



UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Harpers Ferry National Monument
Harpers Ferry, West Virginia

May 14, 1959

IN REPLY REFER TO:

H2215

HFR-283

REGION FIVE		INITIAL AND DATE
MAY 15 1959		
REG. DIRECTOR		
ASST. REG. DIR.		
OPERATIONS		
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REC. RES. PLAN		
RANGER ACT'S		

5/15

Memorandum

To: Regional Director, Region Five

From: Superintendent, Harpers Ferry National Monument

Subject: Research Report, The Methodist Protestant Church, Research
Project No. HF-22C

Historian Smith offers the following comments in response to the questions raised by Regional Historian Frank Barnes in his memorandum of May 12, in regard to this research report:

The quotes given on page 7, relative to the Masons do prove that they added an extra story to the church building but the last line referring to their occupancy of the second floor was inadvertently left off. The quotation should read:

"The New Hall recently erected at Harpers Ferry, was dedicated to the purposes of Benevolence and Charity, on Saturday last. The members of the Order, numbering over two hundred, assembled in the Methodist Protestant Church, and after being formed in the order of Procession repaired to the Hall, above, where the Dedicatory exercise took place..."

Frank H. Anderson

Frank H. Anderson
Superintendent

In triplicate

Copy to: Director

Barnes
5/12
Kelly
5/12

Region Five
421 Walnut Street
Philadelphia 6, Pa.

May 12, 1959

Memorandum

To: Superintendent, Harpers Ferry National Monument
From: Acting Regional Director
Subject: Research Report, The Methodist Protestant Church,
Research Project No. HF-22c

This is a generally good report. As a matter of good historiography, however, the Kimball report quoted near the bottom of page 8 should have been used as documentation for the material on church appearance and use given on the preceding page. The quotes given on page 7, relative to the Masons, do not prove at all that they added an extra story to the church building; the second sentence on the page is not documented at all. Also, the material in the Kimball quote on wartime damage could well have been worked into the main narrative text.

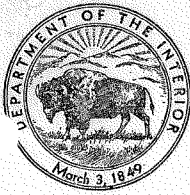
(Sgd.) George A. Palmer

George A. Palmer
Acting Regional Director

In duplicate

Copy to: Director w/copy of Report
History w/copy of Report

FBarnes/mm
General
Daily
Area



H2215

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

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

March 13, 1959

Memorandum

To: Regional Director, Region Five

From: Superintendent, Harpers Ferry National Monument

Subject: Research Report, The Methodist Protestant Church,
Research Project No. HF-22c

Enclosed please find four copies of the "Research Report, History of The Methodist Protestant Church and Odd Fellows Hall, Harpers Ferry, 1843-1868," revised March 12, 1959, 12 pages. This report has been prepared by Historian Philip R. Smith, Jr.

(SGD) FRANK H. ANDERSON

Frank H. Anderson
Superintendent

In duplicate

4FR 283

RESEARCH REPORT

HISTORY OF

THE METHODIST PROTESTANT CHURCH

AND ODD FELLOW HALL,

HARPERS FERRY, 1843-1868

Harpers Ferry National Monument

Prepared by:
Philip R. Smith, Jr.
Park Historian
Dated October 23, 1958
Revised March 12, 1959
12 Pages
HF-22C

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METHODIST PROTESTANT CHURCH

I. OWNERSHIP OF THE LAND, 1796-1868

The lot on which the Methodist Protestant Church was to be erected was a part of the property purchased on June 15, 1796, by the United States from John Wager, Senior, for the purpose of establishing a Federal Armory at Harpers Ferry.¹

The congregation was organized in 1830 and probably met at the Free Church,² which was located on the present site of Bldg. No. 48-A until 1844. Proof that the congregation was functioning before the construction of the church may be found in a notice in the Virginia Free Press of July 14, 1842, of a camp meeting to be held by that denomination.³

On July 12, 1843, Superintendent Henry K. Craig, of the Armory at Harpers Ferry, in a letter to Colonel George Talcott, of the Ordnance Office, recommended that an application^{in lot} from a Methodist Protestant congregation at Harpers Ferry be approved, writing:

"I have received an application from a society or Congregation of the Methodist Protestant Church at this place for a site for the erection of a house of worship. I beg leave to recommend the application to the favorable consideration of the Secretary of War."⁴

Colonel Talcott answered Colonel Craig's letter on July 14, 1843, directing

1. Deed, June 15, 1796, Wager to U. S., National Archives, Reel 21, V.7, pp.704-708.

2. Smith, Philip R., Jr., "Historic Bldg. Report, Part I, for Building No. 48-A, St. John's Protestant Episcopal Church," October 23, 1958, revised March 6, 1959, p.6.

3. Virginia Free Press, July 14, 1842, p.3, c.3.

4. Reel 23, V.2, p.185, National Archives R.G. Craig to Talcott, July 12, 1843.

him to select a site and report its location to him.

Colonel Craig in a letter of July 24, 1843, furnished the necessary information.

"The site selected by the Protestant Methodist Congregation of this place for the erection of a house of worship is on the west side of the road contiguous to which the present Methodist Church is situated and near the junction of that road with the main road (High Street) to Charlestown.

The building will be about 40 by 50 feet, and a space of 45 by 70 feet will be required for its erection....

This location can never I think be needed for Armory purposes." 6

Colonel Talcott submitted and recommended the application to the Secretary of War. 7

Colonel Craig was notified by Colonel Talcott of the Secretary's approval in a letter of July 27, 1843. 8

No written agreement was entered into for the lease of land for the church as was later noted in a letter of February 15, 1849, from Superintendent John Symington to Colonel Talcott. Symington wrote:

"Subsequently to these two other applications to erect churches on the Government lands were made through Major Craig Comdg officer both of which were approved by letters from your office one dated 22nd October 1841 for a Presbyterian Church, the other for a Methodist Protestant church dated 27th July 1843. These two churches are built and marked A and D on that plat of Government lands, (see 1848 and 1852 maps) though no lease of the lots appears to have been executed or other written obligations on the part of those in whose behalf the permits were given, there being a verbal understanding only as I learn that the lots were granted on the same terms as for those formerly granted for like uses." 9

5. Reel 19, V.2, p.150, Talcott to Craig, July 14, 1843.
6. Reel 23, V.2, p.187. Craig to Talcott, July 24, 1843.
7. Reel 19, V.14, p.1408. Talcott to Secretary of War, July 26, 1843.
8. Reel 19, V.2, p.154. Talcott to Craig, July 27, 1843.
9. Reel 26, V.2, p.199. Symington to Talcott.

MAP OF HARPERS FERRY

Prepared in compliance

With letter to Major Symington

April 22, 1848.

No. of Building

Where situated per map.

- A B C D E

Presbyterian Church

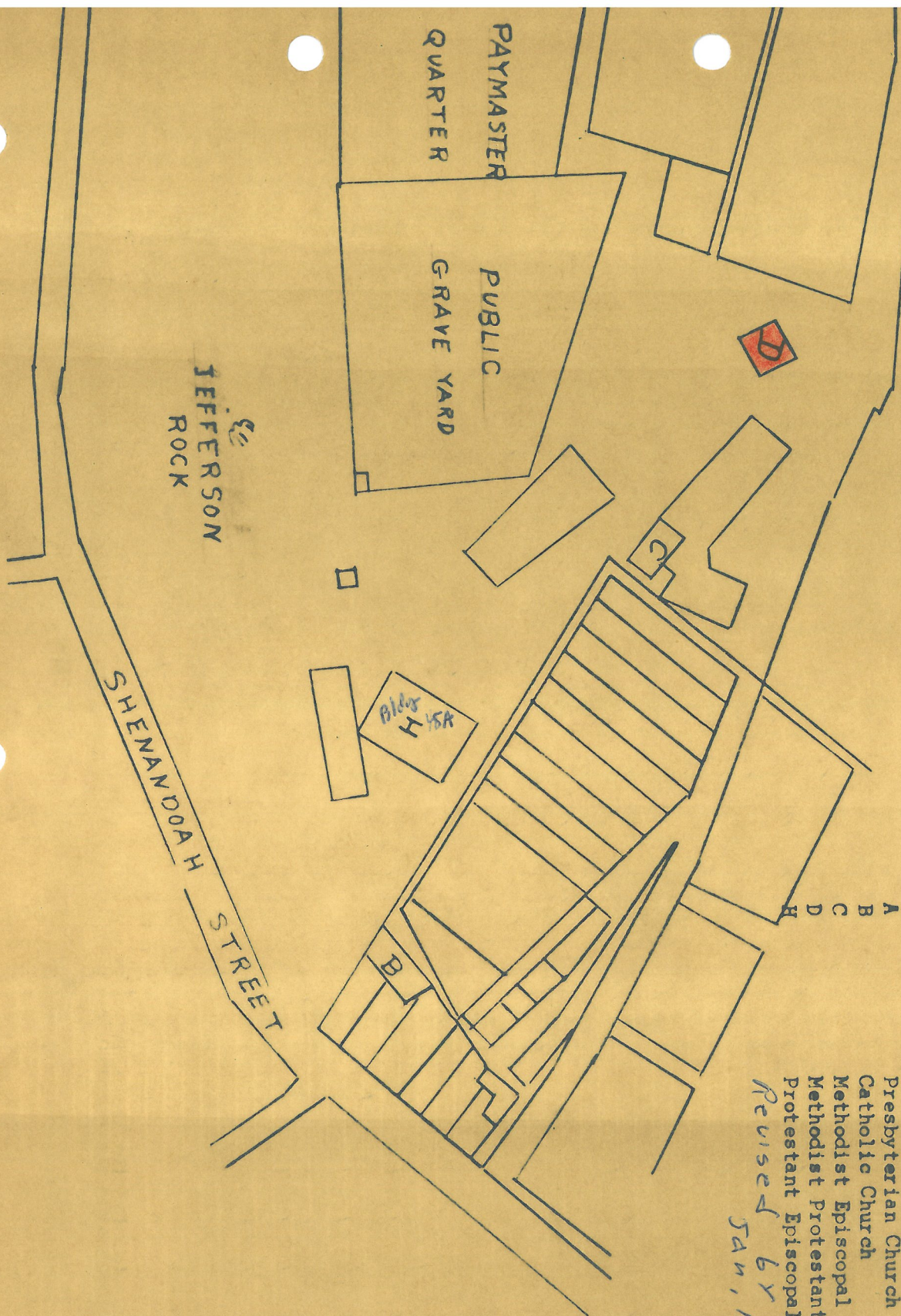
Catholic Church

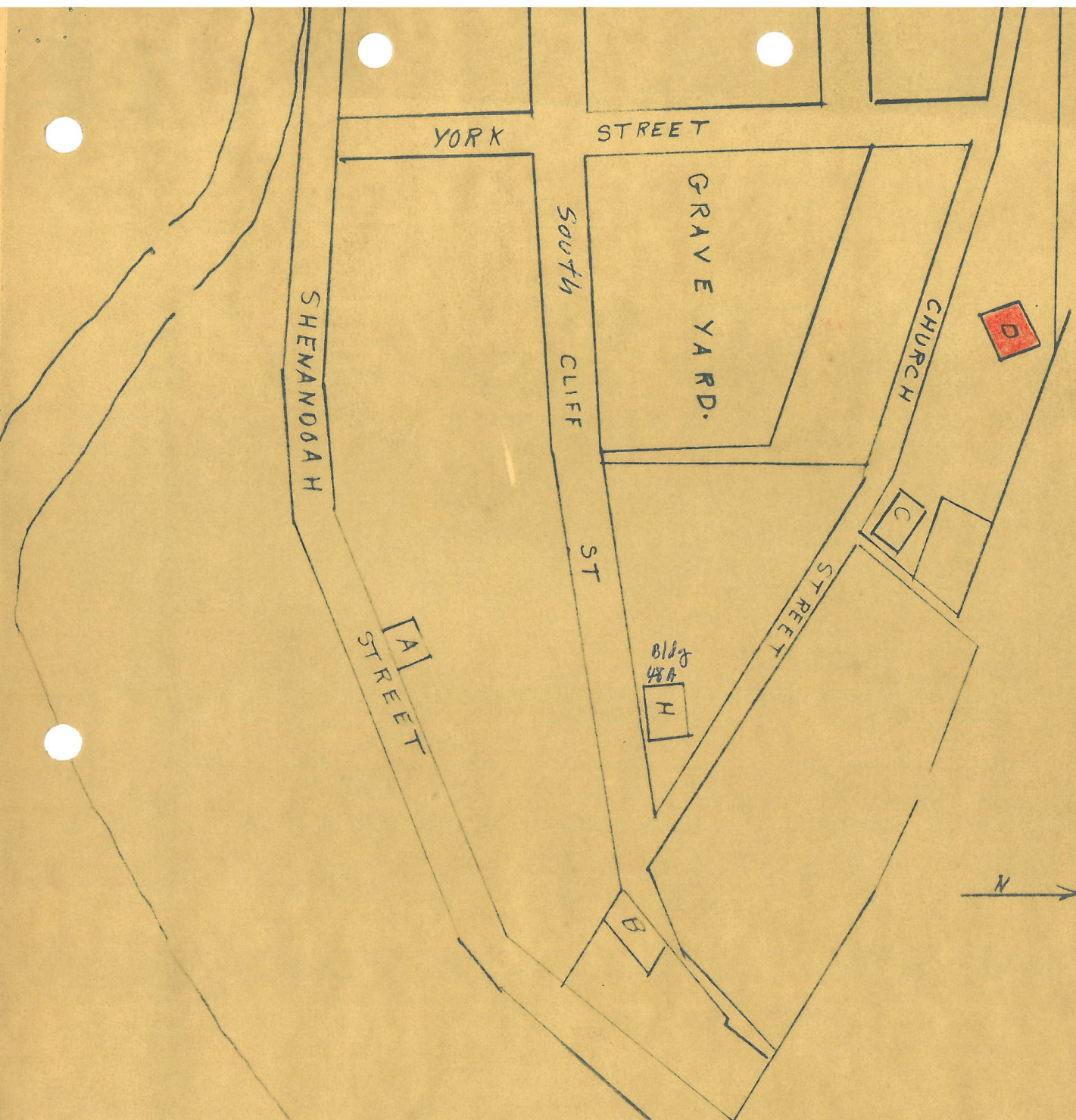
Methodist Episcopal Church

Methodist Protestant Church

Protestant Episcopal Church

Revised by Symington
Jan, 1851





No of Building	Where situated per map.
A	Presbyterian Church
B	Catholic Church
C	Methodist Episcopal Church
D	Methodist Protestant Church
H	Protestant Episcopal Church

S. Howell Brown's Map

MAP OF HARPERS FERRY, 1852

~~PREPARED IN COMPLIANCE WITH LETTER
TO MAJOR SYMINGTON, APRIL 22, 1848~~

~~S. HOWELL BROWN~~

~~REVISED BY MAJOR SYMINGTON,
JANUARY, 1851~~

In the sale of surplus Government land that took place at the Armory in 1852, this lot was set aside for the use of the Methodist Protestant Church in accordance with the policy of the Ordnance Department outlined in the following statement by the Secretary of War:

"From this sale will be excepted such lots or portions of ground as are recommended in said report of 24 September, to be reserved. Also such other lots or portions of grounds as are designated on the plat above described (see 1852 map) as the sites of Churches, parsonages, or public institutions of any kind, leaving to the persons or Corporations interested in said reservations to apply to Congress for a title to the Same, which I have no power to grant." 10

On December 15, 1868,¹¹ full title to this lot was granted to the church by the United States under an act of Congress. The final size of the lot granted to the Methodist Protestant Church in 1868 will be found on the 1869 map on the following page.

II. CONSTRUCTION OF THE METHODIST PROTESTANT CHURCH

The laying of the cornerstone of the new Methodist Protestant Church was announced by the Virginia Free Press on November 2, 1843.

"MASONIC

Charity Lodge No. 111,

Of Free and accepted Masons will lay the Corner-Stone of the Methodist Protestant Church at Harpers-Ferry, on Saturday 11th of November. All Bretheren in regular standing are respectfully and cordially invited to attend, and join us in the ceremonies of the day.

PHILIP COONS, JOHN C. UNSELD
JEROME B. YOUNG, Committee" 12

10. Report of Board of Officers, September 24, 1851, Approved by the Secretary of War, June 10, 1852, Reel 24, V.8, p.802-806.

11. 1869 Map, Catalogue of the Harpers Ferry Armory Property to be sold by the United States on the 30th November, 1869, at the Town of Harpers Ferry, Va.

12. Virginia Free Press, November 2, 1843, p.3, c.1.

1869 MeP



The church was probably finished in 1844. Its dimensions were ~~forty~~³⁰ by fifty feet, and was a one story building constructed of rough chaff stone. In 1845 the International Order of Odd Fellows apparently added a second floor over the church. The new I.O.O.F. Hall was completed in 1846 and it was to be dedicated on July 4, 1846, according to an account in the Virginia Free Press:

"GRAND DEDICATION AND PROCESSION

Virginia Lodge, No. 1, of the I.O.O.F. at Harpers Ferry, Va., hereby notifies her sister Lodges, and all members in regular standing that her new Hall will be dedicated with all the ceremonies, on SATURDAY the 4th day of July next. The procession will be formed at 11 o'clock precisely, and at 12 o'clock an Oration will be delivered by an able and popular Brother.

All Bretheren in regular standing are most cordially invited to spend the day of jubilee with their bretheren of Harpers-Ferry. A brotherly welcome will be extended to all who may honor us with a visit." 13

On July 30, 1846, the Virginia Free Press carried an account of the dedication of the I.O.O.F. Hall in the Methodist Church:

"ODD FELLOWS DEDICATION AT HARPERS FERRY

"The New Hall recently erected at Harpers Ferry, was dedicated to the purposes of Benevolence and Charity, on Saturday last. The members of the Order, numbering over two hundred, assembled in the order of Procession repaired to the Hall, above, where the Dedicatory exercises took place..." 14

Photograph HF-51 shown in the Appendix thus shows the building in 1857 as a two story dwelling built into the side of the hill. It has six windows on either side and five and the entrance in the front facing on High Street or the Charles Town Road. The front of the building is decorated with a false front. Steps lead up to the front door of the building.

III. USE OF THE BUILDING, METHODIST PROTESTANT CHURCH AND ODD FELLOWS HALL

The Methodist Protestant Church was used for the purposes of worship

13. Virginia Free Press, June 18, 1846, p.1, c.6.

14. Ibid., July 30, 1846, p.2, c.2.

from the time of its construction in 1844 until the Civil War. The upper story of the building was occupied by the Harpers Ferry Chapter of the International Order of the Odd Fellows from 1846 until 1861.

With the coming of the Civil War the operations of the Methodist Protestant Church and all other churches in ^Harpers Ferry were interrupted, thus ¹⁵ from 1861 to 1865 no services were held in the Methodist Protestant Church. The church applied to the United States Government for compensation for damage to the church in 1866, alledging that the building had been damaged by ¹⁶ Union troops.

On November 14, 1866, the Reverend E. Richardson wrote to General Meigs, since the first request for payment for damages done to the church by Union troops had been denied. In this letter he stated that other parties have been recompensed for damages done to their property by troops and he asked that ¹⁷ the claim of the Methodist Protestant Church be reconsidered.

Captain A. S. Kimball reported to Maj. Genl. M. C. Meigs on December 10, 1866, in regards to the church and Odd Fellows Hall which he had just inspected:

"The Hall of this Lodge was built in conjunction with the Methodist Protestant Church of Harpers Ferry and comprises the upper story of that Church. The building is of rough chaff stone and its areas are about 30 X 50 feet. The ground was the gift of the government, upon which the church is located.

The troops took possession of the Hall in 1862 but at what particular date it was difficult to determine. The occupation continued until the fall of 1863, a period of about one year. The building does not appear to have been occupied by the order of any competent authority but merely taken possession of by the troops on duty at Harpers Ferry and was used as quarters

15. Program of the Camp Hill Methodist Church, Harpers Ferry, W. Va.

16. Reverend J. Clay to Genl. Dana, September 23, 1866, Office of the Quartermaster General, Consolidated Correspondence File, 1794-1815, Box 377.

17. Ibid.

for the men.

During this occupation the building was seriously damaged. the inside of the Hall, including windows, ceiling, joists, frame works and in fact every item of wood work was torn out and Sawed for fire wood. There is at time nothing remaining except the naked stone walls and it is claimed that the entire damage was committed while the Hall was occupied by the troops.

It is also claimed on the part of the Trustees that a large amount of valuable furniture, the property of the Lodge, was also destroyed by the troops. But of this there could be obtained no evidence beyond the testimony of interested parties.

I am of opinion that the sum claimed, being \$1,500 is no more than would be required to put the Hall in such condition as it is believed to have been when taken possession of by the troops.

The claim for that part of the edifice used as a church has, I am informed already been settled.

The Trustees, to whom the claim is presented are reported to have been loyal during the war..." 18

Because the building was so badly damaged it was decided not to rebuild on that site and another church was erected on the former parsonage lot, Block D, Lot 2, Camp Hill. Stone and brick used in the erection of the new building was salvaged from the old Armory yard.

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IV. HISTORICAL PRINTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS

Additional photographs of the Methodist Protestant Church will be found in Smith, Philip R., Jr., "Historic Bldg. Report, Part I, for Bldg. No. 48-A, St. John's Protestant Episcopal Church," October 23, 1958, Revised March 6, 1959, on the following pages:

1. 1861, HF-46, page 20.
2. 1862, HF-240, page 21.
3. 1862, HF-11, page 23.
4. 1865, HF-449, page 24.

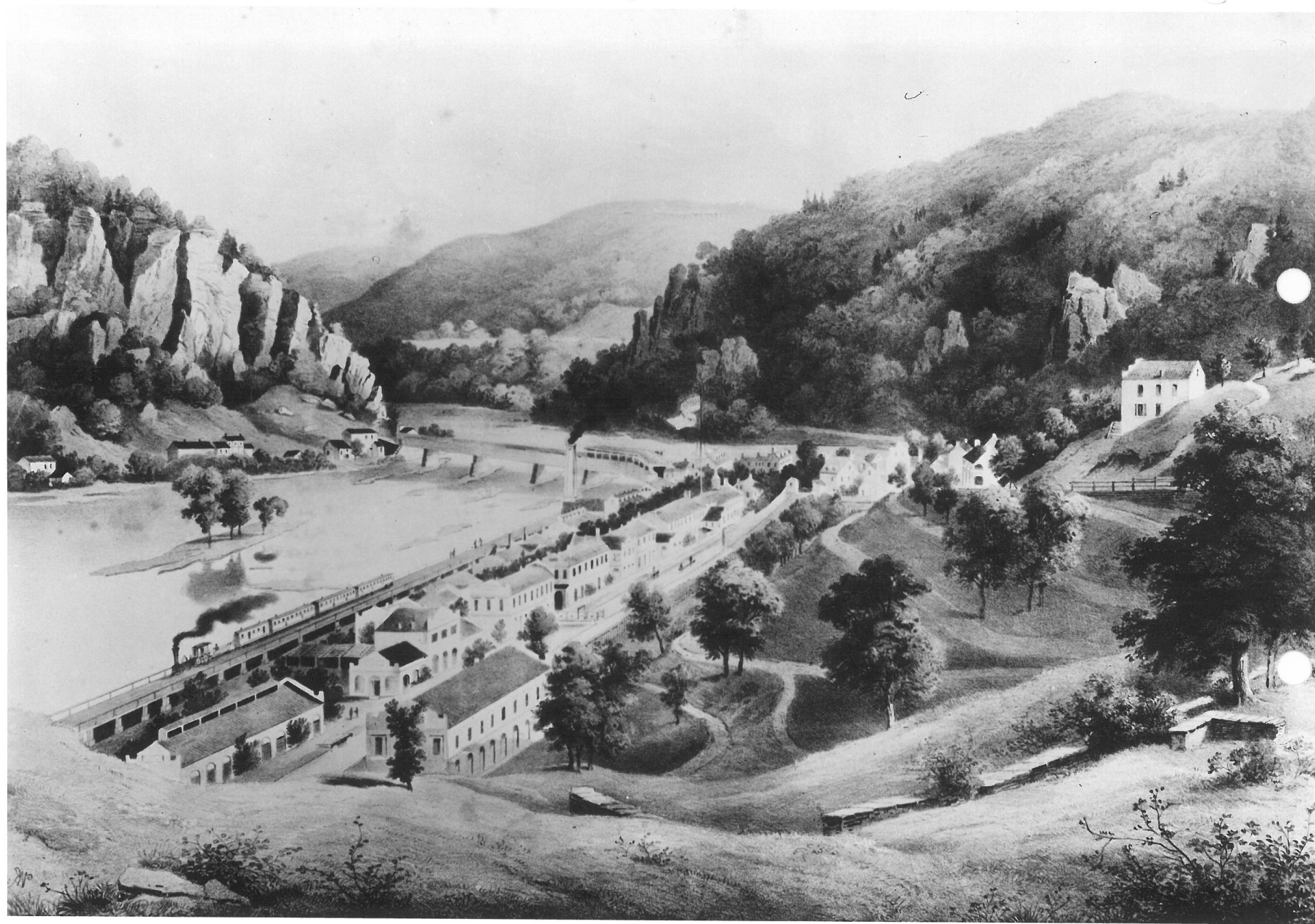
Photograph HF-51, a print made in 1857, will be found on the next page of this report.

Taken from Nature, by Ed Beyer, 1857

View of the armory.

Entered according to Act of Congress, 1857, by Ed
Beyer in the clerk's office of District of Virginia.
HF-51.

To the right of the picture on the hill may be seen the Metho-
dist Protestant Church. Note front and the stairs of the building.



V. HISTORICAL PLANS OF BUILDING

No historical plans of the Methodist Protestant Church have been found and it is unlikely that any will ever be found.

VI. SUMMARY OF HISTORICAL DATA

A. Ownership of the Land

The Methodist Protestant Church Lot was owned by the United States Government from 1796 to 1868. From July, 1843, to December 15, 1868, the lot was leased by the United States to the congregation of the Protestant Episcopal Church. The original lot leased to the church was 45 by 70 feet. Title to a lot as laid out on the 1869 map, was granted to the Methodist Protestant Church by an act of Congress on December 15, 1868.

B. Construction of the Building

The cornerstone of the Methodist Protestant Church was laid on November 2, 1843. The church was finished in 1844. Its dimensions were ~~forty~~³⁰ by fifty feet. The structure was a one story building constructed of rough chaff stone. By 1859 the building had six windows on either side and five and the entrance in the front facing on High Street. The front of the two story stone building was decorated with a false front. Steps led up to the front door of the building. This building is no longer standing. In 1845-46 a second story was added over the church by the local chapter of the International Order of Odd Fellows. The I.O.O.F. Hall was completed in 1846.

18. National Archives, Washington, D. C., RG 92, Office of the Quartermaster General, Consolidated Correspondence file, Harpers Ferry, West Virginia (ms) (ltr. Capt. A. S. Kimball, Baltimore, Md., to Maj. General M. C. Miegs on December 10, 1866.)

19. Program of the Camp Hill Methodist Church, Harpers Ferry, W. Va.

C. Use of the Building

The building was used from 1844 when the church was completed until the Civil War as a Methodist Protestant Church on the first floor. The second floor was used from 1846 to 1861 as a meeting hall for the local chapter of the International Order of Odd Fellows. It was extensively damaged during the Civil War while being used as a barracks for troops and was demolished after 1866.

VIII. METHODIST PROTESTANT PARSONAGE, 1843-1861, CAMP HILL

Prior to 1851 the ^Methodist Protestant Church had occupied under a lease from the U. S. as a parsonage, House No. 144, a one story wooden structure, Class 12, with a valuation of \$250. ²⁰ This house was located on Block ²¹ A, Lot 2, Camp Hill.

On September 4, 1852, Lot No. 2, Block D, Camp Hill, was leased to the ²² church as a lot on which to erect a new parsonage. The church held the lease to this lot from 1852 until 1868 when they were granted title to the lot by an act of Congress.

Philip R. Smith, Jr.

Philip R. Smith, Jr.
Park Historian
March 12, 1959

20. Col. Talcott to Superintendent Symington, March 27, 1850, Reel 19, V.5, p.142. List of Dwelling Houses belonging to the U. S. At Harpers Ferry, December 31, Photostatic Collection, Map Case, Drawer No. 4.

21. Snell, C. W., "A Comprehensive History of the Construction, Maintenance and Numbers of Armory Dwelling Houses, 1796-1869", October 31, 1958, p.114.

22. Reel 24, V.6, p.573, September 4, 1852, Superintendent Huger to Col. Craig, Ordnance Department.