

**Park Building 3
and Wager Lots 53A and 54B,
High Street,
Harpers Ferry National Historical Park**

(1796 to 1954)

Special History Study

FINAL REPORT

Prepared by

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National Park Service/University of Maryland
Cooperative Agreement

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PREFACE

Wager Lots 53A and 54B, together with Park Building 3, are located on the southwestern side of High Street. Lot 53B, just northwest of the stone steps, forms the southeastern boundary, while Lot 54A forms the northwestern boundary. (Wager Lots 53 and 54 were created in the mid-1830s; the subdivision names 53B and 54A were created by Park historian Charles Snell. The present report retains Snell's labels.) The rear of these lots, or southwestern side, incorporates part of the cliffs. Park Buildings 1-A through 1-D sit beyond the rear of these lots.

The pre-Civil War history of these two lots initially was documented in two 1958 Charles Snell reports: "Historic Building Site Survey Report for Bldg. No. 3--Wager Lot No. 53--High Street, 'The Williams and Koonce Lots'," and "Historic Building Survey Report for Bldg. No. 2, Wager Lot No. 54--High Street, 'The George W. Cutshaw and Michael Doran Lots'." In 1980, Snell prepared the Historic Structures Report history section addressing post-war ownership of the two lots and construction of Park Building 3. That year, Thomas Fields and Susan Shufelt prepared the architectural data section on the building as well. Some archeological work was conducted around the site in the mid-1980s.¹

Snell's earlier reports had benefitted from the mammoth research he and his fellow historians conducted in the 1950s on the pre-war history of Harpers Ferry, but no such wealth of information for the post-war years had been compiled in 1980, when the Historic Structures Report was prepared on Park Building 3. That void currently is being addressed by a historical

¹Charles W. Snell, "Historic Structure Report: The Samuel H. Williams/William B. Nichols Buildings, Building No. 3, on Wager Lots 53A-54B, Historical Data, Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, West Virginia" (Denver Service Center, National Capital Team, Denver, Colorado, National Park Service, February 1980); Thomas E. Fields and Susan L. Shufelt, "Historic Structures Report: The Nichols/Williams Building, Building 3, Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, Architectural Data Section" (Denver Service Center, National Capital Team, Falls Church, Virginia, National Park Service, September 1980); Ellen M. Scidel, "Archeological Excavations for Package No. 115 Buildings 3, 37, 38, 39, 40, 43, and Lot 55B Harpers Ferry National Historical Park Harpers Ferry, West Virginia" (Northeast Team, Denver Service Center, September 1985).

research project begun in February 1989 through a cooperative agreement between the National Park Service and the University of Maryland Department of History. Part of this project has been the creation of a computer database containing an index of information on the Harpers Ferry area found in local newspapers, censuses, and property records.

Using the new information generated by this project, the present report covers the history of Wager Lots 53A, 54B, and Building 3 from the earliest written historical documentation to acquisition by the Park in the 1950s. Among the findings of the present report:

- (1). The frame building standing on Wager Lot 53A in 1849, or some other frame building, likely still stood on the property in 1869, contrary to statements made by Snell in his 1980 report. The brick and stone building that replaced it was built between December 1869 and 1872.
- (2). The history section of the Historic Structures Report assumed all of Park Building 3 was built after 1901, an assumption disproved when architects Fields and Shufelt concluded Park Building 3 was constructed in two stages. This report pinpoints the two construction dates. The portion on Wager Lot 53A was built late in 1898 or 1899, while the portion on Lot 54B was built in 1902.

As with the earlier histories, this document is a physical history, presenting known information on property ownership, the construction or removal of buildings, and use of the property. The historical overview relates the property to some general information on Harpers Ferry, but no attempt has been made to address larger historical themes. In the event the Historic Structures Report for Park Building 3 is redone, the information herein could provide the basis for the history section.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The development of Wager Lots 53A and 54B was an outgrowth of the establishment of a national armory at Harpers Ferry at the end of the eighteenth century, the declining influence of a single family during the fourth decade of the next century, and the formation of transportation networks during the same time period. In 1747, Robert Harper came to the confluence of the Shenandoah and Potomac rivers on his way to the Shenandoah Valley. Pleased with what he saw, Harper bought the claim of squatter Peter Stephens. Later, Harper obtained formal title from Thomas Lord Fairfax in several patents between 1751 and 1763. In 1796 and 1797, the United States purchased much of Harper's land.²

When the United States purchased land there, Harpers Ferry had grown only modestly from the settlement Harper first had seen in 1747. Then little more than a convenient river-crossing point for travellers journeying through the Blue Ridge Mountains to the Shenandoah Valley and beyond, the community held only a handful of buildings, in addition to a gristmill, sawmill, and ferry operation, at Harper's death in 1782. Within two decades of the establishment of the armory, the community's population had grown to nearly 1,400, creating demand for residential construction to house the new arrivals and commercial development to provide goods and services for this population.³

Although the United States government owned much of the land at Harpers Ferry, the Wager family, Robert Harper's heirs, had retained two centrally-located parcels: one of six acres

²Charles W. Snell, "The Acquisition and Disposal of Public Lands of the U. S. Armory at Harper's Ferry, West Virginia, 1796-1885," Vol I, "A Narrative History," (National Park Service, December 1979), pp. 1-3. Hereafter cited as "A Narrative History."

³Joseph Barry, The Strange Story of Harper's Ferry with Legends of the Surrounding Country (Martinsburg, WV: Thompson Bros., 1903; reprint Shepherdstown, WV: Shepherdstown Register, Inc. for the Woman's Club of Harpers Ferry District, 1979), pp. 12-14.

and another of three-fourths acre. On this property, the Wagers attempted to control the mercantile business at Harpers Ferry during the early nineteenth century. In 1818, family matriarch Catherine Wager claimed the 1796 land sale had been based on a verbal agreement stipulating the United States would allow no retail store on public property and persons living on Wager property would have a monopoly on the mercantile business.⁴ The government did not support Mrs. Wager's claim, but until the 1830s, the family did control virtually all privately-owned property at Harpers Ferry and, therefore, had considerable influence in town. Exemplifying the attitude the Wagers had is an advertisement Catharine Wager ran in the Farmer's Repository in March 1819, offering Harpers Ferry "for rent, on the premises, to the highest bidder."⁵

The Wager property along High Street north of the stone steps probably was not part of the profitable lease arrangements the Wagers instituted for their holdings along Shenandoah Street to the confluence of the two rivers. In the first four decades of the nineteenth century, this land largely was vacant. Available documentation suggests only four buildings, most or all likely built within the decade, were standing there in 1840. Of the four, two were frame dwellings located on Wager Lots 53A and 54B.⁶

Harpers Ferry underwent a transformation in the 1830s that set the stage for more extensive development of the Wager property. About 1830, the Charles Town, Smithfield, and Harpers Ferry and the Frederick and Harpers Ferry turnpikes opened. The Chesapeake and Ohio

⁴Decius Wadsworth to Hon. J. C. Calhoun, 15 April 1820, Reel 19, 12: 1204-5; Wadsworth to James Stubblefield, 19 September 1818, Reel 14, Vol 2, p. 163; Stubblefield to Wadsworth, 8 April 1820, Reel 21, Vol 4, pp. 345-50.

⁵Farmer's Repository, 3 March 1819, p. 3, col. 4.

⁶The other two were a brick building on 54A and a stone building on 55B. See Mary Johnson, "Wager Lots 53B, 54A, 55 and 56, High Street, Harpers Ferry National Historical Park" Special History Study (National Park Service/University of Maryland Cooperative Agreement, 17 August 1995), pp. 24, 41.

Canal, begun in 1828, reached Harpers Ferry in 1833, while the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, also begun in 1828, crossed the Potomac River late in 1836. Earlier that year, the Winchester and Potomac Railroad opened. Thus, travel by road to several nearby towns, by river to the District of Columbia, and by rail from Winchester to Baltimore became easier.⁷

The event most directly affecting the development of the lots on High Street was the insolvency of James Bate Wager, Catharine's son and one of the heirs to the family holdings in Harpers Ferry, in the 1830s. Wager's financial troubles brought the court-ordered division of the Wager property among James, his brother Gerard, and sister Sarah Ann Swayne. In 1835, James M. Brown platted the Wager land, at which time Wager Lots 53, 54, 55, and 56 were created (See Figure 1). Over the next several years, the lots assigned to James Wager, among them Lots 53 and 54, were sold.⁸

Division and sale of a portion of the Wager holdings in the late 1830s opened up the downtown area of Harpers Ferry for new development. Within a few years, the strip of land along the west side of High Street became built up. Buildings were constructed on these four lots, and subdivision of these lots when the Wagers sold or leased the property led to further development. The two-story frame building standing since at least the 1830s remained on the former lot, but Lot 54B owner Richard Doran had a three-story brick building erected on his property in 1849, replacing the frame house previously located there.

While use of buildings in earlier years apparently was residential, in the two decades preceding the Civil War, new construction made the west side of High Street a collection of

⁷Dave Gilbert, Where Industry Failed: Water-Powered Mills at Harpers Ferry, West Virginia (Charleston, WV: Pictorial Histories Publishing Co., 1984), pp. 35-41.

⁸Charles W. Snell, "The Business Enterprises and Commercial Development of Harpers Ferry's Lower Town Area, 1803 to 1861" (Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, 9 April 1973), pp. 8-9.

residences, small shops and eating/boarding establishments. A shoemaker, saddler and harness maker, tailor, and general flour and feed store proprietor were among the shop owners operating on these lots during the 1840s or 1850s. A tavern/boarding house operated at the uphill end of this strip, near the intersection of High Street and the public walk. The Green House, another tavern, was located near the middle of this strip, across from the new alley leading to Potomac Street and the musket factory. Similar establishments were located across High Street, thus creating an enclave of taverns and craft-oriented businesses distinct from the stores occupying buildings along Shenandoah Street. The upper floors of the buildings continued as residences, either for the families of business owners or other tenants.⁹

The outbreak of civil war in 1861 impacted these lots along with the rest of Harpers Ferry. Many armorers moved north or south to manufacture arms for the Union or the Confederacy, and many other inhabitants departed also, fleeing the devastation descending upon the town. Buildings were destroyed or damaged. The town changed hands several times before the Union army finally established control. Troops and blacks who congregated in areas controlled by federal troops occupied many buildings in town. For example, following the Civil War, Michael Doran filed a claim against the United States government, seeking rent on four dwellings used by soldiers and blacks in 1863 and 1864. One of these buildings was a three-story brick building on High Street, likely that on Wager Lot 54B.¹⁰

Information on use of the Doran building following the war is lacking, although it likely continued as rental property until near the end of the century. A three-story stone and brick

⁹For information on other High Street businesses, see for example Snell, "The Business Enterprises and Commercial Development of Harpers Ferry's Lower Town Area, 1803 to 1861" and Jill Y. Halchin, ed., Archeological Views of the Upper Wager Block, A Domestic and Commercial Neighborhood in Harpers Ferry (U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, 1994).

¹⁰Box B, Claim 1817, Claim of Michael Doran, R.G. 92, Office of the Quartermaster General, Claims Branch 1861-1889, Miscellaneous Claims, National Archives.

building replaced the frame building on Wager Lot 53A in the early 1870s, however. This building was occupied for several years by a tinsmith, thus continuing the pre-war tradition of craft-oriented businesses, before a grocery opened there in the 1890s.

The impetus for erection of Park Building 3 on Wager Lots 53A and 54B came in 1898. That July, a serious fire swept through several buildings on the west side of High Street.

Three large buildings of brick and two of stone were burned, . . . The total loss incurred by the fire is estimated at \$7,000, and among those who sustained the heaviest losses are the following: The Brent Nichols property [Wager Lot 53A], the most valuable in the block, . . . The Richard Doran heirs, property [Wager Lot 54B] . . . The Joseph Renner property [Wager Lot 54A] . . . The Swain property [Wager Lot 55].¹¹

Shortly thereafter, Nichols constructed a new building on his lot, and, in 1902, he expanded this building northward onto the Doran property he purchased in 1901.

Nichols used his new building first as a grocery and later as a hardware store. Following his death in 1920, this building was used for varying periods of time for a drug store, pool and billiard hall, meat shop, and grocery. While growth of the automobile and the consequent improvement of roads negatively impacted businesses in small towns, these kinds of businesses were able to survive because they provided goods and services to which local residents most likely wanted convenient access.¹²

When the United States Congress passed legislation in 1944 for the creation of a national monument at Harpers Ferry, the west side of High Street north of the stone steps contained three buildings (Park Building 3 on Wager Lots 53A and 54B, Park Building 4 to its immediate south on Lot 53B, and Park Building 2 to its immediate north on Lot 54A) and the ruins of other

¹¹Virginia Free Press, 20 July 1898, p. 3, col. 4.

¹²Mansel G. Blackford, A History of Small Business in America (New York: Twayne Publishers), pp. 93-4.

buildings that had once lined this side of the street. In the early 1950s, title to individual lots was acquired by the State of West Virginia for the park. Park Building 3 was in "relatively" good condition, but the interior of the lower floor exhibited "some deterioration."¹³ Because the primary thematic focus of the new national monument was John Brown and the Civil War, plans were made to remove buildings constructed after the war. Demolition of Park Building 3 was recommended, and delineation of pre-war building foundations and use of waysides to interpret this earlier occupancy was suggested. Although most other post-war structures were removed in the downtown area, including Park Buildings 2 and 4, Park Building 3 remains.¹⁴

¹³Explanatory sheet accompanying Architectural Base Map of Harpers Ferry, 13 September 1955, NM-HF-3055.

¹⁴Cathy Gilbert, Maureen DeLay Joseph, and Perry Carpenter Wheelock, Cultural Landscape Report: Lower Town Harpers Ferry National Historical Park (Department of the Interior, National Park Service, National Capital Region, 1993), p. 3: 131; Charles W. Snell, "Historic Building Site Survey Report for Bldg. No. 3 - Wager Lot No. 53 - High Street, 'The Williams and Koonce Lots'" (Harpers Ferry National Monument, 29 July 1958); idem., "Historic Building Survey Report for Bldg. No. 2, Wager Lot No. 54 - High Street, 'The George W. Cutshaw and Michael Doran Lots'" (Harpers Ferry National Monument, 30 July 1958), administrative data sections.

BUILDING HISTORY

Wager Lot 53A (to 1898)

From the mid-1700s, this lot was part of Robert Harper's holdings at the confluence of the Potomac and Shenandoah rivers, and his heirs did not convey this property when they sold much of Harper's land to the United States in 1796. In 1835, a division of the Wager property was made among the three children of John Wager, Jr., in order to apply son James' inheritance toward the settlement of his debts. In that division, James Wager received title to Wager Lot 53. This lot fronted 48 feet on High Street, as recorded on a plat prepared by James M. Brown.¹⁵

As a result of a court order calling for the sale of James Wager's holdings, on June 18, 1836, Lot 53 was sold to James Duncanson and Philip Coons, the latter a local merchant and prominent member of the community.¹⁶ At that time, Lot 53 held "a good Frame Tenement, yielding a fair rent."¹⁷ Not for nearly four years was a deed issued by special commissioners Andrew Kennedy and Joseph T. Daugherty. Nine days after receiving a deed, Duncanson executed a deed of trust for his half-interest in this lot, as well as Lot 46, on behalf of Coons, who had signed a \$500 note for Duncanson. In November 1842, trustee George Sappington sold Duncanson's half-interest to Edmund Chambers for \$350, making Chambers and Coons co-owners

¹⁵Partition of Wager Land, Deed Book 29, p. 140.

¹⁶From the 1830s to the 1850s, Coons variously was an active Democrat, president of the Shenandoah Bridge Company, director of the Harpers Ferry Savings Institution, and a member of the masons and the town council. (*Virginia Free Press*, 19 May 1830, p. 3, col. 4; 23 January 1840, p. 3, col. 1; 13 July 1843, p. 3, col. 1; 9 May 1851, p. 2, col. 2; *Constitutionalist*, 1 May 1839, p. 3, cols. 6 & 7)

¹⁷*Virginia Free Press*, 22 September 1836, p. 3, col. 5.

of Lot 53.¹⁸

Chambers sold his interest to Thomas T. Earnshaw and fifteen other men for \$400 in April 1844. Three days later, on May 2, Coons sold his interest to Esau Wood and twenty-five other men for \$650. In all likelihood, these men were part of some group (perhaps political or fraternal), but the nature of their interest in Wager Lot 53 is not known. Both the Earnshaw and Wood groups failed to meet the terms of deeds of trust they had executed the day of purchase.¹⁹ Coons reacquired his interest in May 1845, while the other half-interest was sold to William H. Moore, armory inspector and son of master armorer Benjamin Moore, in August.²⁰

In November 1847, Philip Coons advertised the sale of Lot 53 on High Street. According to the sale notice, the lot then held a "three story weather-boarded Building." Renting annually for \$100, the building was then occupied by shoemaker Joseph Groff.²¹ With a \$1,200 investment producing goods worth \$3,000 in 1850, Groff had a sizeable shoe making business. Seven men, making a total average monthly wage of \$140, worked for Groff. These men no doubt were the shoemakers listed in the Groff household that year. In addition to Joseph (35), his wife Elizabeth (35), son Chilton (7), and daughters Mary (5) and Georganna (4 months), Ann Wolf, Ann Nourse, and shoemakers William Palmer, John Stipes, John Nichols, John McIntire, Thomas Widdows, John Widdows, and John W. Bowman were enumerated in the Groff

¹⁸Andrew Kennedy and Joseph T. Daugherty to James Duncanson and Philip Coons, 1 January 1840, Deed Book 24, p. 215; Deed of Trust, James Duncanson to George Sappington, 10 January 1840, Deed Book 24, p. 94; Sappington to Edmund Chambers, 12 November 1842, Deed Book 27, p. 61.

¹⁹Edmund Chambers and wife Mary to Thomas T. Earnshaw, et al, 29 April 1844, Deed Book 27, p. 126; Philip Coons and wife Anne C. to Esau Wood, et al, 2 May 1844, Deed Book 27, p. 177.

²⁰Isaac Fouke to Philip Coons, 1 May 1845, Deed Book 27, p. 481; William Chambers to William H. Moore, 18 August 1845, Deed Book 28, p. 236; Spirit of Jefferson, 23 August 1844, p. 1, cols. 2 & 3; Merritt Roe Smith, Harpers Ferry and the New Technology: The Challenge of Change (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), p. 299.

²¹Spirit of Jefferson, 12 November 1847, p. 3, col. 4.

household.²² Although Groff's location on the census suggests he was located in the High Street area in 1850, he probably was no longer connected with Lot 53, as the following discussion explains.²³

On January 16, 1849, Philip Coons and William Moore formally divided Lot 53 into two portions. Coons received the northwestern portion, fronting 28 feet, 3 1/2 inches along High Street, while Moore received the remainder. Although the 1847 sale notice had described the building on Lot 53 as a three-story building, the 1849 partition describes the building on Coons' portion as a two-story frame building, a description like that carried in deeds since 1840. Moore's portion held a "single frame building." The brick chimney along the partition line was included in Moore's part, although Coons received the right to use it until such time as Moore tore it down. The two buildings clearly were attached.²⁴ (Moore's portion, designated Lot 53B by historian Charles Snell, will be treated in a separate report).

The day after Coons and Moore formally partitioned Lot 53, Coons sold Lot 53A, with the two-story frame building, to George Rothery.²⁵ If not before that date, then certainly afterward, Rothery and his wife Hannah lived on the premises. In August, Rothery, who planned to quit his position at the armory and move to Weverton, Maryland, advertised the sale of this High Street property "at present occupied by him." The lot, 28 feet, 3 1/2 inches wide and 28 feet deep contained a dwelling house that covered the entire width of the lot and was 18 feet

²²Seventh Census (1850), Jefferson County, 28th District, Products of Industry, p. 10; Population Schedule, Harpers Ferry, pp. 411-411B.

²³The Groff household is listed immediately before the Roeder household, located in Package 118, on the census. Although Groff clearly moved from the premises by 1849, he could have returned, however.

²⁴Partition, Philip Coons and wife Anne C. and William H. Moore and wife Laura F., 16 January 1849, Deed Book 30, p. 497.

²⁵Deed of Trust, George Rothery and wife Hannah to Isaac Fouke, trustee, 17 January 1849, Deed Book 30, p. 356.

deep.²⁶ On August 17, Rothery and his wife sold the property to Samuel M. Williams for \$893.²⁷

According to the 1850 census, Samuel Williams (48) was a toll gatherer. His family consisted of his wife Hezekiah (45), Joshua (21), Robert (17), Rachel (14), and Prudence (11); Rachel Brown (20), Mary Holland (8), and watchman William Willis (19) were also included in the Williams' household. Williams may or may not have lived on Lot 53A after purchasing the property--no information on occupancy has surfaced--but the family lived in the large stone house along the Shenandoah River (Lot 7, Block D) before the Civil War and until the 1870 flood made that structure uninhabitable.²⁸

During these years, the frame building apparently continued to stand. In December 1869, the Virginia Free Press reported J. D. Potterfield, an auctioneer, had sold a 28 foot square lot on High Street belonging to Samuel Williams to Henry Keller for \$600. Keller evidently bid for his son-in-law William Exner, who executed two notes for \$300 each on December 3 to secure payment for the property. In March 1870, Exner and Williams signed an agreement calling for Williams to execute a deed to the property once Exner had paid the \$600. Williams finally transferred title to Exner in 1876.²⁹

William Exner, a native of Baden, Germany, came to the Harpers Ferry area before 1868, the year he married Louisa Keller, and established himself as a tinner. In 1870, Exner, his wife,

²⁶Virginia Free Press, 9 August 1849, p. 3, col. 1.

²⁷George Rothery and wife Hannah to Samuel M. Williams, 17 August 1849, Deed Book 30, p. 494.

²⁸Seventh Census (1850), Harpers Ferry, p. 410B; Mary Johnson, "Lots 1 to 7, Block D, Shenandoah Street, Harpers Ferry National Historical Park" Special History Study (National Park Service/University of Maryland Cooperative Agreement, 17 July 1995), p. 62.

²⁹Virginia Free Press, 13 December 1869, p. 3, col. 3; Agreement, William Exner, S.M. Williams and wife Keziah, 21 March 1870, Deed Book D, p. 384; Samuel Williams and wife Keziah to William Exner, 26 July 1876, Deed Book D, p. 387.

and son Henry lived with his in-laws. Exner quickly involved himself in local politics, participating in meetings of conservative Democrats and as a member of the Harpers Ferry town council in the 1870s.³⁰

When J. D. Potterfield auctioned off Lot 53A in 1869, the property held a "small board tenement," possibly the same frame building standing on Lot 53A since at least 1836.³¹ Within a few years of this sale, however, the building was replaced. Although William Exner did not formally receive title to the property until 1876, the 1872 Land Book records this lot under his name. This document notes that Exner had acquired it from Williams and that \$700 had been added to the valuation for buildings. Thus, between December 1869 and 1872, Exner had the frame building removed and a new building erected.³²

The new building was a three-story structure, primarily of stone, but with a third-story wall of brick on the southern side. The building was three bays across the front but without windows in the main part of the side wall. A photograph taken in 1886 (HF-787, Figure 2) reveals a narrow, one-story frame structure on the southeastern wall. This structure does not appear in the 1894 Sanborn Map (Figure 3).

After purchasing Lot 53A from Samuel Williams, Exner and his family may have moved to that location, and his business definitely was located there. That year, the Exner household contained tinsmith William (34), wife Louisa (29), and children William (11), John (7), and Annie (3).³³ A sign at the third floor level of the building wall nearest Lot 53B appears in HF-787.

³⁰Marriage (1801-1890), p. 168; Ninth Census (1870), Bolivar Township, p. 478, p. 57; Virginia Free Press, 30 September 1871, p. 3, col. 2; 8 June 1872, p. 3, col. 1; 4 January 1873, p. 3, col. 2; Spirit of Jefferson, 15 August 1876, p. 2, col. 3; 13 August 1878, p. 2, col. 2.

³¹Virginia Free Press, 13 December 1869, p. 3, col. 3.

³²Jefferson County Land Book, 1872.

³³Tenth Census (1880), Harpers Ferry, p. 5, p. 10.

This sign notes "W. EXNER MANUFACTURER OF TINWARE And Dealer in Stoves & Hardware." Additionally, a post with a coffee pot atop it, located at the edge of the sidewalk directly in front of the building, also references the tinware and stoves available inside.

Late in the decade, Exner closed his business in Harpers Ferry. William Exner still was located in Harpers Ferry in May 1887, when the Spirit of Jefferson reported he had received a patent for a water cut-off and spout. A year and a half later, however, on January 15, 1889, the same newspaper reported, "Mr. W. E. Harrell is about opening the tin and store business at the old stand of Mr. Wm. Exner, on High street, Harper's Ferry."³⁴ Harrell may have stayed in this building only a short while, as the building is listed as vacant on the 1894 Sanborn Map.

In December 1896, William Exner and his wife, then living in McKeesport, Pennsylvania, sold Lot 53A to William Brent Nichols for \$1,050.³⁵ Nichols, son of Lewis H. and Elizabeth Nichols, had been engaged in farming in the Halltown vicinity through his early adult years but by the early 1890s had entered the grocery business at Harpers Ferry with his brother Jacob. By the time he bought Lot 53A from William Exner in 1896, William Nichols apparently was sole owner of the business, then apparently located on Shenandoah Street.³⁶

Nichols was located on Lot 53A by July 1898, when fire swept along the west side of High Street, burning three brick and two stone buildings. Among the damaged structures was the "Brent Nichols property, the most valuable in the block, occupied as a grocery and feed store,

³⁴Spirit of Jefferson, 15 January 1889, p. 3, col. 1. Also 17 May 1887, p. 3, col. 1.

³⁵William Exner and wife Maria L. to William B. Nichols, 16 December 1896, Deed Book 82, p. 476.

³⁶Ninth Census (1870), Bolivar Township, p. 454, p. 10; Tenth Census (1880), Bolivar District, p. 26; West Virginia State Gazetteer and Business Directory, 1891-92 and 1895-96; Randall's Business Directory of Winchester, Berryville and Front Royal, Va, Charlestown, and Harper's Ferry, W.Va. 1892-93 (Martinsburg: John C. Randall, pub.), p. 49.



Figure 2. HF-787. High Street, May 1886. The first building on the left is William Exner's store and residence on Lot 53A. The front of the Doran building on 54B is next.

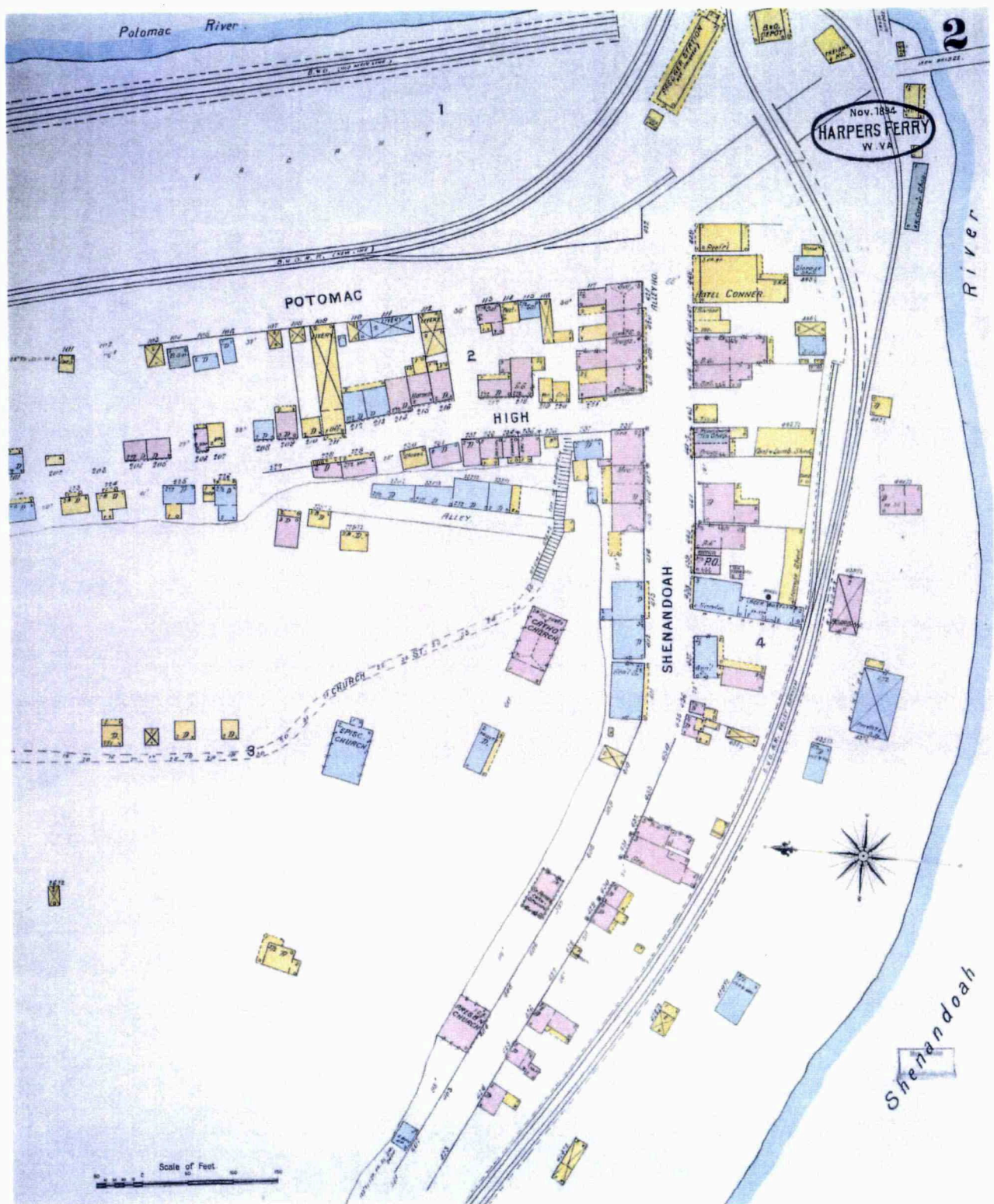


Figure 3. Sanborn Map, Harpers Ferry, November 1894.

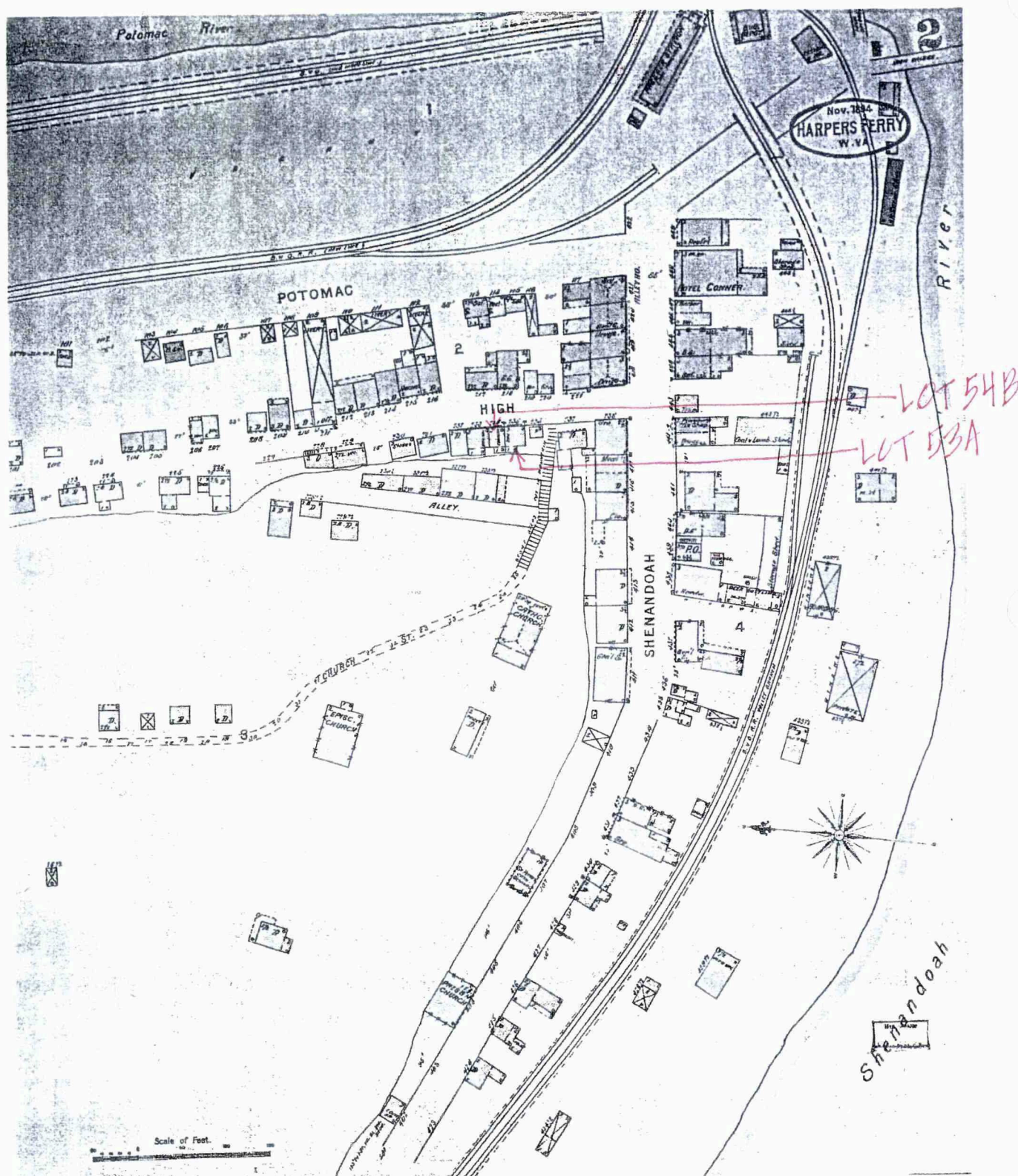


Figure 3. Sanborn Map, Harpers Ferry, November 1894. MARKED COPY

insured for \$1,700."³⁷ According to the Spirit of Jefferson, by October, Nichols had "cleaned away the ashes and debris of his recently burned building, and was about to begin the erection of another and a better one."³⁸

Wager Lot 54B (to 1898)

From the mid-1700s, this lot was part of Robert Harper's holdings at the confluence of the Potomac and Shenandoah rivers, and his heirs did not convey this property when they sold much of Harper's land to the United States in 1796. In 1835, a division of the Wager property was made among the three children of John Wager, Jr., in order to apply son James' inheritance toward the settlement of his debts. In that division, James Wager received title to Wager Lot 54. This lot fronted 41 feet on High Street, as recorded on a plat prepared by James M. Brown.³⁹ Historian Charles Snell concluded this lot was one of two James Wager lots, "with 2 comfortable dwelling houses of frame," offered for sale in 1836 by special commissioners Andrew Hunter and Joseph T. Daugherty.⁴⁰

In October 1837, James Wager, his wife Mary, who had purchased the lot at the sale, and commissioners Andrew Hunter and Joseph T. Daugherty deeded Lot 54, "with the buildings and houses thereon," to George Cutshaw, who had been operating a tailoring establishment in Harpers

³⁷Virginia Free Press, 20 July 1898, p. 3, col. 4.

³⁸Spirit of Jefferson, 11 October 1898, p. 3, col. 3.

³⁹Partition of Wager Land, Deed Book 29, p. 140.

⁴⁰Snell, "Wager Lot No. 54," pp. 5-6; Virginia Free Press, 24 March 1836, p. 3, col. 5.

Ferry since at least 1831.⁴¹ A May 1840 deed of trust indicates Lot 54 then held "two houses[:] one a frame building & the other a brick building."⁴²

In January 1840, Cutshaw advertised that he had moved his tailoring business to the first floor of his dwelling house on High Street, in all likelihood the brick building where he is known to have been residing two years later.⁴³ The brick building stood on the northwestern part of Lot 54. In July 1843, Cutshaw sold the southeastern portion of Lot 54 (Lot 54B) to Richard Doran, retaining the part on which the brick building stood. The portion sold to Doran fronted 19 feet, 10 inches, on High Street and extended to the rear of the lot.⁴⁴ (Lot 54A is discussed in a separate report).

A native of Ireland, Richard Doran had been in Harpers Ferry since the early 1830s and was a prominent businessman.⁴⁵ A year after buying Lot 54B, Richard Doran left Harpers Ferry, reportedly on a trip to Baltimore. After he failed to return and no word was received from him, he was presumed dead and steps were taken to settle his estate. Early in 1849, however, Doran returned, having reportedly spent much of the preceding four years in Glasgow, Scotland.⁴⁶

How Doran's property was utilized during his absence is not known, nor is it clear any improvements stood on the lot during those years. While a frame building evidently stood on the

⁴¹Andrew Hunter, Joseph T. Daugherty, James B. Wager and wife Mary to George Cutshaw, 5 October 1837, Deed Book 22, p. 254; Virginia Free Press, 1 September 1831, p. 3, col. 4.

⁴²Deed of Trust, George W. Cutshaw to Isaac Fouke, 22 May 1840, Deed Book 24, p. 289.

⁴³Constitutionalist, 8 January 1840, p. 3, col. 6; Deed of Trust, George W. Cutshaw to Isaac Fouke, 20 January 1842, Deed Book 25, p. 364.

⁴⁴George W. Cutshaw and wife Martha J. to Richard D. Doran, 25 July 1843, Deed Book 26, p. 412.

⁴⁵Virginia Free Press, 2 May 1833, p. 3, col. 3; Seventh Census (1850), Harpers Ferry, p. 416. Advertisements for Doran's business appear frequently through the 1830s and early 1840s.

⁴⁶Virginia Free Press, 31 July 1845, p. 2, col. 1; 15 February 1849, p. 2, col. 5.

southwestern portion of Lot 54 in 1840, when George Cutshaw executed a deed of trust, the deed conveying this portion to Richard Doran fails to mention any building on the property being transferred. As deeds frequently fail to reference specific buildings, the lack of mention could be insignificant. Interestingly, however, the brick building standing on the portion of Lot 54 not being sold to Doran is mentioned.⁴⁷

At any rate, following his return to Harpers Ferry in 1849, Doran had a building constructed on Lot 54B. In August, George Rothery, owner of Lot 53A, advertised the sale of his property on the west side of High Street "between the stone steps leading to the Catholic Church, and the new brick house just built by R. D. Doran, Esq."⁴⁸ Post-war photographs show this building as a three-story building with a stone first story and brick upper stories. It was three bays wide across the front and had a single dormer window in the front of the gable roof. Exterior doorways on both the first and second floors afforded access at the front of the building. (See HF-787, Figure 2.)

In November 1849, Richard Doran leased his "two story brick house with stone basement & brick kitchen in the rear" to Thomas Sturdy and William McSherry for a period beginning December 1, 1849 and ending April 1, 1851. The total rent Sturdy and McSherry were to pay was \$266 and 66 2/3 cents. The lease prohibited Sturdy and McSherry from assigning this lease without Doran's consent.⁴⁹

Sturdy did not long enjoy possession of this building. In January 1850, Thomas Sturdy

⁴⁷Deed of Trust, George W. Cutshaw to Isaac Fouke, 22 May 1840, Deed Book 24, p. 289; George W. Cutshaw and wife Martha J. to Richard D. Doran, 25 July 1843, Deed Book 26, p. 412.

⁴⁸Virginia Free Press, 9 August 1849, p. 3, col. 1.

⁴⁹Lease, Richard Doran and Thomas Sturdy and William McSherry, 28 November 1849, Park Reel 29, Vol 2, p. 151.

was killed when struck in the head by a tumbler. According to accounts in the Virginia Free Press, a man visiting Sturdy's "Oyster establishment" had picked the tumbler up at the bar to throw at a black boy in Sturdy's employ but missed the boy, striking Sturdy instead. Sturdy's obituary notes he left a widow and four children.⁵⁰

At some point during the period covered by the lease to Sturdy and McSherry, at least part of the building on Lot 54B passed into the occupancy of a John O'Meara. O'Meara's name appears only once in the available historical record in an April 1, 1851 lease between Richard Doran, George Furtney, and John G. Ridenour. By this document, Furtney, a local shoemaker, and Ridenour, a local merchant, leased the upper story, garret, and brick kitchen of the building previously occupied by a O'Meara for a year for \$60.⁵¹ As the portions of the building leased to them did not include the main floor, they evidently did not use the building for business purposes. One or both may have used it for a residence.⁵²

Property owner Richard Doran died in July 1851. According to the terms of his will, his wife Bridget received a lifetime estate to one-third of his property, while his brother Michael received a lifetime estate to the remaining two-thirds. Following the deaths of Bridget and Michael, Richard's property was to be divided between his brother William Doran, sister Sally Walsh and her son William, nephew James Doran (son of Patrick Doran), and sister Catherine

⁵⁰Virginia Free Press, 31 January 1850, p. 2, col. 4; 7 February 1850, p. 2, col. 4.

⁵¹Lease, Richard Doran and George H. Furtney and John G. Ridenour, 1 April 1851, Park Reel 29, Vol. 3, p. 268; Virginia Free Press, 30 August 1849, p. 3, col. 1; Seventh Census (1850), Bolivar, p. 393.

⁵²From the early 1850s, Furtney apparently had his shoe shop in a small building across the street (Charles W. Snell, "The Business Enterprises and Commercial Development of Harpers Ferry's Lower Town Area, 1803 to 1861," 9 April 1973, p. 124). Based on census order, Snell concluded the families of John Arrear, William Malory, and Sarah Walsh probably occupied the building in 1850, while Patrick Carroll lived there in 1860 (Snell, "Wager Lot No. 54," pp. 9-10). Snell apparently relied on census order to locate people in particular buildings, but this report does not utilize that method. Interestingly, however, Sarah Walsh was Richard Doran's sister. Since Sturdy died early in 1850, and the next occupants (not identified until April 1851) utilized only a portion of the building, the Walsh, Arrear, and Malory households could have been there.

Fitzpatrick.⁵³

Occupancy of the Doran building for the next five decades largely is lacking. According to a claim made by Michael Doran, federal troops and blacks occupied four Doran buildings in 1863 and 1864, including a three-story brick dwelling on High Street.⁵⁴ Doran apparently managed the Richard Doran buildings until his own death March 23, 1882, after which an accounting of Richard's estate finally was made.⁵⁵ Richard's estate was not settled for another two decades, but the property probably was used as rental property during these years.

The 1894 Sanborn Map indicates a cobbler was located in the Doran building. Several shoemakers--Addison Ott, George Shreck, Edward Stroup, James LaRue, and John Cowley--are listed on the 1892 Voter Registration Roll for Harpers Ferry Precinct. Shreck was in Bolivar, but the location of the others is not certain. James Banks, another shoemaker, was located in Harpers Ferry in the early 1890s. His name is listed in Randall's Business Directory (1892-1893), which locates Banks' business on High Street.⁵⁶

By July 1898, the shoe shop had been replaced by the harness shop of J. W. Clevenger. John Fitzpatrick, probably the son of Richard Doran's sister Catherine Fitzpatrick, lived upstairs. That month, a fire swept through the row of buildings situated north of the stone steps, burning three brick and two stone buildings. The Doran building was among those burned. Clevenger lost his stock and tools worth about \$150, but Fitzpatrick's household goods were saved. The

⁵³Will of Richard D. Doran, 28 June 1851, Will Book 13, p. 106.

⁵⁴Box B, Claim 1817, Claim of Michael Doran.

⁵⁵Death Record 3 (1881-1889), p. 52; Accounts of Fiduciaries Book F, p. 37.

⁵⁶1892 Voter Registration Roll; Randall's Business Directory, p. 53.

building was insured for about \$1,000.⁵⁷

By late 1899, the heirs of Richard Doran had brought suit in chancery, apparently to complete division of the estate. In December, the court ordered a commissioner determine what property belonging to Richard Doran remained unsold and how any property had been disposed of, what parties were entitled to the undisposed property, and settle any accounts for occupancy of Doran property. Unfortunately, records of this court case, which could shed light on occupants, have not been found. As a result of this suit, Lot 54B was sold to William Brent Nichols, who received a deed in December 1901. At that time, some portion of the brick building apparently remained, as the deed refers to "the brick house, situated thereon" in describing the portion of Lot 54 being conveyed to Nichols. The building was useless, however, and Nichols paid only \$105 for the property.⁵⁸

Building 3, 1898-1953

In 1898, the property on which Building 3 would be constructed was owned by two different parties. William Nichols owned Lot 53A, while the Richard Doran heirs still owned Lot 54B. The buildings on both properties had suffered extensively from a fire in July 1898. By October, however, Nichols reportedly had "cleaned away the ashes and debris of his recently burned building, and was about to begin the erection of another and a better one."⁵⁹ This

⁵⁷Virginia Free Press, 20 July 1898, p. 3, col. 4; Eighth Census (1860), Harpers Ferry, p. 192.

⁵⁸Spirit of Jefferson, 26 December 1899, p. 2, col. 4; Forrest W. Brown to W.B. Nichols, 2 December 1901, Deed Book 91, p. 28.

⁵⁹Spirit of Jefferson, 11 October 1898, p. 3, col. 3.

newspaper item suggests Nichols had a new building (what would eventually form the southeastern part of Building 3) erected in late 1898 or 1899 rather than wait until he acquired title to Lot 54B in 1901. Supporting this conclusion is a photograph taken about 1901, which shows a three-story building with a three bay front on Lot 53A, but no structure on Lot 54B (Figure 4). Architectural evaluation of Building 3 also revealed differences in design and trim suggestive of a two-stage construction.⁶⁰

As constructed, Nichols' new building apparently utilized the rear and southeastern walls from the previous building on Lot 53A. Deeper than its predecessor (extending back to the cliff and actually utilizing the cliff as part of the wall), Nichols' building used the rear wall from the old building as an interior wall. Nichols' new building probably fronted about 23 feet on High Street.⁶¹

After having his new building constructed, William Nichols reopened his business there; the 1902 Sanborn Map (Figure 5) indicates a grocery was located in this building. By then, Nichols had purchased the adjoining Lot 54B. In October, the Farmers Advocate reported, "Mr. W. I. Gore has just completed a brick store and residence building for Mr. W. B. Nichols, at Harpers Ferry."⁶² This item clearly must refer to construction of the northwestern portion of Building 3. Also three stories with a three-bay front, this addition fronted approximately eighteen feet on High Street, making a combined width of about forty-one feet across the front. The exterior wall on the northwestern side of the original part of Building 3 evidently was removed

⁶⁰These differences are discussed in Thomas E. Fields and Susan L. Shufelt, "Harpers Ferry Historic Structures Report Architectural Data Section Nichols/Williams Building, Building 3" (draft, Denver Service Center, National Capital Team, National Park Service, September 1980), pp. 17-21. Architects noted differences in the segmental arches over windows, window spacing, headers, interior details, etc.

⁶¹Fields and Shufelt, p. 16. The relationship of Building 3 to foundations on Lot 54B was one of the questions archeologists hoped to answer in the mid-1980s, but disturbances on the ground kept them from answering definitely any of their questions (Seidel, pp. 6, 11).

⁶²Farmers Advocate, 25 October 1902, p. 3, col. 1.

at the first-floor level, creating a single commercial space on that floor.⁶³

A hall and stairway on the northwest afforded access to the upper floors. Additional access to the upstairs areas were via entrances at the third-story level from the walkway at the rear of the building and possibly at the second-floor level via an entrance at the southeastern side. Sanborn Maps consistently document a one-story frame addition across part of the rear, in all likelihood a porch such as that appearing in NHF-174 (Figure 12). A low-pitched gable roof topped the building. Adjoining the southeastern side of Building 3 by 1902 was a one-story frame building. Enlarged at the rear by 1907 and again between 1922 and 1933, it was being used as a corn crib by 1912, possibly in conjunction with the grocery.⁶⁴

In addition to operating his grocery store in Building 3, William (Brent) Nichols probably lived there. The 1900 census lists Brent Nichols (53) as a boarder in the household of widow Geneva (or Genevieve) Fritts (42). Also enumerated in this household were her son George (18), a laundry agent, and her mother Susan Reid (78). While Nichols is listed as a boarder, the census also lists him as the owner. The page on which the Fritts household is listed is labeled "High Street," and several families owning property near Nichols are also listed, suggesting the Fritts household was located in Building 3.⁶⁵ Nichols is similarly listed as a boarder of Geneva Fritts in 1910, while she is listed as his housekeeper in 1920. In reality, she was his cousin.⁶⁶

Sanborn Maps indicate Nichols continued to operate a grocery in Building 3 during the

⁶³Fields and Shufelt, pp. 29, 33.

⁶⁴Sanborn Maps, 1902, 1907, 1912, 1922, and 1933. Architects found evidence the existing entrance on the southeastern side at the second-floor level was not original and suggested the rear area may originally have been a porch with access to the building coming through a now-boarded-up door (Fields and Shufelt, p. 25).

⁶⁵Twelfth Census (1900), Harpers Ferry, p. 78A.

⁶⁶Thirteenth Census (1910), Harpers Ferry, pp. 189-90; Fourteenth Census (1920), Harpers Ferry, p. 193A; Will of W.B. Nichols, probated 9 March 1920, Will Book D, p. 445.

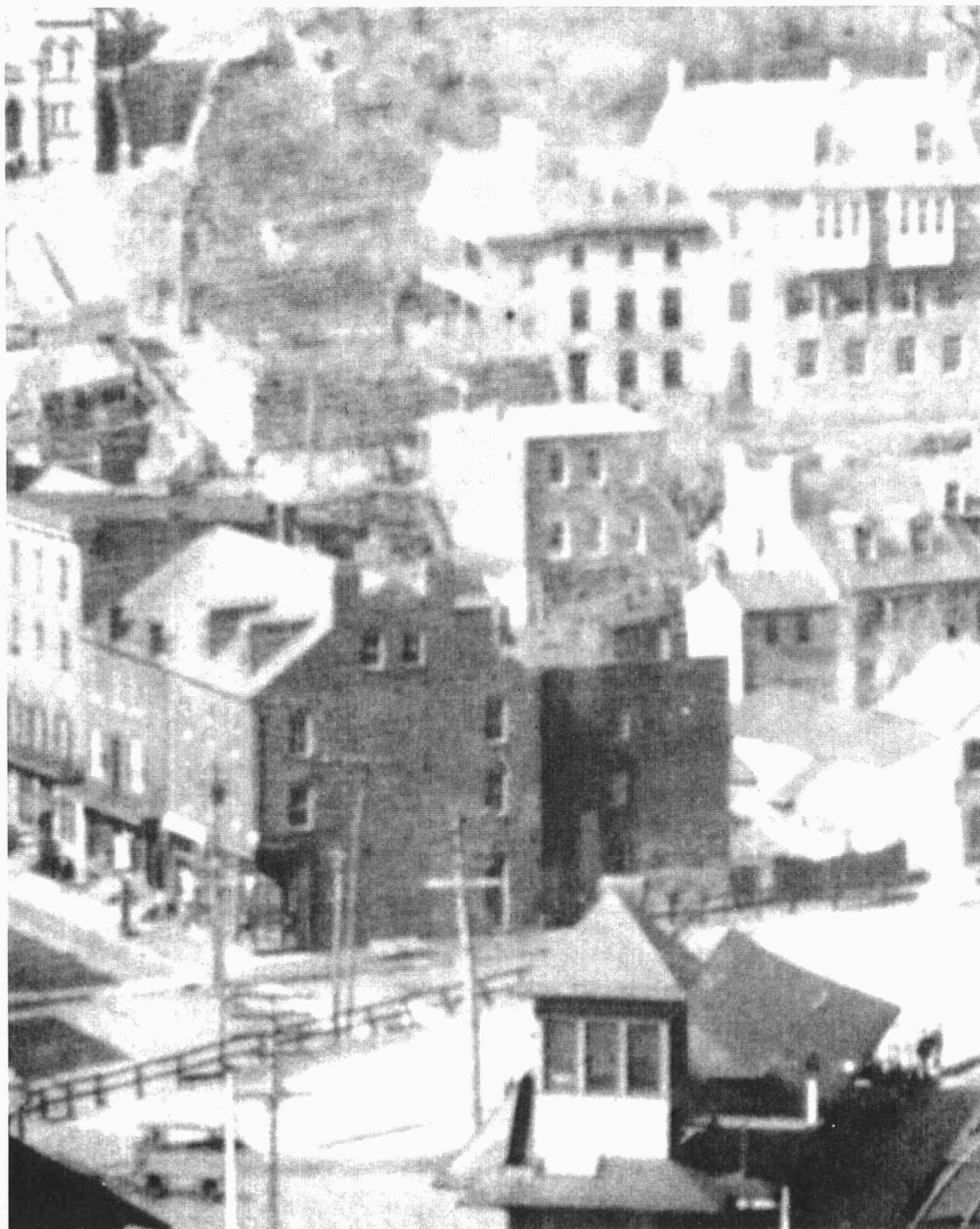


Figure 4. "Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, circa 1898." The photograph in this poster, erroneously labeled 1898, but actually circa 1901, shows the southern portion of Park Building 3.



Figure 5. Sanborn Map, Harpers Ferry, August 1902.

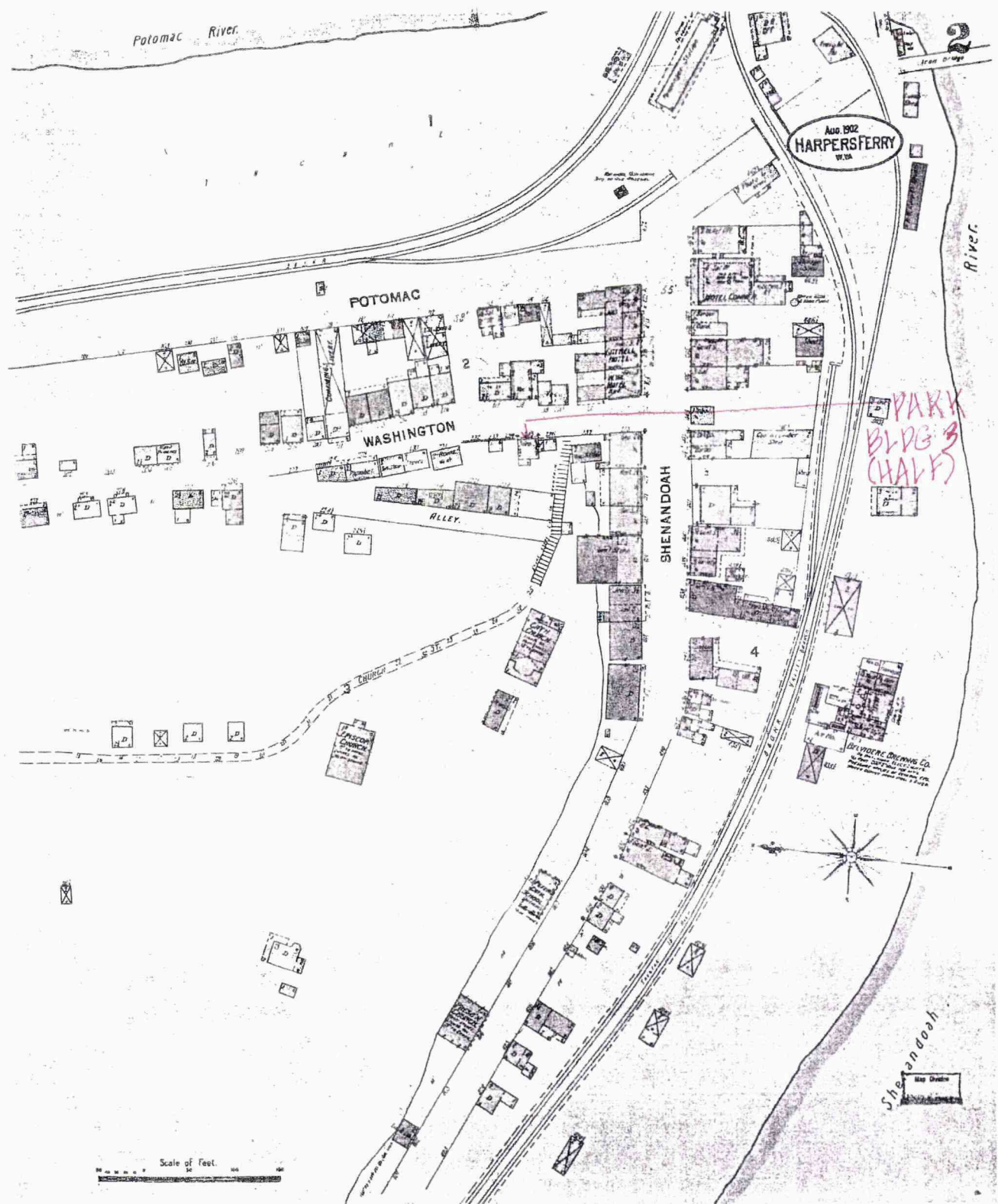


Figure 5. Sanborn Map, Harpers Ferry, August 1902. MAKKI VCCY

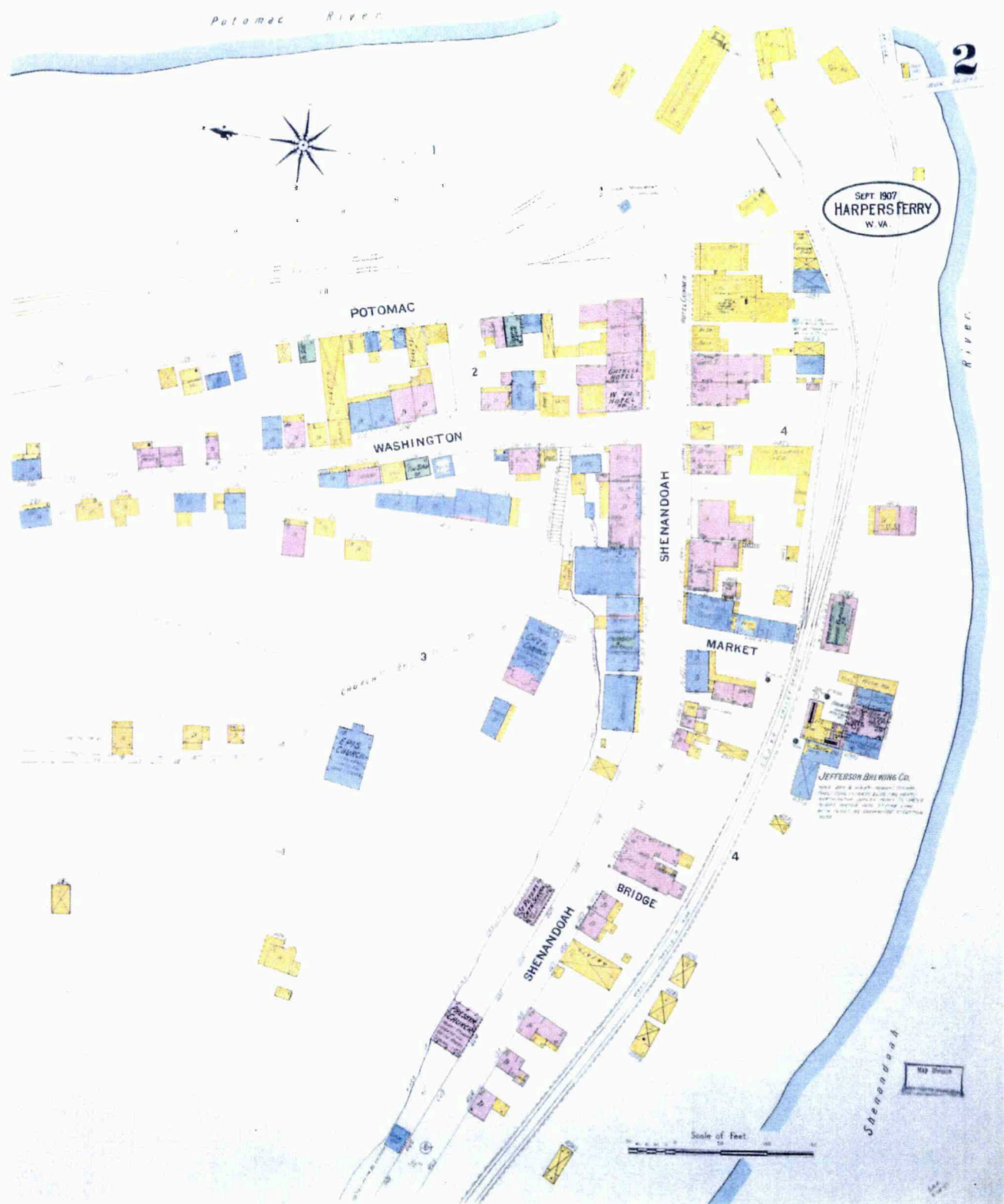


Figure 6. Sanborn Map, Harpers Ferry, September 1907.

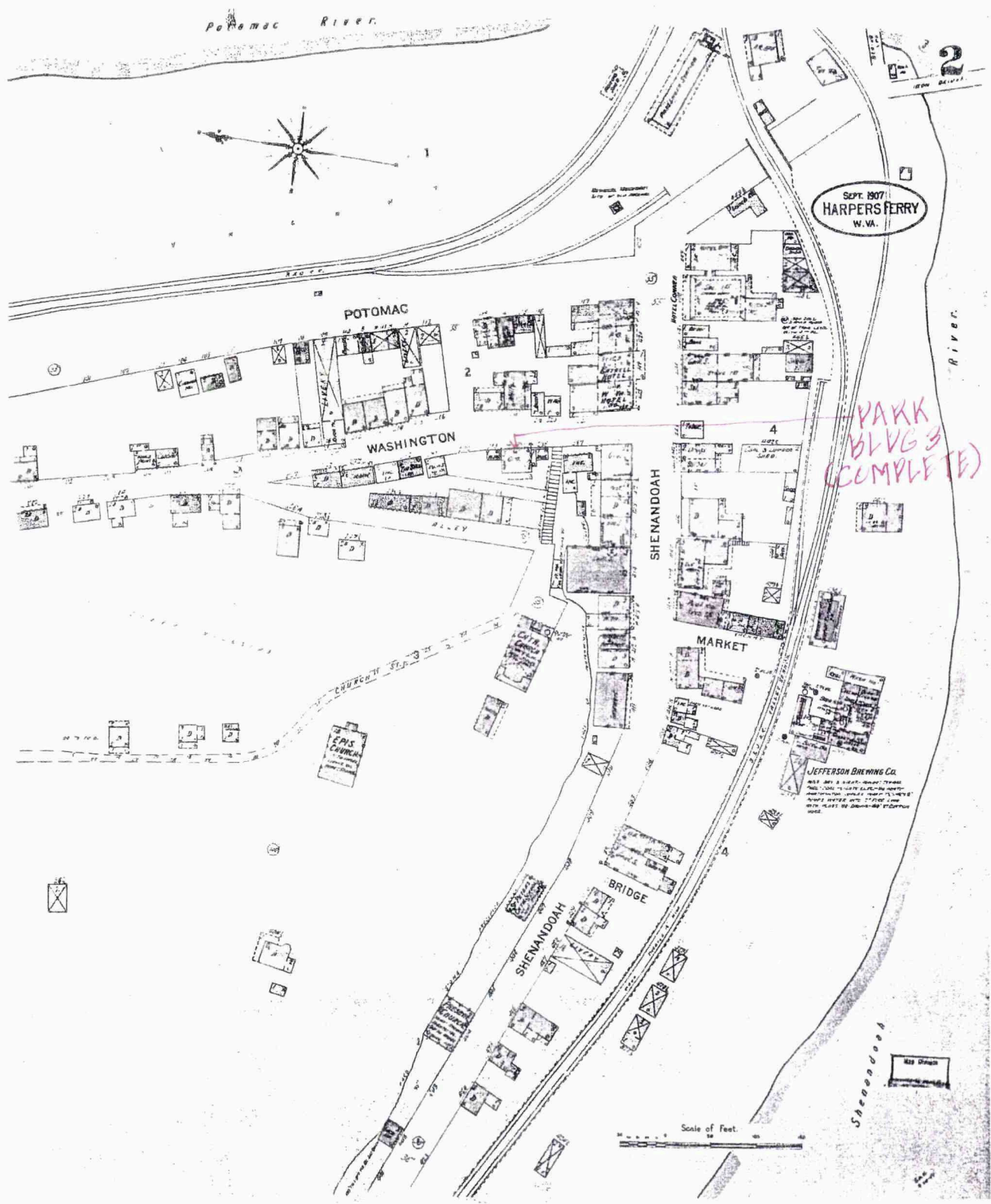


Figure 6. Sanborn Map, Harpers Ferry, September 1907. MARKED COPY



Figure 7. HF-378. Looking up High Street, ca. 1910. Building 3 is on the left beyond the small frame building.

early years in this two-decade period. About 1912, however, he apparently changed his business to a hardware store; a 1912-13 business directory lists his business as hardware.⁶⁷ William Brent Nichols died in February 1920 at the age of 73. Unmarried, Nichols bequeathed money to several nieces and nephews, sisters, and his cousin Genevieve A. Fritts, with the remainder of his estate to be divided equally between his four brothers. Nichols had written his will ten years before his death, and his brother Jacob had died subsequently, leaving brothers Frank, Daniel, and Charles as the heirs of the rest of his estate.⁶⁸

Following William Nichols' death, his brother Frank operated the hardware store in Building 3. Briefly, early in 1921, nephew Shirley Nichols had his drug store in one end of his Uncle Frank's hardware store before moving his business to Shenandoah Street about June.⁶⁹ That spring, Frank Nichols, as executor of his brother's estate, offered the stock of hardware for sale, but no sale occurred at that time. On March 1, 1922, the stock of hardware was sold at public sale. The sale notice indicates the Nichols' stock included farm implements, such as plows, moldboards, and pitchforks, as well as items such as poultry fencing, sprayers, tools, padlocks, nails, window screens, harness furnishings, and flower pots. The store merchandise sold for \$2,865.46.⁷⁰

The previous fall, Mrs. Fritts had vacated the upstairs of Building 3, and Charles Jones had moved in. In February 1922, a week after notice of the impending sale of the stock of hardware appeared, the Farmers Advocate reported Frank Nichols planned to retire from the

⁶⁷Sanborn Maps 1902, 1907, and 1912; West Virginia Gazetteer and Business Directory, 1912-1913.

⁶⁸Will of W.B. Nichols, probated 9 March 1920, Will Book D, p. 445.

⁶⁹Farmers Advocate, 8 January 1921, p. 1, col. 2; 9 April 1921, p. 1, col. 3; 18 June 1921, p. 1, col. 1.

⁷⁰Farmers Advocate, 9 April 1921, p. 5, col. 4; 11 February 1922, p. 4, col. 2; Estate of W.B. Nichols, Accounts and Fiduciaries Book P, p. 459.

hardware business and that a Mr. Foster would be moving his pool and billiard hall into the room Nichols was vacating. Foster, an electrician who had come to Harpers Ferry from Winchester a year earlier to take charge of interlocking switchboards on the railroad, purchased a pool and billiard establishment on Shenandoah Street in 1921 and operated there until moving to the Brent Nichols' building. This newspaper account further indicated Foster's family would be occupying the second floor of the Nichols building as a residence.⁷¹

On March 7, 1923, William Nichols' heirs sold Lots 53A and 54B to Charles N. Jones for \$4,000.⁷² Jones, like his father Thomas Jones, was a local liveryman. In 1920, the Jones' household consisted of Charles (43), wife Bertha (38), and sons Leslie (17), Paul (16), and Charles (13).⁷³ The Jones family had moved into Building 3 in the fall of 1921 and, in all likelihood, occupied the third story. Not only did the Foster family move into the second floor shortly thereafter, but Charles Jones suffered from "a crippling affliction" that, at some point, put him in a wheelchair. Access to the second floor would have been extremely difficult, while the third floor was accessible from the public walkway at the rear of the building.⁷⁴

Over the next nearly six years, the first floor of the building apparently remained in use as a pool hall. At some point between February 1922 and September 1928, Leslie Jones, Charles Jones' son, took over the business. In September 1928, Jones sold the pool room business, including "2 Pool Tables, 24 Cues, 1 Clock, 1 National Cash Register #35143, 8 Chairs and 1 Ice

⁷¹Farmers Advocate, 2 April 1921, p. 1, col. 1; 5 November 1921, p. 1, col. 5; 18 February 1922, p. 1, col. 1.

⁷²Lewis F. Nichols, et al to Charles N. Jones, 7 March 1923, Deed Book 123, p. 388.

⁷³Twelfth Census (1900), Harpers Ferry, p. 81A; Fourteenth Census (1920), Harpers Ferry, p. 192B.

⁷⁴Spirit of Jefferson, 18 March 1948, p. 2, col. 1.

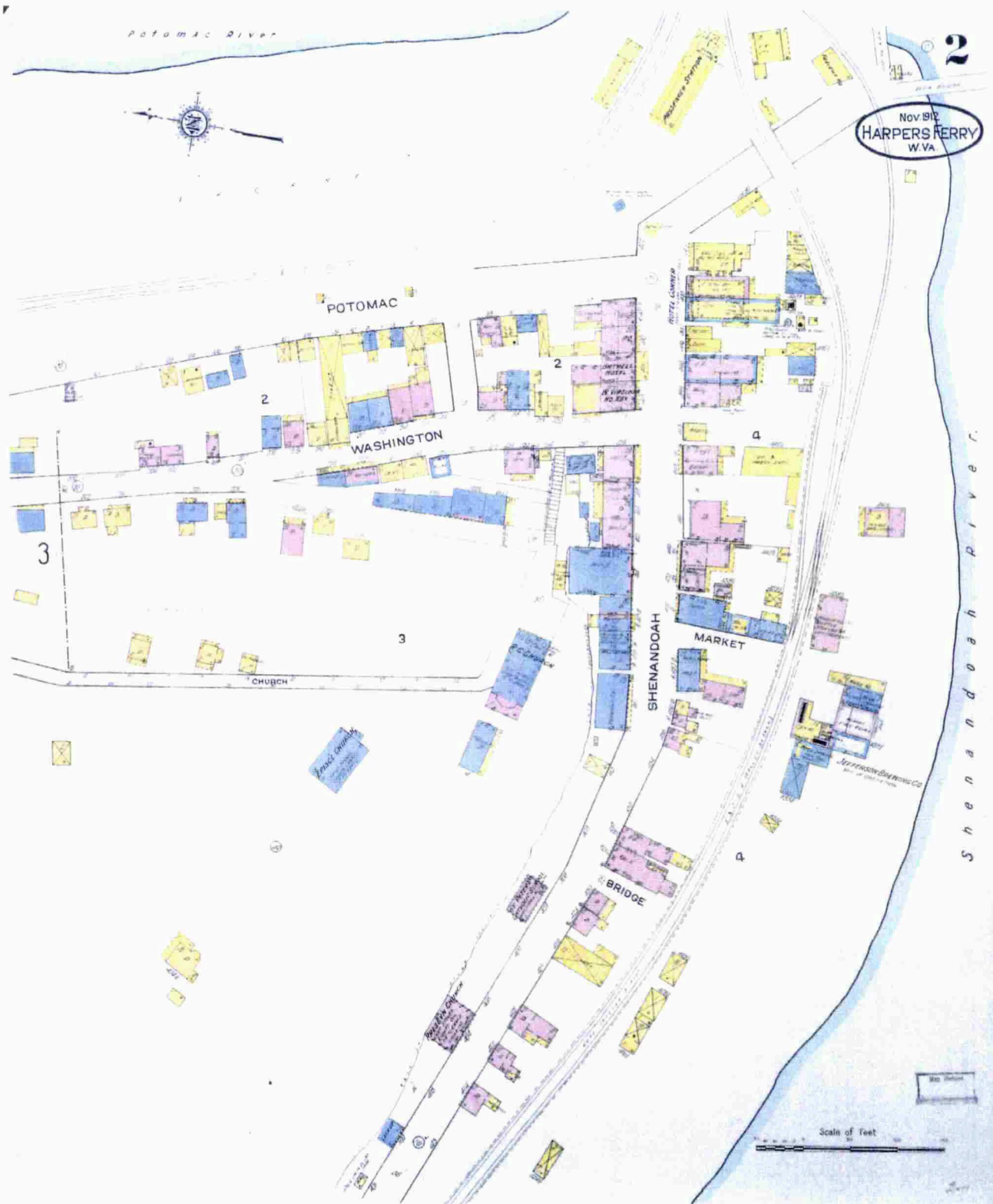


Figure 8. Sanborn Map, Harpers Ferry, November 1912.

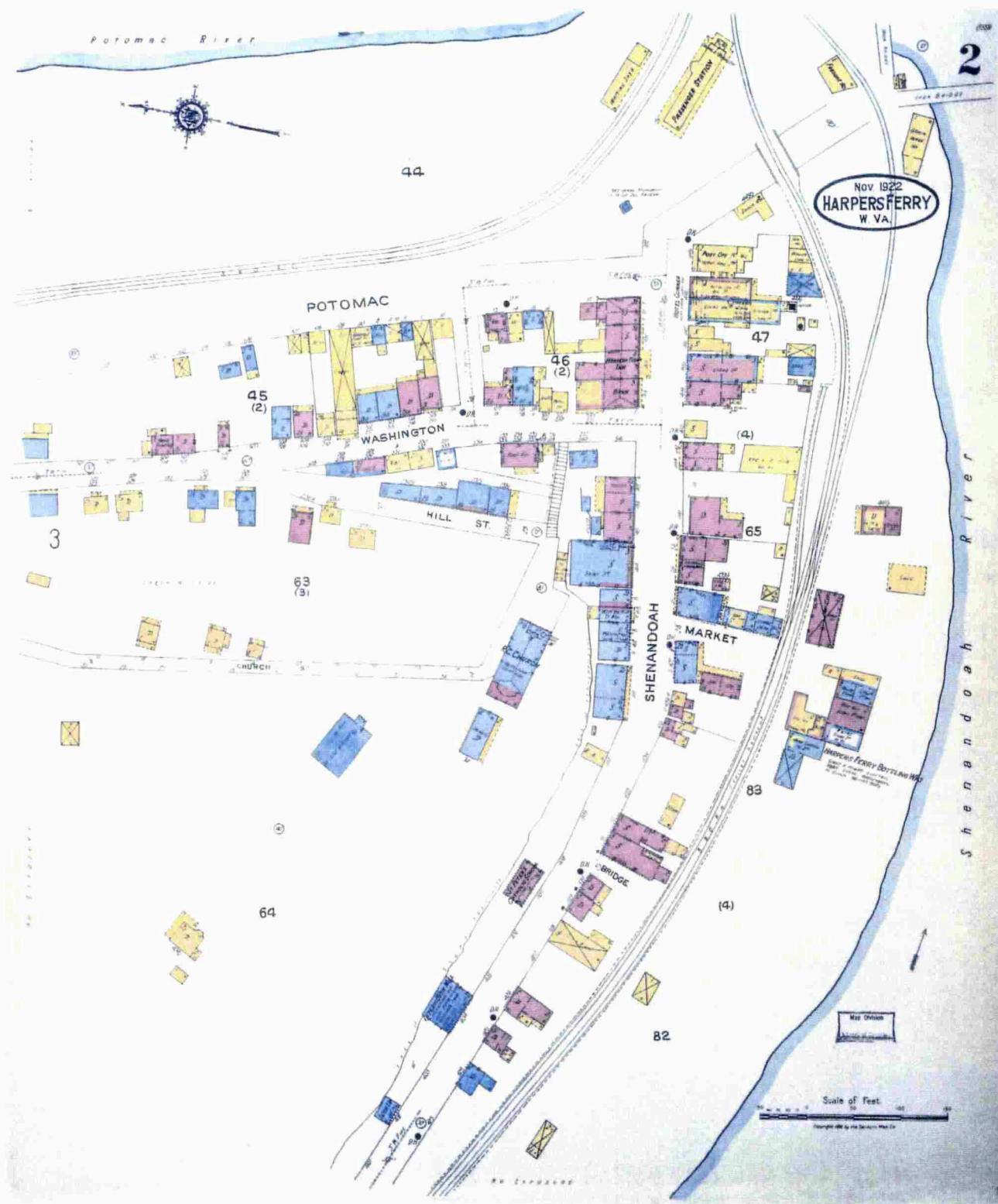


Figure 9. Sanborn Map, Harpers Ferry, November 1922.

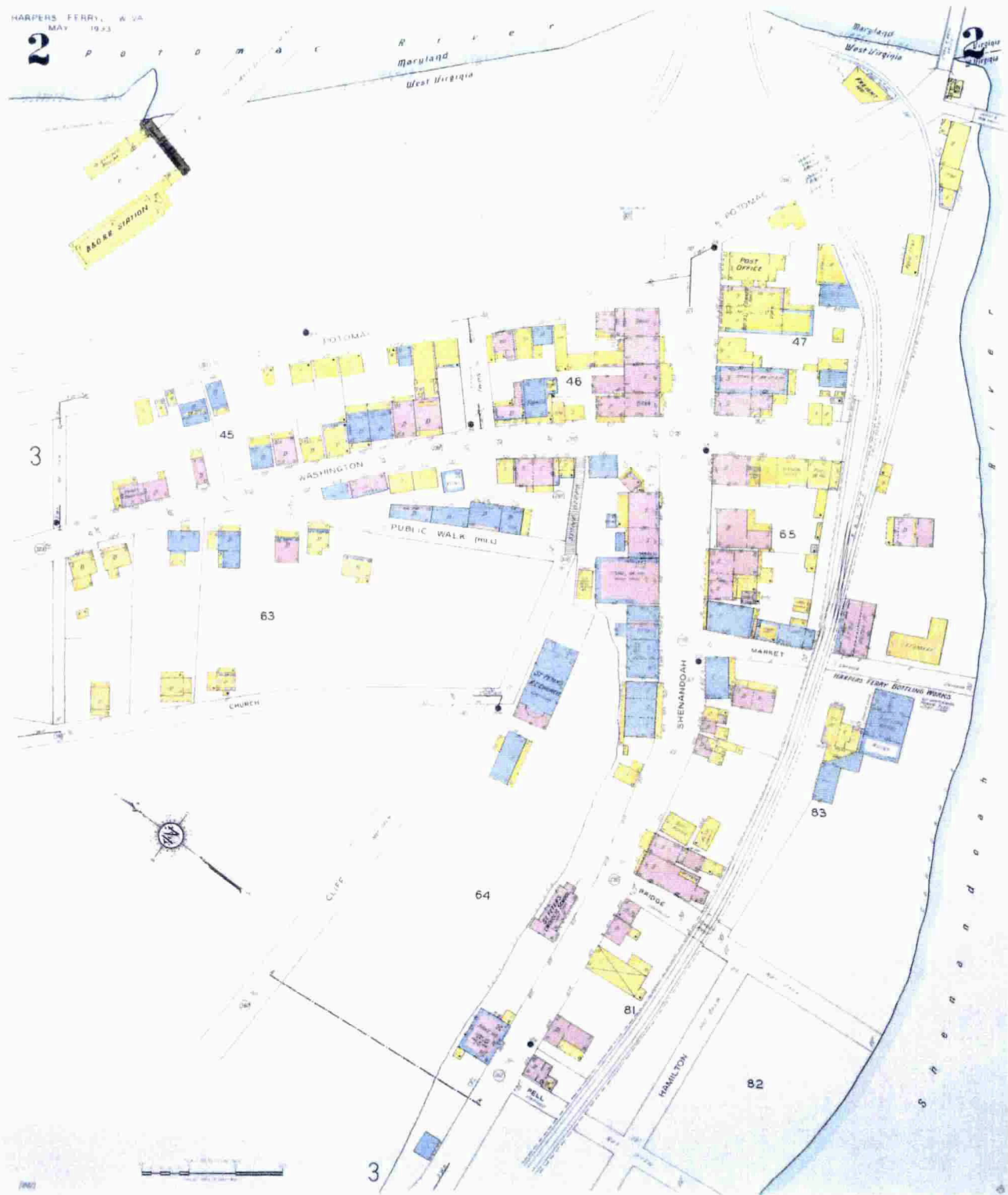


Figure 10. Sanborn Map, Harpers Ferry, May 1933.

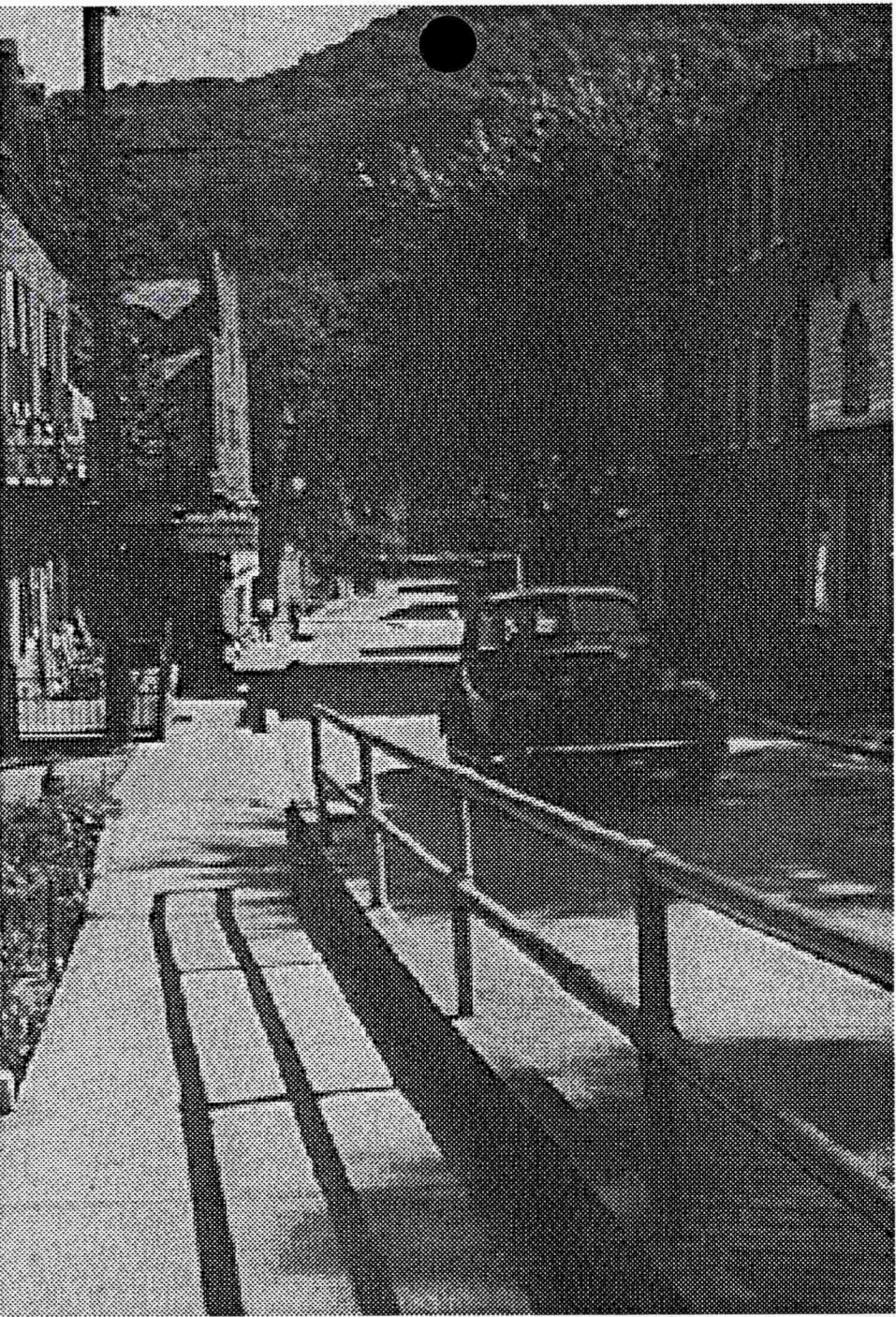


Figure 11. HF-1665. High Street, ca. 1940. Note "Pope's Grocery" sign on Building 3.

Box," to Frank Reibert for \$325.⁷⁵ Reibert, who had operated a grocery store in Harpers Ferry until recently, operated the pool room in the Jones' building.⁷⁶

By March 1929, Charles Schultze, who had a meat market across the street in the Burton building (Park Building 14) for several months, moved his business to the Jones' building lately used as a pool room.⁷⁷ When Schultze purchased the meat market in the Burton building in October 1928, he acquired "1 McCray Ice Box, 1 Self-computing Scales, 1 Cash Register, 1 Double Glass Show Case, 6 feet long and other small articles," and he likely moved these furnishings to Building 3 in 1929.⁷⁸ Schultze still had his meat market in Building 3 in June 1932, when the Spirit of Jefferson reported the ladies of St. John's Lutheran Church would hold a bake sale in the Jones' building "next to Schultz Meat Market."⁷⁹ Unlike earlier Sanborn Maps, the 1933 map (Figure 10) divides Building 3 into two parts, with a partition between the southeastern and northwestern portions, and indicates stores occupied both sides of the building. Therefore, the reference to the bake sale next to the meat market likely means the meat market occupied one side of the building only.

In the fall of 1938, Ernest Pope, one-time manager of the A&P store in Harpers Ferry, opened a grocery store in the "Brent Nichols store room" on High Street. A circa 1940 photograph shows a "Pope's Grocery" sign on Building 3.⁸⁰

⁷⁵Agreement, Leslie Jones and Frank E. Reibert, 27 September 1928, Deed Book 131, p. 334.

⁷⁶Farmers Advocate, 6 October 1928, p. 1, col. 1; Spirit of Jefferson, 11 October 1928, p. 6, col. 1.

⁷⁷Spirit of Jefferson, 7 March 1929, p. 1, col. 1. Isabel Flanagan has suggested the meat market and pool room may have occupied the building simultaneously (Notes of conversation with Patricia Chickering, 8 June 1993), an arrangement consistent with the indication from the 1933 Sanborn that two stores were in Building 3.

⁷⁸Agreement, C.L. Sexton and Charles Scheutze, 24 October 1928, Deed Book 131, p. 355.

⁷⁹Spirit of Jefferson, 15 June 1932, p. 1, col. 1.

⁸⁰Farmers Advocate, 2 September 1938, p. 2, col. 3; HF-1665 (Figure 11).

The Jones family apparently continued to live upstairs. Charles Jones died in 1948. In order to acquire lands for Harpers Ferry National Monument, the State of West Virginia filed a petition in circuit court to take the Jones property. After commissioners for condemnation determined \$12,500 was just compensation, the court ordered the property be transferred to the State in January 1953. The conveyed property was described as follows:

BEGINNING at a stake on the westerly side of High Street, corner to Frank Long, which stake is S. 37 deg. 27' E. 26 feet from the southeastern corner of Lot No. 55; thence S. 37 deg. 27' E. 38.5 feet along High Street to a point corner to George Koonce heirs; thence S. 55 deg. 00' W. 47 feet to a stake on the easterly side of the public walk; thence along the public walk N. 28 deg. 00' W. 41 feet to a stake corner to Frank Ling [sic]; thence N. 54 deg. 5' E. 38.33 feet to the beginning.⁸¹

Jones' widow, son Leslie, and his wife remained in residence for another year and a half. In July 1954, the Harpers Ferry correspondent to the Spirit of Jefferson indicated fifteen families still occupied buildings taken for the national monument. They had been given notice to vacate the premises by July, but "[t]he situation is critical, with no empty houses available." A week later, the same correspondent reported all but four families had moved. Among those moving were the Jones family, who had bought property on Fillmore Street.⁸²

⁸¹Order, *State of West Virginia vs Bertha Jones, et al*, Deed Book 191, p. 151.

⁸²Spirit of Jefferson, 22 July 1954, p. A2, col. 3; 29 July 1954, p. B6, col. 3.



Figure 12. NHF-174. The rear of Building 3, February 1956.

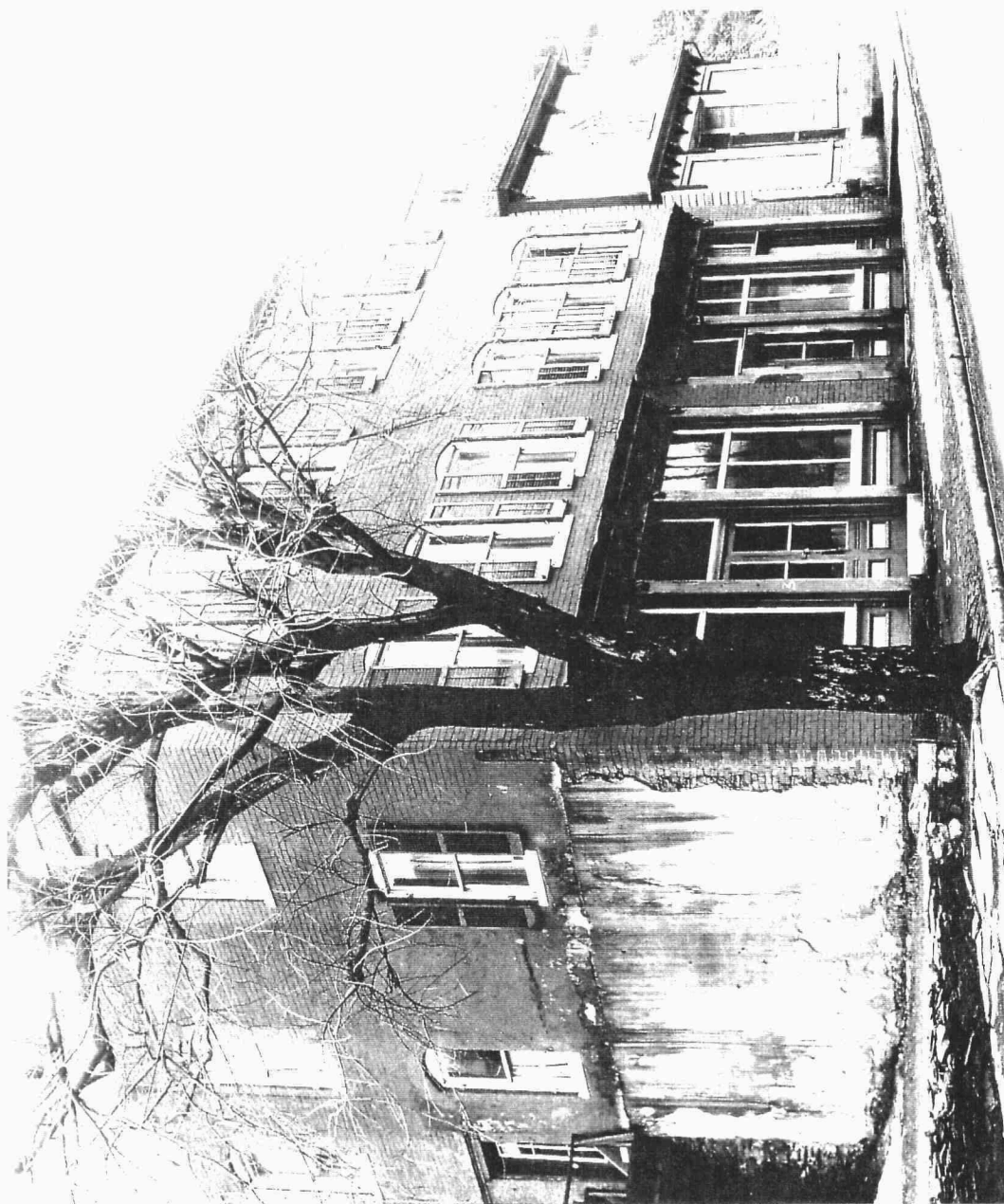


Figure 13. NHF-173. Building 3 in February 1956.

APPENDIX: BUILDING HISTORY (NPS OWNERSHIP)

BUILDING: Nichols/Williams Building (formerly known as Store and Dwelling)

HAFE #: 3

LCS #: 00614

HISTORY

- 1953** January 12 deeded from Bertha Jones and others to State of West Virginia [Deed Book 191, Page 151/Jefferson County Courthouse]
- 1953** December 9 deeded from State of West Virginia to United States [Deed Book 199, Page 41/Jefferson County Courthouse]
- 1955** September condition: "relatively good" with some deterioration on lower interior floors [Architectural Base Map-9/55/Architect's Office]
- 1956** October 15 chimneys capped [Chronology/Building No. 3/Drawer 1]
- 1958** September 23 installation of storm sash and screens (Aluminum Triple-Track combination storm windows and fiberglass insulation, with ventilation, completed by W & R Sales, Inc., of Charles Town, WV at a cost of \$1,965, including similar work on No. 26 and No. 33 [Superintendent Conway's Memorandum-2/3/77/Neubauer Bldg. List/Drawer 2];[Contract No. 14-10-529-1904/Morrell-Drawer 2]
- 1959** November proposal that No. 3 be obliterated, at a cost of \$2,000 [PCP/PCP's/Drawer 2]
- 1975** July 22 recommendation of the Superintendent of Harpers Ferry National Historical Park that No. 3 be demolished, because it was dilapidated and it was "neither architecturally sound or esthetically pleasing" [Memorandum from Superintendent Martin R. Conway to the Director of National Capital Parks-7/22/75/Building No. 3/Drawer 1]
- 1975** painted exterior [List/Buildings Painted/Maintenance]
- 1976** February 17 removed doors and mantels [Daily Diaries/Notebook/Morrell]
- 1976** February 20 installed toilet room [Daily Diaries/Notebook/Morrell]

- 1976** April 6 installed floor into toilet room [Daily Diaries/Notebook/Morrell]
- 1976** April 7 replaced siding in toilet room [Daily Diaries/Notebook/Morrell]
- 1976** painted interior [List/Buildings Painted/Maintenance]
- 1977** September condition: very poor [Inventory of Property-9/30/77/Inventory of Property/Drawer 5]
- 1978** February 8 creation of Package No. 115, which would rehabilitate building Nos. 3, 37, 38, 40, and 43, through stabilization and restoration; at the time, the buildings were deteriorating and were becoming a danger to visitors [Historic Structures Report-7/81/Building #3/Drawer 1]
- 1981** June 17 proposal of Package No. 115, which was stated above; delay in proposal due to lack of funds [Historic Structures Report-7/81, pp. 4,5/Building #3/Drawer 1]
- 1982** August 25 removed air conditioners and storm door on third floor to improve historic scene [Job Order-8/23/82/10-577 Completed FY-82/Maintenance 2]
- 1982** October 25 exterior stabilization and restoration begun by Gruber Building Cleaning and Restoration, Inc., of Williamsport, MD, consisting of the following work: rehabilitating the north and northwest walls, rehabilitating the windows and exterior doors, brick patio with a drainage system, restoring the roof and storefront, and installing drainage from the interior [Notice to Proceed and Contract Time/CX-3000-2-9003 Exterior Restoration Nichols/Williams (Bldg. 3) Pkg. 115/Morrell-Drawer 1];[Construction Contract-8/16/82/Package No. 115/Morrell-Drawer 1]
- 1982** November 29 proposal to switch No. 3 from Package 115 to Package 110 for more immediate help, because No. 3 had deteriorated badly since the completion of the Historic Structures Report to the point where the front sidewalk had to be barricaded due to dangers to visitors; in Package 110, the following work was recommended: repairing the fallen north and northeast brick walls and repoint the others, restoration of the roof, structural repairs (stairways, joists of the second and third floors, and steel beam of the second floor), restoration of the High Street storefront, repairing all exterior windows and doors, installation of a drainage system in the backroom of the first floor, restoration of the interior involving the removal of all non-historic interior walls, replacing outdated mechanical, plumbing, and electrical systems, installation of fire and burglar alarms, resurfacing the front sidewalk equipped with ramp for handicapped access, restoring the brick patio in the backyard, and filling in the backyard cisterns [Building #3/Drawer 1]

1982	December 3	removal of a tree was stopped because the process might cause structural damage to No. 3 [Building No. 3/Drawer 1]
1983	June 28	sent out bids on restoration project Package No. 110D, consisting of the following work on No. 3: adaptive restoration of the interior, rehabilitating the mechanical, electrical, and plumbing system, and installing storm windows on the interior and shutters on the exterior [Package 110D/Hall Drawer 1]
1983	July 31	exterior stabilization and restoration completed at a cost of \$104,433 [Lump Sum Contract-10/5/83/CX-3000-2-9003 Exterior Restoration Nichols/Williams (Bldg. 3) Pkg. 115/Morrell-Drawer 1]
1985	February 19	proposal for the installation of a fire and intrusion system [Order for Supplies or Services/Carson Associates, Inc./Drawer 5]
1985	May 15	issued job order to extend picket fence in rear as safety barrier [Job Order-5/15/85/577 FY-85 Comp/Maintenance 2]
1985	June	extension of picket fence completed [Job Order-5/15/85/577 FY-85 Comp/Maintenance 2]
1985	June 25	painting of picket fence in rear begun and completed [CRM Specialist's Daily Log]
1988	February 29	construction of second floor east porch begun [CRM Specialist's Daily Log]
1988	March 14	construction of second floor east porch completed [CRM Specialist's Daily Log]
1988	September	install Civil War exhibit on 1st floor of bldg.
1988	November 7	installation of drainage pipe to two underground cisterns adjacent to the west wall begun, consisting of excavating down to the base of the cisterns [CRM Specialist's Daily Log]
1988	November 23	installation of drainage pipe to two underground cisterns completed [CRM Specialist's Daily Log]
1988	December 5	deepening of the interior west wall channel drain and installation of a plastic vapor barrier begun [CRM Specialist's Daily Log]
1988	December 12	installation of brick patio adjacent to west wall begun [CRM Specialist's Daily Log]

- 1988** December 16 installation of brick patio completed [CRM Specialist's Daily Log]
- 1988** December 16 deepening of the interior west wall channel drain and installation of a plastic vapor barrier completed [CRM Specialist's Daily Log]
- 1988** December 27 installation of a first floor HVAC system begun [CRM Specialist's Daily Log]
- 1989** January 13 installation of a first floor HVAC system completed [CRM Specialist's Daily Log]
- 1989** April archeologists establish lab processing area on 2nd floor for Pkg. 116 excavations

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