

HISTORIC BUILDING SITE SURVEY REPORT

HISTORY OF THE

UPPER HALL ISLAND, HARPERS FERRY

1796-1884

Philip R. Smith, Jr.
February 19, 1959

HF-284

010718 8

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

010718
HISTORY FILE
NORTHEAST REGION

Harpers Ferry National Monument
(Area)

FILE CODE:
H30

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Prepared by:

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21 Pages
HF-28A

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SECTION I - ADMINISTRATIVE DATA

A. NAME OF AREA

Upper Hall Island.

B. PROPOSED USE OF AREA

Altho Historian Smith is correct in his statement that there is little of historic interest along our new Virginus Island Trail on the Upper Hall Island section, there is considerable natural history to be enjoyed there; birds, trees, etc. His suggestion of a spur trail from the Birginus Island Trail to lead to the sites of the two house ruins is interesting and will be considered further when we establish our self-guiding trail in the near future.

C. PROVISIONS FOR OPERATING AREA

No provisions are necessary for operating the area.

D. PRELIMINARY ESTIMATE OF COST FOR REHABILITATING THE GROUNDS

The cost for the short spur trails suggested could be borne by our regular appropriation.

1. OWNERSHIP OF THE LAND, 1782-1884

Hall's Upper Island, the subject of this report (see 1869 map on next page), was part of the land bequeathed by Robert Harper on September 26, 1782, to his nephew Robert Griffith. On January 9, 1797, Griffith's son and heir sold this land to Rutherford, Darke and others and on February 20, 1797, these¹ men sold this land in turn to the United States for ten thousand dollars.

The land upon which the Hall Rifle Works were located remained in the possession of the United States until December 2, 1869, when the rifle works² and the upper island were purchased by Capt. F. C. Adams for \$30,000. Mr. Adams proved to be a speculator who failed to produce the money and the property then reverted to the government. It was finally purchased by Mr. Savery³ in 1884. Thus in 1884 government control over the rifle works, which had lasted from 1796 to 1884, came to an end and the property was thereafter to be developed by private enterprise.

2. U. S. DWELLING HOUSES, 1807-1852

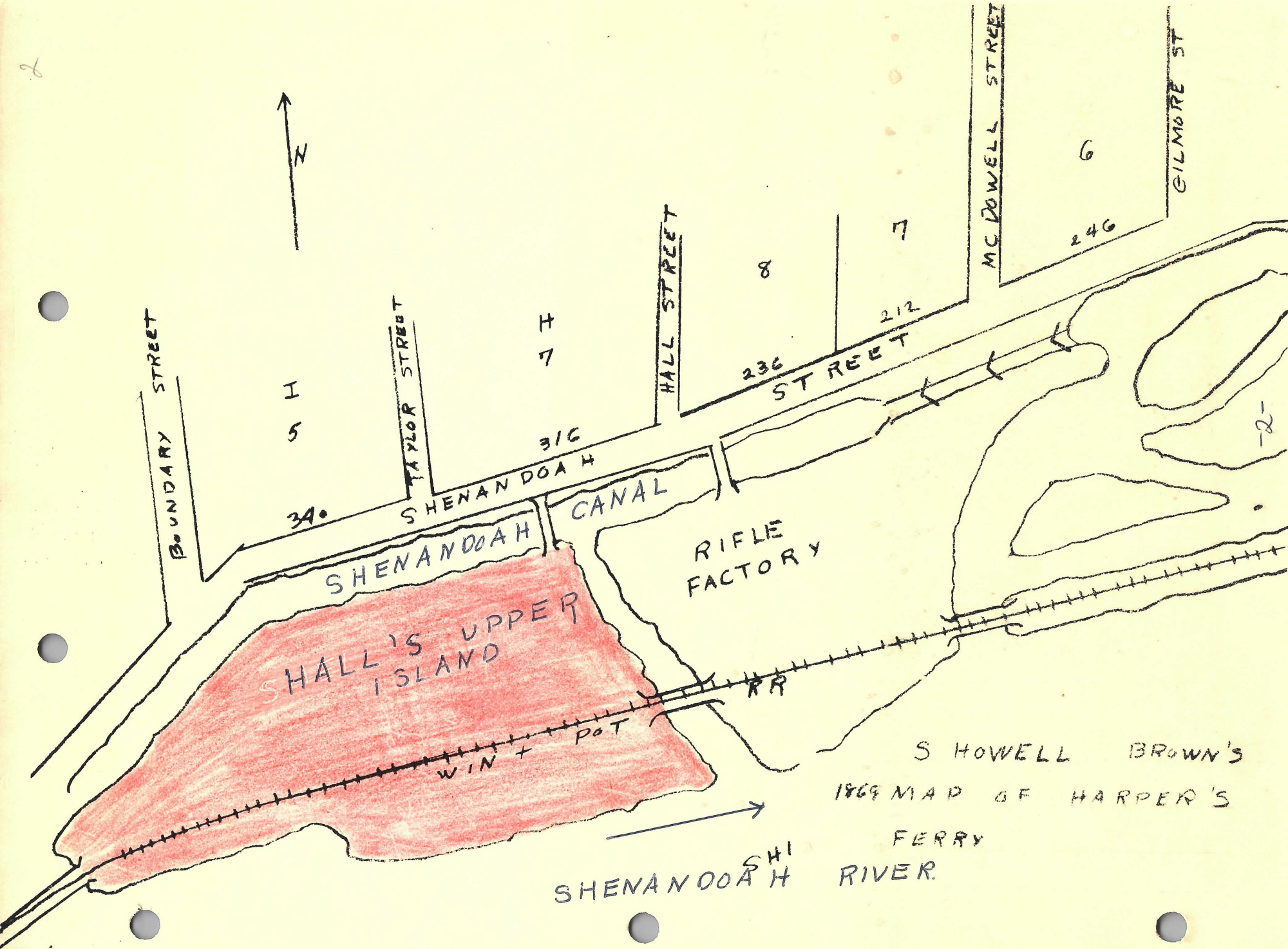
The upper island of Hall's Rifle Works appears to have been unimproved prior to 1807. (See 1807 map on page three of this report.) A glance at the 1834-35 maps in Appendix I and II of this report reveals that⁴¹³ dwelling houses were situated on the upper land by that date.

1. Washington, D.C. National Archives R.G.153, Office of the Judge Advocate General Military Reservation Division, Reservation File, West Virginia Box No. 44, 1 Harpers Ferry (MS) (A copy of the last Will, Robert Harper. Berkeley County, Virginia, 26 September 1782.)

2. 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., p.2.

3. Catalogue of Property of the United States, at Harpers Ferry, W. Va., to be Sold by the Solicitor or the Treasury on the 25th Day of May, A.D. 1880, at Harpers Ferry.

2



S HOWELL BROWN'S
1869 MAP OF HARPER'S
FERRY
RIVER.

It is therefore apparent that the buildings located on the upper island must have been constructed between 1807 and 1834. These buildings were erected by either the U. S. Government or Armory employees. In the case of houses erected by private individuals the Government purchased all their claims to these buildings between the years 1822 and 1838. It can thus be said that all of the structures located on Hall's Upper Island were used as Government Dwelling Houses for Armory employees from the time of their construction until they were destroyed during the Civil War.⁴

The following information on the dwelling houses on the upper island is compiled from the following sources:

1. "List of Dwelling houses belonging to the United States at Harpers Ferry 30th June 1848." 5
2. "List of dwelling houses belonging to the United States at Harpers ferry, December 31, 1850." 6
3. "List of dwelling houses at Harpers Ferry per Inventory 30 June 1851." 7
4. And the 1834-35 maps, Appendixes I and II.
5. Also the Census of 1850. 7a
4. A Comprehensive History of the Construction, Maintenance and Numbers of Armory Dwelling Houses, 1798-1869, prepared by Charles W. Snell, Historian, (Park Supervisory), October 31, 1958, revised January 13, 1959, 140 pages, HF-21B, pp.1-82.
5. List of United States Dwelling Houses at Harpers Ferry, June 30, 1848, Reel 18, V.12, p.1189, National Archives R.G.
6. List of Dwelling Houses belonging to the United States at Harpers Ferry, December 31, 1850.
7. U. S. Dwelling Houses at Harpers Ferry 30 June 1851. Reel 18, V.12, p.1182. National Archives R. G.
- 7a. Census of 1850, Reel 10, V.2, p.97-98, National Archives R.G.

1. House No. 156. According to the 1834-35 maps, it had dimensions of about 22 x 16 feet. It was described in 1848 as a brick two story dwelling, Class 7 with a valuation of \$1,000. In 1850 it was listed as a Class 6 dwelling with a valuation of \$800. It was occupied by William Richards, Armorer, from 1848 to 1852, who paid a rent of \$72 annually.
2. House No. 157. House No. 157 according to the 1834-35 maps, had dimensions of 28 x 30 feet. It was described in 1848 as a two story wooden dwelling, Class 10 with a value of \$400. In 1850 it was listed as a Class 5 dwelling with a value of \$450. It was occupied from 1848 to 1850 by William Baden, watchman, who paid an annual rent of \$35. In 1851 and 1852 it was next occupied by J. G. W. Hyatt, who paid an annual rent of \$35.
3. House No. 158. The dwelling according to the 1834-35 maps, had dimensions of 28 by 28 feet. House No. 158 was listed in 1848 as a two story stone structure, Class 5, with a value of \$1,000. In 1850 House No. 158 was valued at \$900 and placed in Class 5. In 1848 it was rented by James W. Burton, later Master Armorer, who paid a rent of \$75 annually. In 1850 the residence was occupied by A. J. Amiss who also paid a rent of \$75 annually. In 1851-1852 it was occupied by John Earnest.
4. House No. 159. According to the 1834-35 maps, the building had dimensions of 14 x 18 feet. House No. 159 was listed in 1848 as a two story stone dwelling, Class 6, with a value of \$200. In 1848 it was occupied by Jacob Crowel, Jr., armorer, who paid an annual rent of \$18. In 1850 it was rented by J. G. W. Hyatt who paid an annual rent of \$18. And in 1851-1852 it was rented by Austin McCan.
5. House No. 160. According to the 1834-35 maps it had dimensions of 28 x

18 feet. House No. 160 was listed in 1848 as a one story stone dwelling, Class 15 with a value of \$100. In 1850 it was listed as a Class 12 dwelling with a value of \$250. It was rented by William F. Fitzsimmons from 1848 to 1850 who paid an annual rent of \$30. In 1851 it was rented by Joseph Mauzy.

6. House No. 161. According to the 1834-35 maps it had dimensions of 14 x 20 feet. In 1848 it was described as a one story stone dwelling, Class 11, with a valuation of \$500. In 1850, it was listed as a Class 13, with a value of \$200. It was occupied by William Orm, Armorer, from 1848 to 1852, who paid an annual rent of \$35.

7. House No. 162. According to the 1834-35 maps, it had dimensions of 38 x 18 feet. In 1848 House No. 162 had been occupied by William Clark who owed \$24.37 back rent, and prior to that by Lawson and Greer who also owed \$119.50. House No. 162 is listed as a one story wood dwelling, Class 8 in 1850 with a value of \$500. *The house was demolished in 1850.*

8. House No. 163. According to the 1834-35 maps, it had dimensions of 56 by 22 feet, including House No. 164. House No. 163 was listed in 1848 as a one story wood dwelling, Class 9, with a value of \$450. In 1850 it was listed as a Class 11 with a value of \$300. It was rented by William Graham from 1848 to 1850, who paid an annual rent of \$38. In 1851 it was rented by George Cockrell.

9. House No. 164. House No. 164 is listed in 1848 as being a two story brick dwelling, Class 2 with a value of \$2,500. It was broken up in 1848.

10. House No. 165. House No. 165, according to the 1834-35 maps, had dimensions of 18 x 16 feet. It was listed in 1848 as a one story stone dwelling, Class 9, with a value of \$450. In 1850 it was listed as a Class 11 dwelling with a value of \$300. It was rented by John Rowe from 1848 to 1850 who paid

an annual rent of \$35. It was then occupied by Peter Woodhall, Armorer, from 1850 to 1852, who paid a rent of \$35 annually.

11. House No. 166. According to the 1834-35 maps had dimensions of 26 x 16 feet. It was listed in 1848 as a one story stone dwelling, Class 9, with a value of \$450. In 1850 it was listed as a Class 11, with a value of \$300. It was occupied from 1848 to 1850 by John Earnest, Armorer, who paid an annual rent of \$35. In 1851 it was occupied by Henry Fassett.

12. House No. 168. According to the 1834-35 maps, it had dimensions of 36 x 18 feet. House No. 168 was listed in 1848 as a two story stone dwelling, Class 5, with a valuation of \$1,000. In 1850 it was listed as a Class 6 with a value of \$800. It was occupied from 1848 to 1852 by Philip Burkhart, an armorer, who paid an annual rent of \$60.

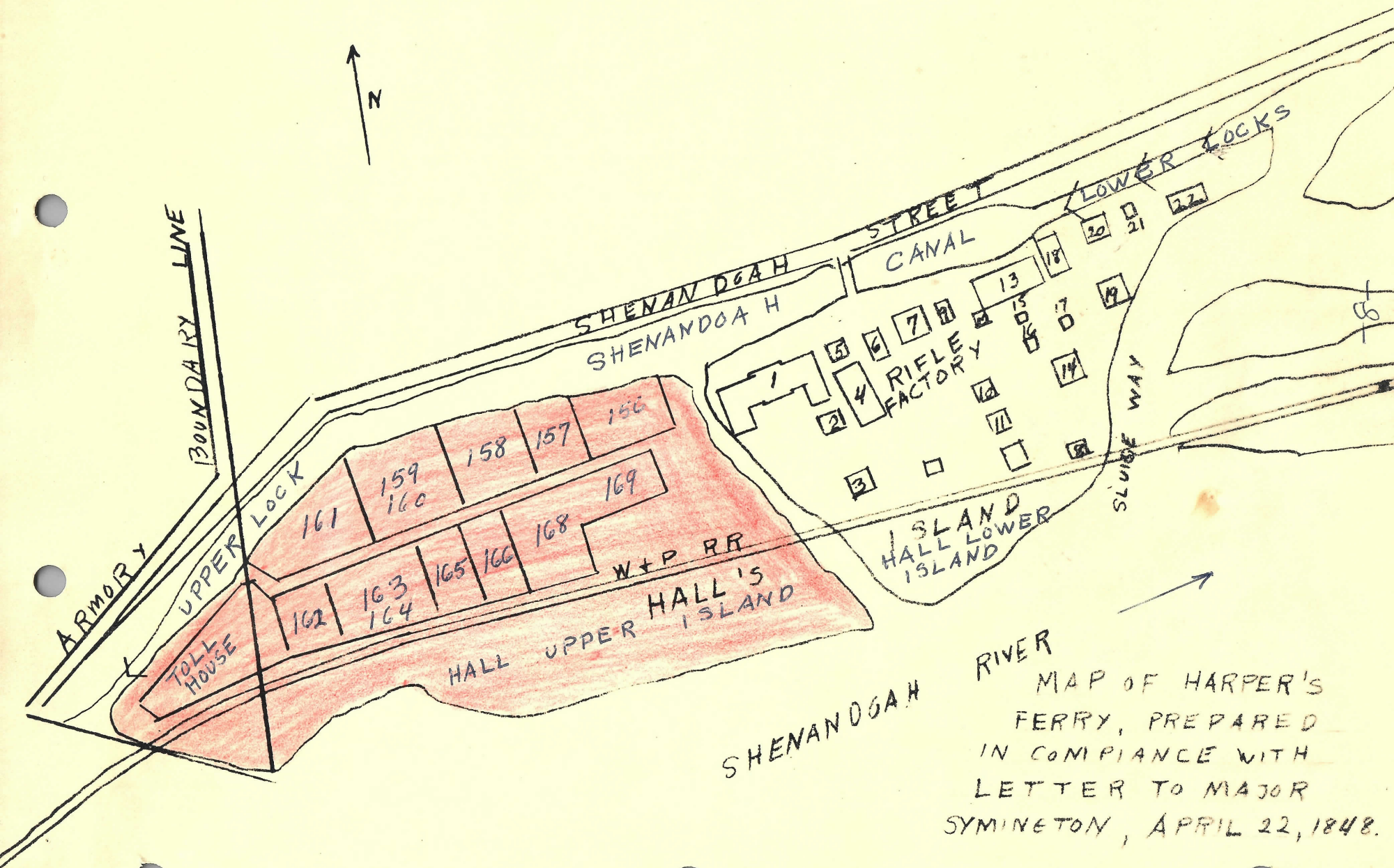
13. House No. 169. In 1848 it was listed as a one story wooden dwelling, Class 7 with a value of \$600. In 1850 it was listed as a Class 9 dwelling with a value of \$450. It was occupied from 1848 to 1850 by Thomas Nargin, who paid an annual rent of \$48. It was occupied from 1851 to 1852 by Charles Holt who also paid an annual rent of \$48.

On the following page will be seen Brown's 1848 Map of Harpers Ferry on which has been indicated the probable location of houses and lots.

Three buildings were erected for Hall on either the factory or the upper island in 1819 at a cost of \$1,350.⁸

In October of 1831 John Hall asked for and received permission to construct kitchens for two of his dwelling houses. The kitchens were to be one story

8. Wadsworth to Stubblefield, July 16, 1819, Reel 14, V.3, p.218, National Archives R.G. Stubblefield to Wadsworth, Reel 13, V.3, p.230, August 2, 1819, National Archives R.G.



SHENANDOAH RIVER
MAP OF HARPER'S
FERRY, PREPARED
IN COMPLIANCE WITH
LETTER TO MAJOR
SYMINGTON, APRIL 22, 1848.

brick buildings with dimensions of eighteen by fourteen feet, and were to cost about one hundred and fifty dollars each.

Two years later, Hall requested that he have permission to build kitchens on two more dwellings. They were to be one story in height and have dimensions of twenty-two by thirteen feet.

On May 3, 1840, Superintendent Edward Lucas reported a fire in one of the dwelling houses on the upper island. One of the families in the building were to be lodged in a nearby dwelling after it was renovated.

3. DISPOSITION OF DWELLING HOUSES, 1852-1865

A Board of Officers was convened at Harpers Ferry Armory on September 22, 1851, in connection with the proposed public sale of armory lands to be held shortly. The board recommended in part:

"3rd - The Rifle factory, and the upper part of the island on which it is situated, which is now occupied by dwelling houses. These dwellings should be removed, and this part of the island reserved for future use, and to protect the bank of the Canal by which it is bounded."

This was approved by the Secretary of War on June 10, 1852.

In 1854 it was proposed to establish a lumber yard on the upper end of Hall's Island and it was recommended that the shanties or houses there be torn down to make room for the yard. Thus although the board of officers

9. Hall to Bomford, October 3, 1831, Reel 22, V.11, p.1070, National Archives R.G. Bomford to Hall, October 6, 1831, Reel 14, V.9, p.834, National Archives R.G.

10. Hall to Bomford, March 30, 1833, Reel 22, V.13, p.1284, National Archives R.G.

11. Lucas to Talcott, May 3, 1840, Reel 12, V.7, p.670, National Archives R.G. Talcott to Lucas, May 6, 1840, Reel 16, V.1, p.134, National Archives R.G.

12. Report of Board of Officers, September 22, 1851, Reel 24, V.8, p.802-806.

13. Estimate of Funds for 1854, Reel 20, V.7, p.709, National Archives R.G.

convened in 1851 had recommended that the dwellings on the upper end of Hall's Island be torn down, they were still standing in 1854 because the armory workmen had been busy in tearing down other houses located on other portions of the Armory property in the 1852-1853 period.

The demolition of the buildings on Hall's Island had evidently started in early 1854 because on April 3, 1854, Major Bell wrote to Col. H. K. Craig:

"There are three buildings for Dwelling houses on the Rifle Factory grounds, numbered 156, 168, and 158 on Brown's Map of 1848, which occupy land reserved from sale and come within the instructions of the Sec of War, for removal therefrom.

The first three are desirable as residences for the Master foreman of the Rifle department, and for such hands at that factory as might be useful to have occupy them for the better protection of the workshops at night or in case of fire.

They are not in the way of any proposed improvement and therefore I request authority to retain them for the purposes named." 14

The other dwelling houses were demolished in 1854 and thus only three buildings were standing on the upper island in 1859 when the John Brown Raid occurred. These were Dwelling House No. 6, or 156, under the old numbering system; Dwelling House No. 7, or 158, under the old numbering system, and Dwelling House No. 8, or 168, under the old numbering system. These were used as residences for Armory employees from 1854 to 1861.

The following families were probably living on Hall's Upper Island in

1860.			Value of Personal Estate:	Place of Birth:
"Margaret Decker	47 F		\$75	Va.
Palatinus	" 23 M	Armory Employee		"
Sarah	" 21 F			"
Mary	" 18 F			"
Levi	" 17 M	Laborer		"
Willie	" 7½ M			"
Francis Knapp	30 M	Machinist	500	Va."

14. Bell to Craig, April 3, 1854, Reel 25, V.1, p.25, National Archives R.G.

"Patricia Knapp	26 F								Va.
Florence A. "	6 F								"
Edgar "	4 M								"
Alexas "	4/12 M								"
John A. Mason	38 M	Machine Oiler							Va.
Rebecca "	40 F								Md.
John P. Fouke	44 M	Armory Employee							Va.
Augusta "	28 F								Va.
John J. "	9 M								"
Alice A. "	7 F								"
Lillian "	4 F								"
					Value of	Value of			
					Real Estate	Pers. Est.			
George Mauzy	61 M	Agent for river Coal			\$400	\$900			Va.
Mary E. "	31 F								"
Fannie A. "	7 F								"
George W. "	5 M								" 15

These three buildings remained standing until the Civil War when they were torn down to make way for the construction of a military railroad. They are described in the 1865 Inspection Inventory of Harpers Ferry Armory as follows:

"Dwelling House No. 6, (House No. 155) two story Brick, Rifle Factory on Hall's Island torn down to make room for military Rail road."

"Dwelling House No. 7, (House No. 158) one & a half story, stone, On Rifle Factory on Hall's Island-Torn down to make room for military Rail Road."

"Dwelling House No. 8, (House No. 168) two story brick - On Rifle Factory on Hall's Island - Torn down to make room for military Rail Road." 16

4. THE ARMORY LUMBER YARD

In the estimate of funds for 1854 the following request was made:

15. Records of the Bureau of the Census (RG29) Population Schedules of the Eighth Census of the U. S., 1860. Virginia, V.13, Jefferson County, Reel 10, V.II, p.185-186.

16. Brigadier General Edward D. Ramsay to Brig. Genl. A. B. Dyer, Chief of Ordnance, July 27, 1865. National Archives R.G.156 - Harpers Ferry Photo-static Collection. Map Case, Drawer No. 10.

"14. For a lumber shed and yard...

\$600"

The justification for this amount stated:

"14. The removal of the shanties heretofore used as dwellings on the Upper end of Hall's Island will give a good position for a lumber yard, and the only one which is accessible and not liable to be overflowed. The flood of 1852 swept away the former lumber yard and a great deal was lost. The plan of the lumber shed will be furnished before the meeting of Congress." 17

One of the old dwellings standing in the way of the lumber yard was owned by Doctor Nicholas Marmion. After attempts to buy the dwelling from Marmion were frustrated by the high price that Marmion asked for the building, the superintendent of the armory was instructed to take legal measures to have the building removed. 18

The sum of \$6,000 was appropriated for the construction of the lumber shed and yard in 1854 and Col. Craig of the Ordnance Office notified Samuel Byington, Master Armorer in Charge, of this appropriation on August 18, 1854. 19

Construction on the lumber yard, however, had not been started by December 31, 1854, as the following was noted in the appropriation for repairs and improvements:

"The Special Armory accounts, shew the following condition of the objects of expenditure, provided for in the Appropriation for Repairs, Improvements, New Machinery" for the fiscal year ending 30th June 1855, on the 31st December,

17. Estimate of Funds for 1854, Reel 20, V.7, p.709, National Archives R.G.

18. Bell to Craig, April 6, 1854, Reel 25, V.1, p.28, National Archives R.G.
Craig to Bell, April 10, 1854, Reel 19, V.7, p.623, National Archives R.G.
Marmion to Bell, April 24, 1854, Reel 25, V.1, p.62, National Archives R.G.
Bell to Craig, April 25, 1854, Reel 25, V.1, p.60, National Archives R.G.
Craig to Bell, May 4, 1854, Reel 19, V.7, p.636, National Archives R.G.
Bell to Craig, May 6, 1854, Reel 25, V.1, p.67, National Archives R.G.
Craig to Bell, May 8, 1854, Reel 19, V.7, p.638, National Archives R.G.
Bell to Craig, June 21, 1854, Reel 25, V.1, p.105-106, National Archives R.G.
Maynadier to Bell, June 23, 1854, Reel 19, V.7, p.652, National Archives R.G.

19. Craig to Byington, August 18, 1854, Reel 19, V.7, p.660, National Archives R.G.

"1854.

Objects of Expenditure	Appropriations or Estimates	Expended to Dec. 31, 1854	Conditions of Improve- ments, remarks	
11...Lumber yard and shed	6,000	417.63	Not commenced."	20

5. HISTORICAL PLANS OF BUILDINGS

No historical plans of the buildings located on Hall's Upper Island have been found and it is highly unlikely that any will ever be located.

6. HISTORICAL PRINTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS

Photographs of this area will be found in a forthcoming report on the Hall Rifle Works, 1848-1861: Photograph HF-490 taken about 1857 and HF-37, taken about 1865. There are no photographs that show the improvements in detail on the upper island before the Civil War.

7. SUMMARY OF HISTORICAL DATA

A. Ownership of the Land

The upper Hall Island was owned by the United States from 1797 to 1884 when it was purchased by Mr. Savery at the public sale of armory lands.

B. Construction of the Houses located on Hall's Upper Island

The thirteen dwelling houses located on the upper island of Hall's Rifle Works prior to 1854 must have been constructed between 1807 and 1834. These buildings were erected by either the United States Government or Armory employees. In the case of houses erected by private individuals the Government purchased all their claims to these buildings between the years 1822 and 1838. It can thus be said that all of the structures located on Hall's Upper Island were used as Government houses from their construction until their destruction.

20. Appropriations for repairs and improvements, Dec. 31, 1854, Reel 25, V.4, p.395, National Archives R.G.

All but three of the thirteen armory dwelling houses were removed in 1854 when they were demolished as part of the armory program to remove sub-standard dwelling^s. The three remaining structures were designated as Armory Dwelling Houses No. 6, 7 and 8 in the 1859-65 period.

In 1855 an armory lumber shed and yard were built at a cost of \$6,000 on the site of the former houses on the Upper Hall Island.

Three houses were used as Armory dwelling houses down to the outbreak of the Civil War. They were demolished to make way for the construction of a military railroad, between 1861 and 1865.

Also located on the upper end of the island was a small frame house belonging to the Shenandoah Canal Company, which was used as a toll house. The site for this house was leased by the company from the United States. ²¹

8. 1859-HISTORICAL BASE MAP

1. Building No. 6 (156 on the 1834-35 maps) A brick two story dwelling house erected 1807-34 and used as a Government Dwelling House for Armory employees. Dimensions about 20 by 14 feet. Probably rented by Francis Knapp, machinist in 1859. ^{22 16}

2. Building No. 7 (158 on the 1834-35 maps) A two story stone building with dimensions of 18 x 16 feet. Erected 1807-34 and used as a Government Dwelling House for Armory Employees. Probably rented by John Mason, Machine Oiler in 1859. ^{23 28}

3. Building No. 8 (168 on the 1834-35 maps) A two story stone dwelling with dimensions of 36 by 18 feet. Erected 1807-34 and used as a Government Dwelling House for Armory employees. Probably rented by John P. Fouke, Armory employee in 1859.

4. Toll House For the Shenandoah Company, probably a small wooden dwelling and occupied by George Mauzy, Agent for the River Co. in 1859.

5. Lumber Shed and Yard Built in 1855 at a cost of \$6,000 occupying the sites of the dwellings torn down in 1854. Upper Hall Island owned by U. S. in 1859.

21. James Stubblefield to Charles A. Steward, Pres. of the Shen. Can. Nav. Co., September 3, 1828, Reel 22, V.5, p.417, National Archives R.G.

On the following page is presented an historical base map showing armory dwelling houses 6, 7, and 8 and the armory lumber yard in 1859. The map was traced from the 1848 Brown Map and the lots and buildings plotted in to scale on the basis of evidence presented in this report.

9. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

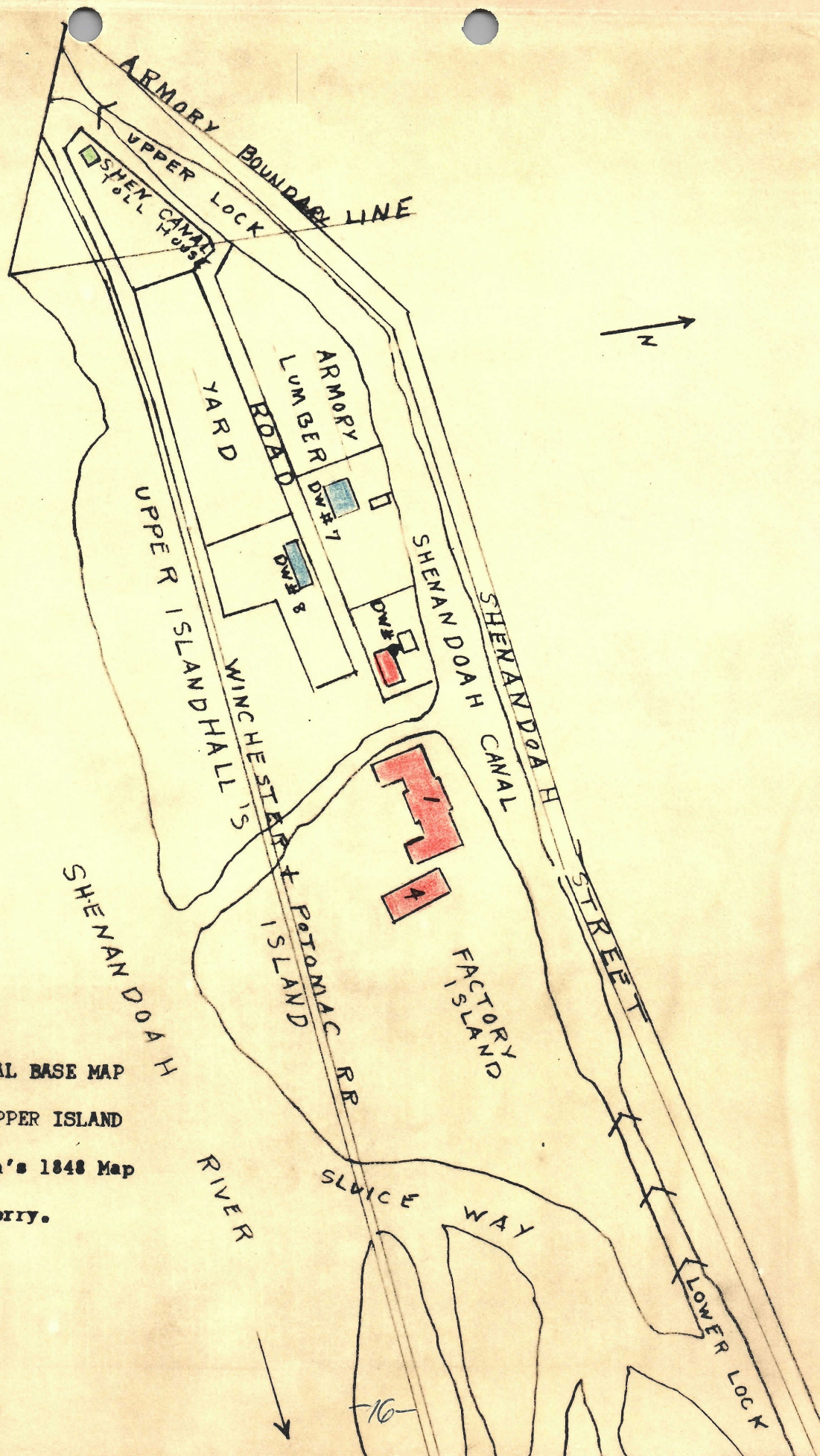
A. Upper Island, 1884-1955

In 1884 the Upper Hall Island was purchased by Mr. Savery. The Shenandoah Pulp Mill was erected on the site of the Hall Rifle Works on the lower island. An artificial lake, Lake Quigley, was constructed west of the mill to float the logs in. It is supposed that this lake covered the site of the ruins of buildings formerly situated on the upper island.

B. Upper Island Today

There remain today the original stone railroad abutments between the upper and lower Hall Islands. The space between the abutments has been filled in for the tracks of the railroad. Within a hundred feet of the present trails running around the Island of Virginius and the Hall Island are the stone foundation ruins of two of the three dwelling houses standing in 1861. These are probably the remains of Dwelling Houses No. 6 and 8. The entire area is heavily overgrown with underbrush.

Fill for the modern 340 bridge over the Shenandoah River covers the site of the lumber yard located on the upper portion of the island. Just west of the 340 bridge there are what appears to be the remains of one of the stone walls of the upper lock.



1859 HISTORICAL BASE MAP
OF THE HALL UPPER ISLAND
Based on Brown's 1848 Map
of Harper's Ferry.

- Brick
- Stone
- Frame

C. Recommendations

There is nothing for visitors to see today in passing over that part of the trail that covers the Upper Hall Island. It is suggested that a side trail be laid out from the main trail to the sites of these two dwelling houses on the upper Hall Island and a suitable trailside sign erected. A similar sign should be placed to show the site of the lumber yard.

SIGNED

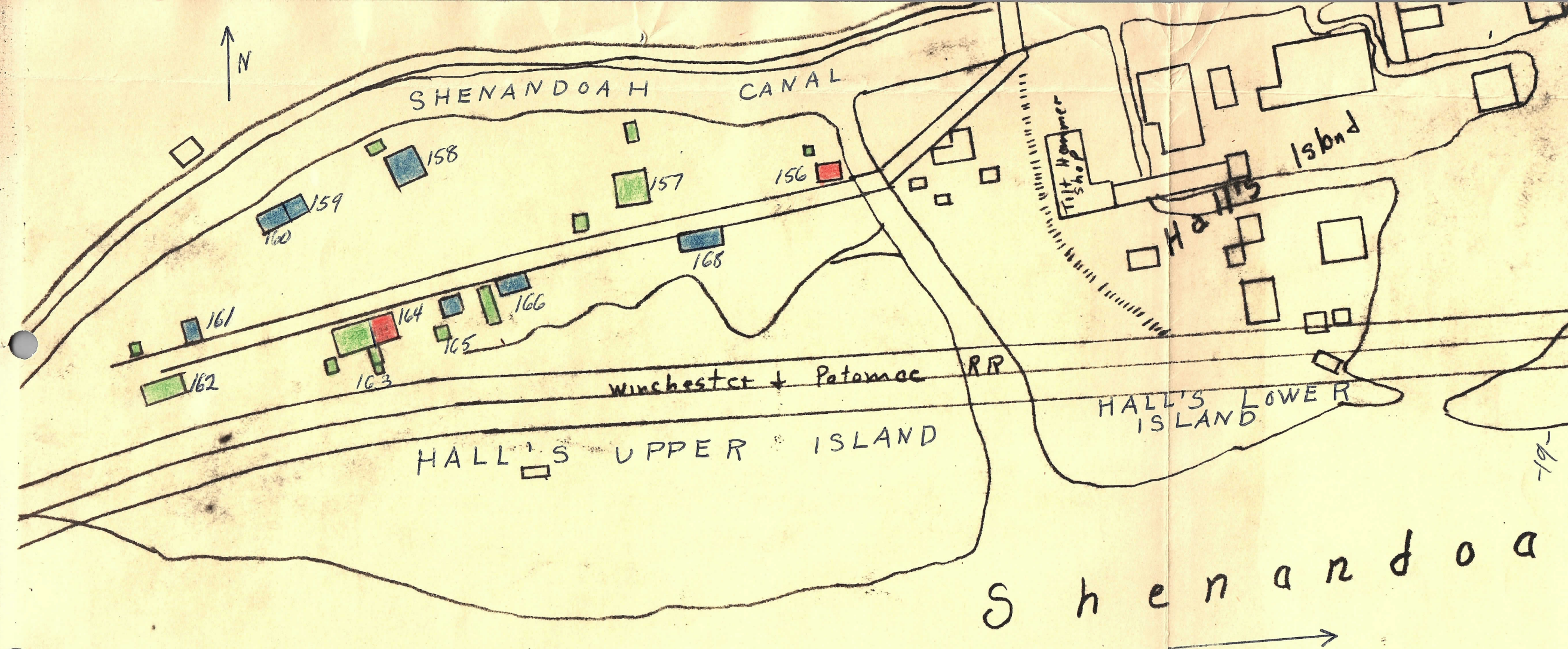
Philip R. Smith, Jr.
Park Historian
February 19, 1959

APPENDIX I

"MAP C, PLOT OF HARPERS FERRY Exhibiting the limits of the ground requisite for the passage of the Winchester & Potomac Rail Road through the town." Undated map, but prepared August 12, 1834.

From National Archives R.G. 77. Records of the Office of the Chief of Engineers. Fortification Map File, map: Dr. 150, sheets 78-1 and 78-2. Scale 100 feet to 1 inch.

Dwelling Houses on the map have been numbered in ink according to the 1848-1852 lists of Government Dwelling Houses and the records pertaining to the 1852 sale of Government Houses and Lots in the Shenandoah Street area.



A Plot Map C

Exhibiting the limits of the ground
for the passage of the Winchester & Potomac R.R.
through the islands adjacent to Harpers Ferry.

Scale 100 feet to the Inch 1834

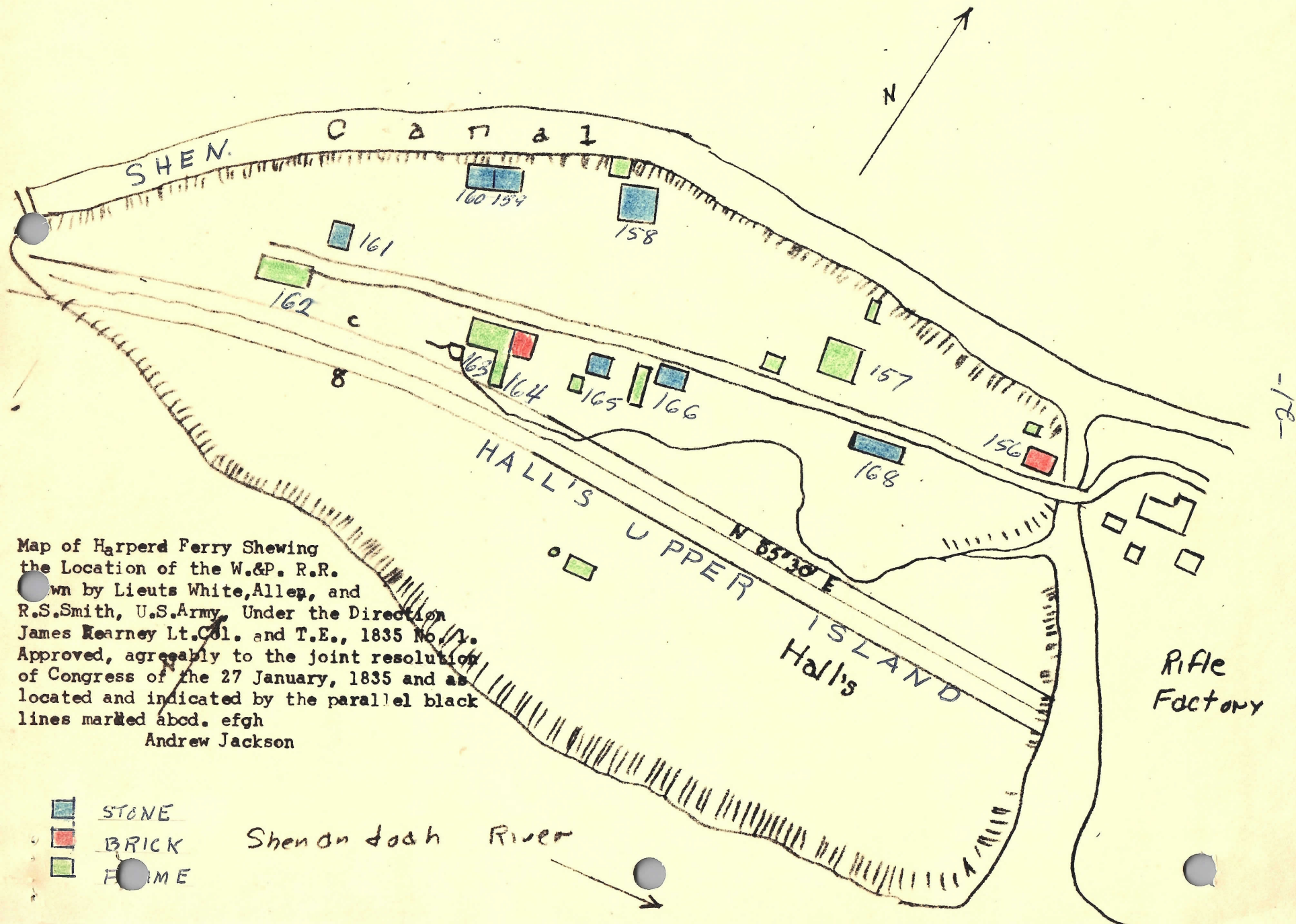
- STONE
- BRICK
- FRAME

APPENDIX II

"MAP OF HARPER'S FERRY, SHewing the Location of the WINCHESTER and POTOMAC RAIL ROAD, Drawn by Lieuts. White, Allen, and R. S. SMITH, U. S. Army, Under the direction of James Kearney, Lt. Col. and T.E., 1835-No. 2. Approved by President Andrew Jackson, January 27, 1835."

National Archives R. G. 77. Records of the Office of the Chief of Engineers. Fortification Map File, part of map. Dr. 150-Sheet 82-2. Scale: 100 feet to 1 inch.

Dwelling Houses on the map have been numbered in ink according to the 1848-52 lists of Government Dwelling Houses and the records pertaining to the 1852 sale of Government Houses and Lots in the Shenandoah Street area.



HISTORY FILE
NORTHEAST REGION