPS gate about ¼ mile south of Peacher's Mill, is the site of Shover's distillery. According to a Leesburg newspaper report in 1827, "*four copper stills have been installed by George Shover near Peacher's Mill.*"[62] Operating a distillery near a mill had certain advantages, especially in the form of a ready supply of corn mash. The closeness of Shover's Distillery and Peacher's Mill is depicted on Civil War-period map (Figure 26).

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[62] *Genius of Liberty*, 1827 fragment, as quoted in Scheel, "Irish Corner...," B-1.



Figure 25. Dam on Falls Branch. (Photo by Rob Brzostowski)

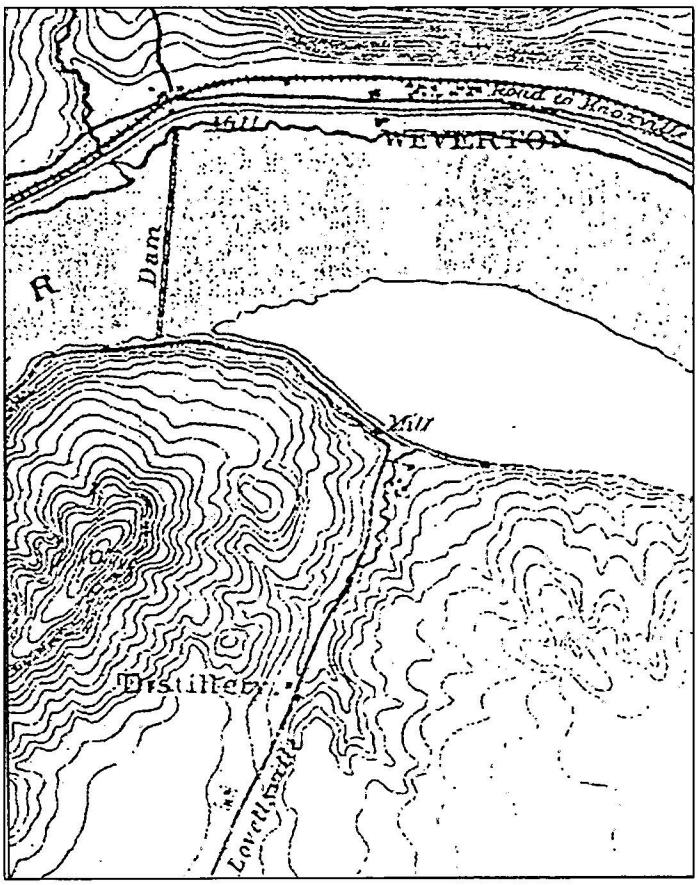


Figure 26. This detail of a Civil War-period map shows the location of Shover's Distillery in relation to Peacher's Mill. (O.R. Atlas, Plate XIII)

During the early years of its operation, Peacher's Mill served primarily the needs of the local farming community, grinding wheat, corn, and rye for the nearby farmers of Short Hill and Lovettsville. With the completion of River Road in 1832, the mill came to occupy the key intersection of the Falls Branch road and the main route to the Neersville area and Harpers Ferry. The proximity of Peacher's Mill to Stump's Landing and Waltman's heavy ferry at Berlin also provided a connection (after 1833) to the newly built C&O Canal and B&O Railroad systems. This connection allowed Peacher to do business with those outside of the local area. According to some reports, large shipments of imported grain received from C&O canal boats were transported by wagon to Peacher's Mill.[63]

Despite the advantageous location of Peacher's Mill, and perhaps due to personal financial stress caused by a nationwide economic depression in the mid-1830s, John Peacher decided to sell his Loudoun County mill. On February 25, 1836, an item in the *Virginia Free Press* informed its readers: "*John Peacher, Sr. selling mill on Potomac 4 miles below Harpers Ferry...*"[64] When the mill finally sold almost three years later, the sale price was only $4,250. The low sales price and evidence from property tax records indicates the mill building and/or its machinery was in poor condition. Through 1838, the mill was consistently valued at $1,500, but then dropped in value in 1839 to $800.

Robert Y. Wilson of Baltimore purchased Peacher's Mill in 1839. Wilson was a key financial backer of Caspar Wever and the Wever Manufacturing Company. Wilson's purchase was one in name only; the guiding force behind the acquisition was Caspar Wever. Inspired by the factory town of Lowell, Massachusetts, and the rapid developments taking place over at Harpers Ferry, Wever formulated a plan to develop his own industrial community at a site across the Potomac from Peacher's Mill. A voracious reader and informed businessman, Wever surely understood that his Maryland land along the falls of the Potomac, or "Weverton" as it was aptly named, held the same industrial potential (Figure 27). Wever had strong money-making ambitions as well and this led him to acquire much real estate, speculating on a big return in the future.[65]

Over on the Loudoun shore, Wever's plans included expanding the production of the Peacher's Mill complex. Deeds indicate he had the mill refurbished shortly after it was purchased and census records suggest a miller and two assistants were hired to oversee the day-to-day operations. Then, in 1847, the Wever Manufacturing Company initiated condemnation hearings against the lands of John Everhart, Sarah (Everhart) Wenner, and Samuel E. Washington, in order to widen the Peacher's Mill millrace. The company's stated reason for the improvement was to "*build other machines and engines...and to supply the same with water by enlarging the present race or canal.*"[66] During this time Peacher's Mill was known variously as "Wever's Merchant Mill," "Weverton Flour Mill," and "Canal Mill."

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[63] Weatherly, *The German Settlement*, 104.

[64] *Virginia Free Press*, February 25, 1836, p2c4.

[65] Peter Maynard, *Wever of the B&O Railroad and Weverton,* (The Brunswick Historical Press, Brunswick, Maryland, 1996), 94-95.

[66] LC Order Book 10 (1847), 354-356, 374, 386, 394.

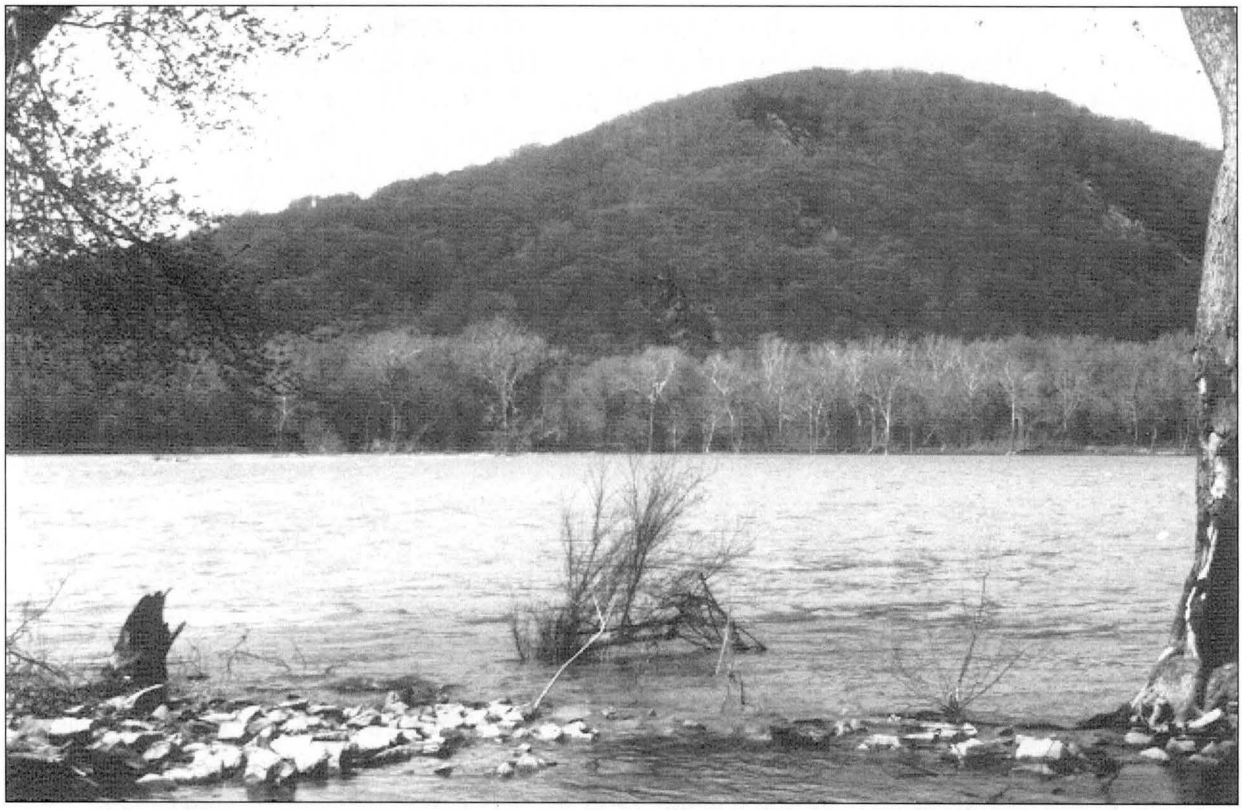


Figure 27. Weverton, as seen from Peacher's Mill millrace. Caspar Wever's dream of establishing a large industrial community at this site across the Potomac was never realized. (Photo by Rob Brzostowski)

At the same time as improvements were made to the millrace, Caspar Wever was negotiating with the C&O Canal Company to have a dam built across the Potomac. Needed to divert water to power the mills on both shores, the dam was to occupy the same rocky ledge that had supported the Everharts' fish dam since prehistoric times (Figure 28). The fish dam was removed and C&O personnel began work on the new dam. Completed in 1849, the Weverton dam consisted of wood-covered rock cribbing secured with iron bolts to the bedrock in the river.

The Wever Manufacturing Company, despite its name, was not directly involved in manufacturing. Instead, it was devoted to the development and management of waterpower and to the sale and lease of adjacent real estate. Weverton Manufacturing's own insufficient capital and their excessive lease rates discouraged other companies from investing in Weverton. As a result, Wever's dream of establishing an industrial village never fully materialized. A flood of unprecedented proportions struck in 1852 from which Weverton never fully recovered. A number of liens were placed on company assets to ensure the payment of company debts. Liens were attached to Peacher's Mill, and when the debts were settled to the satisfaction of the courts in 1860, the property was sold by the Sheriff of Loudoun for a mere five dollars.[67] The mill seems to have remained in production, although at a reduced capacity, until sometime shortly after the Civil War.

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[67] LC DB 5T:209, dated December 16, 1860.

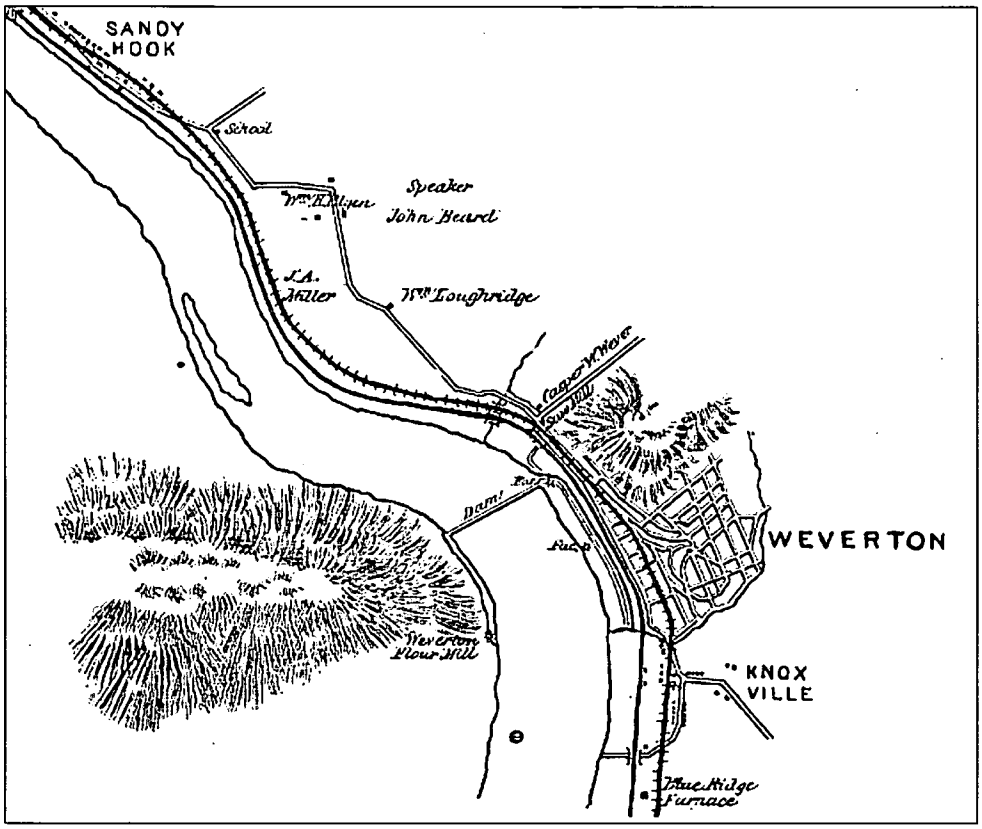


Figure 28. Detail of S. Howell Brown's 1852 map of Jefferson County, Virginia. The Weverton Manufacturing Company's dam diverted water to power mills on both shores. (Library of Congress)

Quarrying

Though stone quarrying was never pursued on a large commercial scale on Short Hill, it nevertheless fulfilled local needs. Documentary evidence for quarrying on Short Hill is found in a deed agreement between two Dixie Bottom property owners, construction reports for the River Road, and advertisements in local newspapers. Other indications of quarrying are the actual physical remains indicative of this limited industry. There are what appear to be at least two abandoned quarries on the NPS Short Hill tract.

The earliest mention of stone-cutting activities comes in the form of an 1816 agreement between miller John Conard, Jr. and his brother-in-law/neighbor Canrad Neer. Neer agreed to allow Conard to buy rock on Neer's lots so that the miller could fashion millstones.[68] This arrangement was significant as it illustrates a growing self-reliance by area millers that was absent in earlier colonial days. Up to this time, the most popular millstones were French burr-stones, which had

[68] LC DB 2U:161, 163; both dated March 15, 1816. There is anecdotal evidence of earlier quarrying (see section on George Washington).

to be imported and often at great costs.[69] The Short Hill millstone quarry may have been utilized sporadically into the mid-19th century, when merchant Philip Coons became owner of the property. Newspaper advertisements indicate Coons was selling grindstones at his store in Harpers Ferry.[70]

Significant quarrying appears to have occurred along River Road near Peacher's millrace and the Weverton dam site (Figure 29). Records associated with the construction of River Road indicate quarrying and blasting occurred there to make room for the road along the narrow shoreline. The quarry may also have been the principal source of building stone for the nearby Peacher's Mill and its attendant miller's house and outbuildings. Furthermore, the quarry would have been a convenient source for materials necessary for the frequent repairs made to the mill, the Weverton dam, as well as the structures across the river at the Weverton town site. A smaller quarry is located several hundred feet east of the rock walls found at the Peacher's Mill complex.

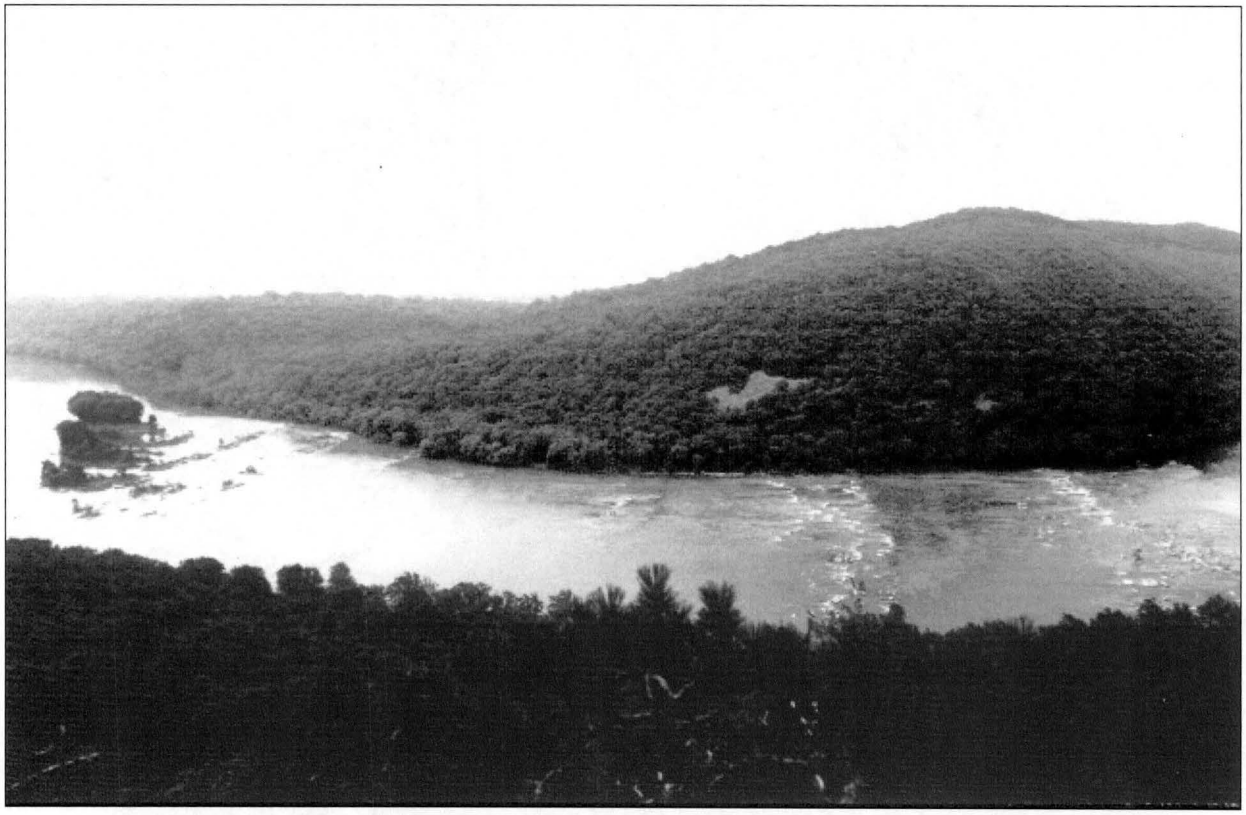


Figure 29. The bare spot on the side of Short Hill Mountain indicates the location of past quarrying activities. (Photo by Rob Brzostowski)

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[69] Dave Gilbert, *Where Industry Failed...*, 13.

[70] *Virginia Free Press*, December 19, 1844, p4c3.

Wood Lots and Timber Management

Plentiful quantities of timber on Short Hill awaited the first settlers. Just how valuable a commodity the wood was can be gleaned from a 1785 lease agreement between farmer Jacob Sullifrank and owner George William Fairfax. In the lease, Fairfax included some very specific conditions regarding the woods and its management during Sullifrank's tenancy. In fact, Sullifrank could not use or dispose of any timber or wood without Fairfax's consent. Neither was Sullifrank to allow any "*waste or spoil to be made of the woods, underwoods, trees or timber and if at any time any timber fit for carpenters or coopers use, or rails should be cut down in clearing ground or otherwise, the same shall all be worked up and not suffered to rot or perish under the penalty of five pounds over and above the value of such timber...for every such offense.*"[71] A final stipulation required Sullifrank to leave standing in one body at least seventeen acres (20%) of his eighty-five acre farm. The wood from these acres would have been utilized to support and maintain the farm, providing materials to construct and repair the dwelling, outbuildings, and fences, as well as serving as fuel for heat.

The Fairfax woodlands situated on the south side of Shenandoah River, across the river from the armory, were early recognized as a valuable source of wood. A constant supply of wood and charcoal was needed to heat the armory workshops and fire the iron smelting furnaces. In 1809 a contract was made with Ferdinando Fairfax whereby Fairfax allowed the armory to cut 1,400 cords of wood on his Shannondale Manor land "*from the mouth of the Shenandoah to Nicewanger's place...*," a property adjacent to the Piedmont Manor containing the Short Hill tract. Two years later, in 1811, Ferdinando Fairfax offered to sell to the United States (also for the use of the armory) the right to cut wood from the Loudoun Heights portion of Shannondale Manor for ten dollars per acre.[72]

About the same time Fairfax was completing these deals with the U.S. government, he began dividing up his Piedmont Manor tract and selling off parcels specifically as wood lots. John Matthias, the official Loudoun County surveyor, was employed to mark off several contiguous lots on the east side of Short Hill Mountain. The western boundary line of these woodlots was the crest of Short Hill Mountain and it remains a boundary for the current NPS Short Hill tract. Elsewhere on Short Hill, an 1812 deed to Jacob Waltman, Sr.'s "*wood lott*" describes the land as "*...Chiefly in wood and timber some of it large and fine...*" A portion of this tract apparently remained wooded at least through the late 1870s, as subsequent deeds refer to the property as the "Washington Wood lot."[73]

By 1829 the armory obtained all of its firewood and charcoal from Loudoun Heights and an estimated 2,000 wagonloads per year was brought over to Harpers Ferry. Starting in 1835, the work was contracted out to individuals who furnished woodchoppers and also hauled the wood

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[71] LC DB P:187, dated March 20, 1785.

[72] Philip R. Smith, "History of Loudoun Heights, 1813-1880," (Harpers Ferry National Monument Research Report, Project No. HF-75A, 1959), 1.

[73] LC DB 2P:313, dated June 1, 1812 and LC DB 6L:374, dated November 2, 1877.

to the armory.[74] Among those contractors was the prominent Harpers Ferry merchant, Philip Coons. Coons owned several large farms, one of which, known as the Still House Farm, consisted of 309 acres on the west side of Short Hill in the Dixie Bottom area. Armory documents show that Coons entered into contracts with the U.S. for delivery of charcoal and wood from as early as 1829 to at least until 1843.

Both the U.S. Armory and private landholders were continually bothered by trespassers on their wood lots. Pilfering of wood supplies on Loudoun Heights had become a problem as early as 1818 and overseers and rangers were eventually hired to patrol the woodlands.[75] In 1829 the armory superintendent issued warnings in the local newspaper against trespassing on government wood lots. Philip Coons placed similar public notices forbidding trespassing and the pilfering of wood "*on his land in Loudoun two miles below Harpers Ferry.*"[76]

Coons was involved in other entrepreneurial activities that he hoped would increase the value of his Still House Farm. As president of the Shenandoah Bridge Company he spearheaded the effort to replace the Shenandoah ferry with a toll bridge. The bridge became a reality in 1844 and was soon returning a handsome profit on initial investments. An account in the *Spirit of Jefferson* states, "*It is acknowledged by all who are acquainted with the subject that* [the bridge project] *would have failed, but for the great energy and untiring zeal with which Mr. Philip Coons exerted himself.*"[77] Then, in 1851, now president of the newly formed Hillsborough & Harpers Ferry Turnpike Company, Coons granted free passage for armory employees and waived tolls for wood and coal shipments to the armory. Both of these efforts, the bridge and turnpike, occurred as the wood supply on Loudoun Heights was nearly exhausted and the armory was actively seeking other sources of timber. Had he not been forced to sell his Loudoun farm a few years later, it is likely Coons' Short Hill land would have been valuable indeed (Figure 30).

Logging on Short Hill never seems to have reached a large scale. With the destruction and closure of the armory during the Civil War, the primary consumer of the area's woodlands was gone. It was not until the early 20th century that some clearing of timber on the Short Hill tract occurred.

In 1903, Charles E. Roach purchased the old Coons Still House Farm tract. The following year he sold a fifty-acre portion of the property. The deed for that transaction specifies that Roach retains the timber rights for one year and that he reserves a right-of-way "*until the balance of the tract is cleared of wood and timber and that fences are to be kept closed during wood hauling.*"[78] It is unknown whether Roach was associated with the Roach Lumber Company that appears

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[74] Smith, "History of Loudoun Heights...," 7.

[75] Smith, "History of Loudoun Heights...," 9.

[76] Smith, "History of Loudoun Heights...," 9; *Virginia Free Press* December 2, 1829, p4c3; *Virginia Free Press* November 22, 1838, p3c5; *Virginia Free Press* September 15, 1842.

[77] *Spirit of Jefferson*, January 10, 1845, p2c6.

[78] LC DB 7Y:325, dated April 15, 1904.

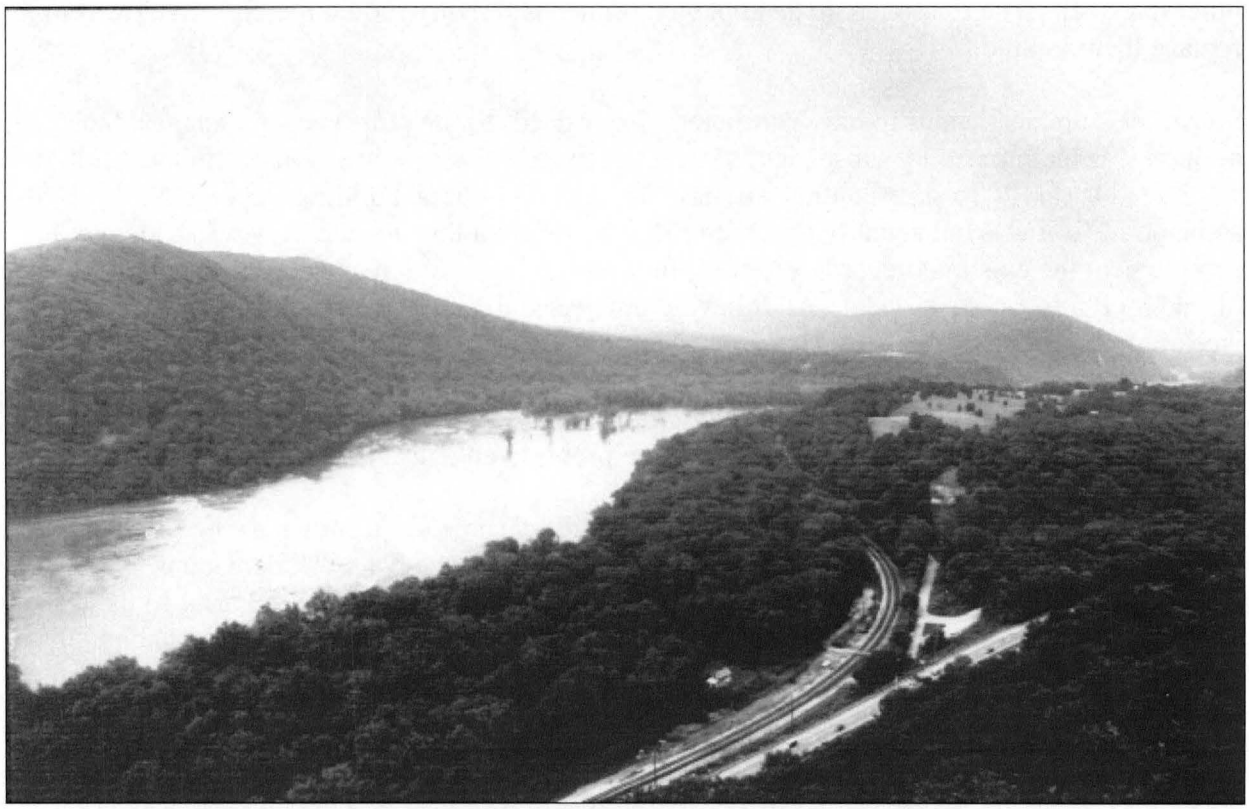


Figure 30. Much of the Dixie Bottom land between Short Hill (at left) and Loudoun Heights (high ground at right) was owned by Philip Coons from 1834 to 1855. Documents show that Coons entered into contracts with the U.S. Armory for delivery of charcoal and wood. (Photo by Rob Brzostowski)

in local advertisements beginning in 1909. Road traces located throughout the NPS Short Hill tract were probably associated with the logging of this period.

Orchards And Distilleries

The growing of orchards began in Dixie Bottom at an early date. The above mentioned Sullifrank-Fairfax lease agreement of 1785 contained, among other things, a provision that compelled Sullifrank to establish an orchard and keep it in "*good and sufficient repair.*" Fairfax's requirement for his tenant to plant an orchard was actually a fairly standard clause in many leases of the period. Fairfax wanted his lands to be developed and he early recognized the value of orchards as a means to do it. He correctly estimated the soil and climate of the area to be especially favorable for orchards. Indeed, since colonial times the orchard industry has prospered and to this day features prominently among the agricultural pursuits of the region.

Sullifrank's lease stated that within two years he was to plant an orchard of 100 winter apple trees and 150 peach trees. The apple trees were to be placed at a minimum of 30' away from each other and the peach trees at least 16' apart. The entire orchard, Fairfax insisted, should then be "*well inclosed with a good, sufficient and lawful fence*" to protect the fruit from horses and

other livestock. The trees were to be kept well pruned and if any should die, Sullifrank was to replace them in kind.[79]

Sullifrank's orchard seems to have prospered. Later deeds to the same property suggest the orchard was maintained by subsequent owners or tenants. For example, James Stubblefield's 1827 deed is careful to state that his purchase includes all houses, buildings, and orchards.[80] At some point (if it was not actually part of Sullifrank's original farm) a distillery was added to complement the existing orchard. Proof for the distillery is found in an advertisement of sale placed by Philip Coons in 1834. After having purchased the property from Stubblefield only one week before, Coons advertised: "*As I have determined to remove to the West, I will offer for sale my Property...I will also sell my FARM and DISTILLERY, situated in Loudoun county, Virginia, within two miles of Harpers-Ferry, on the Potomac River.*"[81] Coons, in fact, did not sell the orchard and distillery at this time. He owned the property until 1856.

During Coons' tenure as owner, the orchard and distillery came to be known as the Still House Farm and the surrounding land was commonly called Still House Flats. Under Coons' management from 1834 to 1856, improvements were made at the Still House Farm, so that by 1855 it contained three dwelling houses, a stable, barn, spring house, still house, and about 500 apple trees. The 309-acre tract contained approximately sixteen acres of orchard land while the remainder was largely in timber. Several stone foundations and one abandoned and dilapidated frame dwelling are found on the property today (Figure 31). The various structures are of undetermined age, but some potentially date back to Sullifrank's tenancy beginning in 1785.

Coons, in one of his many commercial enterprises, sold groceries in Harpers Ferry and the apples from Still House Farm may well have been sold at his store on Shenandoah Street. A testimonial in the *Virginia Free Press* newspaper, remarking on a rather large piece of fruit, states: "*Have been presented with an apple by Mr. P. Coons. Measures 14 inches in circumference. Comes from his Still House Farm 2 miles from Harpers Ferry in Loudoun County.*"[82] When Coons' personal property was put up for sale to cover some debts, the inventory included items related to his distillery at Still House Farm, including: "*2 Stills, cups, and* [illegible]; *20 Hogshead for Distilling*; *20 Cider, Molasses, liquor & fish barrels*; *6 Barrels of Cider & Vinegar*; *2 Empty half barrels*; *1 Cider Mill cast iron nuts*; *1 Cast iron Screw Cider Press*; [and] *1 Grindstone & Crank.*"[83]

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[79] LC DB P:187, dated March 20, 1785.

[80] LC DB 3P:152, dated September 5, 1827.

[81] *Virginia Free Press*, March 27, 1834, p3c3. For details of the Stubblefield-Coons transaction, see LC DB 4Q:36, dated March 20, 1834.

[82] *Virginia Free Press*, September 6, 1855, p2c1.

[83] LC DB 5N:335, dated May 12, 1856.





Figure 31. Ruins of the Still House Farm property. The stone foundation is the still house; the frame structure is of undetermined age. (NPS photos by David Tucker)

After Still House Farm passed out of the possession of Philip Coons, references to the orchard and distillery largely disappear from the historical record. However, descriptions of the acreage still characterize some of it as "orchard or hill land" as opposed to the more general "wood lot."

Other distillers are known to have manufactured "moonshine" in the Dixie Bottom area in more modern times (Figure 32). Historian Eugene Scheel reports that Mr. Johnny Nick and his father operated a legal still at the mouth of Piney Branch (site of the NPS Potomac Wayside). The still continued in operation (illegally after Prohibition was ratified in 1920) until 1941, when the Rt. 340 bridge was constructed and the site was no longer as remote as it once had been. Illegal stills were occasionally raided by the law. In 1927, the *Farmer's Advocate* reported that five Prohibition officers raided a moonshine camp in Loudoun County one mile southeast of Harpers Ferry. The raid netted two stills and an unspecified quantity of mash and liquor.[84]

Another local man, Harry "Shorty" Ashbaugh, chose an un-named stream in the Dixie Bottom floodplain for the site of his intermittent moonshining operation. Ashbaugh, who also ferried passengers across the Shenandoah River after the 1936 flood destroyed the old bridge there, lived in a "*close by cabin at the head of the stream.*" A humorous anecdote says that, while he tended his illegal still, his family was instructed to tell anyone who asked, "*He's hunting squirrels up on Short Hill.*" Scheel states that Ashbaugh continued to "hunt" into the early 1950s.[85]

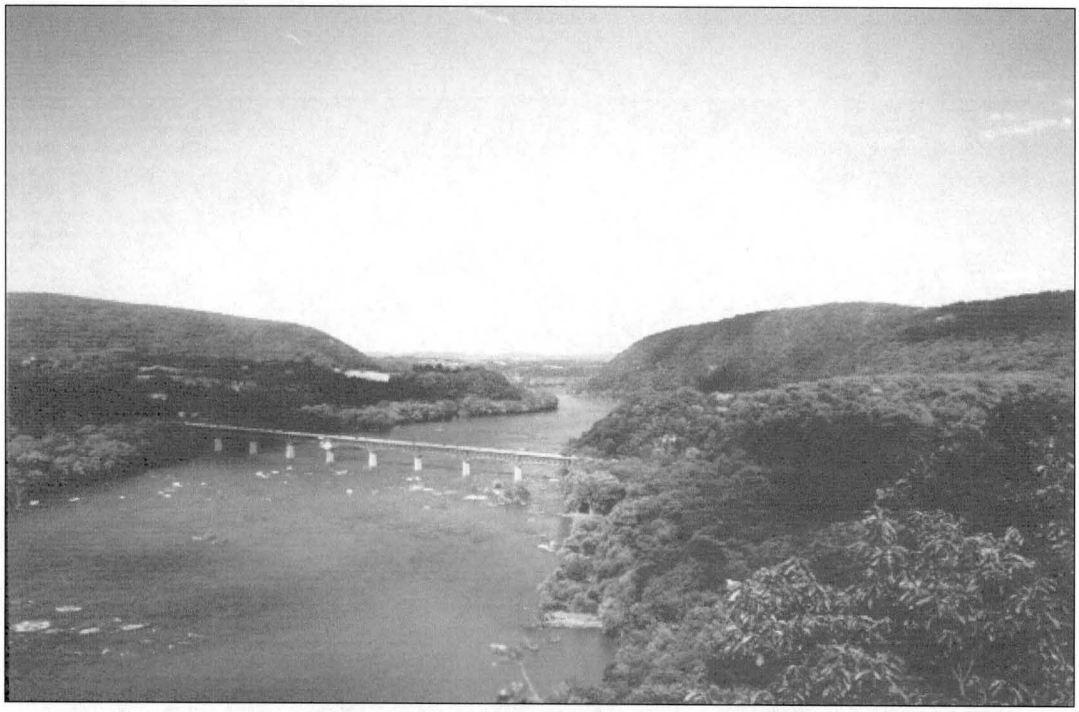


Figure 32. View from Loudoun Heights down the Potomac. Moonshiners are known to have operated in the Dixie Bottom and Potomac Wayside areas. The Potomac Wayside is the located near the bridge landing at right. (Photo by Rob Brzostowski)

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[84] Scheel, *Loudoun Discovered...*, 194-195; *Farmer's Advocate,* April 16, 1927, p1c5.

[85] Scheel, *Loudoun Discovered...*, 195.

Limekiln on Falls Branch

By the year 1780, much of the soil in Loudoun County had become seriously depleted and unproductive. To many farmers the idea of rotating crops was not considered important and their insistent growing of corn or wheat exhausted the soil almost as quickly as tobacco had in the rest of the state. In contrast to the general poor husbandry of their neighbors, the farmers of the Quaker and German settlements of northern Loudoun practiced crop rotation and manuring. In addition to these practices, many German farmers also applied crushed limestone to their fields. Adding lime to the fields balanced the soil conditions and noticeably increased a farmer's yield. The custom was not widely practiced until after 1803 when Loudoun agronomist John Alexander Binns published a popular book on the subject.[86] Binns had first seen the effectiveness of the method during his Revolutionary War service near Philadelphia. The "Pennsylvania Dutch" had brought the tradition with them from Germany and subsequently carried it with them to Virginia.

Testimonials to the effectiveness of Binn's "Loudoun system" soon filled the newspapers. Here and there mills sprang up where limestone could be ground into powder. So great were the increases in yield in Loudoun's wheat country, that farmers wholeheartedly embraced the practice. As a result of this balanced agriculture, harvested grain flooded the mills and was "king" of the region throughout the rest of the 19th century.

In addition to grinding by waterpower, limestone could be burned in a kiln to produce lime. Alternating layers of wood and limestone were laid down inside the kiln. The wood was then burned and the resulting burnt lime was removed through a small opening at the base. One such limekiln is located on the east side of the Falls Branch road, just south of Peacher's Mill (Figure 33). Scheel attributes the construction of this limekiln to the Leesburg firm of Manning and Orr. He states it was built in the 1870s, run by local farmers as a cooperative, and was last fired in the late 1890s.[87] A lack of local limestone may account for the brief period of operation.

Though operation of Peacher's Mill had long before left his family's control, it is possible that John Peacher's grandson was affiliated with the Falls Branch limekiln. The 1910 census lists William H. Peacher's occupation as foreman of a limekiln.[88] Born in 1871, William Peacher would have been a young man during the kiln's brief period of operation. Though it is only speculation, he may have acquired the necessary skills there to become foreman at another later limekiln.

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[86] Frederick Gutheim, *The Potomac*, (Rinehart & Company, Inc., New York, New York, 1949), 171-177.

[87] Scheel, *Loudoun Discovered...*, 127.

[88] 1910 U.S. Census, 166. William H. Peacher's son (William L. Peacher) and two in-laws (Nute Manuel and Edward Manuel) are also listed as limekiln laborers.



Figure 33. Limekiln on Falls Branch. It was in operation from ca. 1870 to ca. 1900. (Photo by Rob Brzostowski)

Springs and Water

It was the availability of water and waterpower that fostered the industrial developments and nurtured the agricultural pursuits around Short Hill. The Potomac River was the obvious source for water to power mills and their machinery, but springs and streams provided the water for household use and for use in the local distilleries. Fresh water springs can be found scattered across Short Hill, but one in particular – Painter's Spring – deserves special mention. Painter's Spring, so-called because of its location on the old Painter family property just south of Peacher's Mill, was well known for its great capacity.

So great was the output of Painter's Spring, that for many years it provided water for the entire town of Brunswick. In 1919, town officials sought to replace their old pump system that drew water directly from the river with a gravity-based system. The new system called for a collector pipeline to run down Short Hill from Painter's Spring, across the Potomac River to Knoxville, where it would then turn and proceed to a reservoir in Brunswick – for a total distance of about two miles (Figure 34).[89] Acting on behalf of the citizens of the town, the mayor negotiated the purchase of the necessary right-of-way and obtained an easement across George W. Kernodle's

[89] Margrabe, *Brunswick...*, 21.

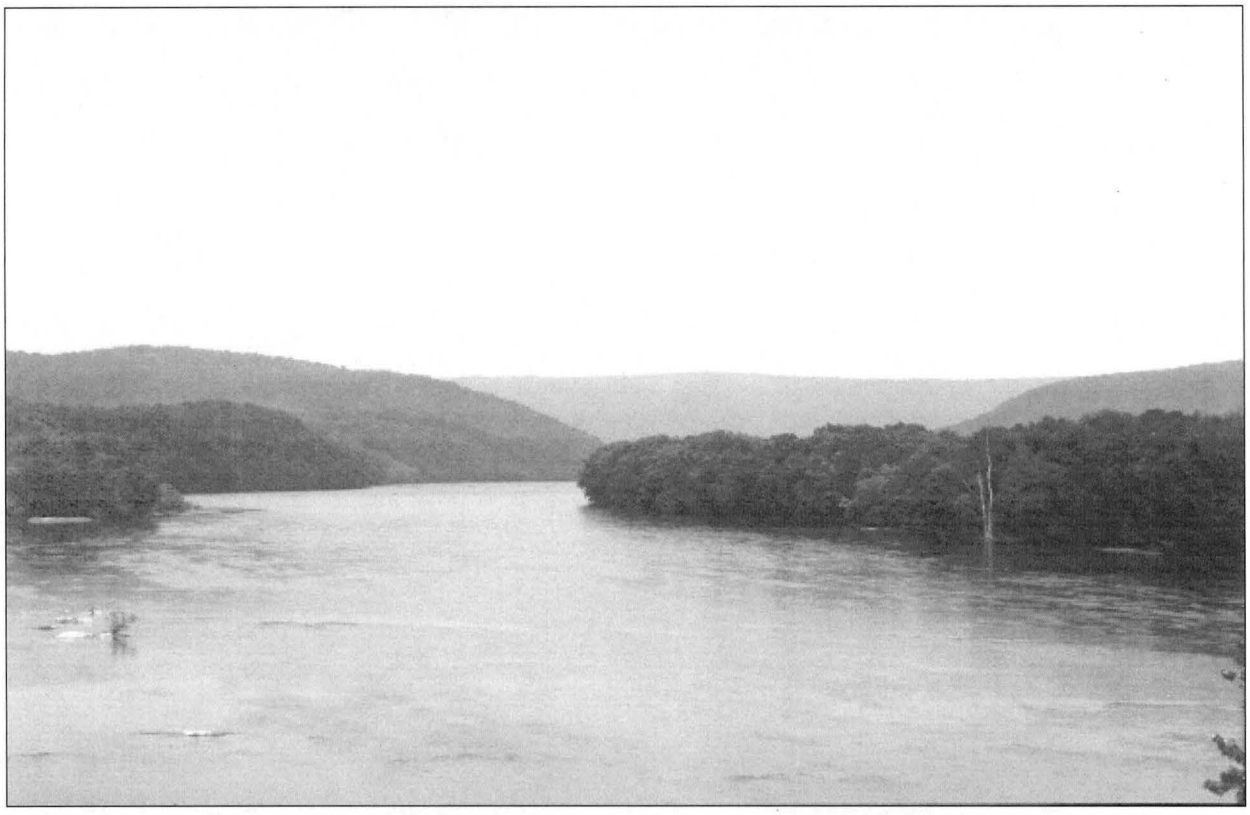


Figure 34. View up the Potomac from the bridge at Brunswick, Maryland. The Town of Brunswick incorporated spring water from Short Hill Mountain (the larger of the hills at left middle ground) into the town's water system. (Photo by Rob Brzostowski)

property.[90] Kernodle had his own plans for the Short Hill tract. In 1925, he began a sustained but unsuccessful campaign to generate hydroelectricity at his Short Hill property. Kernodle envisioned a dam on the Potomac at the northern tip of Short Hill.

Construction of Brunswick's water pipeline started in 1922. Painter's Spring was capped and a 6" cedar pipe wrapped with wires was attached. About fifteen years later, with funding obtained from the Public Works Administration, the cedar pipe was replaced with a 6" steel pipe. The steel pipe is still visible as it approaches the Potomac River, poking through the ground about 12' east of the ruins of Peacher's Mill. This use of the future NPS tract is the last documented development to occur on Short Hill.

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[90] LC DB 10E:299, dated April 18, 1919.

Short Hill and the Civil War

On the eve of the Civil War in 1861, residents of Loudoun County, Virginia were divided in sentiment over the issue of secession. The difference of opinion was largely a result of the nature of the county's early settlement. Germans and Quakers had come down from Pennsylvania to take up small farms in the northern and western portions of the county, while planters of English heritage had settled the eastern and southern portions of the county where they established larger plantation-like holdings. Thus, when faced with the decision to remain with the Union or join the Confederacy, the northern and western sections were predominately pro-Union, while to the south and east the people were equally strong in their Southern views.

On April 17, 1861, five days after the attack on Fort Sumter and the beginning of the war, the Virginia convention met and passed an Ordinance of Secession by a vote of 85 to 55. The ordinance could not become official, however, until ratified by the people in a special referendum. The two delegates from Loudoun had voted against secession in Richmond, but popular opinion had shifted by May 23, 1861 when Loudouners, by a more than 2 to 1 margin, endorsed ratification of the Ordinance.

The results of the referendum in Loudoun show how deeply the county remained divided. The precincts in the northwestern section voted more than 7 to 1 against the ratification, while the eastern and southern precincts voted strongly to support it. Several precincts in southern Loudoun voted unanimously for its adoption. The residents living "Between the Hills," including the populations of Neersville, Turneysville, and the areas on the west side Short Hill, voted in the Waters Precinct. When the results were tallied there, thirty-nine votes were cast against secession and twenty-six in favor. Even though the Waters Precinct neighbored other overwhelmingly unionist precincts, people living in the Short Hill area were still clearly divided.[91]

Virginia's decision to secede had dire consequences for the residents of northwestern Loudoun County. When Maryland failed to join the Confederacy, Loudoun found itself in the dangerous and unenviable position of being a border county. The physical geography of the region left it no protection from invasion. Under average conditions, the Potomac River had multiple fording places that allowed troops to advance through Loudoun during offenses and likewise retreat through it after defeat. Strategic mountain passes in the Blue Ridge also attracted armies and served as critical routes of supply and communication.

The richness of Loudoun's agriculture and quality of its horses and livestock frequently attracted armies of both sides in need of supplies. The presence of the B&O Railroad and nearby Harpers Ferry placed further emphasis on Loudoun as a border county. The strategic importance of the B&O Railroad, and the South's nearly constant attempts to disrupt it, ensured a military presence throughout the war. Though no major engagements occurred in Loudoun, with the exception of the battle of Ball's Bluff, the citizens endured many hardships.

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[91] Fitzhugh Turner, (editor), *Loudoun County and the Civil War: A History and Guide*, (Potomac Press, Leesburg, Virginia, 1961), 12; Scheel, *Loudoun Discovered...*, 203.

Within the boundaries of the NPS Short Hill tract, wartime activities were on a limited scale. Because of its inferior elevation to Maryland Heights and South Mountain, Short Hill Mountain was not considered a critical position to hold (Figure 35). Picket forces and scouting parties probably entered the area from time to time, but there is no documentation supporting any sustained occupation. Trout suggests the possibility that some of the rock "walls" near Peacher's Mill may have served some military purpose, as the site commands the Loudoun shoreline approaches to and from Harpers Ferry.[92]

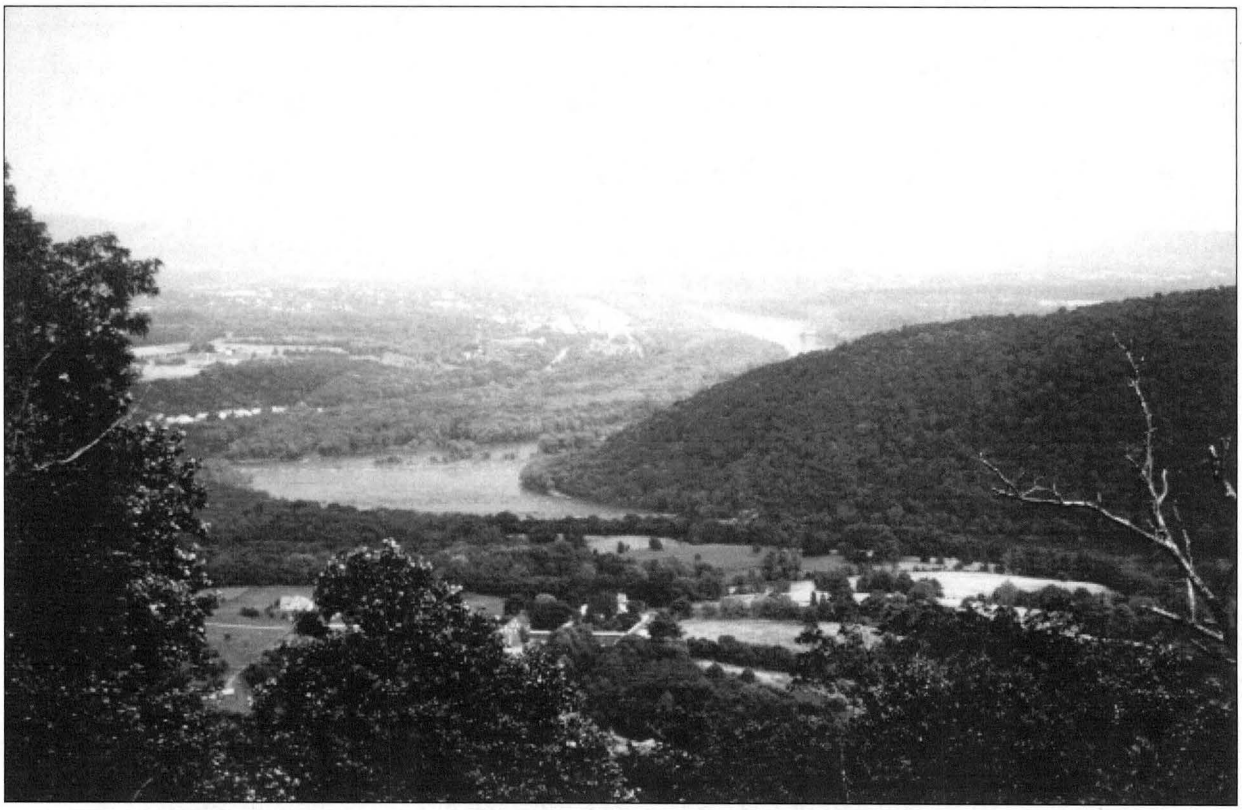


Figure 35. View of Short Hill from the 100-Pounder Battery on Maryland Heights. Because of its inferior elevation to Maryland Heights, Short Hill Mountain was not considered a critical position to hold. (Photo by Rob Brzostowski)

Certainly the River Road from Harpers Ferry to Lovettsville was an important east-west route of travel for both sides. On February 24, 1862, five companies of the 28th Pennsylvania Infantry and a four gun battery under the command of Colonel John W. Geary crossed the Shenandoah River from Harpers Ferry and occupied Loudoun Heights. By February 27, they were joined by the remaining companies of the regiment supported by another four guns of the battery plus a squadron of the First Michigan Cavalry. On the following morning they marched towards Lovettsville along the River Road. In his report of the movement, Geary wrote "*...along the route* [we] *were greeted with enthusiastic demonstrations of joy and manifestations of Union feeling.*"[93]

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[92] Trout, "Peacher's Mill...," 33.

Geary's forces occupied Lovettsville where he established his headquarters. He obviously received a similar welcome to the one given him as he rounded Short Hill. Regarding Lovettsville, he wrote: "*The majority of the inhabitants and many from the surrounding country hailed our presence with gladness, and willingly took the oath of allegiance and claimed the protection of our government.*" But there were hostile elements as well. Finding that the enemy intended to harass his forces, Geary dispatched a detachment of infantry with one gun to the crest of "*Short Mountain*" to protect his flank. Though their position on Short Hill is not specifically stated, it may be assumed the detachment was near Mr. Christian Nicewarner's farm, for Nicewarner's diary entry for March 1, 1862 states: "*Federal troops came to our house. Taken prisoner by Col. Geary.*"

Christian Nicewarner, in his early forties when the war began, lived on a farm on the east side of Short Hill Mountain a few miles west of Lovettsville. Other Nicewarners, including his father, lived on the west side of Short Hill and Loudoun Heights. Christian Nicewarner kept a diary from 1861 to 1877, recording nearby events as he saw or experienced them. His wartime entries are short and mostly devoid of commentary or opinion, but they nevertheless provide a unique local perspective on the events of the Civil War.

Naturally, most often Nicewarner's diary entries record the things that effected him personally: the several occasions his horses were stolen; the torching of his father's barn and his own barn during the disastrous "Burning Raid" of 1864; and the capture or death of soldiers from local families. Other entries concern the goings-on in nearby communities. For instance, Nicewarner notes the destruction of bridges and buildings at Harpers Ferry in June 1861 and the movements of troops associated with the Federal occupation of Lovettsville in February 1862. He makes note of the burning of the bridge and canal boats at Berlin and the frequent episodes of guerilla warfare that occurred all around him.

Another class of Nicewarner's diary entries documents happenings that, without the benefit of today's hindsight, might seem mundane. For example, he observes Confederate cavalry massing in Lovettsville for two straight days, September 4 – 5, 1862, followed by "Stonewall" Jackson's army, unaware that they will soon take part in the siege and capture of Harpers Ferry and the horrific battle of Antietam. His entry for July 8, 1863: "*Fight at Gettysburg*" (the battle took place July 1-3) gives some indication how slow news could be to reach more rural areas. Taken as a whole, Christian Nicewarner's diary reflects how the Short Hill population experienced the Civil War.

Guerilla Warfare and the "Burning Raid"

In common with other border areas during the conflict, Loudoun County was the scene of much partisan activity on both sides. It has been claimed by some that the activities of Confederate partisan troops in northern and western Virginia, especially those of Colonel John S. Mosby, may have prevented a Union victory in the summer or fall of 1864. While there is no doubt that the disruptions of communications and supply lines was effective, there were many Southerners

[93] U.S. War Department, *War of the Rebellion: Official Records...*, Series I, Vol. V, 512.

who were critical of the partisan tactics. Some saw them as the cause of much unnecessary suffering and loss.

Mosby was the best known of the partisan commanders that operated in northwestern Loudoun, an area that came to be known as "Mosby's Confederacy." Originally an enlisted man and officer in the 1st Virginia Cavalry, he eventually joined Colonel J.E.B. Stuart's staff as a scout. After paving the way for Stuart's famous ride around McClellan during the Peninsula Campaign of 1862, Mosby was rewarded with the authority to raise a band of partisans for service in northern Virginia. Mosby's "Rangers," along with Major Elijah White's "Comanches," were a great nuisance to the Northern field commanders.

On the Union side, Captain Samuel C. Means commanded the Independent Loudoun Rangers. In conjunction with Major Henry Cole's Maryland Cavalry Battalion, the Loudoun Rangers engaged in scouting and patrolling in Loudoun County and along the Potomac and Shenandoah Rivers.[94] In this duty they frequently clashed with the commands of Mosby and White. Skirmishes occurred between the forces around Harpers Ferry, Lovettsville, Waterford, Brunswick, and Hillsboro.

Of all the personalities of the Civil War period, none is more central to the history (and folklore) of Short Hill than Confederate cavalryman John W. Mobberly. It is an understatement to say that Mobberly was a legendary figure (Figure 36). According to his tombstone in the cemetery of Salem Methodist Church, Mobberly was twenty-years old at the time of his "assassination" in 1865. His story, much romanticized and exaggerated, touches on the Short Hill country around Harpers Ferry, Lovettsville, Hillsboro, and the nearby villages of Maryland and West Virginia.



Figure 36. Confederate cavalryman, John W. Mobberly. Stories of Mobberly's wartime activities in the Short Hill area have been exaggerated and romanticized. (NPS, courtesy of Helen Cooke, Leesburg)

Most of what is known about the Neersville native comes from reports written after the Civil War and there is little consistency to these accounts. In them, Mobberly is said to be either a private, a lieutenant, or a captain. He is variously reported to be a member of White's Comanches, Mosby's Rangers, or else operating independently with no allegiance whatsoever. Depending on the account, he was either a bushwacker and ruthless murderer or he was a fearless cavalier, aiding people in need, and idolized by area women.[95] No doubt the truth lies somewhere in between the sharply contrasting claims.

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[94] Turner, *Loudoun County and the Civil War...*, 47.

[95] See Richard Crouch's definitive biography of Mobberly, "*'Rough-Riding Scout': The Story of John W. Mobberly, Loudoun's Own Civil War Guerrilla Hero.*" (1996).

Loudoun historian Eugene Scheel places the Mobberly homeplace at the junction of the northern spur of the Egg Path trail and the current Branch River Road. Mobberly and his mother Polly were neighbors of the Rileys, and James H. Riley (father of Abner Riley, the entrepreneur of the Egg Path in later days) was one of Mobberly's marauders.[96] Mobberly and his men supposedly had a hideout somewhere on Short Hill Mountain, for that was the direction from which they always swept down and attacked.

Years after the war, an anonymous local resident confessed that he and other members of Mobberly's gang had abducted a prominent Unionist from his home and staked him out to die of exposure on Short Hill Mountain. John W. Forsythe, a veteran of the Independent Loudoun Rangers, recorded in his 1892 memoirs that "*a number of skeletons*" were found on Short Hill at the end of the war.[97] And though sources disagree, the Still House Farm may be the site of the capture of "French Bill," a notorious Union deserter who joined Mobberly's ranks. Mobberly himself was killed in an ambush on April 5, 1865, at the Potterfield farm on the east side of Short Hill. Christian Nicewarner's diary notes the event, "*Mobley* [sic] *killed at S. Potterfield's*" as well as Confederate retribution two days later: "*S. Potterfield's barn burned by Rebels.*"

If the legends of Mobberly's cruelty are even remotely accurate, it is no wonder that Union leaders desperately wanted to capture or kill the Confederate partisan forces. The aggressiveness of Mobberly, Mosby, and White's men caused much annoyance to Union troops. Unfortunately for the non-combatant element of Loudoun's population, the retaliatory acts of the frustrated Union commanders led to the systematic destruction of much of the area surrounding Short Hill.

When General Philip Sheridan opened his Shenandoah Valley Campaign in 1864, Mosby immediately began harassing his supply lines. On August 16, 1864, General Grant telegraphed instructions to Sheridan: "*If you can possibly spare a division of cavalry, send them into Loudoun County to destroy and carry off the crops, animals, negroes, and all men under fifty years of age capable of bearing arms...In this way you will get many of Mosby's men.*"[98] Sheridan, busy with his operations in the Shenandoah Valley, did not act immediately on Grant's instructions, but on November 26, 1864, he sent the following ominous communication to his superiors: "*...I will soon commence on Loudoun County, and let them know there is a God in Israel.*"[99]

One day later, Sheridan issued orders to Brevet Major General Wesley Merritt to begin an operation against the guerrillas in the large area bounded on the west by the Shenandoah River, on the south by the Manassas Gap Railroad, on the east by the Bull Run mountain range, and on the north by the Potomac River. To capture the partisans and deprive the rest of forage, Sheridan ordered Merritt to burn all barns and mills and their contents, and drive off all livestock. He was, however, to ensure that no harm was done to the citizens and that no dwellings were burned.

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[96] Scheel, *Loudoun Discovered...*, 189; Scheel, "Irish Corner...," B-1, B-3.

[97] Steve Meserve, "Conflicting Portraits of a Rebel," *Washington Times*, December 7, 2002.

[98] as quoted in Turner, *Loudoun County and the Civil War...*, 54.

[99] as quoted in Jeffry D. Wert, *Mosby's Rangers,* (Simon and Schuster, New York, New York, 1990), 260-261.

Merritt was given five days to complete the task.[100] The order led to great destruction of property in Loudoun County and the episode became known as the "Burning Raid."

As part of this raid, on November 30, 1864, two regiments of the Reserve Brigade commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Caspar Crowninshield moved north "between the hills" to the Dixie Bottom area, passed along River Road to Peacher's Mill, and then joined up with other Union forces at Lovettsville (Figure 37). In a detailed report of the Reserve Brigade's operations, Crowninshield listed as destroyed 230 barns, 8 mills, 1 distillery, 10,000 tons of hay, and 25,000 bushels of grain. Listed as captured were 87 horses, 474 beef-cattle, and 100 sheep.[101] Farmer/diarist Christian Nicewarner lost all his livestock and his entire crop when his barn was set afire.[102]



Figure 37. U.S. Lieutenant Colonel Caspar Crowninshield. Crowninshield commanded two regiments of the Reserve Brigade during the notorious "Burning Raid." (U.S. Army Military History Institute)

Though Crowninshield states that the order to burn *all* mills and barns was literally carried out, documentation suggests that Peacher's Mill was spared. Loudoun County personal property taxes for 1865 routinely list "*damage by burning*," yet no such entry is made for the mill and its assessed value remains constant. Peacher's Mill may have been spared because it's owner, Samuel B. Preston of Knoxville, Maryland, was a loyal Unionist. It is believed that Shover's Distillery, located about ¼ mile south of Peacher's Mill, may have been the one distillery listed as destroyed by Crowninshield's Reserve Brigade during the raid.

Aside from bringing much misery to the local citizens, many of whom had Union sympathies anyway, it appears the raid was ineffective in curtailing the activities of the Confederate partisans. In his official report, Brevet Major General Merritt explained that the guerrillas were very cautious to avoid his men while they carried out their incendiary duty. Furthermore, the rebels were able to avoid capture because: "*the sides of the mountain bordering Loudoun Valley are practicable throughout their extent for horsemen, and the guerrillas, being few in numbers, mounted on fleet horses and thoroughly conversant with the country, had every advantage of my men.*"[103] Short Hill Mountain, it would seem, was a good place to hide out as only about a dozen of Mosby's men were captured in the entire operation.

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[100] War Department, *Official Records...*, Series I, Volume XLIII, Part I, 671.

[101] Ibid, 673.

[102] Wert, *Mosby's Rangers*, 262.

[103] War Department, *Official Records...*, Series I, Volume XLIII, Part I, 672.

Official estimates of the damages inflicted during the five-day Burning Raid exceeded $1 million dollars. After the war, at least 208 Union-sympathizing residents of Loudoun County filed claims against the government for payment of damages caused by Union soldiers. John and Christian Nicewarner were among the claimants. In his last will and testament, John Nicewarner bequeathed $100 to his grandson "*in consideration of his services rendered me during the late Rebellion and for assisting me in getting up my account against the United States for property taken by the United States troops.*" The $100 gift was conditional on whether the government accepted the claim. This fact and other items of the will suggest that John Nicewarner had very few assets to pass on to his family.[104] Christian Nicewarner's diary entry for January 27, 1865 simply states: "*Sent claim to Washington for barns burned.*"

Such claims, when the government made payment on them, helped Loudouners rebuild after the war. The transition back to "normalcy" actually came easier to Loudoun County than it did in other parts of the South. One reason for this quicker recovery was the nature of Loudoun's population. Before the war began, Loudoun enjoyed a booming agricultural economy. The main products – wheat and corn – did not require the large number of slaves that the tobacco and cotton-growing areas did. In a trend going back to the mid-18th century, slaves made up less than 5% of the total population in northwestern Loudoun (compared to 30-40% in the eastern reaches of the county).[105] Thus when the Emancipation Proclamation freed their slaves, the individual slave owners here did not suffer the economic loss felt in some other places. Small-sized farms were able to resume levels of previous production more quickly during the Reconstruction period.

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[104] Loudoun County Will Book (WB) 2Z:25, written March 18, 1873, probated April 14, 1874.

[105] Phillips, *Historian's Guide...*, 392.

The 20th Century and the National Park Service

In April 1914, a reporter from the *Baltimore Sun* related an incredible story to a fellow reporter from the *Farmer's Advocate*. Two men from Harpers Ferry, he said, had placed a wager on a footrace from Shepherd Gatrell's Hotel to the top of Maryland Heights. The winner of the bet, the reporter claimed, had reached the top in a blazing six minutes and five seconds! Whether or not the *Sun* reporter's claim was true, he told the story for a good reason; he was also a hiking enthusiast and guide. He was trying to explain the motives of a trainload of hikers that he was accompanying to Harpers Ferry. The hiking group, all members of a club called the Wanderlust Society, was coming to Harpers Ferry from Baltimore and Washington to "*seek exercise for their climbing muscles.*" The local paper reported: "*after a luncheon, climbers will be divided into three squads and set into motion under prominent local strollers...who will proceed to work Loudoun Heights, Bolivar Heights, and Maryland Heights.*"[106] Judging by the number of newspaper reports that appeared over the next few years, hikers from the Wanderlust Society continued to make Harpers Ferry a destination in the pursuit of their hobby. On several of these occasions, large numbers of the Wanderlusters went for guided hikes on Short Hill Mountain. Though their final destination on Short Hill was not disclosed, it is likely they hiked up to Buzzard Rock, a 1183'-high rocky ledge with scenic views.

Buzzard Rock is one of several landmarks that attracted people to Harpers Ferry during the first decades of the 20th century. Other popular attractions included John Brown's Fort and the ruins of the U.S. Armory, Civil War commemorative monuments, the confluence of the two rivers, the stone steps, the Harper House, and the views from Maryland Heights and Jefferson Rock. Tourist brochures and literature advertised these points of interest and suggested scenic walking tours of the town. The B&O Railroad also actively promoted tourism to Harpers Ferry, bringing visitors on special excursion trains to its ornamental gardens on the old armory grounds and to Island Park, its amusement park on Byrne's Island. The tourist trade, in everything from picture postcards to meals and accommodations, was an intrinsic part of the local economy. People came to Harpers Ferry to see the many landmarks of historical significance and to witness the town's celebrated natural setting.

With regards to the history of Short Hill, it is doubtful that many tourists shared the athletic ambitions of the Wanderlust Society hikers and actually made their way to Buzzard Rock. In truth, Short Hill Mountain was too remote and lacked the historical connections that prompted sightseers to come to Harpers Ferry. However, it is another of Harpers Ferry's historical landmarks – Jefferson Rock – that had the single greatest influence on the Short Hill property during the 20th century. It was the picturesque view from Jefferson Rock towards the Potomac water gap, and the desire to keep that view unspoiled, which led to Short Hill's eventual inclusion to Harpers Ferry National Historical Park (Figure 38). Before that happened, however, there was a long period of inactivity at the Short Hill tract. The first half of the 20th century at Short Hill was characterized primarily by a consolidation of the acreage by a single individual and the periodic occurrence of catastrophic floods that physically altered the landscape.

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[106] *Farmer's Advocate*, April 4, 1914, p2c2.

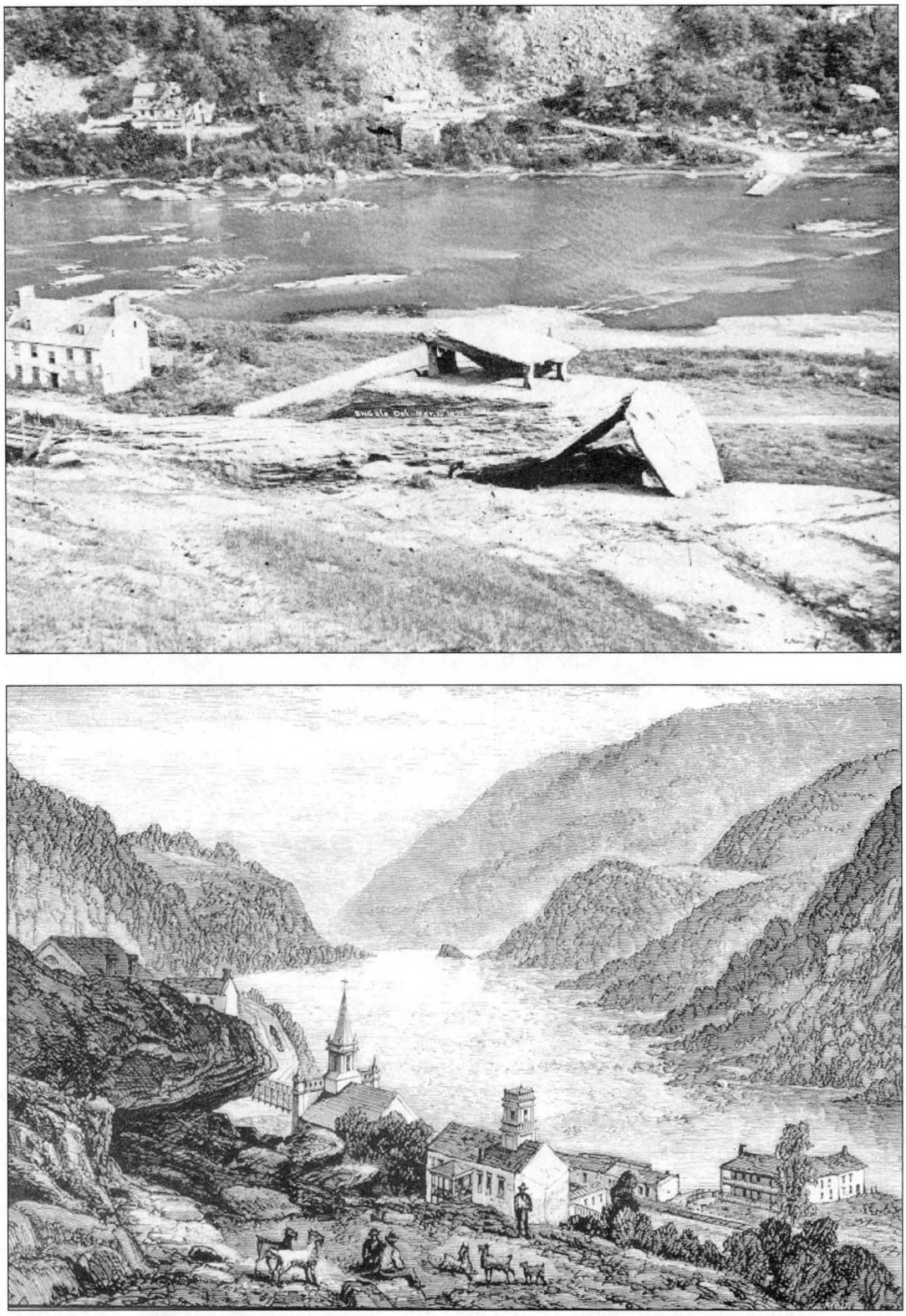


Figure 38. Thomas Jefferson remarked that the view from Harpers Ferry was "one of the most stupendous scenes in nature." It was the desire to keep that view unspoiled that led to Short Hill's inclusion to Harpers Ferry National Historical Park. ("Jefferson Rock, Harpers Ferry,"1872 engraving; 1876 photo, both NPS)

With the purchase of a 5-acre property in 1924, Dr. George W. Kernodle expanded his Short Hill holdings to 473 acres. Kernodle, a reputed waterpower expert and resident of Washington, D.C., also owned properties along the Potomac River in Maryland. He began acquiring land on Short Hill in 1911, beginning with a 6-acre riverside tract in the Dixie Bottom area. In 1913 he added the 10-acre Peacher's Mill lot. Kernodle purchased two wood lots adjacent to Peacher's Mill the following year, which added an additional 40 acres and included the land containing the millrace.[107] Peacher's Mill itself had been inactive for many years, but Kernodle had no intentions of becoming a miller. Instead, he was motivated by a desire to harness the Potomac River's energy to generate electricity. He wanted to build a dam at a site just above the old Weverton dam, anchoring it to the Loudoun shore at Devil's Elbow. Kernodle also planned to construct a generating plant downriver at the site of old Stump's Landing.

Kernodle added a substantial amount of land to his growing Short Hill estate in 1920. He purchased four more parcels totaling 413 acres at a public auction held in Neersville. The legal title was not transferred until 1923, a delay caused by an unresolved chancery suit involving the property's previous owner.[108] Kernodle traveled several times to Harpers Ferry from 1925-1929 in his attempts to enlist support for his scheme, but failed in these efforts. A news item appearing in 1926 states that the noted industrialists Henry Ford and Harvey Firestone were rumored to be interested in the hydroelectric project, but their backing never materialized either.[109] It was evident that Kernodle's vision of water-powered industry at Short Hill, like Caspar Wever's vision before him, would never become a reality.

Just around the time George Kernodle was completing his land buying on Short Hill, two significant floods occurred on the Potomac. First, in March 1924, the river crested at 19'. This was followed by an even more destructive flood in May, the river cresting this time at nearly 28'. The May 1924 flood was particularly devastating to the economy at Harpers Ferry. Residences and businesses along Shenandoah Street, the town's commercial center, were especially hard hit. Logs washed in from the pulp mill on Virginius Island and debris littered the town streets. Contaminated water supplies led to fears of possible outbreaks of typhoid and dysentery. The flood also disrupted rail traffic and ravaged the C&O Canal, the latter suffering damages so severe it never resumed service.

An even worse flood struck Harpers Ferry in March 1936 when torrential rains and melting snow caused both the Potomac and Shenandoah rivers to crest at 36 ½ ', a record that still stands for the highest water level ever recorded (Figure 39). The damages caused by these floods and five others during the 1920s and 1930s discouraged rehabilitation and development in the region and created a general atmosphere of decline and decay.[110]

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[107] For Kernodle's various land transactions see LC DBs: 8P:229; 8S:391; 8V:340, 439; 9Q:3; 9T:466.

[108] LC Chancery Order Book Z:19, 28, 65, 79, 362.

[109] *Farmer's Advocate*, March 6, 1926, p1c1.

[110] Gilbert, "Cultural Landscape Report...," 3-116.

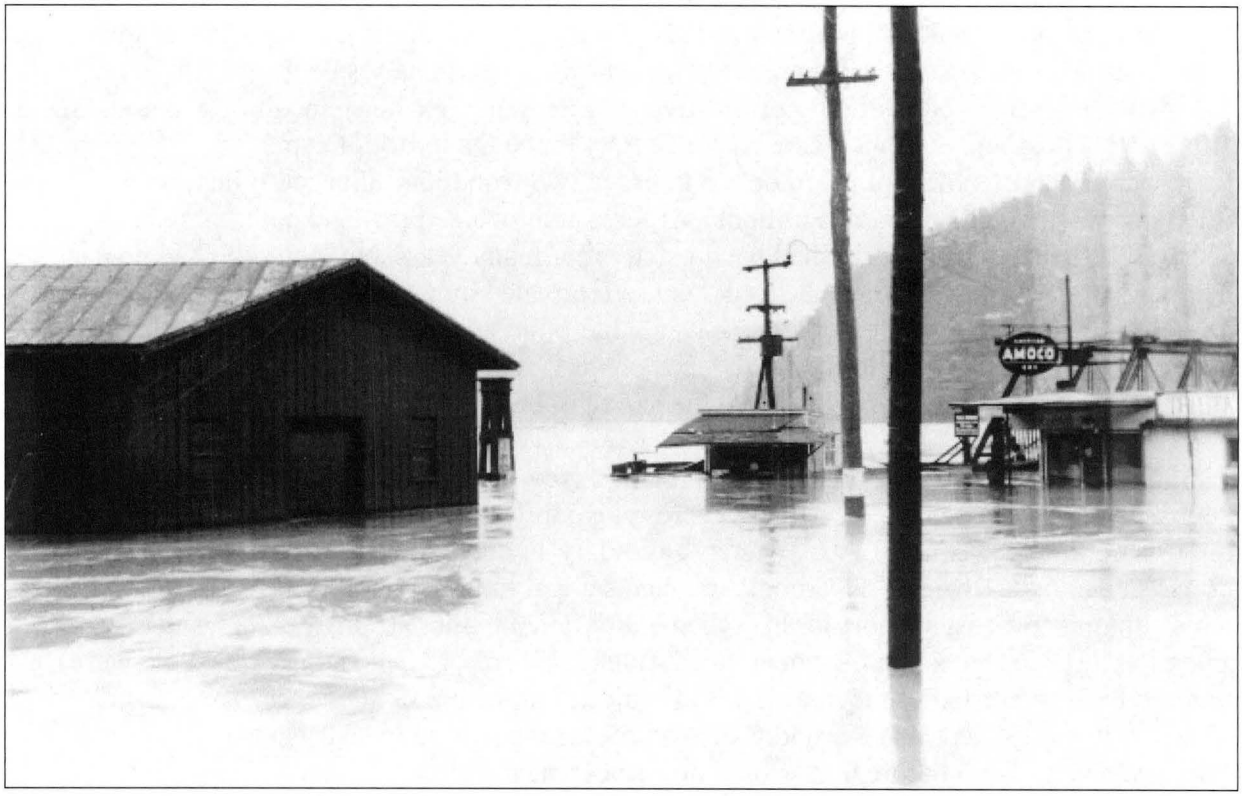


Figure 39. 1936 flood waters at the Point, Harpers Ferry. This record-setting flood is said to have totally submerged the 2 ½-story Peacher's Mill at Short Hill. (NPS)

George Kernodle died in 1933 and thus did not live to see the impact the great 1936 flood had on his Short Hill properties. The title to his land passed to his heirs and they remained the owners until 1967. Because of the 1936 flood, the land they inherited was much different than it had been only a few years prior. Reports indicate that the 1936 flood completely submerged the 2 ½ story Peacher's Mill.[111] The flood also caved in entire sections of River Road near Devil's Elbow. The damage to River Road was so extensive that it was abandoned and never reopened. The closing of this road ended a century of direct travel between Harpers Ferry and Lovettsville.

At Harpers Ferry the flood destroyed the Bollman Bridge over the Potomac and the Shenandoah bridge, leaving nothing but the piers, and further isolated the residents of the Short Hill area (Figure 40). Ferry service across the Shenandoah River, resumed at first as a temporary measure, actually remained in place for several years. Harry Ashbaugh, whose family lived on the old Still House Farm property, served as the ferryman. In the meantime, the states of Maryland, Virginia, and West Virginia launched a multi-million dollar bridge and highway relocation project. The new Maryland bridge at Sandy Hook was completed in 1947, but West Virginia was not able to finish spanning the Shenandoah until two years later.

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[111] Trout, "Peacher's Mill...," 41.

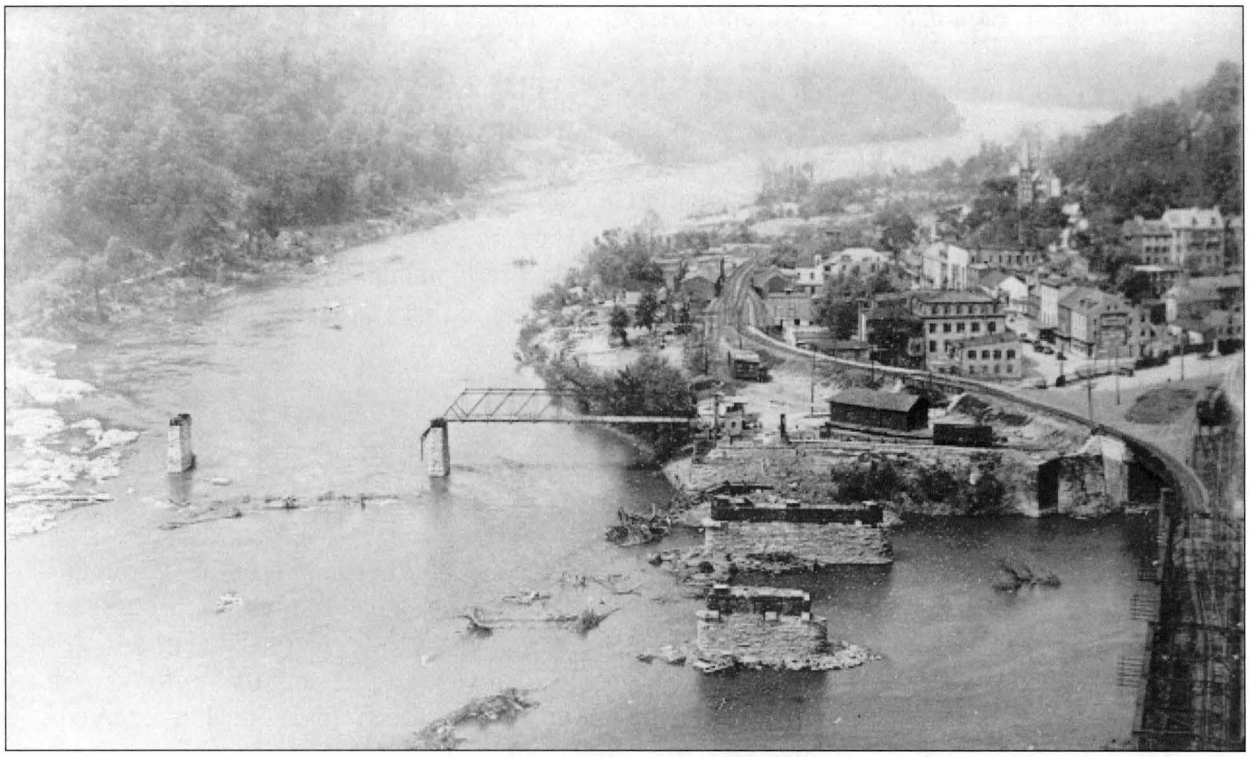


Figure 40. The 1936 flood destroyed two bridges at Harpers Ferry. This resulted in a major realignment of U.S. Route 340. At Short Hill, the old River Road was abandoned. (NPS)

When the new river crossings were completed, U.S. Route 340 no longer directed traffic through the Lower Town of Harpers Ferry. Instead, the highway crossed the Potomac about one mile downriver from Harpers Ferry near a knoll situated midway between Loudoun Heights and Short Hill. In 1948, Mr. Tommy Thompson opened that area's first gas station, an Amoco at the intersection of U.S. 340 and VA Route 275 (now 671), selling fuel for 20 cents per gallon.[112]

From the Loudoun landing of the new Potomac bridge, the alignment of U.S. 340 took vehicles along the south side of the Shenandoah to the new Shenandoah bridge, bypassing the town of Harpers Ferry altogether. Considerable opposition to the placement of the new Shenandoah bridge was raised at first, for fear that Harpers Ferry's tourist trade would be diminished as a result. Those fears proved to be groundless, however, as visitors continued to find their way to the town, which had in 1944 been designated Harpers Ferry National Monument.[113]

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[112] Scheel, *Loudoun Discovered...*, 194.

[113] Bushong, *Historic Jefferson County*, 398.

The Creation and Expansion of a National Historical Park

The inclusion of Harpers Ferry in a regional network of historical and recreational sites was an idea dating back to the 1930s. The town was initially envisioned as one link in a series of sites along the proposed Lincoln Memorial Highway, a scenic loop from Washington, D.C. that would also connect to the battlefields at Antietam and Gettysburg. Another early proposal would have extended the Skyline Drive along the Blue Ridge to Harpers Ferry. These were all federal projects that were planned to provide jobs during the Depression and stimulate the economy in rural areas.[114] All the plans shared in common the conviction that Harpers Ferry was advantageously located, had significant historical connections, and possessed outstanding scenery and recreational potential.

After a long period of promotion and perseverance by the town's backers, Congress enacted legislation in 1944 authorizing the creation of a national monument on 1,500 acres for the purpose of "*commemorating historic events at or near Harpers Ferry.*" While this was a significant milestone in the history of the town, Congress had appropriated no funds for land acquisition. Finally, in 1951, the state legislature of West Virginia unanimously appropriated $350,000 to acquire 514 acres for the Monument. The property acquired consisted of a large segment of the Lower Town of Harpers Ferry, much of Bolivar Heights, and the north face of Loudoun Heights.[115] Restoration of the town began in earnest in the mid-1950s and received widespread favorable publicity. Visitation increased dramatically.

In 1963 the state of Maryland more than doubled the acreage of the Monument when it donated 763 acres of "*history soaked lands*" on Maryland Heights. Subsequent legislation in 1963 changed Harpers Ferry's designation from a National Monument to a National Historical Park. "*The word 'monument' is often misleading...,*" West Virginia Senator Jennings Randolph explained. "*It does not convey the vast scope of history and natural grandeur which are to be found at Harpers Ferry.*"[116] The history and grandeur continued to draw increasing numbers of tourists to Harpers Ferry in the 1970s.

Interest in turning Short Hill Mountain into a regional park also grew in the 1960s and 1970s. An undated manuscript map (ca.1965?) reveals federal plans to develop two scenic parkways in the Harpers Ferry area (Figure 41). One of these, the "Potomac Parkway" would run down past the mouth of the Shenandoah River on U.S. Route 340. Instead of crossing the Potomac on the Sandy Hook bridge, the new Potomac Parkway would remain on the Loudoun shore and pass through the northern tip of Short Hill Mountain via a tunnel. The mountain itself is labeled "Proposed Short Hill Mountain Park" with visitor attractions to include a trail head, sightseeing, and picnicking.

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[114] Gilbert, "Cultural Landscape Report... ," 3-126-127.

[115] Frye, Dennis E., "Harpers Ferry Park – Yesterday and Today" in *50th Anniversary Commemorative Program*, 4-6.

[116] As quoted in Frye, "Harpers Ferry Park...," 6.

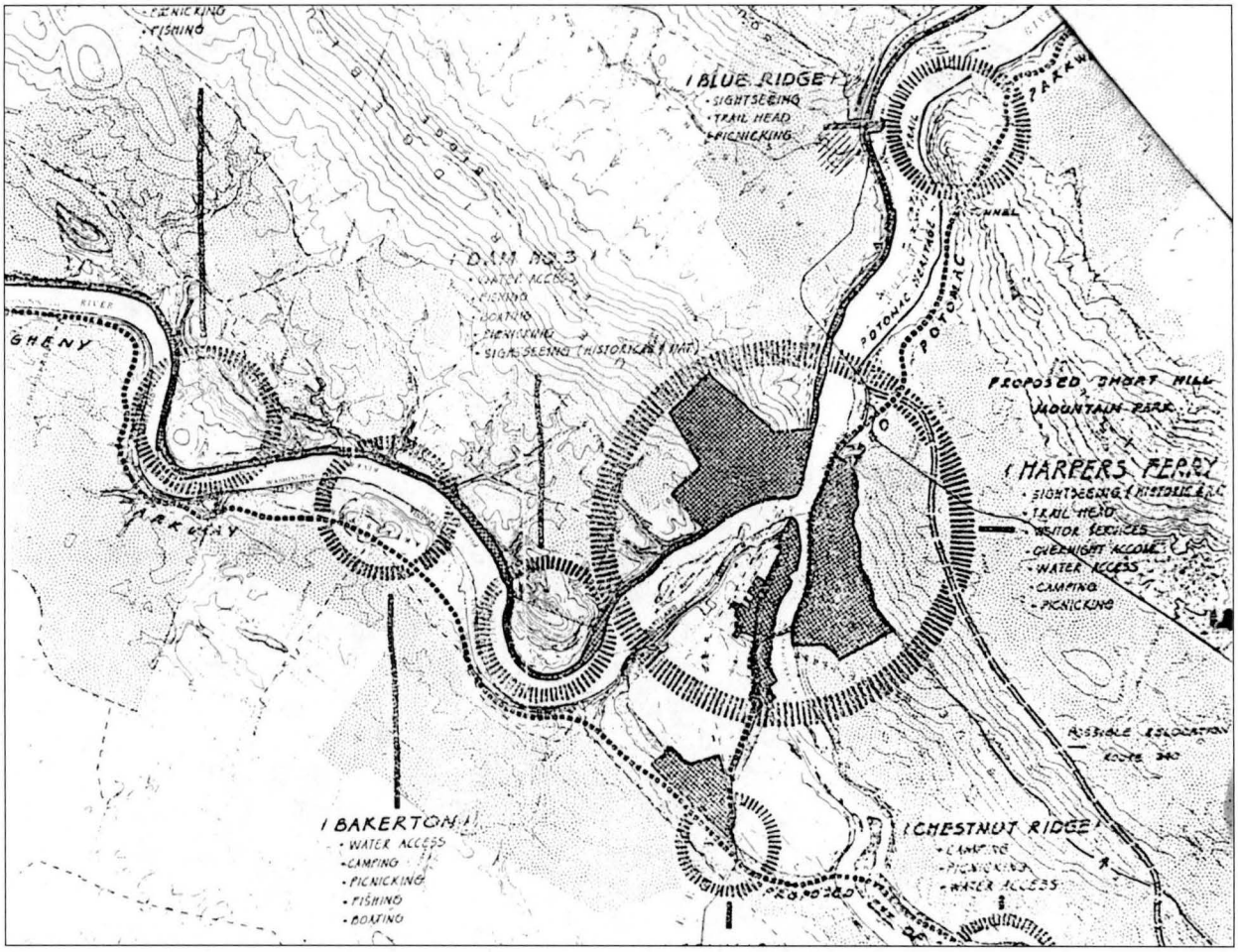


Figure 41. Plan of Proposed Potomac Parkway. The Harpers Ferry area has been the site of several proposed scenic parkways since the 1930s. Had the Potomac Parkway been constructed as seen here, the "Short Hill Mountain Park" would have a tunnel. (NPS)

In addition to the recreational potential, awareness of the historical sites located on Short Hill Mountain was also beginning to grow. This fact is illustrated by a letter dated 1973 from Grant Conway, a noted member of the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club, to Mr. John Lewis, State Historic Landmarks Commissioner for Northern Virginia. The letter describes Conway's exploratory hiking trip along the Potomac from the Sandy Hook bridge to Falls Branch. During the trip, Conway visited the ruins of the Still House Farm and Peacher's Mill. He calls the Short Hill area "*a neglected part of the county which is ripe for development, and some sites may be worthy of landmark designation and historical preservation.*" Conway closes the letter by stating: "*This remote section of your county deserves your attention. It might even result in reviving interest in a regional park for part of Short Hill.*"[117]

[117] Grant Conway, letter to John Lewis, dated March 19, 1973, on file at Harpers Ferry National Historical Park.

Bicentennial celebrations spurred a renewed interest in local history, and newspaper articles and other publications appeared featuring stories on nearby cultural sites, especially Peacher's Mill and the abandoned River Road.

In early 1979, the Nature Conservancy, a national land conservation organization with headquarters in Arlington, Virginia, took the initiative to acquire the Short Hill tract. The Conservancy learned that a 473-acre tract (formerly George Kernodle's tract) was for sale and purchased an option to buy. After purchasing the option, the Nature Conservancy asked Virginia Congressman Joseph L. Fisher to sponsor legislation to purchase the land for the National Park Service. Fisher, whose Congressional District included the tract, studied the proposal, hiked the area, and became an enthusiastic backer of the project. He pledged to introduce the necessary legislation and work for its passage.

On June 5, 1979, Representative Fisher introduced H.R. [House Resolution] 4317 to the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs. The official title of the legislation as introduced was: "*A bill to amend the boundary of the Harpers Ferry National Historical Park to include Short Hill in Loudoun County, Virginia, and for other purposes.*" On June 7, the bill was referred to the Subcommittee on National Parks and Insular Affairs for further study, hearings, revision, and consideration. The bill was reported favorably and provisions of the measure were incorporated into H.R. 3757, entitled: "*A bill to amend the National Parks and Recreation Act of 1978, and for other purposes.*" On February 22, 1980, the bill, having passed both the House and Senate, was presented to the President. President Carter signed the bill on March 5, 1980 and it became Public Law 96-199. The president's approval prompted *The Brunswick Citizen* to proclaim "*good news a-plenty...for people in this community who appreciate the out-of-doors and historical things.*"[118]

As the legislation worked its way towards becoming law, the Nature Conservancy attempted to acquire additional land between Short Hill and the Park. This was done, at least in the early stages, largely without forming an active working relationship with Park Service officials at Harpers Ferry. A representative of the private group visited the newly appointed (July 1979) Superintendent of the park, Donald W. Campbell. Superintendent Campbell recalls that the Conservancy representative spoke matter-of-factly about the pending purchase and he indicated that the group's intentions were to benefit the park. The meeting included discussion on the scenic protection of the Potomac water gap, a goal both parties held in common.[119] For Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, the potential development of areas adjacent to or near park boundaries was a growing challenge at the beginning of the 1980s.

Though no strong partnership existed at first between the Conservancy and Park Administration, it is clear the two groups had common interests. Far from indicating any disagreement, the situation merely reflected the opportunistic nature of the Conservancy's Short Hill purchase. It was not uncommon for the Nature Conservancy to acquire lands before a suitable buyer could be arranged. In the case of the Short Hill acquisition, it was reported that the Conservancy would

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[118] Pete Maynard, "A New Park For This Area!" *Brunswick Citizen*, April 24, 1980, 7.

[119] Donald W. Campbell, personal communication, April 3, 2003.

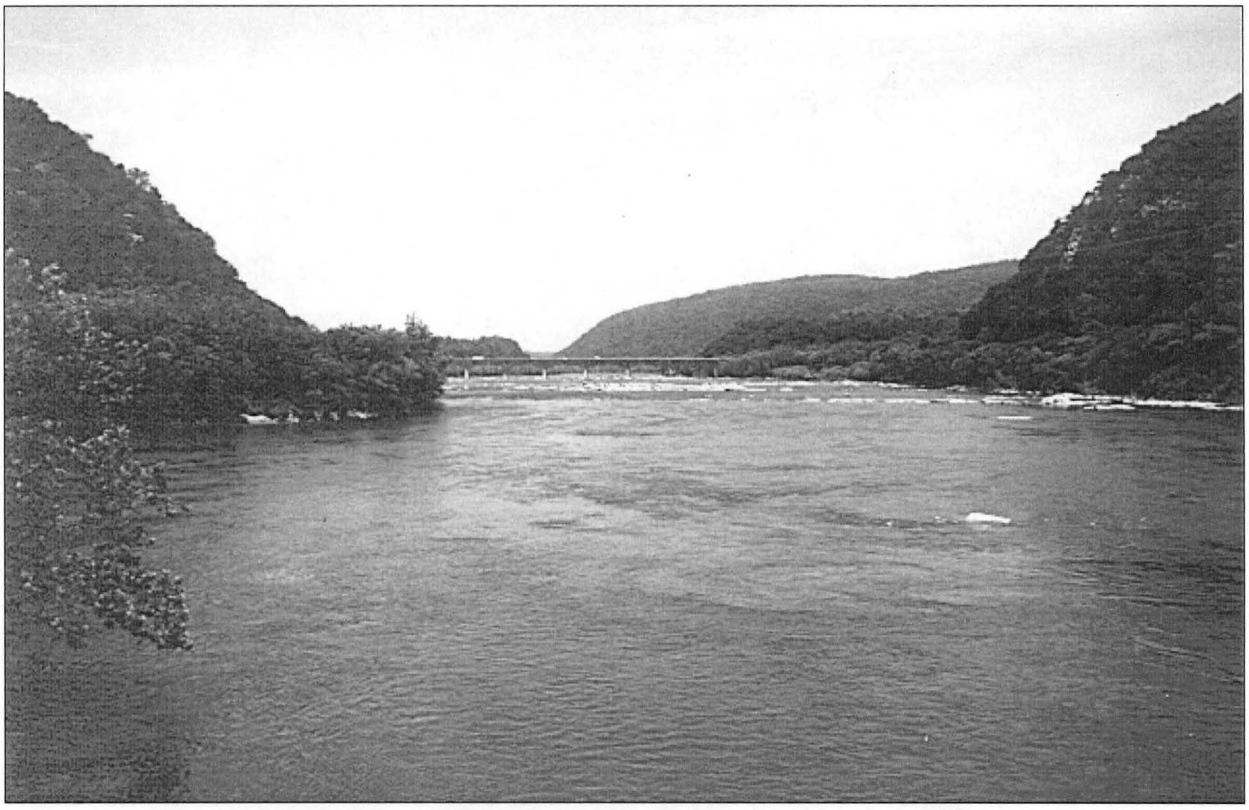


Figure 42. In 1979, the Nature Conservancy arranged the purchase and transferal of a 473-acre Short Hill tract to the National Park Service. The importance of preserving the downriver view from Harpers Ferry was the catalyst. (Photo by Rob Brzostowski)

continue to renew its option to purchase until the necessary arrangements were made for transfer to the National Park Service.[120] The importance of preserving the downriver view from Harpers Ferry was widely recognized, but more work was yet to be done (Figure 42).

In August 1979, Steven T. Hamblin, Director of the Nature Conservancy's Mid-Atlantic Office, approached Mr. A. James Clark, President of the Hyman Construction Company of Bethesda, Maryland. The construction company owned the site of the former Blue Ridge Rod and Gun Club, located on the prominent bluff overlooking the Potomac and the Virginia end of the Sandy Hook bridge. Hamblin asked Clark if he was willing to sell, but Clark indicated his company's "*very strong feelings on the subject*" and long-term intentions to hold on to the property.[121]

The Park Service continued to show interest in the Rod and Gun Club property and developed legislation to acquire it should Clark decide to dispose of it in the future. In May 1980, Acting Director of the National Park Service, Ira J. Hutchinson expressed the NPS' belief "*that additional acreage* [is] *necessary to adequately protect the view from Harpers Ferry. Still we are concerned about the foreground of the view and are anxious to pursue further acquisition for*

[120] Maynard, "A New Park...," *Brunswick Citizen*, April 24, 1980, 7.

[121] Steve Hamblin, memorandum to Dave Sherman, "Gun Club Property," dated February 5, 1981, on file at Harpers Ferry National Historical Park.

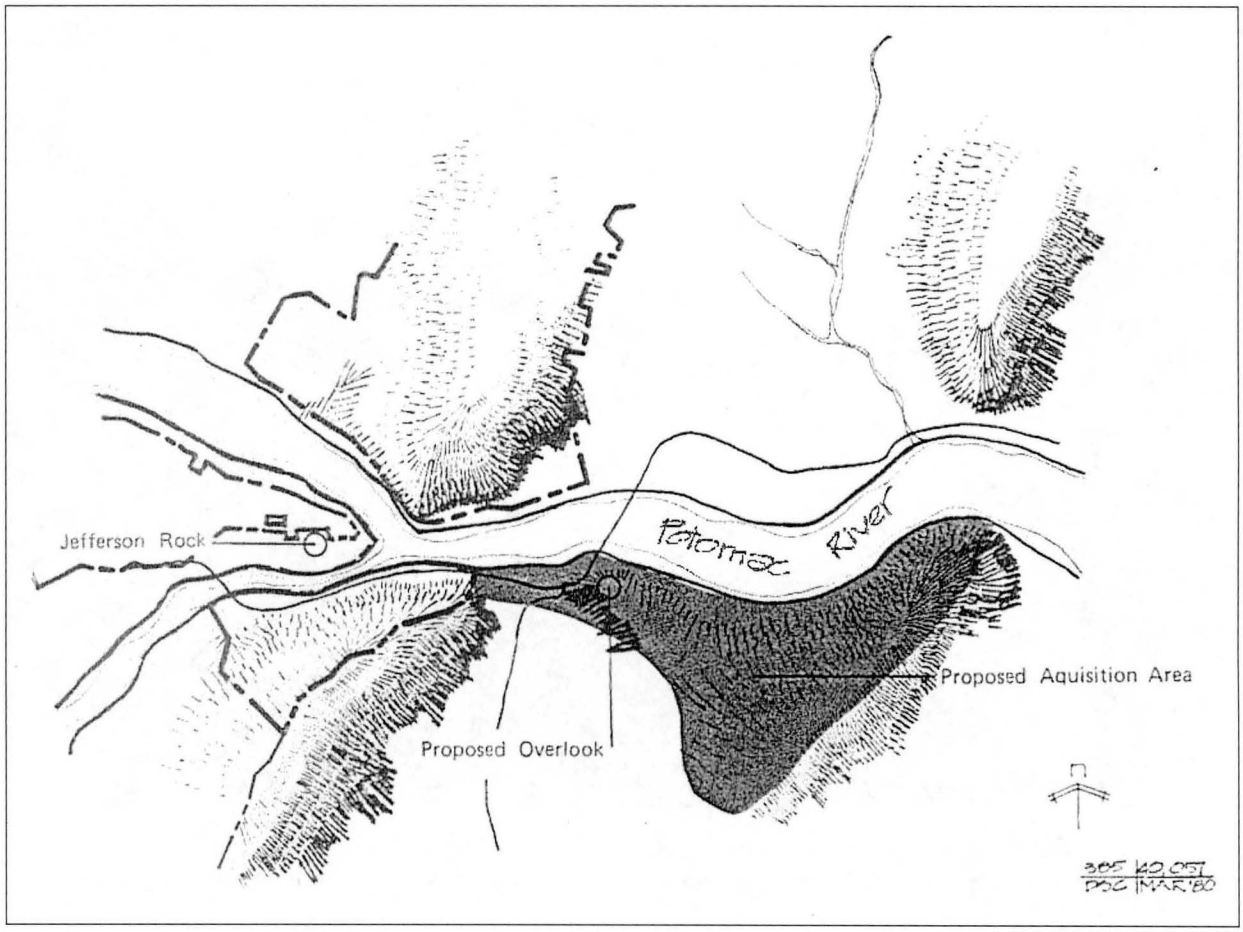


Figure 43. NPS Development Concept Plan, 1980. NPS officials wished to acquire all the riverside property between Loudoun Heights and Short Hill. (NPS)

the park in Loudoun County to include those lands lying along the Potomac River between Short Hill and Route 340 to the west."[122] A preliminary Development Concept Plan for those lands

shows the Park Service's wish to develop an overlook on the Rod and Gun Club property[123] (Figure 43). The Nature Conservancy's Steven Hamblin, however, continued to indicate that the spot was an unlikely addition to the park. The property remains in private hands.

Though the NPS was unsuccessful in acquiring all the land it wanted, enactment of Public Law 96-199 cleared the way for purchase of the Short Hill tract from the Nature Conservancy. Section 108 of the act authorized adding the 475 acres to Harpers Ferry National Historical Park and also increased the legislative ceiling for acquisition by $300,000. NPS representative Mr. Dick Schwartz negotiated the purchase from the Nature Conservancy. The deal, completed in

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[122] Ira J. Hutchinson, letter to Honorable Joseph L. Fisher, dated April 17, 1980, on file at Harpers Ferry National Historical Park.

[123] Development Concept Plan, United States Department of the Interior/National Park Service, NPS 1599, 1980.

January 1981 without fanfare or ceremony, transferred 370.14 acres for $197,000.[124] The legislation had permitted acquisition of 475 acres, but when a survey was done, it was discovered that the property was actually divided into two parcels, and not contiguous. The Park Service acquired the larger piece, situated mostly on the western slope from Buzzard Rock to the river.

With the addition of the Short Hill tract, the most celebrated view of the "Gap" from Harpers Ferry was now protected. Superintendent Campbell summed up the general feeling when he stated: "*It is gratifying that this area, with so much beauty and so much history, will be preserved for our children and our children's children to enjoy.*"[125] The panoramic view from Jefferson Rock to the gap has been modified somewhat by modern bridges, highway traffic, and a few modest structures, but the overall scene remains the same. The confluence of the Shenandoah and Potomac Rivers, dramatically framed by Maryland and Loudoun Heights, continues to be a popular and inspirational park attraction.

Park Service stewardship of the Short Hill tract in recent years has evolved from its emphasis on the property as a scenic backdrop and buffer against development. Many current programs have centered on the tract's natural resources. Natural resource inventory studies involving the study of amphibians and reptiles, small mammals, aquatic insects, birds, and exotic plants – to name but a few – have been conducted at Short Hill. Other efforts have focused on understanding and combating disease and pests such as the hemlock wooly-adelgid and gypsy moth. In these ways the Park has cared, and continues to care for Short Hill's natural environment.

Less attention has been given to the study of cultural resources on Short Hill, but this is changing. In fact, Short Hill may be considered something of a cultural resources preserve. From this perspective, a good parallel can be drawn between Short Hill and Virginius Island. When Virginius Island was made part of Harpers Ferry National Monument in 1944, much of its cultural resources lay under several feet of flood-deposited sand and the area was treated as an archeological preserve. As in-depth studies began to reveal the extent of the historic resources there, the public expressed a heightened appreciation for those resources. This in turn has fostered their careful preservation for all to enjoy. Hopefully, the same will hold true for Short Hill. As more is learned about the tract, the better the National Park Service will be able to manage Short Hill's combination of special attributes – history, scenery, and recreational opportunity.

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[124] LC DB 778:658, dated January 5, 1981.

[125] As quoted in Maynard, "A New Park...," *Brunswick Citizen*, April 24, 1980, 7.

Part Two: Chain of Title

Part Two presents notes on the chain of title for all NPS Short Hill property. The two primary tracts discussed are the Mill Tract and the Stubblefield Tract (Figure 44).

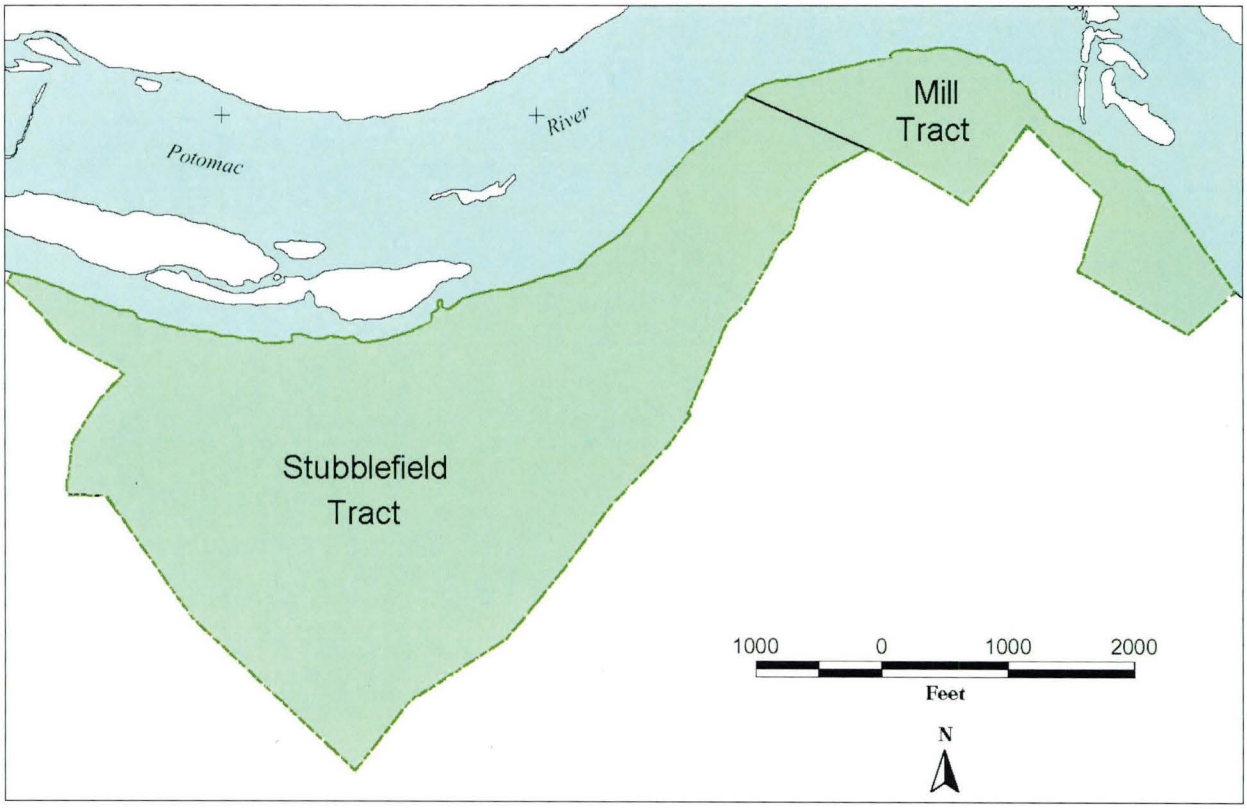


Figure 44. Boundaries of the Stubblefield and Mill Tracts. (NPS graphic by John Ravenhorst)

The Stubblefield Tract takes its name from James Stubblefield, the first owner to consolidate all that acreage into one property after its initial outsale by the Fairfax family. The Mill Tract is so called because it includes the land on which John Peacher's mill was built. The names are convenient designations that are used for ease and clarity of discussion. The histories of the two tracts are distinct and each is discussed in a separate section. A third section covers the period 1933-1981, from when the acreage of both tracts was reconsolidated under a single owner to its inclusion to Harpers Ferry National Historical Park.

Tables summarizing the chain of title for each of the property are included in Appendix I.

Mill Tract

The Loudoun lands that included the Mill Tract were once part of Piedmont Manor, a Fairfax property of 17,296 acres that lay on the Potomac between Short Hill Mountain and Catoctin Manor to the east. The part of Piedmont Manor encompassing the 50-acre Mill Tract was first divided into lots and sold off by Ferdinando Fairfax and his wife, Elizabeth Blair Fairfax. Known as the "Ferdinando Fairfax Division" outsales were made from this portion of Piedmont from 1811 through 1822.

In 1812, for the purpose of securing a $1,350 debt he owed to Elijah Chamberlain, Ferdinando Fairfax executed a deed of trust to John Discon (Dixon). The property conveyed in trust is described as "*comprehending a range of Mill seats with a command of water at & below a Considerable Fall on the River Potomack Estimated to contain from fifty to sixty acres of Land Chiefly in wood and timber some of it large and fine.*" Both Elijah Chamberlain and John Dixon were among a group of citizens that formed The Jefferson Company of Farmers, Mechanics, and Merchants in 1814 for the purpose of advancing industry, agriculture, and commerce at Harpers Ferry. When Ferdinando Fairfax failed to settle his debt with Chamberlain, John Dixon was authorized to make the "*river mill lot*" available at a public sale. The public sale was held at Harpers Ferry on September 22, 1817, and Jacob Waltman, Sr. was the highest bidder at $1,871.

Jacob Waltman, Sr. and Emanuel Waltman September 22, 1817

Shortly after his purchase of the river mill lot, Jacob Waltman, Sr. purchased three wood lots (No. 3, 4, and 5 of the Ferdinando Fairfax Division) on the east side of Short Hill and a 124-acre tract adjacent to the mill lot.

Jacob Waltman, Sr. and his wife Margaretha Waltman were the parents of Mary Ann Waltman. By a second wife, Rachel, sons Jacob Waltman, Jr. and Emanuel Waltman were born. In about 1795, daughter Margaretha married miller Jacob Everhart, Jr. and to this union was born Jacob III, John, and Joseph Everhart.[126]

After five months of ownership, Jacob Waltman, Sr. conveyed the river mill lot and wood lot to his son Emanuel Waltman. The February 1, 1818 deed states that the transaction was made "*for and in consideration of his natural love and affection, plus the sum of two thousand dollars.*" Emanuel Waltman owned the lot until his death. Emanuel Waltman's executors, his father Jacob Waltman, Sr. and neighboring landowner John Wenner, sold the property to the brothers Jacob III, John, and Joseph Everhart in 1822.

[126] Jacob Waltman, Jr. was the operator of the "heavy ferry" at the important river crossing of Berlin (Brunswick). Jacob Everhart, Sr. assumed control of Dodd's Mill on nearby Dutchman Creek in 1765. For Everhart family genealogy, see files of the Thomas Balch Library, Leesburg.

The Everhart brothers paid $1,100 on February 11, 1822 for the river mill lot. The brothers, continuing a practice employed by Native Americans, operated a fish dam here at Payne's Falls. Following in his father's and grandfather's footsteps, John Everhart took over the Everhart family mill on Dutchman Creek. It must have been with some reluctance then that the brothers sold a 10-acre portion of the mill lot to the well-known miller John Peacher. The deed, executed March 20, 1824, gives Peacher "*the privelege of erecting a Mill or any other kind of Machinary he the said Peacher may think proper to erect but not to interfere with said Everharts fish dam.*"

The remaining lands not sold to Peacher were divided between John and Joseph Everhart, and Sarah J. Everhart (Figure 45). Sarah J. Everhart, an "*infant under the age of twenty-one years*" was the eldest daughter and heir of Jacob Everhart III, who had died in 1828.

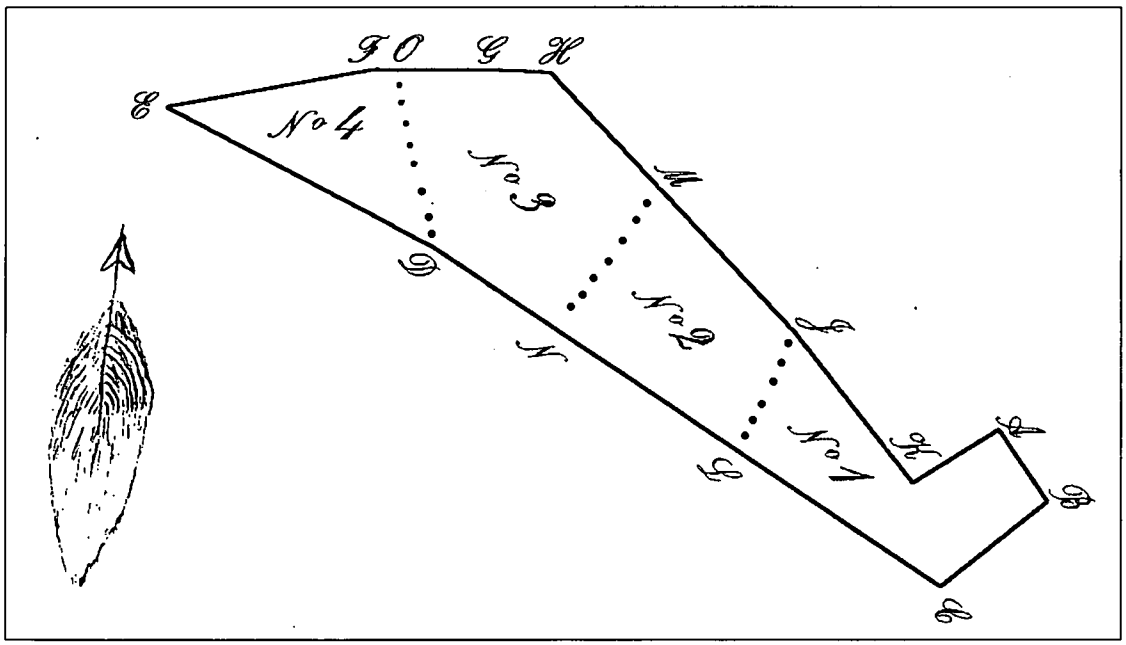


Figure 45. Plat of the Everhart Division, 1831. Lots No.1 and 4 were assigned by the court to John Everhart, Lot No.2 to Joseph Everhart, and Lot No.3 to Sarah J. Everhart. John Peacher's mill was located in the notched-out space in the top right of tract. (LC DB 3Y:116)

The Everhart Division was ordered by the Loudoun County Court in 1831 after the two remaining brothers brought a suit against Sarah Everhart and Sarah J. Everhart (widow and daughter, respectively, of their deceased brother) to determine the dower rights of Sarah Everhart. The court ordered a survey be done of the wood lot and that it "*be divided into three equal parts according to quality and quantity.*"[127] Lots No.1 and No. 4 were assigned to John Everhart, Lot No.2 to Joseph Everhart, and Lot No.3 to Sarah J. Everhart. [The allotments of John Everhart and Sarah J. Everhart ultimately were included into the NPS Short Hill tract. See page 82 for notes on the chain of title for these wood lots.]

[127] For details of Everhart vs Everhart and the resultant Everhart Division, see Court Order of November 9, 1830 and LC DB 3Y:116.

After having sold their mill on "Peacher's Island" (now Virginius Island) to U.S. Armory Superintendent James Stubblefield, John and "Liddy" (Lydia) Peacher relocated to the river mill lot at the northern tip of Short Hill Mountain. On the 10 acres they purchased from the Everhart brothers, Peacher soon erected a substantial stone mill, a miller's house, and several outbuildings. The initials "JP" are still visible on one of the mill's stone walls (Figure 46).

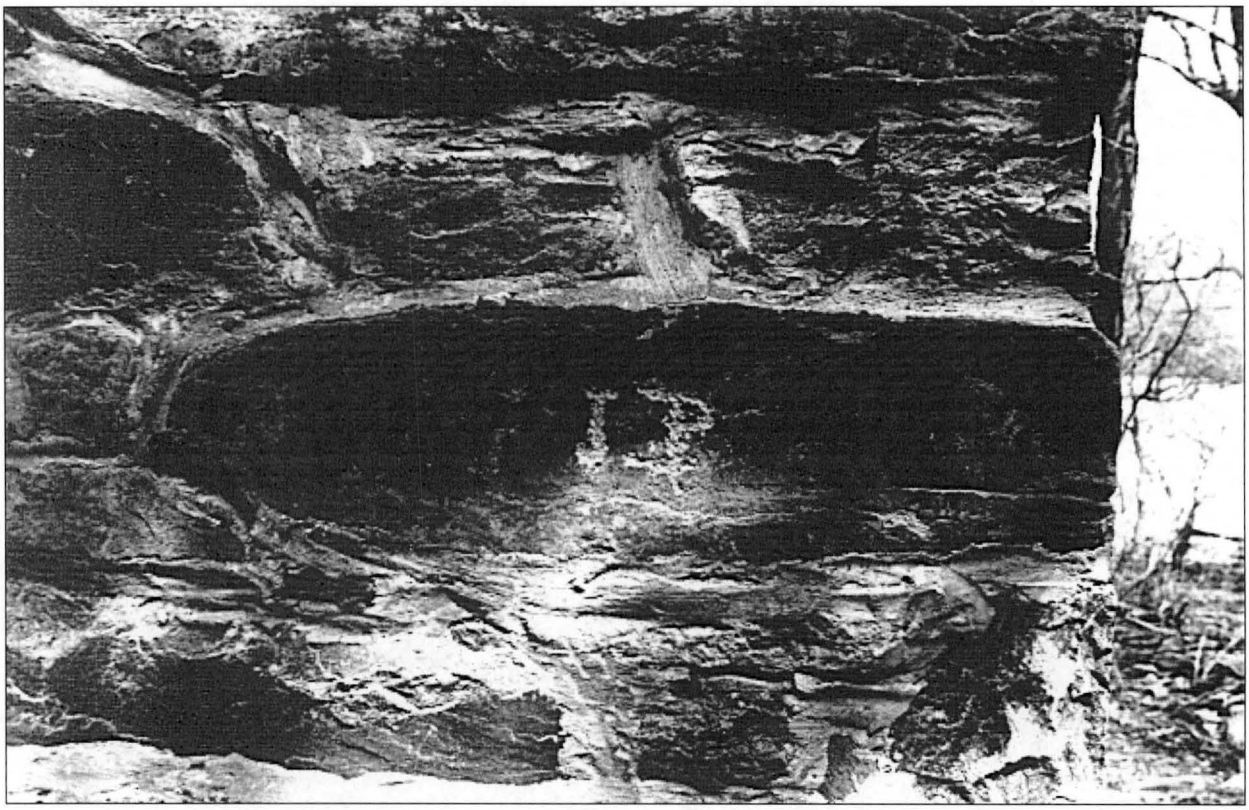


Figure 46. John Peacher's initials were scratched into the stone of his mill at Short Hill. Constructed in 1824-1825, this mill was the third in a series of four mills he operated around Harpers Ferry. (Photo by Rob Brzostowski)

John Peacher had several beneficial business dealings with Superintendent Stubblefield, suggesting that Peacher was among a small group of local businessmen in the good graces of Harpers Ferry's ruling elite. For instance, Stubblefield played a role in Peacher's successful acquisition of the much contested title to the government's Keep Tryst Furnace tract in 1819. Correspondence indicates that Stubblefield intended to use Peacher's $5,000 down payment to purchase the Shenandoah River ferry rights from Ferdinando Fairfax. Four years later, Stubblefield purchased John Peacher's mill and property on Peacher's Island. Peacher then used Stubblefield's $15,000 purchase money to buy his Short Hill mill lot. Then, in 1825, Stubblefield petitioned the Loudoun County Court to have a road approved from Harpers Ferry to Peacher's Mill. Known as the River Road, when completed it passed through Stubblefield's

property on the way to Peacher's Mill. Even if Stubblefield's motives for assisting Peacher were for his own personal gain, Peacher seems to have benefited from the association as well.

Census and tax records from the period 1825 to 1839 suggest that John and Lydia Peacher may have lived intermittently at the Short Hill miller's house during this time. At other times it was probably rented or leased to other millers. The Peachers are absent from the 1830 census, but property tax records list the mill as Peacher's "estate." According to the 1830 census, a miller named John Litchfield lived in the general area, and it is possible that he rented and operated Peacher's Mill. If the Peachers ever did occupy the site for any length of time, four of their youngest children may have been born there.[128]

On February 6, 1839, John Peacher sold the mill and 10-acre lot to Robert Y. Wilson, a stockholder of the Weverton Manufacturing Company.

Weverton Manufacturing Company February 6, 1839

From the period 1839-1860, several individuals associated with the Weverton Manufacturing Company held the title to Peacher's Mill. At one time or another, title to the mill was held by Robert Y. Wilson, Caspar W. Wever, James William McCullough, and William Loughbridge. Chief among them was Caspar Wever, the man with an all-encompassing vision of industry, trade, and transportation for the Potomac River property called Weverton over on the Maryland shore.

Prior to founding the Weverton Manufacturing Company in 1835, Wever was the superintendent of construction on the National Road. He held a similar position for the fledgling B&O Railroad Company.[129] At Harpers Ferry, Wever supervised the building of the masonry piers of the Wernwag Bridge. He resigned from the railroad in 1835 in order to concentrate his energies on the promotion and development of infrastructure at Weverton.

Census records for 1840 suggest that John Bagert (Bagent) may have operated Peacher's Mill at that time. His occupation is listed as "manufacturing" and he is listed as employing two other individuals.

In a remarkably shrewd business deal in 1847, Caspar Wever succeeded in getting the C&O Canal Company to construct a dam across the Potomac at Payne's Falls. The dam was built at great expense to the canal company and saved Wever's company about $25,000.[130]

The 1850 Industrial Census indicates Wever's Merchant Mill (the current name for Peacher's Mill) was leased and operated by Peter Zimmerman. Another legal document dated 1854 lists Zimmerman as the "tenant" of the mill property.[131]

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[128] For Peacher family genealogy, see Trout, "Peacher's Mill...," 17.

[129] Maynard, *Wever of the B&O Railroad...*, 15.

[130] Maynard, *Wever of the B&O Railroad...*, 100-101.

A number of factors contributed to the collapse of the Weverton Manufacturing Company in the early 1850s, but severe property damage caused by a major flood in 1852 seems to have led to the company's final demise. Though no flood damage was recorded for Wever's Merchant Mill, it is assumed that structure was also badly damaged.

As Weverton's financial crisis deepened, stockholders and investors sought to recover debts owed to them by filing liens of attachment on company property. On May 24, 1852, former company president William Loughbridge filed a lien of attachment on the mill property at Short Hill in order to recover a $1,000 debt. When the debt could not be recovered, he initiated a law suit (styled Loughbridge vs Weverton Manufacturing Co.). On April 30, 1853, the court found in favor of Loughbridge and ordered the sale of the property, with the debt to be paid out of the proceeds.[132] After a long period of inactivity, the court finally notes that William Loughbridge was paid damages plus interest ($1,018.95) on August 21, 1860.[133]

Samuel B. Preston December 16, 1860

David Hixson, Sheriff of Loudoun County, acting under the authority of an order of the Circuit Court, deeded the mill property to Samuel B. Preston of Knoxville, Maryland. The December 16, 1860 deed indicates Preston paid $5 for the mill, a sum covering the cost of processing the deed. The 1860 Industrial Census indicates Preston actually took possession of the property earlier that year. The operation is listed as a "Merchant & Grist Mill."

Though owned by Preston, the mill was operated by employee Henry Krebb at a salary of $20 per month. Krebb, together with his wife Catherine and their 15-year old son, probably occupied the miller's house on the property. The 1860 census lists the son's occupation as "boatman," suggesting the possibility that he hauled finished flour across the river for transport to the railroad and C&O Canal or was actually employed by the canal.

With the outbreak of the Civil War, it is likely that many troops passed through the mill property on the River Road. Based on consistent valuations recorded in personal property taxes, the mill seems not to have been damaged during the Burning Raid of November 1864. Though the mill ground 15,000 bushels of wheat in 1860, production seems to have ceased during or shortly after the Civil War. Major floods in 1870 and 1877 also decreased the assessed value of the mill.

Owner Samuel B. Preston died November 13, 1895, and three years later his heirs sold the mill to Thomas C. and Hattie Bell Tritapoe.

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[131] Trout, "Peacher's Mill...," 36-37.

[132] LC Order Book 2:24.

[133] LC Order Book 1:208.

Thomas C. and Hattie Bell Tritapoe (Trittapoe, Tretapoe) February 8, 1898

The heirs of Samuel B. Preston (W.C. Morsell, Rebecca Morsell, et al., all residents of Frederick County, Maryland) conveyed the mill property to Thomas C. and Hattie Bell Tritapoe on February 8, 1898, for $150. An 1892 voter registration list indicates Thomas C. Tritapoe was a resident of Jefferson County, West Virginia and had been since 1889. The occupation of the 23-year old Tritapoe is given as "laborer" and his birthplace is Virginia.

By deed dated September 2, 1901, Thomas C. and wife Hattie Bell Tritapoe sell the property to Katharine A. Tritapoe. The relationship between the members of the two parties is not known.

Katharine A. Tritapoe September 2, 1901

Katharine A. Tritapoe paid $150 for "*land situated on Potomac River...*" No mention is made in the deed of any of the existing improvements.

In 1912, the Loudoun Co. Circuit Court issued a final decree in a chancery cause of Katharine A. and Charles Tritapoe vs Heirs of the late Samuel Preston, and T.C. and Hattie B. Tritapoe. The suit was apparently brought to settle a dispute concerning "*defects and clouds upon the title*" to the property which the Tritapoes claimed by adverse possession. The court "*put to rest any and all questions as to the validity and completeness of the title*" and acknowledged that Katharine Tritapoe had title to the property "*now occupied by her.*" The court noted that the Tritapoes' occupation and use of the property "*has continued for much longer than fifteen years, and much longer than is necessary to acquire title to real estate by adverse possession.*" The defendants, all residents of Frederick County, Maryland, did not appear in court.[134]

If members of the Tritapoe family had been living on the site for "*much longer*" than fifteen years in 1912, their occupation would predate their original 1898 deed. That they claimed the property by adverse possession means the property was abandoned by the 1890s or earlier.

On April 7, 1913, Katharine A. Tritapoe and her husband Charles Tritapoe sold the mill property to George W. Kernodle. Charles F. Harrison, a Special Commissioner appointed in the above mentioned chancery cause, is also listed among the grantors.

Dr. George W. Kernodle April 7, 1913

Dr. George W. Kernodle took title to the river mill lot for a listed purchase price of $10. Kernodle had ambitions to build a dam and hydroelectric plant on the site. His deed for the 10-acre tract is careful to note that the sale "*conveys all riparian rights and privileges.*"

On April 18, 1919, Kernodle sold an easement and right-of-way to the Town of Brunswick for the purpose of conveying water for use in the town's water supply system.

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[134] LC Chancery Order Book W:403.

Kernodle's purchase of the mill lot was his second in a series of six Short Hill purchases between 1911 and 1924. Kernodle died on May 3, 1933, and all of his Short Hill land (473 acres) passed to his heirs.

Sarah J. Everhart Wood Lot

Sarah J. (Everhart) Washington April 5, 1831

Lot No.3 of the 1831 Everhart Division was assigned to Sarah J. Everhart, the eldest daughter of Sarah and Jacob Everhart III (see Figure 45). The tract contains 20 acres, 25 perches.

Sometime before 1847, Sarah J. Everhart married Samuel E. Washington. Also by this time, her mother the widow Sarah Everhart is remarried to Johnathan Wenner.

In anticipation of the construction of the Weverton Dam, in 1847 the Weverton Manufacturing Company initiated condemnation hearings against the land surrounding Peacher's Mill. The condemnations occurred so the millrace could be widened and improved. The lands affected by the improvements were two wood lots: Lot No.3 owned by Sarah J. and Samuel E. Washington and Lot No.4 owned by John Everhart.

Sarah J. and Samuel E. Washington experienced a period of financial stress in the early 1850s. Samuel E. Washington had become indebted to several individuals. The total amount of his debts recorded from 1849-1852 was $2,468.87. To secure this money, Samuel E. Washington executed three separate deeds of trust, two that mortgaged his real estate and another that mortgaged his personal property.[135] Wood Lot No.3 of the Everhart Division was among the lands put in trust.

The deed of trust for the personal property assigns all his property for the benefit of his creditors. It states: "*Samuel E. Washington, owing to sundry losses and misfortunes, is at present unable to discharge his just debts.*" It puts in trust all his property "*of every description and kind consisting in part of small grain now growing, corn, horses, cattle, sheep, hogs, farming utensils, household and kitchen furniture, in a word, every thing.*" Samuel E. Washington could not repay his creditors and on March 2, 1857, trustee Mr. A.T.M. Filler sold all of his property at public auction.

Richard James March 2, 1857

Richard James was the highest bidder at the public sale of Sarah J. and Samuel E. Washington's wood lot. The bid was $5 per acre; the sale price was $100. The lot is described as "*on the short hill near the River Mill.*"

A flood noted for its destructiveness occurred on the Potomac River September 30-October 1, 1870 and quite probably decreased the value of the lot.

Richard James and his wife Mary C. James owned the wood lot jointly until the death of Richard James in early 1876. In his will, Richard James bequeathed the "*Home Farm*" in Lovettsville to his wife. The remainder of his property was to be equally divided between his two unnamed

[135] LC DB 5E:203, 204, 305.

children. The will contains an unusual provision for his wife to renounce the terms of the will and sell all of the James' property if she so chose, taking one-third of the proceeds for "*her own use and benefit.*"[136] In fact, Mary C. James did elect to renounce the provisions of the will. A lawsuit ensued (James' Executor vs. James) in which the court directed a sale of the wood lot "*out and out.*"

Emanuel Wenner November 2, 1877

Emanuel Wenner was the highest bidder ($25) at the public sale of the 20-acre wood lot held on February 2, 1877. Accordingly, a deed was made over to him on November 2, 1877. The deed describes the land as the "*mountain lot...known as the Washington Wood lot.*" The low $25 sale may reflect damages caused by the flood of 1870. By this time also Samuel Preston had ceased his milling operations at the adjacent Peacher's Mill site. Just three weeks after Wenner purchased the wood lot, another significant flood struck.

One year later, Wenner purchased the two wood lots (Lots No.1 and No.4) assigned to John Everhart in the 1831 Everhart Division [See p. 85 for notes on the chain of title for the John Everhart wood lot].

Emanuel Wenner died in 1887. When an inventory of his estate was made on August 30, 1887, the value was stated at $5,739.70. At an estate sale the following day, a John Ebb George of Loudoun County is listed among the buyers. His purchases consisted of some farming equipment and horse furniture.[137]

On August 25, 1889, John Ebb George purchased the 20-acre Sarah J. (Everhart) Washington wood lot from Emanuel Wenner's numerous heirs: Mary E. McIntosh; C.C. Wenner and Leah E. Wenner, his wife; Caroline V. Arnold and Samuel Arnold, her husband; Robert Wenner and "Ocea" (Alice) Wenner, his wife; John W. Wenner; Jacob Wenner; Jane Wenner; and Ella Wenner.

John Ebb George August 25, 1893

John Ebb George bought the wood lot "*on the Short Hill Mountain near the Potomac River*" for $51. It is unclear what relation John Ebb George is to the John George who operated a mill during the 1830s in the nearby area currently known as Georges Mill.

John Ebb George and his wife Orra I. George sold the wood lot to Dr. George W. Kernodle on October 10, 1914.

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[136] LC WB 3A:314, probated April 10, 1876.

[137] LC WB 3H:357, 360.

Dr. George W. Kernodle October 10, 1914

Dr. George W. Kernodle of Washington, D.C. purchased the wood lot for $275. Kernodle had taken title to the adjacent Peacher's Mill lot during the previous year. Though nothing ever became of it, Kernodle had plans for establishing a hydroelectric plant in the area. The wood lot was a significant purchase for Kernodle, for he planned to anchor a dam to the Potomac shore in the vicinity of Devil's Elbow.

Kernodle went on to acquire 473 acres of land on Short Hill Mountain. When he died on May 3, 1933, the land passed to his heirs in its entirety.

John Everhart Wood Lot

John Everhart April 5, 1831

In 1822, John Everhart and his brothers, Jacob III and Joseph Everhart, purchased the entire river mill lot at Short Hill. In addition to operating fish traps on the river, John Everhart was in charge of the family's mill on Dutchman Creek. In 1824, the Everhart brothers sold a 10-acre portion of the river mill lot to John Peacher, who quickly established a mill on the site. John's brother, Jacob III died in 1828 and a law suit ensued to determine who had rights to the remaining wood lot not sold to Peacher. A court order on April 5, 1831, led to the division of the wood lot into four smaller lots (see Figure 45) and assignment of ownership. In that division, John Everhart was assigned 20 acres, made up of two lots: Lot No.1 and Lot No.4.

John Everhart played a role in having the public road, known as the River Road, built from Harpers Ferry to Peacher's Mill. In 1832, he was one of nine commissioners appointed to oversee a lottery to fund the road's construction. When it was completed, River Road passed through John Everhart's wood lot. In 1839, John Everhart petitioned for $1,000 in improvements to the road, in anticipation of the construction of the Weverton Dam. Documents supporting Everhart's petition indicate the road would need to be elevated at the spot of the intended dam. In 1847, the Weverton Manufacturing Company also had a small portion of John Everhart's wood lot condemned for improvements to the existing millrace.

John Everhart maintained ownership his wood lots until his death on February 10, 1873. He is buried in the Lutheran Reformed Cemetery in Lovettsville. The disposition of John Everhart's estate led to a Chancery Cause (John Everhart's Administrator vs Mary C. Everhart and others) in which the court ordered all real estate of John Everhart to be sold at public auction to the highest bidder.[138] William Smith and James L. McIntosh were appointed commissioners of the sale which took place on March 13, 1875.

Emanuel Wenner November 23, 1878

At the public sale of John Everhart's estate, commissioner Mr. James L. McIntosh was the highest bidder at $5 per acre, or $100. The deed for the transaction indicates "*McIntosh desires that said deed shall be made directly to Emanuel Wenner.*" McIntosh was Emanuel Wenner's in-law, having married Mary E. Wenner. The deed conveying title to the two wood lots was made on November 23, 1878. One year prior to this, Emanuel Wenner had purchased the adjacent 20-acre wood lot, Lot No.3 of the Everhart Division [See p. 82 for notes on the chain of title for the Sarah J. (Everhart) Washington wood lot].

Emanuel Wenner died in 1887. When an inventory of his estate was made on August 30, 1887, the value was stated at $5,739.70. At a sale of Emanuel Wenner's personal property the following day, Robert Wenner, one of numerous heirs, bought: 1 waiter and contents, 2 lard

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[138] LC Chancery Order Book H:387.

cans, 1 sausage grinder and stuffer, 1 grubbing hoe, 1 hogshead, 1 bucket, 1 mower and reaper, 1 cut saw and 1 lot of tools, 1 young cow, 1 brown mare, 1 saddle, and 3 churns. Six years later, Robert Wenner purchased 32 acres of Emanuel Wenner's land, including the two wood lots.

Robert Wenner May 17, 1893

Robert Wenner paid $170.40 for the two wood lots and another twelve-acre lot. The wood lots remained in the possession of Robert Wenner and his wife "Ocea" (Alice) G. Wenner until sold to Dr. George W. Kernodle on November 5, 1914.

George W. Kernodle November 5, 1914

Dr. George W. Kernodle of Washington, D.C. paid $275 for Robert and Ocea Wenner's wood lots. Kernodle had taken title to the adjacent wood lot [originally Sarah J. (Everhart) Washington's Lot No.3] the previous month. Having already purchased the old Peacher's Mill lot in 1913, Kernodle now owned all the property (with the exception of Lot No.2) contained in the original Jacob Waltman, Sr. purchase from Ferdinando Fairfax in 1818.

In the decade that followed, Dr. Kernodle acquired 417 additional acres on the west side of Short Hill Mountain. When he died on May 3, 1933, all of his Short Hill lands passed to his heirs.

Stubblefield Tract

The boundaries of the "Stubblefield Tract" were first established in 1827. James Stubblefield, who was superintendent of the U.S. Armory at Harpers Ferry from 1807 to 1829, began purchasing land on the west side of Short Hill in 1824. In April 1828, as he prepared to sell a 309-acre tract, Stubblefield had a survey made by the Surveyor of Loudoun County, Johnathan J. Mathias (Figure 47). Though this tract would be split up and recombined several times over the next century, the boundary lines of 1827 would reappear. In fact, many of the same lines currently serve as National Park Service boundaries.

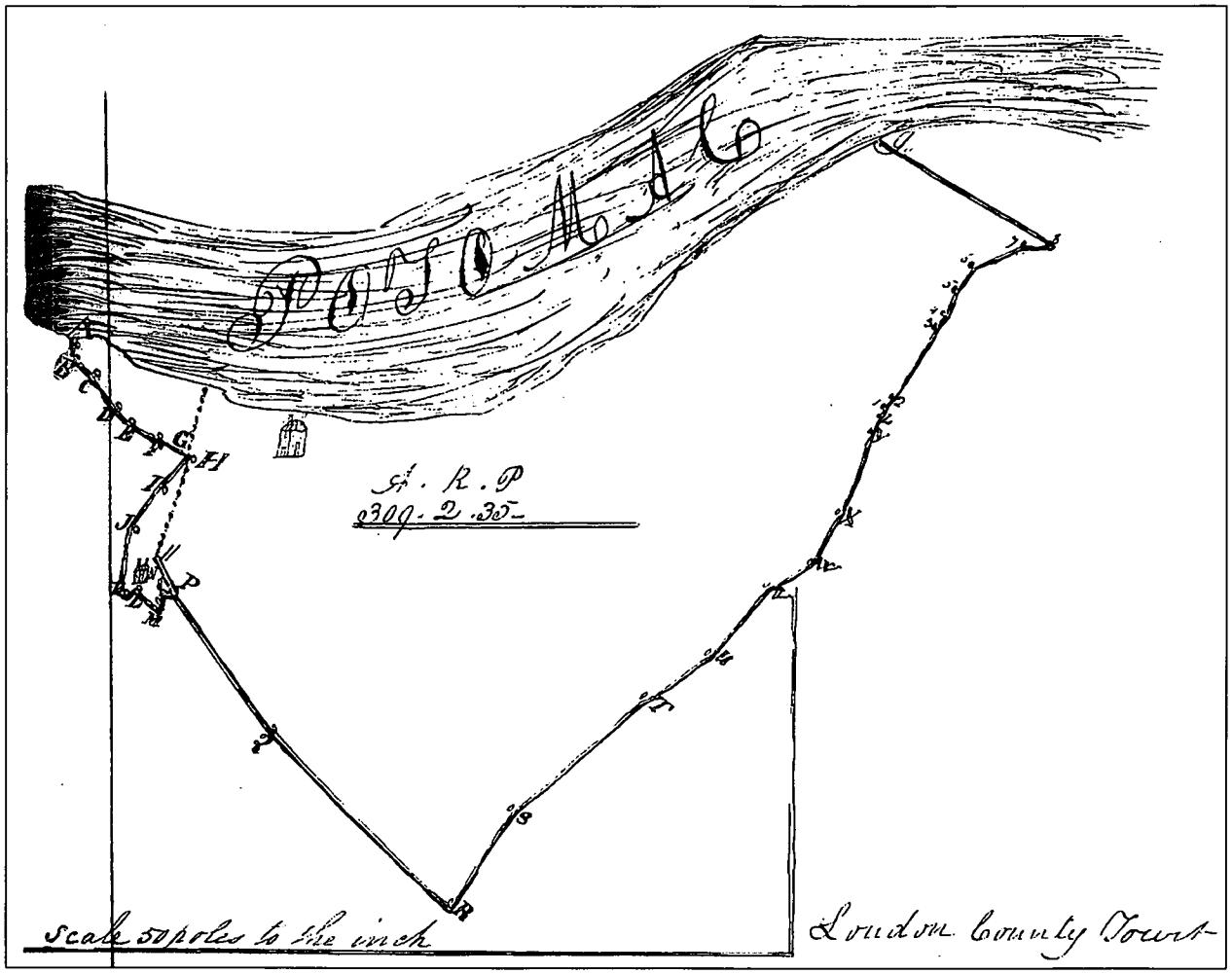


Figure 47. 1828 plat of James Stubblefield's property on Short Hill. The 309 acres were put together from several small purchases from 1824-1827. Stubblefield sold the property in 1834. (Loudoun County Deed Book 4Q:36)

Jacob Sullifrank (Sullifrank, Sunnefrank, Sunnafrank) March 20, 1785

The earliest known occupant of the current NPS Short Hill tract was Jacob Sullifrank. Jacob Sullifrank entered into a three-life lease with George William Fairfax on March 20, 1785. Sullifrank's tenement consisted of eighty-five acres "*situate...in the parish of Shelburne in the County of Loudoun Supposed to be on the Short Hills.*" The survey description of his land provides clues to the neighboring tenants or owners. Abel Janney, John Jackson, and Jacob Hibbs are mentioned, although the land of Hibbs in 1785 was "*now supposed to be James McKi*[nn?]*ies.*" A clause voided Sullifrank's lease if the eighty-five acres, or any part of it, was already leased or overlapped another tenement.

Because the term of the lease was for three lives, it remained in effect for the lives of Jacob Sullifrank and his two sons, John and Abraham Sullifrank. Numerous clauses in the lease specify what improvements had to be made, including the building of a dwelling and the planting of an orchard.

In October 1786, the Virginia General Assembly outlawed this colonial leasing system and the Sullifranks were free to purchase the land if they so chose. Reference is made in the first decades of the 19th century to tracts that "*comprehend the tenement formerly leased to Abraham Sullyfrank,*" suggesting that the Sullifranks were in residence after the leasing system was abolished. A list of tithables for Shelburne Parish in 1782 shows that Jacob Sullifrank lived in Shelburne Parish and owned no slaves.

John Hopkins, Sr. September 22, 1815

The first person to own the land encompassing much of the Stubblefield Tract was John Hopkins, Sr., "*currently of the County of Frederick, Virginia.*" Ferdinando Fairfax, who by inheritance came to own the entire Piedmont Manor, owed Hopkins a debt of $7,293.99 in 1814. This was an amount due to Hopkins from a judgement he won against Fairfax in a lawsuit in the District of Columbia for the County of Alexandria.

Fairfax conveyed in trust to John Hopkins a 250-acre parcel so that if he failed to pay the debt, Hopkins could force a sale and collect the proceeds. Fairfax still had a balance remaining of $2,780.95 in 1815 and the trustees were required to sell the property at public auction. At the sale, which occurred at the tavern of Henry Peers in the Town of Leesburg, John Hopkins, Sr. was the highest bidder at $6 per acre. The tract included the former tenement of Abraham Sullifrank.

Philip Strider ca.1816

Sometime around 1816, Philip Strider leased the 250-acre tract from John Hopkins, Sr. The Striders owned property around the Keep Tryst Furnace and Elk Run. During the period 1800 to 1819 they attempted to increase their holdings adjacent to Harpers Ferry and use it to their advantage.

The Striders, especially brothers John, Philip, and Henry, aligned themselves with a small clique of Harpers Ferry businessmen –namely the Beckhams, Stephensons, Stubblefields, and Wagers– that combined political influence and social standing with exclusive property ownership to wield significant power over community developments.[139] The economic power of these men encompassed a wide variety of goods and services and was a key source of patronage for select merchants. Many obtained exclusive rights to supply the armory and armory workers with various commodities. These rights were often established under questionable contracts. For instance, the Striders sold pit coal to the armory at prices much higher than other nearby dealers.[140]

In 1817, Philip Strider and his wife Catherine conveyed their Short Hill property in trust to John Hopkins, Jr. A memorandum on the back of the deed states the purpose of Strider's sale: to pay John Hopkins a debt of $2,544 arising from two bonds. The first bond was for $800 and could be discharged "*by the delivery of a new Wagon Complete with Cover and feeding trough and five good and Strong horses with all their Geer complete.*" Strider failed to pay the debt in full, and again the 250 acres was sold at public auction in Leesburg. And, as before, John Hopkins, Sr. retained ownership by bidding the highest at the sale.

Frederick Handshy (Handschy, Henshaw, Hensha) April 1, 1818

Frederick Handshy, of Loudoun, already owned a 173-acre tract of Short Hill land when he purchased Hopkins' (adjacent?) 250-acre tract in 1818.[141] His earlier parcel derived from Diggs' Short Hill tract. He purchased Hopkins' tract for $2,500. Having paid $500 of the purchase price outright, Handshy made two deeds of trust to secure the remaining $2,000.

A deed of trust he made in 1819 suggests that Handshy intended to develop the property. The deed reserves "*one acre in the upper bottom together with the use of the water if the sd.* [said] *Hensha shall want the same for a mill.*"

Handshy had other creditors and it appears that by 1822 he was experiencing financial difficulties. First, he sold in trust the 250-acre tract to pay a debt of $135.05 to Thomas Gapaway. Four days later he sold in trust much of his personal property to secure funds he owed to Fontaine Beckham and Edward Wager. The list of items he put up as collateral for the Beckham-Wager debt includes four cows, two horses, nine sheep, three beds and bedding, a wagon, numerous kitchen items, as well as the crops he currently had growing.

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[139] Merrit Roe Smith, *Harpers Ferry Armory and the New Technology: The Challenge of Change*, (Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York, 1977), 149.

[140] Smith, *Harpers Ferry Armory...*, 163.

[141] LC DB 2V:299, dated February 5, 1816.

In 1823, Handshy began selling portions of his real estate. He sold parcels to Philip Grove and his neighbor Hiram Carney.[142] The following year he sold his 170-acre tract to James Stubblefield. By 1833, Handshy lived in Washington County, Maryland.

James Stubblefield 1824 - 1827

James Stubblefield began acquiring land on Short Hill in 1824. He made small purchases from John Neer, David and Susannah Neer, Hiram Carney, and Philip Grove. He acquired two large tracts from Frederick Handshy, including the 250-acre tract Handshy purchased from John Hopkins, Sr. Over 300 hundred acres of Stubblefield's lands were eventually included into the present NPS Short Hill tract.

James Stubblefield was among the leading citizens of Harpers Ferry in the first decades of the 1800s. He was appointed superintendent of the armory in 1807 and served for twenty-two years, the longest tenure in the history of that position. His influence stemmed not only from his political position as administrator of the armory, but also from his social status arising from his family ties. James Stubblefield's sphere of influence was greatly expanded by his marriage to Mary Beckham Stubblefield (Figure 49). Mary Beckham Stubblefield was the sister of Fontaine, Camp, and Armistead Beckham and had close ties to the powerful Wagers and Stephensons.



Figure 48. James Stubblefield (1780-1855) and Mary Beckham Stubblefield (1780-1834). Towards the end of his tenure as superintendent of the armory at Harpers Ferry, James Stubblefield speculated briefly in land on the west side of Short Hill. His marriage to Mary Beckham aligned him with the most influential citizens of the day. (Oil paintings by George Cook, 1822; from the collection of Mrs. Sidney Marsh Cadwell, courtesy of Mrs. Charles Green Summers)

[142] LC DB 3G:60; 3F:474, both dated May 22, 1823.

As a community leader Stubblefield provided employment for his family and friends, patronized their businesses by controlling commerce, and otherwise looked out for their interests. Other members of the community aligned themselves with Stubblefield and his circle. Short Hill land owners Philip Strider, John Peacher, Hiram Carney, and Philip Coons all had dealings with Stubblefield. Stubblefield's controversial policies and claims of mismanagement led to two trials by court martial, once in 1824 and again in 1829. He was acquitted both times. Both trials occurred during Stubblefield's period of Short Hill land acquisition.

Stubblefield's motivations to own Short Hill land are not clear. Though he did not reside on his Short Hill land, Stubblefield played an active role in the development of the area. In 1825 he filed a motion in the Loudoun County Court to have a public road built "around the points" of Short Hill, the River Road running from the Shenandoah ferry to Peacher's Mill. For much of the way, this road would pass through Stubblefield's private property. Soon after the road was completed in the early 1830s, Stubblefield sold his 309-acre tract to the Harpers Ferry merchant Philip Coons.

Philip Coons March 20, 1834

Philip Coons paid $3,000 to Stubblefield for his Short Hill tract. The relatively high sales price probably reflects the improvement of the property by the completion of River Road. The arrival of the C&O Canal on the opposite shore and the imminent arrival of the B&O Railroad may also have increased the value of the land.

Philip Coons was a prominent citizen of Harpers Ferry. A man of multiple and diverse business interests, Coons ran a boarding house, operated a slaughterhouse, leased the Shenandoah ferry, supplied wood and charcoal to the armory, sold groceries, owned a bakery, and invested in several key transportation-related improvements. Coons also owned extensive real estate in Jefferson and Loudoun Counties.

Coons' Short Hill farm was known as the "Still House Farm" and the surrounding area was called "Still House Flats." Though he maintained a residence in Harpers Ferry and never lived on the Short Hill property, during the period of his ownership the farm's orchard and distillery (possibly established by 18th-century tenant Jacob Sullifrank) prospered. By the 1850s the property had three dwellings, a stable, barn, spring house, and about 500 apple trees.

Information is scarce concerning the identities of Coons' tenants. An 1841 advertisement indicates that Amos Neer will hold a public sale at the "*upper farm*" on the property.[143] A notice of sale for the property in 1856 provides the name of one resident. It states the land "*will be shown by Mr. Henry Lee who resides on the farm.*"[144]

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[143] *Virginia Free Press*, August 26, 1841, p3c4.

[144] *Virginia Free Press*, November 6, 1856, p3c1.

By the mid-1850s Coons ran numerous advertisements calling for payment of all debts due to him. This combined with several deeds of trust made on his properties, and offers of sale or rent on others, clearly indicate a period of financial distress. A number of merchants and trading partners also brought lawsuits against him during this time.

Coons executed a deed of trust on the Still House Farm to Archibald M. Keitzmiller in 1855 to secure approximately $4,000 in debts he owed to Joseph Conrad (Conard?). An interesting note in this deed states that the acreage of the farm, said to be 309 acres on Stubblefield's 1828 plat, has "*by calculation since made*" been determined to actually contain 355 acres. Later deeds to the property revert to the 309-acre figure.

In 1856 much of Coons' real estate and personal property was sold, and an auction was held to sell his "*several valuable slaves.*"[145] A second deed of trust was made on the Still House Farm because he found himself "*so embarrassed in his pecuniary affairs as to be unable to meet his engagements.*" Finally, to satisfy his creditors, trustees Archibald M. Keitzmiller and John C. Unseld sold the Still House Farm to Samuel N. Grubb.

Additional notes on Philip Coons:

1831. Jefferson County Chancery cause (Philip COONS vs James STUBBLEFIELD, Sr.; James Stubblefield, Jr.; Philip Grove; Hiram CARNEY, David Neer; William Mayweg; and John Henkle)

1852. Circuit Court Case. John Grubb, Jr., assignee of Philip COONS vs Hiram CARNEY and J.W. VANVACTER.

Samuel N. Grubb July 17, 1858

Having failed to pay his debts to the satisfaction of his creditors, Coons' 309-acre Short Hill farm was auctioned on February 28, 1857, in front of the United States Hotel in Harpers Ferry. Samuel N. Grubb, of Loudoun County, became the new owner after bidding $6 per acre ($1,857.50). Grubb paid one-third of the purchase money on the day of the sale and made two additional installments in 1858.

Grubb is known to have operated a mill in the 1850s on the site of "John Demory's Mill Seat" in the vicinity of Neersville. The mill, situated at the confluence of Piney Run and Sweet Run, appears to have closed sometime before 1889.[146]

In 1895, property taxes indicate the land was valued at $5 per acre and $100 for buildings; the following year the value dropped to $4 per acre and $0 for buildings.

Samuel N. Grubb owned the property until his death. His heirs sold it to Charles E. Roach.

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[145] *Virginia Free Press*, May 29, 1856, p2c7; July 3, 1856, p2c7; and July 24, 1856, p2c5.

[146] Scheel, *Loudoun Discovered...*, 202.

Charles E. Roach September 26, 1903

Charles E. Roach of Hagerstown, Maryland took title to the property for $2,000. Roach owned additional acreage on Loudoun Heights, including the Hotel Shenandoah (formerly Green's Mountain House Hotel). One year prior to his purchase from Grubb's heirs, the fifty-six room hotel had burned to the ground when a coal stove set the building afire.[147]

In 1904, Charles E. Roach and his wife Alice V. Roach sold a 50-acre portion of the tract to Loudoun County farmer, Peter Snider (Snyder). The fifty acres is conveyed as two tracts. Tract 1, consisting of about 16 acres, is described as "*Bottom Land*" and Tract 2 is described as "*orchard or hill land.*" Roach retained the timber rights to the property for one year and a right of way until the tract was "*cleared of wood and timber.*" It is uncertain whether Charles E. Roach had any connection with the Roach Lumber Company that advertised in local newspapers in 1909.

In 1909, Roach and his wife sold the remainder of the Short Hill property to John E. Pitman. That same year Roach sold 21.5 acres of his hotel tract in exchange for one Rambler automobile.[148]

John E. Pitman May 6, 1909

John E. Pitman purchased 259 ¾ acres of Short Hill land, most of it on the steep hillside, for $315. Pitman already owned other wood lots on Short Hill. For example, in 1907 he bought a 20-acre lot from Peter Snider that was situated "*between two wood lots already belonging to Pitman.*"

Pitman died around 1913, as evidenced by an administrator's sale of his farm and personal property at an auction in October of that year. His estate consisted of 386 acres, mostly in Loudoun County. Edward B. Fry (of Fry and Littleton, and one-time owner of the Shannondale Springs resort) purchased this land for $2,375. C.W. Sheutze purchased Pitman's livestock.[149] Fry sold the 259 ¾ acres of Short Hill land to Peter Snyder. With this transaction, the boundaries of the 309 acres as first assembled by James Stubblefield in 1827 were re-established.

Peter Snider November 21, 1913

Peter Snider paid Fry $400 for the Short Hill land, then valued at $1 per acre.

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[147] Smith, "History of Loudoun Heights...," 84-85.

[148] Smith, "History of Loudoun Heights...," 88.

[149] *Farmer's Advocate*, October 11, 1913, p2c2.

Snider resided on a farm at the corner of the intersection of Harpers Ferry Road (Rt.671) and the road that now bears his name, Snider Lane. A Loudoun County business directory of 1888-1889 lists a P.H. Snyder of Neersville as a distiller. A Harpers Ferry news account stating that Snider was "*known here well as a marketman*" suggests he regularly brought produce to town for sale.[150]

In 1917, Peter and Mary A. Snider, his wife, sold a 5-acre portion of their "Dixie Bottom" land to Mary Edna McComas.

Mary Edna McComas July 2, 1917

Mary Edna McComas, of Frederick County, Maryland, purchased the small parcel for $125. The property was surrounded by other land owned by the Sniders and they reserved the right for a road across the property "*to the mountain.*" The Sniders also agreed to make and hang one gate on the road, and to build one half of a barbed-wire fence.

George W. Kernodle May 1, 1924

In 1920, the Loudoun County Circuit Court ordered (Chancery Cause Snider's Committee vs Snider, et al) J.J. Porter to act as special commissioner and auction four parcels of Peter Snider's real estate. The auction took place in front of Porter's Store in Neersville and George W. Kernodle placed the winning bid of $3,107.96. He took possession of the four parcels, consisting of 412 ¾ acres, on February 19, 1923. Kernodle purchased the 5-acre outsale from the "*widow McComas*" the following year.

With the purchase from McComas, all the acreage that would eventually be included in the NPS Short Hill tract was consolidated. For the first time since it passed out of Fairfax hands in the early 19th century, the Short Hill tract was in the possession of a single owner.

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[150] *Farmer's Advocate*, February 25, 1911, p2c2.

Evolution of the Present Day Short Hill Tract

Heirs of George W. Kernodle 1933

In purchases he had made between 1911 and 1924, Dr. George W. Kernodle assembled 474 acres of Short Hill land. The combined value of these lands in 1924 was $1,454, which included $200 for buildings and improvements. The 50-acre "Mill Tract" was the most valuable of his land; the land and timber was valued at $15 per acre and the value of the assorted buildings at the mill complex was $150. Kernodle's land on the west side of Short Hill was less valuable due to the steepness of the terrain. The majority of this land was worth $2 per acre. Improvements on the McComas property were valued at $50. These values remained consistent until Kernodle's death in 1933.

Dr. Kernodle's will bequeathed all his real estate to his executors, son George Howard Kernodle and son-in-law Ronald L. McDonald. McDonald was married to Kernodle's daughter, Ruth K. (Kernodle) McDonald. Kernodle's son and son-in-law were directed to manage, sell, or lease the Short Hill property at their own discretion. The proceeds arising from any sale or lease were to be divided equally among his five children.[151] George W. Kernodle's wife, Kate L. Kernodle appears to have predeceased her husband, sometime after 1919.

The heirs of George W. Kernodle owned the Short Hill property until 1967. During their tenure as owners, four conveyances occurred that slightly decreased the total acreage. First, in 1942, executors George Howard Kernodle and Ronald L. McDonald conveyed 1.16 acres to the Commonwealth of Virginia.[152] This transaction was associated with the realignment of U.S. Route 340. In 1946 another conveyance was made to the Commonwealth of Virginia for the express purpose of improving the road. The deed does not specify the amount of land conveyed, but it is assumed to have been minimal.[153] The final conveyances affected the portion of Kernodle's property that did not become part of NPS lands; a perpetual right-of-way to a 0.7-acre parcel and an additional 2.6 acres were conveyed to The Western Union Telegraph Company in 1965 for the purpose of construction and maintenance of telegraph wires.[154] An associated survey of the property was made in 1964 by Knight and Mackintosh.

In 1967 the trustees and heirs of George W. Kernodle granted the 473-acre tract to a three-party grantee. The listed sale price is $10 with $50,000 deferred. The heirs of Kernodle at the time of the transaction were Roger A. McDuffie, Jr., Iris K. Del Vecchio, and Ruth K. McDonald. Substitute trustees for the estate were also appointed. J. Clifford Kohlmann and Russel T. Woodfield performed these duties.

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[151] LC WB 90:538, dated February 24, 1933.

[152] LC DB 11S:244, dated October 1, 1942.

[153] LC DB 13L:499, dated May 7, 1946.

[154] LC DB 454:541, dated March 1, 1965.

The three parties who purchased the Kernodle Short Hill property were Harry C. Colwell (5/10 interest); Theodore L. Miazga and Viola M. Miazga, his wife (3/10 interest); and Matilda M. Miazga (2/10 interest). The relationship between the three parties is not evident. All are listed on the deed as tenants in common. In addition, Theodore and Viola Miazga are listed as joint tenants with rights of survivorship. The term "tenants" refers to the joint ownership of the three parties, and does not necessarily imply that Colwell and the Miazgas were already in residence on the property. [155]

On November 20, 1967, Harry C. Colwell and the Miazgas conveyed a deed of trust to William W. Nickels and Lucas D. Phillips, both residents of Loudoun. Nickels and Phillips were trustees for Clifford Kohlmann, representing the interests of the Kernodle estate. This deed secured the property until the deferred payment of $50,000, was made. The land could be released from the deed of trust incrementally, upon payment of $150 for each acre other than river front property. The river front property could be released from trust upon payment of $500 per acre. In the meantime, a right-of-way was maintained by the trustee on any released property to ensure that none would become landlocked. In 1975, Nickels and Phillips conveyed the title back to Colwell and the Miazgas, thereby releasing the trust and indicating that the deferred $50,000 principal was paid.

A fourth set of owners was introduced to the co-ownership in 1976, when Theodore L. and Viola Miazga gave as joint tenants a gift of one-half of their interest to Theodore J. Miazga and Janina Maria Miazga. [156] Janina Maria Miazga was a minor.

The Nature Conservancy, a nationwide land conservation group, purchased an option to buy the 473-acre Colwell-Miazga property in 1979. The Conservancy encouraged a Virginia Congressman, Representative Joseph L. Fisher, to introduce legislation that would allow the National Park Service to purchase the land. Legislation for that purpose was passed into law in 1980.

The law authorizing Park Service acquisition was for 473 acres that the Colwell-Miazgas believed to be a single parcel, covering Short Hill from the radio tower to the Potomac. Only when a survey of the perimeter was made in August 1980 was it was discovered that the land was actually divided into two distinct tracts, and not contiguous. The smaller, southernmost tract contained just over 100 acres; the northern tract encompassed 370.14 acres.

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[155] Joint tenancy is a form of ownership by two or more individuals together. It differs from other types of co-ownership in that the surviving joint tenant immediately becomes the owner of the whole property upon the death of the other joint tenant. This is called a "right of survivorship."

A tenancy in common is another form of co-ownership. It is the ownership of an asset by two or more individuals together, but without the rights of survivorship that are found in a joint tenancy. Thus, on the death of one co-owner, his or her interest will not pass to the surviving owner(s) but will pass according to his or her will or, if there is no will, by the law determining heirs.

[156] LC DB 658:286, dated December 30, 1976.

The Nature Conservancy January 1981
United States of America January 5, 1981 to Present

The Colwell-Miazga property formed the backdrop of the downriver view from Harpers Ferry. Both the Conservancy and Park Service were concerned with the preservation of this scenic view. However, the discontinuous nature of the Colwell-Miazga acreage was problematic. Lack of a common boundary between the two tracts precluded the National Park Service from acquiring the entire property. The Nature Conservancy claimed that the option to buy gave them the right to partition the property. The joint tenants agreed, but because Janina Maria Miazga was a co-owner (she had at this time a 3/40 interest) and "an infant" (under the age of 16, and thus by Virginia law "a person under a disability"), the courts had to first appoint a guardian ad litem.[157]

After a month of hearings, on December 31, 1980, the Circuit Court of Loudoun County ordered that The Nature Conservancy did in fact have the right to compel partition and also confirmed the Conservancy's purchase price of $166,563.[158] The partition was made and the National Park Service acquired title to the larger northernmost tract, 370.14 acres from Buzzard Rock to the river. The sale was concluded on January 5, 1981, and the purchase price was $197,000. Tax records for this period place the value of the property at just above $185,000, but for those whose goal was the protection of the historic view from Harpers Ferry, the price was well worth it.

[157] A "guardian ad litem" is a person appointed by the court, similar to an attorney, who makes recommendations to the court regarding the best interest of a child.

[158] Chancery Order Book 58:169, 187, 303, 453.

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Appendix I
Chain of Title Tables

The following tables provide the chain of title for the various properties that comprise the NPS Short Hill tract. This acreage was first combined under one owner, Dr. George W. Kernodle, in 1924. When the heirs of George Kernodle sold the property in 1967, the deed of sale conveyed the land in several tracts. The tracts that were eventually included to Harpers Ferry National Historical Park are:

Tract 2	10 acres	(Peacher's Mill Lot)
Tract 4A	20 acres	(Sarah J. Everhart Wood Lot)
Tract 4B	20 acres	(John Everhart Wood Lot)
Tract 5	413 acres*	(Stubblefield Tract)

* [Tract 5 was comprised of 4 separate parcels. Only Parcel 1, Parcel 2, and a portion of Parcel 3, a combined total of 319 acres, were acquired by the National Park Service.]

Title Table Tract 2.

Date	Instrument	Deed Book: Page	Grantor	Grantee	Notes
6/1/1812	Trust	2P:313	Ferdinando & Elizabeth Blair Fairfax	John Dixon, Trustee for Elijah Chamberlain	conveys 50 to 60 acres "comprehending a range of mill seats" for $1,350
9/22/1817	B&S	2W:196	John Dixon, Trustee	Jacob Waltman, Sr.	Highest bid = $1,871
1/31/1818	B&S	2W:268	Ferdinando Fairfax	Jacob Waltman, Sr.	conveys 2 tracts (124 acres) for $3,700; confirms public sale (2W:196) of mill seat
2/1/1818	B&S	2X:39	Rachel & Jacob Waltman, Sr.	Emanuel Waltman	sale price = $2,000
2/11/1822	B&S	3D:414	Heirs of Emanuel Waltman	Jacob, John, & Joseph Everhart	sale price = $1,100
3/20/1824	B&S	3W:230	Jacob, John, & Joseph Everhart	John Peacher	conveys 10 acres for $1,850 with the "*privelege of erecting a Mill*"
2/6/1839	B&S	4L:306	John Peacher	Robert Y. Wilson	sale price = $4,250
2/6/1839	B&S	4L:308	Robert Y. Wilson	Caspar W. Wever	sale price = $4,250
2/6/1839	Mortgage	4L:309	Caspar W. Wever	Robert Y. Wilson	$1,250 released by 4Z:66
2/6/1839	Mortgage	4L:373	Robert Y. Wilson	John Peacher	$1,250 released by 4Z:70
7/9/1839	B&S	4M:308	Caspar W. Wever	James William McCullough	sale price = $10,000
10/2/1841	B&S	4Q:147	James William McCullough	Weverton Manufacturing Co.	sale price = $5,000
10/26/1842	Trust	4R:249	Weverton Manufacturing Co.	John Janney	sale price = $10,000
6/24/1847	Release	4Y:134	John Janney	Weverton Manufacturing Co.	release of trust 4R:249
8/26/1847	Release	4Z:66	Robert Y. Wilson	Caspar W. Wever	release of mortgage 4L:309
8/26/1847	Release	4Z:70	John Peacher	Robert Y. Wilson	release of mortgage 4L:373

Title Table Tract 2.

Date	Instrument	Deed Book: Page	Grantor	Grantee	Notes
5/24/1852	Attachment	5F:7	Weverton Manufacturing Co.	William Loughbridge	lien attached due to $1,000 debt
6/9/1852	Attachment	5F:30	Weverton Manufacturing Co.	Sheriff John Bayly	lien attached due to $27.51 debt
12/16/1860	B&S	5T:209	Sheriff of Loudoun Co. (David Hixson)	Samuel B. Preston	sold for $5, by court order in settlement of Loughbridge vs Weverton Manufacturing Co.
2/8/1898	B&S	8P:112	Heirs of Samuel B. Preston	Thomas C. & Hattie Bell Tritapoe	conveys 10 acres for $150
9/2/1901	B&S	8P:113	Thomas C. & Hattie B. Tritapoe	Katharine A. Tritapoe	sale price = $150
4/7/1913	B&S	8S:391	Katharine A. & CharlesTritapoe & Commissioner	George W. Kernodle	sale price = $10, in settlement of Chancery Case of Tritapoe vs Morsell
4/18/1919	right-of-way	10E:299	George W. & Kate L. Kernodle	Mayor & Council of Brunswick, MD	conveys right-of-way for 8" water line for $5
11/20/1967	B&S	481:362	Executor & Heirs of George W. Kernodle	Harry C. Colwell, et al.	conveys 6 tracts (473 acres) for $10 with special warranty
11/20/1967	Trust	481:366	Harry C. Colwell, et al.	William W. Nichels & Lucas D. Phillips	to secure payment of $50,000 unto J. Clifford Kohlmann
4/29/1975	Release	617:303	William W. Nichels & Lucas D. Phillips	Harry C. Colwell, et al.	release of trust 481:366
1/14/1981	B&S	778:653	Harry C. Colwell, et al.	Nature Conservancy	conveys 370.14 acres for $166,563
1/5/1981	B&S	778:658	Nature Conservancy	United States of America	conveys 370.14 acres for $197,000 to USA for NPS

Title Table Tract 4a

Date	Instrument	Deed Book: Page	Grantor	Grantee	Notes
7/9/1832	Jacob Everhart Division	3Y:116	Everhart Commissioners	Sarah J. Everhart	title to Lot 3 (20 acres) granted by court order in Everhart vs Everhart
11/3/1851	Trust	5E:203	Samuel E. & Sarah J. (Everhart) Washington	John Everhart	to secure $1,000 debt due to Sarah Wenner's estate
11/3/1851	Trust	5E:204	Samuel E. & Sarah J. (Everhart) Washington	Sheriff's Trustee (Charles B. Tebbs)	to secure $1,000 debt due to Sarah Wenner's estate
2/10/1852	Trust	5E:305	Samuel E. Washington	Charles F. Wright, et al.	conveys all Washington's personal property to secure 9 separate debts
3/15/1855	Trust	5L:38	Samuel E. & Sarah J. (Everhart) Washington	Sarah Wenner's Administrators (Charles B. Tebbs and Armistead T.M. Filler)	to secure several debts of Samuel E. Washington

Title Table Tract 4a

Date	Instrument	Deed Book: Page	Grantor	Grantee	Notes
3/2/1857	B&S	5R:163	A.T.M. Filler	Richard James	purchased at public auction; conveys 20 acres for $100
11/2/1877	B&S	6L:374	Richard James' Executor (Smith)	Emanuel Wenner	purchased at public auction; conveys 20 acres for $25
8/25/1893	B&S	8S:374	Heirs of Emanuel Wenner	John Ebb George	conveys 20 acres for $51
10/10/1914	B&S	8V:340	Orra I. & John Ebb George	George W. Kernodle	conveys 20 acres for $275
11/20/1967	B&S	481:362	Executor & Heirs of George W. Kernodle	Harry C. Colwell, et al.	conveys 6 tracts (473 acres) for $10 with special warranty
11/20/1967	Trust	481:366	Harry C. Colwell, et al.	William W. Nichels & Lucas D. Phillips	to secure payment of $50,000 unto J. Clifford Kohlmann
4/29/1975	Release	617:303	William W. Nichels & Lucas D. Phillips	Harry C. Colwell, et al.	release of trust 481:366
1/14/1981	B&S	778:653	Harry C. Colwell, et al.	Nature Conservancy	conveys 370.14 acres for $166,563
1/5/1981	B&S	778:658	Nature Conservancy	United States of America	conveys 370.14 acres for $197,000 to USA for NPS

Title Table Tract 4b

Date	Instrument	Deed Book: Page	Grantor	Grantee	Notes
7/9/1832	Jacob Everhart Division	3Y:116	Everhart Commissioners	John Everhart	title to Lots 1 & 4 (20 acres) granted by court order in Everhart vs Everhart
11/23/1878	B&S	6M:313	John Everhart's Commissioners (Smith and McIntosh)	Emanuel Wenner	conveys title to Lots 1 & 4 for $5 per acre ($100)
5/17/1893	B&S	8G:314	Heirs of Emanuel Wenner	Robert Wenner	conveys 3 lots (32 acres) for $170.40
11/5/1914	B&S	8V:439	Alice O. & Robert Wenner	George W. Kernodle	conveys 2 lots (20 acres) for $275
11/20/1967	B&S	481:362	Executor & Heirs of George W. Kernodle	Harry C. Colwell, et al.	conveys 6 tracts (473 acres) for $10 with special warranty
11/20/1967	Trust	481:366	Harry C. Colwell, et al.	William W. Nichels & Lucas D. Phillips	to secure payment of $50,000 unto J. Clifford Kohlmann
4/29/1975	Release	617:303	William W. Nichels & Lucas D. Phillips	Harry C. Colwell, et al.	release of trust 481:366
1/14/1981	B&S	778:653	Harry C. Colwell, et al.	Nature Conservancy	conveys 370.14 acres for $166,563
1/5/1981	B&S	778:658	Nature Conservancy	United States of America	conveys 370.14 acres for $197,000 to USA for NPS

Title Table Tract 5

Date	Instrument	Deed Book: Page	Grantor	Grantee	Notes
3/20/1785	Lease	P:187	George William Fairfax	Jacob Sullifrank	85-acre tract
5/14/1814	Trust	2R:385	Ferdinando Fairfax	Edmund I. Lee, Thomas Swann, & Robert J. Taylor	conveys 250 acres in trust
9/22/1815	B&S	2T:140	Trustees for Ferdinando Fairfax	John Hopkins, Sr.	conveys 250 acres for $1,500 in settlement of Hopkins vs Fairfax
1/4/1817	Mortgage	2V:192	Catherine & Philip Strider	John Hopkins, Jr.	conveys 250 acres for $2,544
3/16/1818	B&S	2X:121	Trustee for Philip Strider (John Hopkins, Jr.)	John Hopkins, Sr.	conveys 250 acres for $1,250
4/1/1818	B&S	2W:186	John Hopkins, Sr.	Frederick Handshy	conveys 250 acres for $2,500
4/1/1818	Trust	2X:123	Frederick Handshy	Thomas Swann	conveys 250 acres in trust to secure $1,400 due John Hopkins, Sr.
4/1/1819	Trust	2Y:29	Catharine & Frederick Handshy	Substitute Trustees (Erasmus West & Henry Frazier)	conveys 249 acres (1 acre mill lot reserved) for $600 due Hopkins
10/15/1822	Trust	3F:78	Frederick Handshy	Trustee for Fountain Beckham, Edward Wager, & Roger Humphries (Thos. J. Marlow)	conveys personal property to secure debts due Beckham, Wager, & Humphries
10/20/1822	Trust	3F:77	Frederick Handshy	Trustee for Thomas Gapaway (Samuel Dawson)	conveys 250 acres for $1 to secure $135.05 due Thos. Gapaway
2/2/1824	B&S	3H:419	Catharine & Frederick Handshy	James Stubblefield	conveys 170 acres for $1,800
3/20/1834	B&S	4Q:36	Mary & James Stubblefield	Philip Coons	conveys 309 acres for $3,000
12/3/1855	Trust	5M:300	Philip Coons	Archibald M. Keitzmiller	to secure debts owed by Coons
5/12/1856	Trust	5N:315	Ann C. & Philip Coons	John C. Unseld	to secure debts owed by Coons
7/17/1858	B&S	5W:26	Trustees for Philip Coons (Keitzmiller & Unseld)	Samuel N. Grubb	conveys 309 acres for $1,857.50; purchased at public auction 2/28/1857
9/26/1903	B&S	7X:410	Heirs of Samuel N. Grubb	Charles E. Roach	conveys 309 acres for $2,000
Tract 5 divided into 2 parcels					
Tract 5 Parcel 1					
4/15/1904	B&S	7Y:325	Alice V. & Charles E. Roach	Peter Snider	conveys 2 tracts (50 acres) for $397.57; Roach retains timber rights.
Tract 5 Parcel 2					

Title Table Tract 5

Date	Instrument	Deed Book: Page	Grantor	Grantee	Notes
5/6/1909	B&S	8I:152	Charles E. and Alice V. Roach	John E. Pittman	conveys 259.75 acres for $315
11/21/1913	B&S	8V:483	Heirs of John E. Pittman	Peter Snider	purchased at public auction by E.B. Fry and conveyed to Snider for $400
Tract 5 Parcels 1 and 2 recombined					
7/2/1917	B&S	9D:7	Peter & Mary A. Snider	Mary Edna McComas	5-acre outsale for $125, Sniders reserve use of a road
2/19/1923	B&S	9Q:3	Peter Snider's Commissioner (Cecil Connor)	Dr. George W. Kernodle	conveys 4 parcels (413 acres) for $3,107.96 in settlement of Snider's Committee vs Snider
5/11/1924	B&S	9T:466	Mary Edna McComas	George W. Kernodle	conveys 5 acres for $10, subject to road easement (9D:7)
11/20/1967	B&S	481:362	Executor & Heirs of George W. Kernodle	Harry C. Colwell, et al.	conveys 6 tracts (473 acres) for $10 with special warranty
11/20/1967	Trust	481:366	Harry C. Colwell, et al.	William W. Nichels & Lucas D. Phillips	to secure payment of $50,000 unto J. Clifford Kohlmann
4/29/1975	Release	617:303	William W. Nichels & Lucas D. Phillips	Harry C. Colwell, et al.	release of trust 481:366
1/14/1981	B&S	778:653	Harry C. Colwell, et al.	Nature Conservancy	conveys 370.14 acres for $166,563
1/5/1981	B&S	778:658	Nature Conservancy	United States of America	conveys 370.14 acres for $197,000 to USA for NPS

Appendix II
Short Hill Historical Timeline

Short Hill Events:	Regional and National Events:
	1648 Iroquois Confederacy is formed.
1661 King Charles II grants entire Northern Neck Proprietary, approximately 6 million acres to loyalists.	
1720 Thomas 6th Lord Fairfax becomes sole proprietor of Northern Neck.	1722 Treaty of Albany with Iroquois is ratified, bringing relative security to colonists of Virginia frontier.
	1728 About 60 families establish "The German Settlement" in vicinity of present day Lovettsville.
1735 Thomas 6th Lord Fairfax establishes 17,296-acre Piedmont Manor.	1733 Peter Stevens begins simple canoe ferry at confluence of Shenandoah and Potomac Rivers.
	1747 Robert Harper purchases "The Hole," later known as Harpers Ferry.
	1748 George Washington assists Fairfax surveyors in lower Shenandoah Valley.
1760 Flayle Payne's establishes ferry in vicinity of present day Knoxville.	1756 Seven Years' War (French and Indian War) begins.
	1776 Declaration of Independence.
	1783 Thomas Jefferson visits Harpers Ferry.
1785 George Washington inspects Potomac River and runs the "Spout" near Short Hill. Jacob Sullifrank leases 85 acres from George William Fairfax.	
	1796 U.S. Armory established at Harpers Ferry.
	1803 Loudoun soil conservationist John Binns publishes A Treatise on Practical Farming, espousing use of lime on exhausted soil.

Short Hill Events:	Regional and National Events:
1806 John Conard, Jr. builds grist mill on Piney Run, first known business in "Dixie Bottom" area.	1807 James Stubblefield appointed Superintendent of U.S. Armory at Harpers Ferry.
	1814 British troops occupy Washington during War of 1812, burn White House and other public buildings.
	1817 John Peacher buys and develops island in Shenandoah River (later known as Virginius Island)
1823 James Stubblefield, Superintendent of U.S. Armory at Harpers Ferry, begins to acquire Short Hill lands.	
1824 John Peacher purchases 10-acre mill lot from Everhart brothers. Construction begins on Peacher's Mill complex.	
1825 Flood endangers Peacher's Mill development. Falls Branch road opens. Shover's Distillery commences operations.	1829 James Stubblefield submits resignation as Superintendent of U.S. Armory at Harpers Ferry.
1831 Division of Everhart's tract.	
1832 River Road opens "around the points."	1833 C&O completes canal to lock #33.
1834 Philip Coons acquires Still House Farm.	1834 B&O Railroad reaches shore opposite Harpers Ferry.
1847 Maryland legislature condemns Everhart's fish dam to make way for Weverton dam. Championship boxing match takes place at Still House Farm.	1848 President Polk's message to Congress confirms "abundance of gold" in California, sparking Gold Rush to California.
1849 Weverton dam completed.	
1852 Significant flood.	1852 Hillsborough & Harpers Ferry Turnpike completed.
1855 Philip Coons sells Still House Farm.	1859 John Brown raids Harpers Ferry .

Short Hill Events:	Regional and National Events:
	1861 U.S. Civil War begins.
	1864 "The Burning Raid" lays waste to much of northern Loudoun County.
	1865 Confederate renegade John Mobberly killed.
1870 Significant flood.	
1889 Significant flood.	
1913 George W. Kernodle acquires Peacher's Mill tract. Wishes to promote hydroelectricity.	
	1917 U.S. enters World War I.
1919 Town of Brunswick acquires right of way for use of Short Hill spring in water supply system.	1919 Prohibition ratified by Congress, banning "*manufacture, sale, or transportation of intoxicating liquors*."
	1929 Stock market crashes, sending nation into Great Depression.
1936 River Road closes for good after record flood.	
	1941 U.S. enters World War II.
1942 Significant flood.	
	1944 Harpers Ferry National Monument created.
1972 Significant flood.	
	1980 President Jimmy Carter signs legislation authorizing expansion of Harpers Ferry National Historical Park.
1981 NPS acquires Short Hill tract from Nature Conservancy.	