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DSC ARCHEOLOGY
IN
STORAGE

A

HISTORY OF THE ISLAND OF VIRGINIUS

1751 to 1870

Harpers Ferry National Monument

Prepared by:

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Dated: December 4, 1958
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B&W Scans
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page No.

SECTION I: ADMINISTRATIVE DATA

SECTION II: HISTORICAL DATA

CHAPTER I: Island of Virginius, 1751-1816..... 1

CHAPTER II: Virginius, 1816 to 1830; The Island Gets Its Name and Is Developed..... 10

CHAPTER III: Virginius, 1830 to 1834; The First Maps Showing Physical Development..... 17

CHAPTER IV: Virginius, 1835 to 1844; Coming of the Railroad and New Industries..... 41

CHAPTER V: Virginius, 1845 to 1852; The Harpers Ferry and Shenandoah Manufacturing Company..... 81

CHAPTER VI: Virginius, 1853 to 1861; Mr. Herr Acquires the Island..... 114

CHAPTER VII: Virginius, 1861 to 1870; War and Floods..... 128

CHAPTER VIII: Summary of Historical Data..... 139

CHAPTER IX: Conclusions and Recommendations..... 148

APPENDIX I - PHOTOGRAPHS (Nine)..... 157

MAPS OF THE ISLAND OF VIRGINIUS

1. James M.Brown's Map of Harpers Ferry, June, 1843, Showing Property Line of Early Patents..... 2

2. N. King & Leond. Harbaugh's 1803 Map of Harpers Ferry, showing Island of Virginius..... 9

3. March 23, 1830, Plat of Portion of Tract 2 Purchased by Lewis Wernwag from Fontaine Beckham..... 27

4. Map C, 1833-1834 map showing the proposed route of the W. & P. R.R. across the Island of Virginius.... 35

5. Map No. 2, 1835, an 1834 map showing the proposed route of the W. & P. R.R. across the Island of Virginius..... 38

TABLE OF CONTENTS
(Continued)

Page No.

6. James M. Brown's Map of the Island of Virginius at Harper's Ferry, dated April, 1844..... 79

7. S. Howell Brown's Map of Harpers Ferry Prepared in compliance with Letter to Major Symington - April 22, 1848, with additions made by Major John Symington showing conditions on Virginius as of January, 1851..... 112

8. 1856-1858 "View of the Island Virginius, in the Shenandoah, At Harpers Ferry, Taken near Jefferson's Rock. Taken from Nature by Th. Sachse"..... 121

9. 1859 HISTORICAL BASE MAP OF THE ISLAND OF VIRGINIUS..... 126

10. S. Howell Brown's 1869 Map of Harpers Ferry, showing also Virginius Island..... 130

11. (two tracings) 1913 Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company map, showing right of way, Buildings and Tracks on the Island of Virginius..... 136

12. 1925 Harpers Ferry Paper Co. Blue Print, showing Virginius Island..... 138

13. VIRGINIUS, NOVEMBER 19, 1958; showing historic ruins still visible on the Island of Virginius..... 149

SECTION I - ADMINISTRATIVE DATA

A. Name of Area

Island of Virginius, site of 3[illegible] buildings in 1859.

B. Proposed Use of Island

We concur with Historian Snell's suggestion of the two fold nature of the problem: stabilization and preservation of the ruins and their interpretation. We also agree that archeological exploration should be conducted at an early date. Such activity may well turn up some very interesting exhibits for display on-site or in a museum. In fact we have learned of the recent disappearance of an old stone wheel, perhaps a relic of the flour mill, which for years lay half buried on the island. The self-guiding trail appeals very strongly to us, since, in addition to the numerous historic ruins, there exists a nice variety of trees and shrubs. Many species of birds are also found on Virginius Island in the spring and summer. Various warblers are particularly abundant. A combined history and natural history self-guiding trail is indicated for this island. We doubt, however, the wisdom of excavating the Wernwag Canal. The difficulty of preserving even a small portion of this feature would be great in view of the recurring floods to which Virginius Island is subjected.

C. Provision for Operating Island

Desirability of establishing self-guiding history and natural history trail has been discussed with Regional Interpretive Planner Rose and it is hoped that a start can be made on such a project before the next travel season.

D. Preliminary Estimate of Cost for Stabilizing Ruins and Rehabilitating Grounds

The preliminary estimated cost of archeological exploration required on the Island of Virginius is $1500: Estimate for stabilization of ruins, removing brush, etc. $5,000.

CHAPTER I

ISLAND OF VIRGINIUS, 1751-1816

In June 1842 the Superintendent of the Harpers Ferry Armory, Major Henry K. Craig, alerted the Ordnance Department to the possibility that United States Government might well have a valid claim to title to the Island of Virginius. [1] The investigation and survey of this claim that was made in 1842 and 1843 reveals a number of facts relating to the early history of the island of Virginius that do not appear in the Deed Books and land records.

On August 11, 1843 Major Craig submitted the special survey prepared by James M. Brown, Surveyor of Jefferson County, Virginia showing the location of Government property lines in relation to the Island of Virginius to the Ordnance Department. (For Brown's survey of June 1843, and the legend or notes thereon, see the next pages of this report).[2]

1. Lt. Col. Talcott, Ord. Dept, to Major Craig, July 14, 1842, Microfilm Reel 19, v. 2, p. 108, in reply to Craig's letter of June 25, 1842. National Archives Material. Also Talcott to Secretary of War J. C. Spenser, August 17, 1842, Reel 19, v. 14, pp. 1391-1392. Talcott to Craig, April 18, 1843, Reel 19, v. 2, p. 139 and Craig to Talcott, April 19, 1843, R. 12, v, 11, p. 1043.

2. R. 12, v. 11, pp. 1079-80. For other correspondence relating to Brown's Survey see Talcott to Craig, August 16, 1843, R. 19, v. 2, pp. 159-160. Talcott to Craig. August 26, 1843, R. 19, v. 2, p. 162; Capt. W. Maynadier, Ord. Dept. to Craig, September 12, 1843, R. 19, v. 2, p. 163. Brown was paid $60,00 for this survey. Bill, October 3, 1843, Reel 26, v. 4, p. 393.

Harpers Ferry Armory
Scale 30 po per inch
Jefferson County
June 1843
National Archives

Legend for Brown's Survey, June 1843

Harpers Ferry

Scale 30 poles per inch

Harpers Ferry Armory, Jefferson County Virginia, June 1843

At the request of Henry K. Craig Major of Ordnance at Harpers Ferry I have made a survey of that part of the Public lands at Harpers Ferry which is embraced in a patent from Lord Fairfax Proprietor of the Northern Neck of Virginia for 125 acres bearing date on the 25th day of April 1751, to Robert Harper. The calls of said patent are as follows viz. Beginning at a sycamore tree on the edge of the Shenandoah river, (See letter A in the above plat) thence S55 E 44 poles, thence N 66 E 72 poles to a sycamore at the point D, thence up the Potomac River N 48 W 200 poles to a chestnut G, thence W 105 poles to a white oak H, thence S 140 poles to a red oak K, thence E 150 poles to the beginning. Containing 125 acres.

I began my survey at an old stooping sycamore tree standing on the shore of the Shenandoah river which was shown me as the beginning corner A, I ran thence S 57½ E 40 ps to B, thence N, 63½ E 54 poles to C, thence N 45½ E 75.5 poles to the point D, thence up the Potomac N 52 W 123 poles to E, thence N 61 W 37.3 poles to F. thence N 85 W 43.3 poles to a point said to be the place of a chestnut tree called for in the patent at G, the corner also to a patent for 92 acres from the same to the same, bearing date the 19th day of April 1762, thence with the same S 87½ W 126.3 poles to the place of a white oak called for in the patents H, thence again with the same S 20 minutes West 15 poles to a white oak tree now dead but standing, and recognized as the white oak called for in the said patent for 92 acres and now a corner to Grimes lot f (small f) (these facts induced me to extend the "West 105 poles" line to 126.3 to reach a point bearing N 20 degrees E and 15 poles distant from said recognised corner at f) continuing the same course from the white oak at f, (small f) being S 20 degrees W in all 150.2 poles, to the point where once stood three sycamores, which were said to represent the red oak called for in the patent, and said to be a corner to George Rowles land, and alsothe corner purchased to by the United States from Rutherford and Darke, K, thence N 82¼ E 196.7 poles passing through the Island of Virginius, to the beginning. Let it be observed however, that the closing line in the patent is due East 150 poles, which line is represented by the line K--L, - L is a point in Mr. Wernwag's sawmill dam about 12 feet from the north side of it, and is about 5 poles above a large stone shop which stands nearly opposite to the Merchant Miller.

PQSKT represents a piece of land which George Rowles was to take in a compromise that was recommended by Moses T. Hunter

Attorney at Law in 1827, by said Rowles relinquishing all claim to the triangle QRS and by executing all necessary deeds to secure to the U States the entire use of the water power at this place, the said triangle is bounded as follows: Beginning at an iron bolt in a rock about 2 poles from the canal and north of it at Q thence S 43½ W 23.5 poles to the S. E. corner of S.K. White's house being 4 poles SW of the North gate post at the head gate of the Canal S, thence S 69½ E 17.3 poles to R, thence North 23 poles to the beginning Containing one acre sixteen perches more or less.

U is an old house in which Robert Harper lived and died.

Note: I deem it my duty to state that owing to local attraction occasioned not only by the great amount of iron at the place but by the ore that pervades this neighborhood, and the great uneven mass of the surface over which several of the lines run, and also the difficulties thrown in the way by buildings and water, makes surveying by the magnetic needle at this place a very uncertain business. I therefore recommend the careful preservation of every known corner.

V is a sycamore, a known and acknowledged corner of the land held by the representatives of George Rowles and their river boundaries as recorded reaches to the neighborhood of the three sycamore stumps at K.

G h i j k l m S K f W X represents certain of the lines and corners of the purchase from Rutherford and Darke by the United States.

James M. Brown S. J. C.

including surveying - and - fee $60.00"

Two reports, based on careful study of the Land Records and the Survey, best sum up the story of the Government's claim to the Island and also reveal certain aspects of the early History of Virginius. The first of these Reports, prepared by Lt. Col. George Talcott of the Ordnance Department, was submitted to the Secretary of War, J. M. Porter, on August 17, 1843. Lt. Col. Talcott informed the Secretary:

"On the 25th June 1842 Mjr. Craig in command of the Harpers Ferry Armory, address a letter to this Office asking its consideration, and that of the Secretary of War, to the claim of the United States to an Island in the Shenandoah river, now in possession of Wernwag and others. This letter set forth in brief, the reasons for believing it to belong to the United States, among which were that the Patent to Harper was bounded on this side by the Shenandoah River and no allusion made to the insignificent streams which now divides this Island from the Main, and that there are persons now living who remembers when no such separation existed, and that as late as 1816 this Island was in the possession of one Moreland, who was considered as a Government tenant. It went on however to say that immediately upon Morelands removal, one McPherson the County Surveyor entered it, as unoccupied and unclaimed land, and then sold it to one Pitcher, (sic Poacher) who sold it to James Stubblefield the Superintendent of the Armory, who conveyed it to others.

This letter was referred by the Secretary of War, to the Solicitor of the Treasury with the question 'Can adverse possession oust the U. States of a title' - The Solicitor's answer dated 11th July 1842 was that it could not, and the authorities were given. The Secretary then requested of him that the District Attorney might be directed to inquire into facts, and report whether legal proceedings should be commened.

A correspondence followed as to the advantage of employing Mr. Mason, a legal Gentleman living near the spot, and acquainted with the land titles of the vicinity; and this Office finally advised on the 17th August 1842 (it being desirable for other reasons besides this, that the corners should be found and marked) that the County Surveyor should be employed to run the lines and furnish a plat of his Survey, in the first instance, as it could then be better determined whether to prosecute the claim. This course received the Secretary's approval and the

enclosed plat of Survey, with Maj. Craig's letter of the 11th inst, are now respectfully submitted.

It is proper to call your attention, and that of the Solicitor of the Treasury, should the subject be again referred to him, to that fact that the closing line KL of the Patent of 1751 from the Lord Fairfax to Robert Harper, which Patent is the basis of the U. States' title to the lands at this point, has neither the proper direction nor sufficient length. This may arise from variation of Compass, or from error of calculation at that time; it is believed however to be a rule that when errors of this kind are found, the closing line must take the direction of, and have sufficient length to reach the point of beginning. Such a line will be found drawn on the plot (see page 3 of this report) KA and as a large part of the Island, as at present existing, is believed to have been made by alluvial deposites since that date, and by artifical means, it is believed that, that line will represent very nearly the outer shore of the Island, or the bank of the river as then existing (in 1751).

If the island in question was not an Island at the date of the Patent, it appears that it has become so on the 26th Sept. 1782 for at that date Robert Harper executed his will dividing and bequeathing his estate at this place between his nephew Robert Griffith, and his niece Sarah Harper, by certain fences, which the present plot of Survey describes as being in the line from G to h, and goes on to say that the said Griffiths part is to include the Island opposite to where the dividing line strikes the Shenandoah.

Griffiths son and heir-at-law on the 9th of January 1797 executed a deed of conveyance to Rutherford, Darke, and others, for the land so divided by Robert Harper, referring to the will and to the Island in the Shenandoah and expressing the intention to convey all so devised, yet in going on to give the boundary lines of the land conveyed, those given are said, by the present survey, to be represented in the East and on the Shenandoah side by the lines running from G through h, i, j, k, l, m, to K, and consequently not embracing the Island. Rutherford, Darke & others substantially the same boundary lines, but making no reference whatever to the Island.

I have no doubt but that a portion, at least, of what is called on the present plat of survey the Island of Virginius, was included in the Patent to Harper, & that Griffith intended to convey it to Rutherford--but all reference to it being omitted in Rutherfords Deed to the U. States - the fact of its being afterwards entered as unclaimed land - the participations in

its sale, by the then Superintendent of the Armory-the fact that since being so entered it has been made valuable at private expense by Dams, Mills, Dwelling Houses, &c., and that the Winchester and Potomac Rail Road Company, purchased, it is believed from the present occupants the right of way through it for their road-all these facts combined cause me to doubt whether it would be advisable to take any further measures for prosecuting the claim."[3]

In the second report, dated November 21, 1843, Solicitor of the Treasury, Charles B. Penrok, informed the Secretary of War that:

"On the 9th of September last, as appears by an endorsement on the papers, you referred to me a letter from Col. Talcott, and sundry documents in relation to the claim of the U. States to an Island at Harper's Ferry, which is now in the possession of Mr. L. Wernwag & others. It is proper that I should add that those papers were not received at my office until the 4th ulto. This is unimportant however, as I do not recommend further action on the part of the U. States. During the past summer I made a personal examination of the premises, and I came to the opinion that if the title of the U. States might at one time have been maintained, yet in consideration of the fact that the property had been made valuable at private expense by the erection of Dams, Mills and Dwelling Houses, and of the other circumstances referred to in the letter of Col. Talcott, of the 17th of August last, that it was inexpedient to prosecute the claim. In which, view, I am happy to find, I do not differ from Col. Talcott. The main question is one of fact as to the boundary line, which it would be the province of a Jury to determine; & I feel confident, that any doubt they might entertain would yield to the consideration that the claim had not been pursued until individuals had made great improvements on the Island, and that a verdict would be against the United States..."[4]

3. Reel 23, v. 3, pp. 209-211. Included with this report are copies of the following deeds. Lord Fairfax to Robert Harper for 125 acres, dated February 25, 1751, Reel 12, v. 11, pp. 1087-1088 (note continued on page 8)

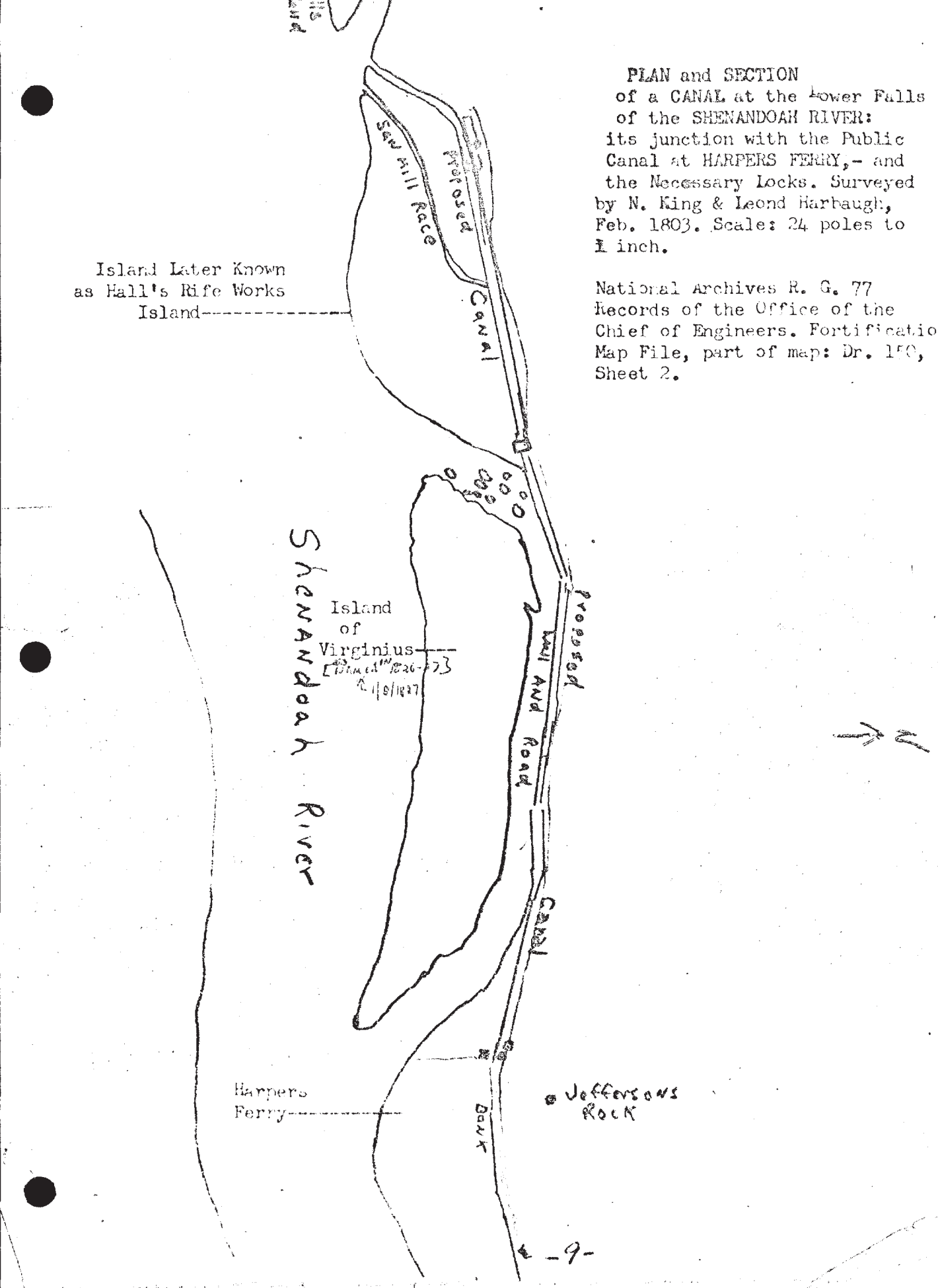
4. Reel 23, v. 3, pp. 205-207.

On November 23, 1843 the Ordnance Department informed Superintendent Craig, that on the basis of Talcott's and the Solicitor of the Treasury's report, the Secretary of War had decided that it was inexpedient to prosecute the U. S. claim to the Island of Virginius and that no further action was to be taken on the subject.[5]

Lt. Col. Talcott's report reveals that the island of Virginius from 1751 to about 1816 was undeveloped land; indeed, in 1816 it had been listed as unclaimed land. The 1803 map of Harpers Ferry (see tracing of part of plan on next page of this report) delineates the Island of Virginius in detail at that date and shows it as an unimproved area, thus further substantiating the statements of Lt. Col. Talcott about the early history of the island.

Note 3 continued: Lord Fairfax's Deed to Robert Harper for 82 acres, dated April 19, 1762, R. 12, v. 11, pp. 1080-1090; Robert Griffith's Deed to Thomas Rutherford, William Darke & others for 310 acres, dated January 9, 1797, R. 11, v. 11, pp. 1083-1086.

5. Reel 19, v. 2, p. 165.



PLAN and SECTION
of a CANAL at the Lower Falls
of the SHENANDOAH RIVER:
its junction with the Public
Canal at HARPERS FERRY,- and
the Necessary Locks. Surveyed
by N. King & Leond Harbaugh,
Feb. 1803. Scale: 24 poles to
1 inch.

National Archives R. G. 77
Records of the Office of the
Chief of Engineers. Fortifications
Map File, part of map: Dr. 150,
Sheet 2.

CHAPTER II

ISLAND OF VIRGINIUS, 1816 to 1830

The Island gets its name and is developed

In 1816, Daniel McPherson, Surveyor for the County of Jefferson, Virginia, took out a Patent from the State of Virginia for the Island of Virginius as unclaimed land.[1]

On May 19, 1817 McPherson and his wife Susanah sold the island described as follows, to John Peacher for $1,000:

"being an Island in the Shenandoah near Harpers Ferry and being the lowermost Island in said river, containing eleven acres, one rood and thirty-four poles and bounded as follows to wit Beginning at a Sycamoore (sic) on the east end and running up said river with the meanders thereof N 10 W 1 pole, N 46' 30" W 26 poles, N 69 W 14 poles, N 78' 12" W 15 poles, N 80 W 22 poles, S 50 W 13 poles, to a poplar, S 66 W 13 poles, to a point opposite a saw mill (located on Hall's Island) S 37 W 15 poles totwo small ash and elm bushes on the west end of said Island thence down the said river with the meanders thereof S 77' 30" E 31 poles, N 87½ 30" poles, S 72 E 25 poles, N 80 E 13 poles, S 73 E 9 poles, N 65 E 2 poles to the beginning, containing eleven acres one rood and thirty poles more or less and all houses, building orchard ways, water..."[2]

On August 30, 1823 John Peacher and his wife Lydia sold to James Stubblefield for one cent the following land:

"...being a small part of an Island in the Shenandoah River near Harpers Ferry, and the lowermost Island in said river (which would be the Island of Virginius), bounded as follows to wit, - Beginning at the most northern corner of said Island and running thence S 50 W 4 poles thence due East 17 poles thence N 80 W 13 poles to the Beginning containing thirty perches..."[3]

1. Notes of Lt. Col. Talcott, attached to his report to the Secretary of War, August 17, 1843, Reel 23, v. 3, pp. 212-213.
2. Deed of B. & S. Deed Book No. 10, pp. 142-143, Jefferson County Court House, Charles Town, West Va.
3. Deed Book 13, pp. 27-28.

James Stubblefield was then Superintendent of the United States Armory at Harpers Ferry; his acquisition of the Island later known as Virginius, however, had nothing to do with his official position, but represented a private or personal investment. On August 30, 1824 John Peacher and his wife Lydia sold to James Stubblefield for $15,000 the following property:

"...and being the whole of an island (except thirty two perches) in the Shenandoah river (which Stubblefield had acquired on August 30, 1823) near Harpers Ferry and being the lower most island in said river, that part of said island herein conveyed containing twelve acres one rood and fifteen perches and bounded as follows. to wit, Beginning at a sycamoore (sic) stump on the east end of said island andrunning up said river with the meanders thereof North 10 W one pole. thence N 46½ W 26 poles, thence N 69 W poles to a stooping willow thence N 75 W 15 poles to an iron bolt in a rock under the bridge thence leaving the meanders of said river and running due West 40 poles to an iron bolt in a rock thence with the meanders of said river S 71 W 19 poles to an iron bolt in a rock, thence S 43½ W 10 poles to an iron bolt in a rock, thence South 3½ W 6 3/10 poles to a small ash and elm on the west end of said island thence down said river with the meanders thereof S 77' 30" S 8 poles, thence N 83' 30" E 31 poles, thence N 87' 30" E 24 poles, thence S 72 E 25 poles, thence N 80 E 13 poles, thence S 73 E 9 poles, thence N 65 E 2 poles to the beginning, containing twelve acres, one rood and fifteen poles, together with all singular Mills, mill house, machinery, water,water course..."[4]

One day later, on August 31, 1824, James Stubblefield entered into an agreement with the new Shenandoah Canal Company. This contract provided for the improvement of the water channel or canal that passed on the inner or north side of the island and also granted Stubblefield the right to erect a dam across the Shenandoah River. The document reads:

4. Deed Book No. 13, pp. 28-29, Deed of B. &. S. August 30, 1824.

"Articles of Agreement entered into this 31st day of August, 1824, between Charles A. Stuart and Wm. Bell, agents for the new Shenandoah (Canal) Company, duly authorised and empowered by order of the President and Directors of the said Company, entered upon their minutes on the 27th Instant, a copy of which is hereto annexed, of the one part, and James Stubblefield, of the County of Jefferson, and town of Harpers Ferry, of the other part...Witnessth: that the party of the first part doth agree and convenant on the part of the said company, to give and doth hereby give to the party of the second part, the privilege of erecting a dam across the channel at any point below the lower locks (which were located on Hall's Rifle Factory Island), on the Shenandoah River, near to Harpers Ferry, which he may choose, so as to turn all the water which now or at any time may flow through the said channel into a canal now made and partly yet to be made, through his island next below the said locks and on which his grist mills and edifices now stand, together with the privilege of using all the water so turned unto his canal, which may not be at any and all ~~all~~ times necessary for the free, easy and safe navigation of the said canal, by the boats ascending and descending the Shenandoah River to any point...They, the party of first part, farther agree and bind themselves, in behalf of the said President and Directors, and their successor, to pay to the said party of the second part, seven hundred and fifty dollars towards making the said improvement with a lock annexed, out of the proceeds of tolls collected on the upwards and downwards transportation of commodities to and from the public works or factorities (sic) belonging to the United States, on the said Shenandoah River, at and near the aforesaid Locks, together with Interest at the rate of six per cent per amun till paid. It is also farther agreed on the part of the first party that the said second party may enter and make any dam, in the main channel of said river, which he may deem necessary to increase the quantity of water in the said canal through his island aforesaid.

Now for and in consideration of the premises aforesaid the said party of the second part, on his part agrees and binds himself, his heirs, executors, administrators and assigns to make the dam first aforesaid, in substantial and permanent style, at such a distance from the lower lock aforesaid, as to form a convenient basin, inwhich the boats and other craft may turn into and out of the lock aforesaid and into and out of the canal through his Island aforesaid that he will make and keep a good and sufficient canal for the passage of such boats and craft as do and may navigate the Shenandoah and Potomac rivers, from the said dam through and to the lower extremity of said Island That at the lower extremity aforesaid, he will

construct a durable and sufficient lock to let the boats and craft aforesaid pass up and down into and from the deep water in the Channel of the said Shenandoah river, and that the said canal and lock shall be free for the passage of every species of craft rafts, etc as intended by the charter of the said company - and the said lock being finished and received by the President and Directors of the said company, as durable and sufficient, shall be taken and considered as the property of the said company."[5]

On December 28, 1824 the island of Virginius was divided by James Stubblefield into four tracts and sold by him to four persons for a grand total of $28,500. By the first deed, Stubblefield sold to Fontaine Beckham for $10,500 the upper or western end of the island that was located mostly on the outer or South side of the mill race. This property we shall call Tract No. 2 (these lots have been generally marked on the 1834 maps that appear in the next chapter). The deed for Tract No. 2 reads in part:

"...near Harpers Ferry, being part of an Island lying in the Shenandoah River near its junction with the Potomack, being the same Island which was conveyed to the said James Stubblefield by a certain John Peacher and wife...the said piece...of said Island is bounded as follows, to wit: Beginning at a stake in the centre of the Street, corner to Wernwag (Tract No. 4), thence reversing his course S 77 E 2 poles and 17½ links, thence leaving said street N. 13 E 10 poles and 8½ links to a branch of Shenandoah River, thence up the same N 81 W 11 poles and 21 links, crossing the mill tail race to an elm, thence N 78' 30" until it intersects a line drawn N 14' 15' W from the Iron stake at the north end of the Mill dam, and thence with said line reversed to said Iron stake at the North End of said wall, thence up the Mill Race S 72' 30" W 12 poles and 7½ links, thence S 84 W 18 poles, thence N 86' 30" W 3 poles to the oil Mill race (or Tract No. 1) thence crossing the same S 78 W 20 poles and 19 links to the upper end of the stone wall at the head gate of the canal, thence S 62' 30" W 4 poles and 2½ links to two Ashes, thence

5. Articles of Agreement, August 31, 1824, Deed Book 13, pp. 259-260.

S 9' 45" W crossing the Mill Race, 4 poles and 7 links to an ash, thence S 77' 30" E down the river with the Meanders and stone wall 77' 30" E 10 poles and 19 links, thence N 81' 30" E 20 poles, thence S 81' E 24 poles, S 88 E 8 6/10 poles to said Wernwag's (Tract No. 4) corner, thence reversing his line N 12' 30" E 10 poles and 12½ links to the beginning containing (Blank) poles of land..."[6]

By the second deed, also dated December 28, 1824, Stubblefield sold to Townsend Beckham for $7,500 the upper or western end of the island of Virginius that was located inward or north of the mill race; this piece we shall call Tract No. 1. The deed for Tract No. 1 reads in part:

"...near Harpers Ferry, being a part of an island lying in the Shenandoah River, near its junction with the Potomac, being the same island which was conveyed to the said James Stubblefield by a certain John Peacher and wife by deed... the said piece or portion of said island is bounded as follows, to wit: Beginning at an iron stake at the North end of the wall of the mill dam corner to Fontaine Beckham's Lot (Tract 2) thence running up the mill race with said F. Beckham's line to two Ashes near the head of said race, thence down the north side of the island with the meanders of the river until it interesects Fontain Beckham's line, (Tract 2) thence with said F. Beckham's line to the Beginning, containing two acres of land, be the same more or less..."[7]

By the third deed, Stubblefield sold to Edward Wager for $3,000 a part of the island which was located below or east of Fontaine Beckham's, Tract No. 2 and on the inner side of the island. Wager's Lot we shall call Tract No. 3; this deed reads in part:

"...near Harpers Ferry, being a part of an Island lying in the Shenandoah, near it junction with the Potomac, being the same Island which was conveyed to the said James Stubblefield by a certain John Peacher and wife...the said piece or portion of said Island is bounded as follows:, Beginning

6. Deed of B. & S. December 28, 1824, Deed Book 13, pp. 330-331. Also Deed of Trust, December 28, 1824, Deed Book 13, pp. 332-333.

7. Deed of B. & S. December 28, 1824, Deed Book 13, pp. 344-345. Also Deed of Trust, December 28, 1824, Deed Book 13, pp. 345-347.

on the south side of a branch of the Shenandoah River, thence S 13 W with the line of F. Beckham's Lot (Tract No. 2) 10 8/10 poles to a stake in the middle of the street, thence with a line of Lewis Wernwag's (Tract No. 4) Lot reversed S 77 E 11½ poles to a Stake, thence N 11½ E 10 8/10 poles to the foresaid Branch of the Shenandoah River thence up, by and with the meanders of the same to the Beginning, containing 123 square poles of land..."[8]

By the fourth and last deed, also dated December 24, 1824, Stubblefield sold to the Lewis Wernwag for $8,000 the remainder (the lower or east end) of the island of Virginius. The deed for this Lot, which we shall call Tract No. 4, reads in part:

"...a piece of land situate lying and being on the Shenandoah Island near Harpers Ferry...beginning at a stake in the middle of the street and running thence S 12½ W 10 poles and 22½ links to the south side of a stone wall thence down the same S 89 E 7 poles and 8 links, thence with the meanderings of the river S 62' 20" E 9 poles and 12½ links, thence S 83 E 5 poles, thence N 87' 45" E 20 poles and 22½ links to three ashes on the east end of the Island, thence crossing the stream until it intersects with the line of the United States, thence up the river with the United States Line to a sycamore, thence crossing the stream to a point on a rock at the waters edge to E. Wagers lot, (Tract No. 3) thence with said Wager's line to a stake in the middle of the street, a corner to said Wager's lot, and thence up the middle of the street to the beginning, containing three acres..."[9]

From the prices paid for the island, $1,000 in 1817 $15,000 in August 1824 and $28,500 in December 1824, as well as from the mention in the four 1824 deeds of bridges, dams, stone walls, streets, mill races and mills, it is evident that considerable physical improvement and development of Virginius must have occurred between 1817 and 1824, and particularly in 1824. However, in light of the financial difficulties that were

8. Deed of B. &. S. December 24, 1824, Deed Book 13, pp. 328-329.

9. Deed of B. &. S. December 24, 1824, Deed Book 14, pp. 41-42. Also Deed of Trust, December 24, 1824, Deed Book 13, pp. 334-336.

to harass the owners of Tracts No. 1, 2 and 4 for the next twenty years, particularly in attempting to meet the principal and interest due on the original purchase money for these 1824 deeds, it would appear that the buyers in 1824 were overly optimistic about the immediate--industrial potentials of island and that, in any case, the increase in value of the property in one year from $15,000 to$28,500 was much too great. Thus in 1824 Virginius was launched on its industrial career, not only with a great deal of water around the island but also in the highly inflated value of the land. This tendency to over-estimate and inflate the value of the properties was to continue for 30 years, until 1854, when the whole stack of cards came down with a crash, and the water was ruthlessly squeezed out and the property values were placed on a more realistic basis.

Returning to 1826, however, that year the inhabitants of the Island of Virginius, at Harpers Ferry, petitioned the General Assembly of Virginia that their settlement be established as the town of "Virginius". The act doing so was passed January 8, 1827, and appointed as the first trustees were Lewis Wernwag, Fontaine Beckham, Townsend Beckham, John S. Gallagher, editor of the Virginia Free Press, and John G. Unseld.[10]

10. Jefferson County, Petitions, December 11, 1826, No. 8691; Virginia General Assembly, Acts, 1826-1827 Session, pp. 109,110, cited in Bushong, Millard Kessler, A History of Jefferson County West Virginia, Jefferson Publishing Company, Charles Town, West Virginia, 1941, p. 87.

The census for 1830 lists the population of the town of Virginius separately from that of Harpers Ferry, and indicates that the total population of the Island was then 89 persons, with 16 heads of families being listed. The white population totaled 70 people of whom 43 were male and 27 female. The free negro population consisted of one femaleand the slaves numbered 18, of whom 7 were male and 11 female.[11]

11. National Archives R. G. 29. Records of the Bureau of the Census, Population Schedules of the Fifth Census of the United States 1830, Virginia Vol. 24, Microfilm reel #10 v. 1, pp. 33-36.

CHAPTER III

ISLAND OF VIRGINIUS, 1830 to 1834

First Maps Showing Physical Development

In this chapter we shall first examine individually the four tracts into whichthe Island of Virginius had been divided in 1824, utilizing lands records and the evidence found in the early newspapers. We shall then bring all of this data together and use it in a study of the 1833-1834 maps of Harpers Ferry.

Tract 1: Townsend Beckham's Tannery Lot, 1830-1834:

In May 1832 Townsend Beckham, the owner of this property, died in his 50th year.[1] In July 1832, John Frame, administrator of Beckham's estate, announced that a sale of Beckham's personal property and a long list of tanned and partly tanned leather goods would be offered at public auction on the Island of Virginius on August 9th of that year. He also advertised:

"FOR RENT, A VALUABLE TANNERY, OIL MILL & DWELLING HOUSE

On Shenandoah River, within half-mile of Potomac near Harpers Ferry. There is attached to the yard a Bark Mill which goes by water..."[2]

In November 1833 and in 1834 this property was then offered for sale by Frame, who described the island tract as follows:

1. Virginia Free Press, May 24, 1832, p. 3
2. Ibid. July 19, 1832, p. 2.

A VALUABLE TANNERY &C.
AT HARPERS -FERRY FOR SALE

"The very valuable and eligible real property belonging to the estate of Townsend Beckham, decd., situated on the upper part of the Island of Virginius, at Harpers Ferry, is now on the market at private sale.

The premises consist of a TANNING ESTABLISHMENT, with water works to grind bark, a large number of vats, Shops, Bark Houses, and every other appurtenance to carry on the business on a most extensive scale.

AN EXCELLENT OIL MILL
TWO COMMODIOUS
DWELLING HOUSES

The yards and gardens of one of them highly improved... together with several out-buildings of different kinds.

A further description of said property is deemed inexpedient, as the purchaser will of course view it for himself. It is confidently believed, however, that the various unusual advantages arising from its proximity to the two greatworks of internal improvement (C. & O. Canal and Baltimore & Ohio Rail Road) the abundant supply of country hides from the Harpers-Ferry market, the water power, &c. combine to render it the most eligible property of the kind, for a person or company with good capital, to be found in the county.

The property, being unsuited to the occupation and management of a widow and young children, will be disposed of on very reasonable terms, both as to price and extension of credits.

For further particulars, apply either to John Frame, at Harpers-Ferry, or to Andrew Hunter, in Charlestown, Va."[3]

Tract No. 1 thus contained in the 1830-1834 period, a Tannery, Oil Mill, with related out-buildings, and two dwelling houses. The property was offered for sale in November 1833, but as we shall see in the following chapter, it was not sold until 1838.

3. Virginia Free Press, November 7, 1833, p. 3, c. 2; also January 2, 1834, p. 1.
4. Ibid., January 20, 1830, p.3.

TRACT NO. 2: Fountaine Beckham's "Island Mills" Lot 1830-34:

In January 1830 Fountaine Beckham, the owner of Tract No. 2, advertised:

FOR RENT

"Two excellent and commodious Houses In the town of Virginius, (the Island near Harpers-Ferry.) One of them, now occupied by Mr. Lewis Wernwag, contains 6 or 8 excellent rooms, cellar ,kitchen, and garret. There is also a good garden attached. The other, occupied by Mr. J. P. Shannon, contains 4 good rooms, kitchen and cellar; and has a large garden. Possession will be given on the 1st of April next..."[4]

On March 23, 1830 Fontaine Beckham and his wife Ann R., and James Stubblefield sold Lewis Wernwag, the owner of Tract No. 4, two acres three Roods and one pole of land from Tract No. 2; this sale will be discussed in detail when Tract No. 4 is considered later on in this chapter.[5]

In July 1830 Fountaine Beckham ran the following advertisement in the newspaper:

"NOTICE: THE ISLAND MILL, at Virginius Near Harpers Ferry, is now undergoing a thorough repair, and will in a few days be ready for the reception of grain...
N. B. The mill being situated immediately below the Shenandoah Locks..."[6]

In 1831 the "Island Mill" was operated by Daniel Snyder and Fontaine Beckham. The notice of their newly formed partnership reads as follows:

[TO FARMERS]

4. Ibid., January 20, 1830, p. 3.
5. Deed of B. & S., March 23, 1830, Deed Book 16, pp. 518-519.
6. Virginia Free Press, July 28, 1830, p. 3, c. 4.

"DANIEL SNYDER, having taken an interest with Fontaine Beckham in the Island Mill, near Harpers Ferry, will remark to the customers of said mill, and to farmers generally, that every exertion will be used to promote the interest of those disposed to do their business at this mill. The undersigned hope, from a determination to have nothing undone on their part, to receive a reasonable share of the business- The mill is in good order, and ready to receive all kinds of grain, which will be strictly attended to by Mr. Stephens, the former miller. For the advantage of customers we will take upon ourselves all the trouble of delivering their flour, (subject to their order) in market, effecting sales, etc., if they wish it. If, on the contrary, they procure their own boatmen, we will deliver their flour at a short notice. And to those who wish to sell their Wheat, we only ask a call, believing as we do, that we can at alltimes give as near the fair market price for Wheat as any other millers. It is not necessary for us here to point out the advantages pertaining in and to this mill, as farmers generally consult their own interest. We will however, remark, that the fine road from Charles Town to Harpers Ferry(this was the Harpers Ferry-Smithfield Turnpike Co. Road, which had been started in 1830-(7)), passing directly by this mill, is now very nearly completed, by which many of the farmers, particularly those quite near thereto, will be enabled for several months in the year to carry from 100 to 125 bushels of wheat at a single load-this to many will be a great advantage. To the farmers of Loudoun (County, Va.) we say, we will exchange Flour for Wheat at any time, and grind their country work, as well as that of our customers, at the shortest notice.

Daniel Snyder
Fontaine Beckham."[8]

In September of the same year, 1831, Fontaine Beckham announced:

"...The undersigned informs the farmersof Jefferson and Loudoun, that not having disposed of any interest in his mill at Virginius, near Harpers-Ferry, he will continue the business, as usual, on his own account. Mr. Thomas H. Stephens, a miller of capacity and experience, has charge of the mill, and will be able to give the utmost satisfaction. The usual quantity of Flour will be given for merchantable Wheat, and the inspection warranted in Baltimore or the Cities of the District. In cases where customers prefer it, the barrels will be given

7. Ibid., August 4, 1830, p. 3
8. Virginia Free Press, August 18, 1831, p. 3, also September 1, 1831, p. 4 c. 3.

instead of the offal. Country work done at the shortest notice; and the highest market price in cash given for Wheat delivered in the mill...

Mr. Stephens, the miller, added to this notice, the statement: "I will pay the road toll (for use of the new Turnpike) upon all wagons hauling Wheat to the above named mill."[9]

In 1832 Fontaine Beckham offered his Island Mill property for sale, thus affording us a fine description of the plant at that date. Mr. Beckham advertised:

VALUABLE MILL FOR SALE,
AT HARPERS -FERRY.

"One of the most valuable Milling establishments in Virginia, is now for sale. It is situated at Harpers Ferry about one-fourth of a mile above the junction of the Shenandoah and Potomac Rivers. It is supplied with an inexhaustible fund of water from the Shenandoah, and may be enlarged to any extent with great advantage. The building, a substantial one of stone is 60 feet by 40; it has two water wheels, twopair of burrs, and room for another pair. There is also an excellent pair of country stones. It is now undergoing repairs, and will be in complete order in a few days.

The situation of this establishment is peculiarly advantageous. It is in an abundant wheat neighborhood, with a turnpike running within 60 yards of it. It is below the Shenandoah locks, and boats can be loaded almost at the mill door. The Winchester and Potomac Rail Road must pass along the island upon which it stands (the Railroad was then in the planning stage and reached the island of Virginius and Harpers Ferry in 1835 and 1836).

The water power is not surpassed by any situation in the country, and a sufficiency may be obtained for almost any eligible purpose.

The advantagesof this concern, will so completely strike any intelligent observer, that it is needless to enlarge upon them. A man of enterprise cannot fail to turn them to good account.

9. Ibid., September 29, 1831, p. 3, c. 6.

"Connected with this property, are four dwelling houses and a cooper shop.

For terms, &c. which will be reasonable application may be made to Mr. George Hagely, who has the mill rented, or to the subscriber in Charlestown. F. Beckham."[10]

Beckham, however, was not to sell this property until 1838.

In 1833 John H. King had apparently formed an association with Beckham, for King advertised:

RYE WANTED

"The subscriber wished to purchase 2 or 300 BUSHELS OF RYE, for which a liberal price in cash will be given, if delivered at Beckham's Mill, Harpers-Ferry. Apply at Capt. Hall's Rifle Factory, to JOHN H. KING."[11]

In 1834 Jacob Staub rented Beckham's Mill, announcing on the occasion:

ISLAND MILL,
NEAR HARPERS-FERRY.

"Having rented the above mill from F. Beckham, Esq. for a term of years (to 1836, see next chapter) and having put the same in excellent condition, the undersigned is now ready to receive

GRAIN,

And to grind in a superior style. He will give one barrel of Flour for every 300 pounds of merchantable Wheat, and will stand the inspection in any market to which it may be sent. From his experience as a miiler (sic) and the excellent order of the mill at present, he feels great confidence in being able to produce first-rate Flour.

He will buy Wheat for cash, at the market price; and those who wish to get rid of the trouble of sending their Flour to market, can be accommodated by him at the lowest possible rate.

10. Virginia Free Press, August 16, 1832, p. 3.
11. Ibid., March 14, 1833, p. 3.

The advantage of this mill consists in its being at the point where Canal navigation commences, and therefore lockage before it reaches that point is saved.

The subscriber's brand has always obtained the highest price in the market, as can be established by reference to boatmen on the river, or tothe flour dealers below.

During the Plaster season, he will always be ready to grind that article, and will generally keep a supply on hand for the accommodation of his customers. JACOB STAUB." [12]

Tract No. 2, then, in 1834, contained Fontaine Beckham's stone merchant flour mill, a building 60 by 40 feet in size; four dwelling houses; and a coopers shop. This last building may have been rented in 1834 by Sidney A. Pilcher. Mr. Pilcher, in any event, advertised in that year:

COOPERS WANTED.

"The subscriber wishes to employ four Journeymen Coopers, of steady and industrious habits, to whom 12 cents per barrel from the smooth and 17 from the rough will be given. Wages will be paid every Saturday night. Virginius, near Harpers-Ferry." [13]

TRACT NO. 3, Edward Wager's Property, 1830-1834:

Edward Wager, the owner of this tract, died in 1832 or 1833, for in August 1833 we find the following notice appearing in the newspaper:

VALUABLE HARPERS FERRY REAL ESTATE
FOR SALE.

"By virture of Court, Spring of 1833, offer at private sale the valuable dwelling houses and lots of the heirs of Edward Wager situated on the island in the Shenandoah, adjacent to Harpers Ferry.

12. Virginia Free Press, July 10, 1834, p. 3, c. 6.
13. Ibid., September 25, 1834, p. 3, c. 5

"The property consists of two comfortable stone stoccoed Dwellings-one of them large enough to accommodate two families-with gardens attached, of remarkable fertility, affording, also front enough for two other buildings. The price is $4,000. ANDREW HUNTER, Special Comm."[14]

Accordingly, on September 28, 1833, Andrew Hunter, Special Commissioner of the Court, and Hannah Wager, the widow of Edward Wager, sold to John B. Gildea for $4,000 the following property:

"...A lot of land situated on the Island in Shenandoah river near its junction with the Potomac, known by the name of Virginius, containing by measurement 123 square poles containing also upon it two stone stuccoed dwelling houses, one of them now occupied by said John B. Gildea the other by a certain John W. Worley, and bounded as follows to wit - beginning on the south side of a branch of the said river, a corner to F. Beckham, (Tract No. 2) thence S 13 W with the line of said Beckham 10 8/10 poles to a stake in the middle of the street or road, Thence with a line of Lewis Wernwag (now Wernwag and Smith) (Tract No. 4.) S 77 E 11½ poles to a stake, thence N 11½ E 10 8/10 poles to the aforesaid branch of the said river, thence up, and with the meanderings of the same to the beginning-being the same tract of land that was conveyed to the said Edward Wager in his life time, from James Stubblefield by deed bearing the date of __December 1824..."[15]

Gildea retained title to this property until May 1835.[16]

Tract No. 3 in 1834 therefore contained two stone stuccoed dwelling houses, one occupied by John B. Gildea and the other rented by John W. Worley.

TRACT NO. 4, LEWIS WERNAG'S SAW MILL LOT, 1830-1834:

In February 1830 Charles H. Mills advertised:

TURNING,
IN WOOD, IRON, BRASS, &C.

14. Ibid, August 22, 1833, p. 3.
15. Deed of B. &. S. September 28, 1833, Deed Book 19, pp. 97-98; also Deed of Trust, September 28, 1833, Deed Book 16, pp. 102-104.
16. Deed of B. & S., May 13, 1835, Deed Book 20, pp. 338-339.

"The undersigned is now prepared, at Mr. Wernwag's saw mill, adjoining Harpers-Ferry, to execute all kinds of TURNING, in wood, iron, brass, &C. He will also make or repair any kind of Machinery which may be wanted, strictly according to direction, turning lathes, &c. &c. He will be thankful for any orders in his line of business, and hopes to render himself useful to the public in that way."[17]

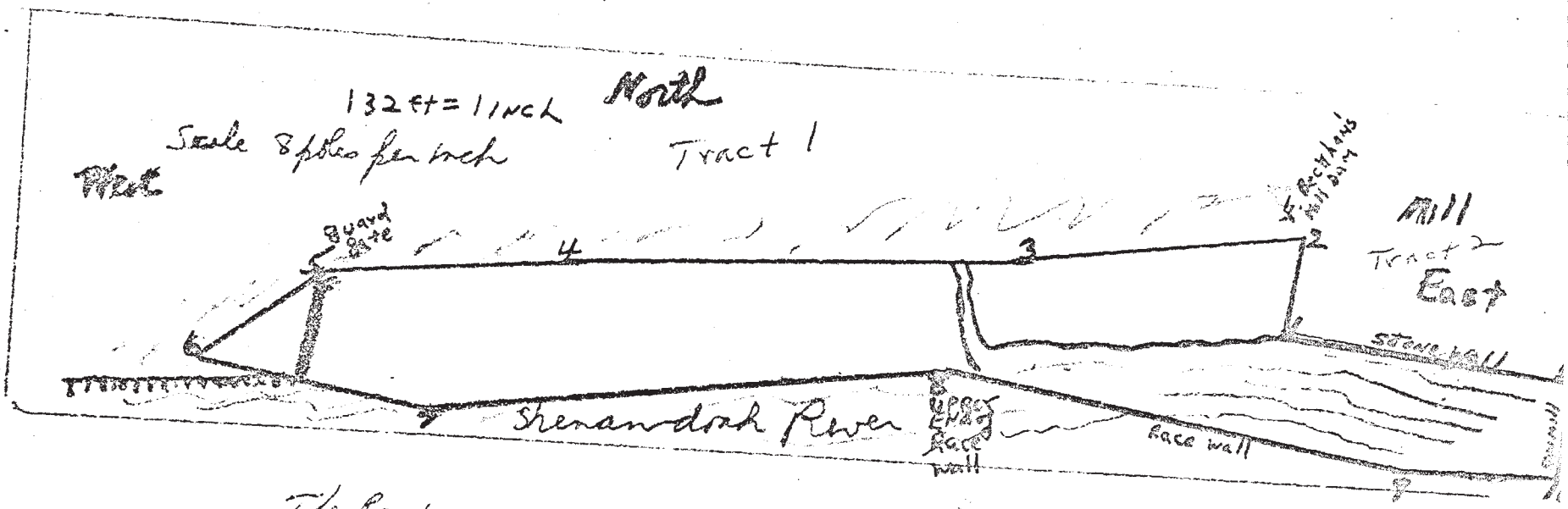
On March 23, 1830 Lewis Wernwag purchased from Fontaine and Ann R. Beckham and James Stubblefield the following portion of Tract No. 2 on the island of Virginius:

"A certain small tract of land...being part of an Island in the Shenandoah river nearest tothe month of said river and known by the name of Virginius Bounded as follows (to wit) Beginning at figure 1 of the annexed figure (see tracing of plat on next page of this report) a cedar stake in the north edge of L. Wernwag's Saw Mill Dam, thence N 73½ E 4.4 poles to fig 2 a stake in said Beckhams Mill dam thence up the same S 83 W 13.5 poles to fig. 3 a small cedar at the south edge of saiddam Thence containing (sic) up the dam S 89½ W 23.6 poles fig 4 two saplings sprouting out of one stump Thence S 82 W 12.5 poles to fig 5 the south post of the guard gate at the head of the island, thence S 45 W 7 poles to fig 6 two ash saplings thence 78½ E 11 poles to fig 7 a pile of stones at the south edge of the island. Thence continuing down the river with its neadnerings N 82¼ E 26 poles to fig 8 the upperend of the race wall at the edge of the river, thence with the same S 80 3/4 E 24 poles to fig 9 thence S 89¼ E 7.8 poles to said Wernwag corner fig. 10 thence with his line S 89¼ E 7.8 poles to said Wernwag corner fig. 10 thence with his line crossing the saw mill dam N 12½ E 4.7 poles to fig 11 in said line at the north edge of the saw mill dam thence up the stone wall which bounds the same N 82¼ W 15.3 poles to the beginning containing two acres three Roads and one pole..."

Wernwag was to have all right and title to the piece thus acquired except that:

"Wernwag shall in no manner or way possess use or enjoy the water privilege on that side of said tract of land which binds on the head race or dam leading to the merchant mill now in possession of said Fontaine Beckham further then he was entitled to use or enjoy before the execution of these present and

17. Virginia Free Press, February 17, 1830, p. 3.



The Portion of Tract 2 Purchased by Lewis Wernwag from Fontaine Rockham on March 23, 1830 and added to Lot 4.

Deed Book 16, PP. 518-519
March 23, 1830
Virginius Island

Map no 54
Drawer no 11

"it is hereby agreed...that said Wernwag shall have and enjoy a right of way for passing and repassing all customary vehicles (both for himselve and other whom he may permit so to pass and repass) to and from said tract of land through and over the lands of the said Fontaine Beckham on said Island according to the shortest and most convenient route from the public street or road on said island to the hereby conveyed premises..." 18

In July, 1831, the Wernwags advertised:

"NOTICE

As it is absolutely necessary to settle the business of L. Wernwag and L. Wernwag & Sons, at Harpers-Ferry, this is to give notice to all persons indebted to the above firm to come forward and close their accounts by cash or notes, previous to the 25th inst. Those neglecting this notice will have their accounts put into the hands of officers for collection.--Those who have any claims against the above firm, will please present them to the subscriber for settlement during that time, at the office of L. Wernwag & Sons, Virginius, where he will attend to bring the business to a close. AUGUSTUS H. GLASER, Agent
for L. Wernwag and L. Wernwag & Sons." 19

In 1831, Lewis Wernwag, Sr., was engaged in the construction of the great railroad bridge over the Mononcacy River, 3½ miles from Frederick, for the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad.[20]

In 1826, he had constructed a portion of the Free Church at Harpers Ferry and in 1828 also erected the Harpers Ferry Methodist Episcopal Church. Mr. Wernwag had also built a dam across the Potomac and performed work on the Armory Shops for the Government at Harpers Ferry prior to 1831.[21] In August of 1832, Lewis Wernwag, Sr., also invented and was

18. Deed of B. & S., March 23, 1830, Deed Book 16, pp.518-519.

19. Virginia Free Press, July 7, 1831, p.3.

20. Ibid., December 1, 1831, p.2-3.

21. Smith, Philip R., Jr., "Historic Building Report, Part I and II, for Bldg. No. 48-A, St. John's Protestant Episcopal Church, Together with a Brief History of the Free Church, St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church, and the Methodist Protestant Church of Harpers Ferry," dated October 23, 1958, pp.8, 52.

constructing a "Self-Regulating or Self-Directing Rail road car" with six wheels that was intended to run around curves.[22]

In February, 1832, it was announced:

"DISSOLUTION.

The partnership heretofore existing at Harpers-Ferry, under the names of 'Wernwag & Sons,' consisting formerly of Lewis Wernwag, sen., John Wernwag, Joseph P. Shannon, Lewis Wernwag, jun. and William Wernwag, but more recently of the three first named above, was dissolved by mutual consent on the 1st day of January last (1832).

All persons indebted to either of the late firms, are respectfully and earnestly requested to come forward and close their accounts by payment or otherwise.

Joseph P. Shannon is fully authorized to close the transaction of both the late firms.

LEWIS WERNWAG,
JOHN WERNWAG,
JOSEPH P. SHANNON." [23]

On July 2, 1832, Lewis Wernwag and his wife, Elizabeth, sold one undivided half-interest in Tract No. 4 to Joseph L. Smith and James Hook, both of Frederick County, Maryland, for $10,000. The deed covering this transaction reads in part:

"...as tenants in Common one full undivided moiety or half part of all the possession, rights, title or interest of them the said Lewis Wernwag and Elizabeth his wife in and to the island of 'Virginius' being an island in the Shenandoah river, and situated nearest to the confluence of said river with the Potmac at Harpers Ferry; including more particularly all that portion of said Island, purchased by said Lewis Wernwag from James Stubblefield and Mary his wife conveyed to the said Lewis Wernwag by deed...dated May 28, 1824...

...and including also more particularly all that portion of said island which was purchased by Wernwag from Fontaine Beckham by deed dated March 23, 1830..." [24]

The public was informed of this event on July 5, 1832, when the new partners announced:

22. Virginia Free Press, August 23, 1832, p.3, c.1; November 28, 1833, p.2, c.1.

23. Ibid., February 16, 1832, p.3.

24. Deed of B. & S., July 2, 1832, Deed Book 17, pp.424-425.

"NEW CONCERN:

"The undersigned, having disposed of half his interest in the most valuable property, THE SAW MILL, &C. on the Island near Harpers Ferry, (called Virginius) to Messrs. Joseph L. SMITH and JAMES HOOK, takes great pleasure in informing the public, that the business in future will be conducted under the name and firm of

JOSEPH L. SMITH & CO.

The advantages of this association need only be alluded to: persons having business with the concern, will find that a new spirit and enterprise will be given to the operations of the establishment; and that it confidently believed, that the whole community will be materially benefitted by the arrangement. LEWIS WERNWAG." 25

Evidence of the "new spirit" of the concern is perhaps to be found in their advertisement that also appeared in the newspaper that same day:

"TIMBER! TIMBER!

"Wanted, immediately, a large quantity of the following kinds of Timber, in logs!

Yellow and White Pine,
All kinds of oak,
Poplar, Bird-eye, Curled and Sugar Maple.
Wild Cherry, Walnut, Ash
Hickory and Locust...

Scantling, &c. can be furnished to bill, at the shortest notice.

JOSEPH L. SMITH & CO." 26

On August 29, 1832, Lewis Wernwag put into trust with John Fitzsimmons, to secure $3,857.71.owed to Joseph L. Russell, "all his interest in the island of Virginius purchased from James Stubblefield, being one undivided moiety or half part of said tract..." 27

In May, 1833, the following notice appeared which probably was related to Wernwag's machine shops:

"TURNING.

The public are respectfully informed that all kinds of TURNING, in Wood, Brass, Iron, and Steel,--also, Turning Lathes, Screw Plates, Stocks,

25. Virginia Free Press, July 5, 1832, p.3; October 4, 1832, p.3.

26. Ibid., p.3; March 21, 1833, p.4, c.1.

27. Deed of trust, August 29, 1832, Deed Book 18, pp.42-43.

"Taps and Dies, Bench Screws of wood or iron, Mill Screws, &c. &c., can be done in the best manner, and at the shortest notice, at the establishment on the Island of Virginius, near Harpers-Ferry." 28

On July 10, 1833, the firm of Joseph L. Smith & Co. announced:

"DISSOLUTION.

The Co-Partnership heretofore existing between the subscribers, in the Lumber business, under the firm of Joseph L. Smith & Co. is this day dissolved by mutual consent. All persons indebted to the concern, are requested to make payment to JAMES HOOK: and those having claims, to present them for payment.

JOSEPH L. SMITH,
JAMES HOOK,
LEWIS WERNWAG."

"TIMBER AND LUMBER

The subscriber having purchased the entire interest of Messrs. Lewis Wernwag and James Hook, in the timber and lumber on hand, and rented the saw-mill, is prepared to fill bills at a short notice, for cash or approved paper. Having on hand a good supply of seasoned

PLANK AND SCANTLING

of various kinds, invites those wishing a supply, to call and examine it.

Cash paid for timber of the following sorts: Yellow and White Pine, all kinds of Oak, Poplar, Birds-eye, Curled and Sugar Maple, Wild Cherry, Walnut, Ash, Hickory, and Locust, if delivered at Harpers Ferry.

JOSEPH L. SMITH." 29

About July 10, 1833, Mr. Joseph L. Smith purchased an additional one-sixth undivided interest from Lewis Wernwag and at the same time also bought out James Hook's undivided interest in Tract No. 4. By these transactions in July, 1833, Mr. Smith therefore acquired an undivided two-thirds interest in Tract No. 4. On July 31, 1833, Lewis Wernwag, Sr., and his wife Elizabeth, sold to John Wernwag, their son, for $6,666.66:

28. Virginia Free Press, May 2, 1833, p.3, c.2.

29. Ibid., July 18, 1833, p.3, c.3; January 2, 1834, p.3, c.6.

"one undivided third part of all that portion of the Island of Virginius in the Shenandoah, lately held by said Lewis Wernwag, Joseph L. Smith and James Hook as tenants in common-the remaining two thirds having lately been sold and conveyed by the said Lewis Wernwag to said Smith and Hook by deeds [which were never recorded, but made in July, 1833-see next Chapter]...being the lower part of said Island adjoining the portions of it belonging to Fontaine Beckham and Edward Wagers heirs..." [30]

In 1833, Lewis Wernwag, Sr., therefore retired from the business and in 1834, Smith held an undivided 2/3d's interest in Tract 4 and John Wernwag the remaining undivded one third interest in that property.

In August, 1834, John Fitzsimmons, Trustee for the deed of trust executed by Lewis Wernwag on August 29, 1832, begain to press for payment of the debt and announced that the sale of Lewis Wernwag's interest in Tract No. 4 would be offered at at public auction on August 30, 1834.[31] The sale, however, was not held at this date and on October 9, 1834, Mr. Fitzsimmons again advertised:

"TRUST SALE

By virture of deed of trust, executed to the subscriber on the 29th day of August, 1832, and dully recorded...to secure a certain debt therein mentioned, originally due from L. Wernwag to Joseph L. Russell, but by subsequent assignment and agreement between the parties, now due from Joseph L. Smith to Daniel Hoffman & Co. of Baltimore, I shall proceed to sell, to the highest bidder, for cash, on Saturday the 8th day of next month, (November) all the INTEREST held by said Wernwag at said Date, in the Valuable Island Property, near Harpers-Ferry, embracing the Saw Mill, Dwelling Houses, and other improvements situated thereon, or so much thereof as may be necessary. Sale to take place on the premises at 2 o'clock, P. M.

JOHN FITZSIMMONS, Trustee." [32]

30. Deed of B. & S., July 31, 1833, Deed Book 19, pp.75-76.

31. Virginia Free Press, August 7, 1834, p.3, c.2.

32. Ibid., October 9, 1834, p.3, c.2.

The threatened November 8, 1834, sale was again postponed and portions of Lot No. 4 were not sold off until 1835 and 1836, as we shall see in the next chapter.

In summary then as regards to Tract No. 4. This lot was enlarged in 1830 when Lewis Wernwag purchased of Fontaine Beckham a two acre strip of Lot No. 2. Lot No. 4, in 1834, contained a large saw mill, a canal, dwelling houses and machine shop and smith shop. From 1830 to January 1, 1832, this plant was operated by the firm of Wernwag & Sons, which was composed of Lewis Wernwag, Senior, John Wernwag, and Joseph P. Shannon. On July 2, 1832, a new partnership was organized comprised of Joseph L. Smith and James Hook and Lewis Wernwag who operated under the name of Joseph L. Smith & Co. Smith and Hook had purchased of Wernwag an undivided one half interest in Tract No. 4. On July 10, 1833, the firm of Joseph L. Smith & Co. was dissolved and Smith, buying out Hook's interest and acquiring a further one-sixth undivided interest from Lewis Wernwag, Sr., continued the business until 1836. On July 31, 1833, Lewis Wernwag, Sr., sold his remaining undivided one-third interest to his son, John Wernwag, and thus gave up all title to Tract No. 4. The other undivided two-thirds interest to Tract No. 4 was held by Joseph L. Smith in 1834.

SUMMARY, ISLAND OF VIRGINIUS IN 1834

Two maps show the Island of Virginius in considerable detail in the 1833-1834 period. The first of these is entitled "Map C - A Plot Exhibiting the Limits of the grounds Requisite for the Passage of the

Winchester & Potomac Rail Road through the Islands adjacent to Harpers Ferry, Scale 100 feet to inch," an undated and unsigned map. From other evidence, however, it is apparent that Map C was made by the Army engineers in 1833 and 1834 as a preliminary or working survey for the next mentioned map.[33]

The second map is entitled "Harpers Ferry Shewing the Location of the Winchester and Potomac Railroad, Drawn by Lieut. White, Allen and R. S. Smith, U. S. Army, under the direction of James Kearney, Lt. Col. and T.E., 1835 Map No. 2.[34] Map No. 2 and the engineers' report accompanying this map were submitted to the Secretary of War on October 7, 1834, hence the working Map C and the finished Map No. 2. (Both show conditions prior to October, 1834.[35]

Buildings on Maps C and No. 2 have both been given the same sets of numbers for the purposes of identifying the structures in connection with the narrative summary that follows. I have also indicated on both maps the general location of the property lines of Tracts No. 1, 2, 3, and 4 on the Island of Virginius.

Track No. 1 (see Maps C and 2, Blue Building) Owned by Townsend Beckham and his estate during this period, 1830-34. This was used as a tannery and consisted of Bldg. No. 1, an oil mill; Bldg. No. 2 a dwelling house,

33. National Archives R. G. 77, Records of the Office of the Chief of Engineers, Fortification Map File. Part of Map. Dr. 150-Sheet 78-4.

34. National Archives R. G. 77, Part of Map: Dr. 150-Sheet 82-2.

35. Microfilm Reel #17, Vol. 4, pp.272-273.

MAP C
(part 1)
A Plot Exhibiting the Limits of the grounds Requisite for the Passage of the Winchester & Potomac Rail Road through the Islands adjacent to Harper's Ferry.
Scale 100 feet to the inch.
(made 1833-34)

Southern end

Shenandoah River

Proposed Route of W. & P. R.R.

Tract No. 4

Tract No. 3

Tract No. 2

Tract No. 1

Townsend Beckham's Island

Shenandoah Canal

Virginia

Harper's Ferry

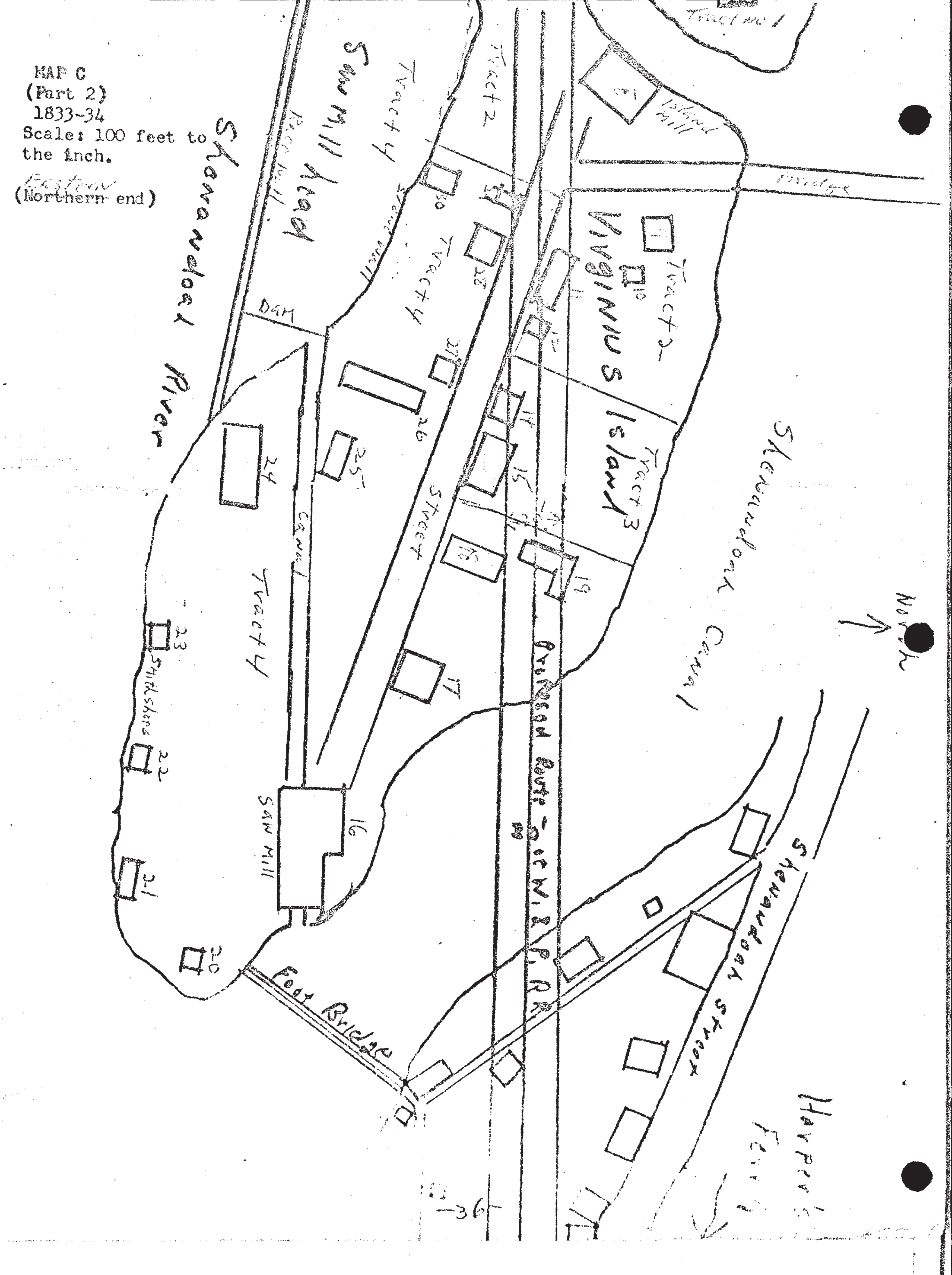
Race Wall

Dam

Lower Island

North

MAP C
(Part 2)
1833-34
Scale: 100 feet to the inch.
~~(Northern end)~~ Eastern



Bldg. No. 3, 4, 6 and 7, probably shops, bark houses and vats, and Bldg. No. 5, probably a dwelling house.

Tract No. 2 (Red Buildings) Owned by Fontaine Beckham, 1830-34. Bldg. No. 8 was the merchant flour mill known as the "Island Mills". This stone structure was 60 by 40 feet is size. There were also four dwelling houses, probably Bldgs. No. 9, 10, 11 and 12, and one coopers shop, probably Bldg. No. 13.

Tract No. 3 (Green Buildings) Owned by Edward Wager in 1830, was sold on September 28, 1833, to John Gildea. This lot contained two stone stuccoed dwelling houses, one of which, Bldg. No. 15, was large enough for two families. The smaller single family house was Bldg. No. 14.

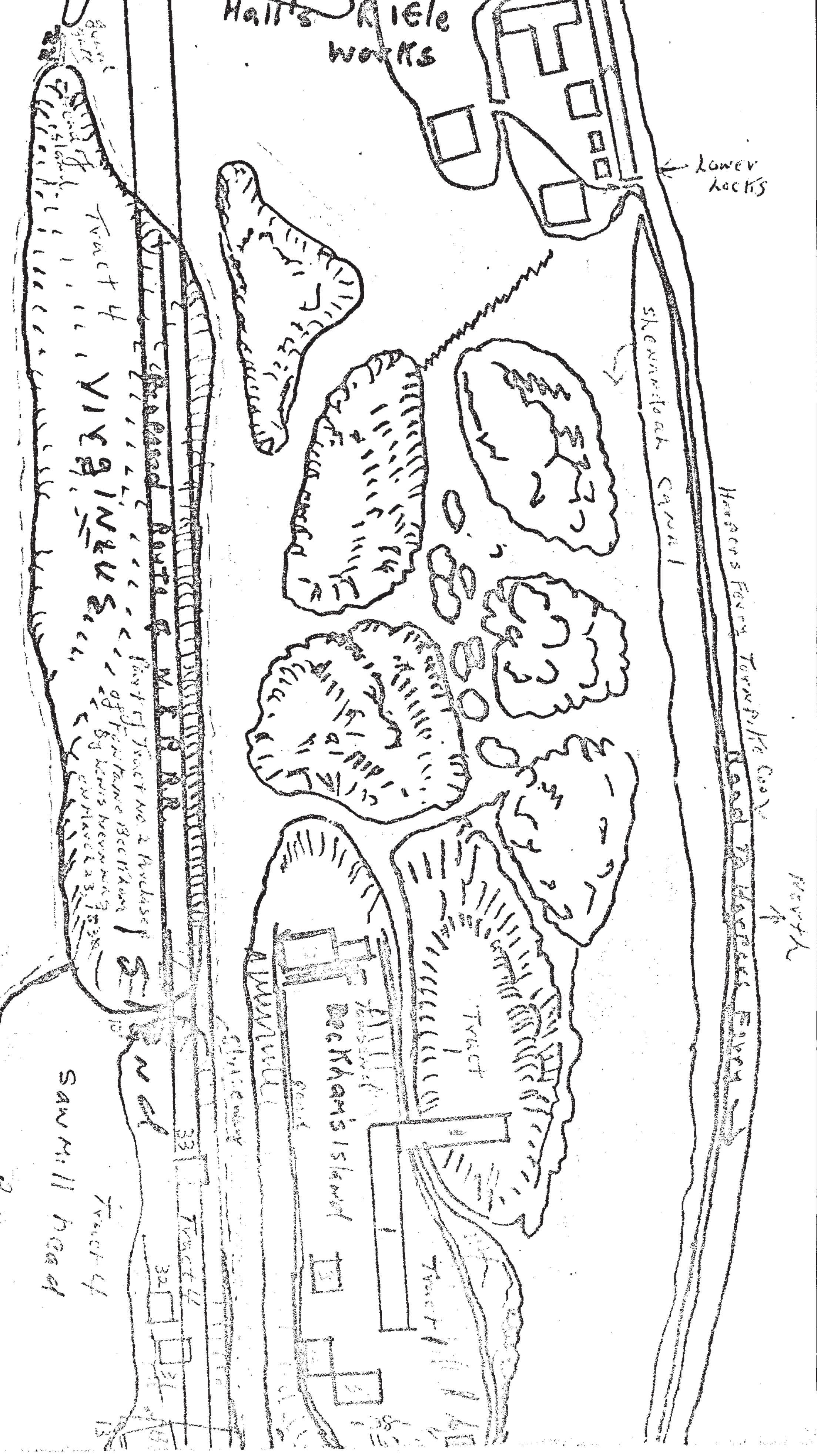
Tract No. 4 (Orange Buildings) Owned by Joseph L. Smith and John Wernwag in 1834. Bldg. No. 16 was a large saw mill; and based on comparsion with the 1844 map) Bldg. No. 17 was a two story frame dwelling house, brick filled; Bldg. No. 18 was a Frame dwelling house, brick filled and rough cast; Bldg. No. 19 was probably a frame dwelling house, one story, brick filled and rough cast; Bldg. No. 20-a small frame office; Bldg. No. 21 a small frame house; Bldgs. No. 22 and 23 two Smiths Shops; No. 24, a machine shop; Bldg. No. 25 probably a double frame dwelling house; Bldg. No. 26 probably 2 story brick dwelling house; Bldg. No. 27 probably a single brick dwelling house; Bldg. No. 28 probably a double brick dwelling house; Bldg. No. 29 probably small brick dwelling house. Bldg. No. 30-use unknown, but perhaps a brick dwelling house; Bldg. No. 31 use unknown, but probably a frame dwelling house; Bldg. No. 32 a small frame dwelling house, No. 33 use unknown but probably a small frame dwelling house.

Total: 33 buildings on the island in 1834.

1835 Map No. 2
Sheet 1

Scale 100 ft to the inch.

~~Southern~~ Western end.



1835 Map No. 2
Sheet 2
Scale: 100 ft. to the inch.
Northern end

In October of 1834 the editor of the Virginia Free Press commented on the Island of Virginius as follows:

"SITUATIONS FOR FACTORIES.

"It has long been a matter of surprise to us, that the advantages of the Island of Virginius, near Harpers-Ferry, for manufactories, of all kinds, have been so long neglected by men of enterprise. It is decidely one of the best situations in the United States for both cotton and woollen factories; the water-power is unsurpassed; and the facilities for getting supplies of raw material, and for transferring the manufactured articles to market, are as great as could possibly be desired.--- Already the Island has upon it a valuable merchant mill, an extensive saw-mill, a superior tannery, and a large building which could be readily converted into a factory, besides situations for many others, where water could be obtained in the greatest abundance.

"Hands could be employed at the place very advantageously, without incurring the expense of erecting buildings for their residences. The families of many of the workmen in the Armory might find useful and constant employment in such Factories, which would yield them a support independent of the exertions of their parents.---A great portion of the idleness and consequent laxity of morals which now next, among children unemployed, might be obviated, and the most beneficial results be produced to the community. Capitalists will find the subject worthy of their attention; and we calculate with confidence, that men in the large cities, who know their interests, will not long remain indifferent to such alluring prospects." 36

36. Virginia Free Press, October 9, 1834, p.3, c.2.

CHAPTER IV

THE ISLAND OF VIRGINIUS, 1835 - 1844: COMING OF THE RAILROAD AND NEW INDUSTRIES

The period 1835 to 1844 witnessed the construction of the Winchester & Potomac Railroad, the development of new industries, changes in ownership, and further subdivision of the four older tracts on the Island of Virginius. In this chapter we shall consider these changes in detail in relation to each tract into which the Island was then divided and shall then conclude the chapter by bringing all this data to bear in a study of James M. Brown's detailed Map of the Island of Virginius, which was made in April, 1844.

Before proceeding to the study of the individual Island tracts, we here present the population schedules of the Island of Virginius in ~~1840, this being the last census in which the Town of Virginius~~ in 1840, this being the last census in which the Town of Virginius was listed separately from that of Harpers Ferry. The total population of the Island in 1840 was 113 persons, with 16 heads of families being listed, as compared to 89 people with 16 heads of families in 1830. The white population in 1840 totaled 108 people, of whom 66 were white males and 42 white females. The free negro population numbered three persons; one male and two females. The slaves living on the island numbered two negro males in 1840.[1]

TRACT NO. 1, THE TANNERY LOT, 1835-1844

Tract No. 1 in 1835 was owned by the estate of Townsend Beckham,

1. National Archives R. G. 29. Records of the Bureau of the Census, Population Schedules of the Sixth Census of the United States, 1840. Virginia, Volume 7, pp.248-249, on Microfilm Reel #10, V.1, pp.68-71.

deceased, and in November of that year was leased to Hugh Gilleece,[2] who at once proceeded to develop a new industry on the Island. On November 12, 1835, Mr. Gilleece announced:

"IRON FOUNDRY
AT HARPERS-FERRY, VA.

"The subscribers wish to inform the public generally that their Iron Foundry, on the island at Harpers-Ferry, will be in operation the 20th of this month, and will cast Machinery of every description, such as

Machine Castings, Mill Gearing,
And Branding Irons.

They will also keep on hand Mouldboards of McCormick's patterns, from No. 6 to No. 12, right and left handed. Also,

The Loudoun Mouldboards, right and left.

They have also on hand, Wagon Boxes of all sizes, and Andirons of various patterns.

They have and will keep constantly a first rate Pattern Maker. So that they will be able to make patterns, of every description, at the shortest notice. All orders thankfully received and promptly attended to.

HUGH GILLEECE & CO.

N.B. Old Iron taken in exchange for any of the above named Castings."[3]

In April, 1836, the Company again advertised:

"...their Foundry is now in active operation, and that they are prepared to execute every variety of

CASTINGS.

They have on hand several of the most approved Threshing Machine Patterns, one of which is Richardson's Mammoth Machine, on an improved plan, warranted superior to any heretofore in use; and also, among a variety of other patterns, the McCormick Mouldboards, of all numbers, right and left, do. Loudoun do; Hillside Plough, right and left, cast together. Also, Plaster- Breakers, Corn-Shellers, Apple-Nuts, Wagon and Dearborn Boxes of all sizes. We have also a first-rate Pattern Maker and a Turning-Lather. Gudgeon Patterns, of all sizes, on hand.

The Baltimore and Ohio Rail-Road, the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, and the Rail-Road to Winchester, all afford great facilities for forwarding any articles in our line to those who may favor us with calls through either of those channels..."[4]

2. For proof that Gilleece leased the Tannery Lot, see Virginia Free Press, February 1, 1838, p.3, c.6. Deed of B. & S., December 8, 1838, Deed Book 23, pp.376-377, all of which will be quoted later in this Chapter.

3. Virginia Free Press, November 12, 1835, p.3, c.4.

4. Virginia Free Press, April 14, 1836, p.3, c.2.

Meanwhile the owners of the tract, who had listed the property for sale in 1833 and 1834, renewed their efforts to dispose of Tract No. 1 in 1836. In March, 1836, the following notice, therefore, appeared in the newspaper:

"TO CAPITALISTS.
A SPLENDID TANNERY, &C
AT HARPERS-FERRY, VA.
FOR SALE.

The very valuable and eligible real property, belonging to the estate of Townsend Beckham, deceased, situate on the Island of Virginius, at Harpers-Ferry, is now in the market at private sale. To those acquainted with the premises a detailed description would be altogether unnecessary.--As the property, however, is well worthy the attention of distant capitalists, desirous of making a profitable investment in such property, their attention is respectfully called to the following facts, combining to render the extablishment here offered unusually eligible.

It consists of an extense TANNERY AND MACHINERY, supplied with abundant water to grind bark, a large number of Vats, with ample room for almost any additional number, many of them under roof, Shops, Bark Houses, and, in a word, every other appurtenance required to carry on the business on the most extensive scale. It is situated nearly at the mouth of the Shenandoah river, by which it connects with the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, distant only a few hundred yards. The Winchester and Potomac Rail Road, connecting at Harpers-Ferry with the Baltimore and Ohio Rail Road, and now finished, passed within a few rods. The transportation consequently to and from Baltimore, and the District of Columbia, is reduced to the low rate of about 25 cents per hundred. It being the only Tanning establishment at the place, or for many miles around, the abundant supply of slaughtered hides afforded by Harpers-Ferry, and the vicinity, amounting to 1000 or upwards annually, is entirely open, with but little competition; the price has heretofore been and still continues at 5 cents per lb. The same causes, together with the large quantity required by the U. S. Armory, afford as ample and advantageous market for the sale of the tanned leather.

An extensive range of mountains in the vicinity affords also an abundant supply of excellent bark; the price has been about $5 per cord for chesnut oak, the kind principally furnished, and $3 per cord for black oak. Attached to the property are two commodious Dwelling Houses, the yards and garden of one of them highly improved, with all necessary out-buildings, an lee House, Slaughter House, with several other buildings of different kinds.

Also, an excellent OIL MILL, supplied by an abundant water power, which, in consequence of the scarcity of flaxseed, has not, for several years, been in operation. The machinery and fixtures, however, can easily be adapted to other purposes requiring water power...

"This property being left in the occupancy, and under the management of a widow and young children, it will be disposed of on very reasonable terms, both as to price and extension of credits.

For further information apply either to JAMES P. BAYLESS, tanner and currier, No. 1, Cheapside, Baltimore; JNO. FRAME, at Harpers-Ferry; or ANDREW HUNTER, Esq. at Charlestown, Va." 5

The property, however, was not disposed of in 1836, for in February, 1838, Special Commissioner Andrew Hunter again advertised:

"PUBLIC SALE
OF VALUABLE TAN YARD
PROPERTY, &C.
AT HARPERS-FERRY.

"By virture of two decrees rendered in the Circuit Superior Court of Law and Chancery for the county of Jefferson--one on the 4th day of April, 1834, in the case of Hunter, guardian, the children and heirs of Townsend Beckham, dec'd--the other on the 2d day of December, 1837, in the case of Wm. Mayweg, said heirs and other, I shall proceed to sell, to the highest bidder, at public auction, on Saturday the 31st day of March next, the whole of that valuable Real Property situated on the Island of Virginius, near Harpers-Ferry, lately the property of Townsend Beckham, deceased, consisting of a large and most advantageously situated TAN - YARD,
with a MILL heretofore used as an OIL MILL, but at present as a FOUNDRY.

Several Dwellings, Bark Houses, and other improvements, complete, for carrying on the Tanning business on a large scale--the grinding of Bark being done by water power...

The terms of the sale will be, $2100 to be paid in six months--$2100 in 12 months, and the residue in one, two, three and four years thereafter, without interest. The purchaser giving bond with a deed of trust on the premises, to secure the purchase money.

The sale, which will be without reserve, will take place before the door of Fitzsimmons's Hotel (the old Harpers Ferry Hotel that was located on Wager Lot No. 15), Harpers-Ferry, on the day above mentioned, to commence at 11 o'clock, A. M." 6

7
The sale, however, was postponed to October 10, 1838.

On December 8, 1838, Andrew Hunter, Special Commissioner and Elizabeth Beckham, the widow of Townsend Beckham, sold to Hugh Gilleece

5. Virginia Free Press, March 3, 1836, p.3, c.5.

6. Ibid., February 1, 1838, p.3, c.6.

7. Ibid., August 9, 1838, p.3, c.4.

and William Apsey for $5,000 the following land:

"...Being part of the Island of Virginius in the Shenandoah River, bounded as follows: Beginning at an Iron stake at the north end of the wall of the mill dam, corner to F. Beckham (now Roland, Heffebower and Williamson) (Tract No. 2) thence running up the mill race with said parties' line to two ashes near the head of said race. Thence down the north side of the island with the meanders of the river until it intersects the line of said Roland, etc. thence with their line to the Beginning containing two acres of land, said parcel being the same which was conveyed to the said Townsend Beckham, now deceased, from James Stubblefield by deed dated of December 28, 1824, and by the said Townsend Beckham and wife conveyed to Edward Wager and Armstead Beckham in trust to secure the purchase money thereof by deed dated December 28, 1824; of which said deed of trust the said William Mayweg became the assignee..." 8

In January, 1839, Hugh Gilleece & Co. advertised:

"A VALUABLE TAN-YARD: &C.
FOR RENT,
AT HARPERS-FERRY, VA.

This TAN-YARD with all its appendages, is offered for rent. It is supposed to be one of the best locations in Virginia for carrying on the Tanning business on an extensive scale, as there is ample room. A number of Vats are under cover. It has every necessary building. The yard is furnished with water, and the bark ground by water power...Immediate possession can be given..." 9

In March, 1839, the Company announced:

"TO FARMERS.

The subscribers wish to inform the Farmers that may be wanting PLASTER, that their Mill will be in operation in a week or so, at which time they will be able to furnish all those in need of GROUND PLASTER." 10

On October 12, 1839, the Deed of Trust executed by Gilleece and Apsey to Trustee William Berry, for the purpose of securing the purchase

8. Deed of B. & S., December 8, 1838, Deed Book 23, pp.367-377; also Deed of Trust, December 8, 1838, Gilleece and Apsey to Henry Berry, Trustee for Commissioner Andrew Hunter, Deed Book 23, pp.378-379.

9. Virginia Free Press, January 10, 1839, p.3, c.3.

10. Ibid., March 14, 1839, p.3, c.2.

of Tract 1 on the Island of Virginius, was offered for sale at public auction "before the tavern of Samuel Gibson", which was located in the Wager Ferry Lot on Lot No. 5.[11] Hugh Gilleece purchased the Deed of Trust at this sale for $4,350.[12]

In November, 1839, Mr. Gilleece advertised:

"FOR RENT: A commodious house, on the Island of Virginius. Possession given immediately. November 12, 1839..." [13]

On April 28, 1840, Hugh Gilleece sold to Alexander Brown for $1.00 one undivided third interest of the land bought at the sale of Tract No. 1 that had been held on October 12, 1839.[14]

In June, 1840, Mr. Gilleece announced:

"CHOPPING MILL.
ON THE ISLAND OF VIRGINIUS.

Hugh Gilleece respectfully informs the public that he has completed his CHOPPING MILL, on the Island of Virginius, near the Foundry, where he is prepared to chop Rye and Corn, for those who may think proper to favour him with a call.

CHOPPED CORN and RYE, will be kept constantly for sale on accommodating terms..." [15]

In the spring of 1841 Gilleece advertised:

"PLASTER! PLASTER!

The subscriber takes this method to inform those persons who may wish to have Plaster GROUND, that he is prepared to do so, at the

11. Virginia Free Press, September 19, 1839, p.3, c.4.

12. Deed of B. & S., October 12, 1839, Deed Book 24, pp.181; Deed of Trust, October 12, 1839, of Gilleece to Samuel D. Baker, trustee, for Henry Baker and Andrew Hunter, for $3,250, Deed Book 24, pp.182-183.

13. Harpers Ferry Constitutionalist, January 8, 1840, p.3.

14. Deed of B. & S., April 28, 1840, Deed Book 24, pp.291.

15. Virginia Free Press, June 11, 1840, p.3, c.3.

"shortest possible notice and on reasonable terms, as he intends keeping his mill grinding during the ensuing Spring. Gentlemen who may want a quantity ground, residing near the Rail-road, can have it done promptly, and delivered to the agent of the Company, to be sent to their nearest point..." 16

Again in the Spring of 1842, he announced:

"PLASTER, PLASTER, PLASTER!

H. Gilleece would respectfully inform the Farmers that his Plaster Mill is in active operation, and it is desirable that those who want PLASTER should send in their orders in time. The Farmers will bear in mind that they will be at no expense of hauling until the Plaster is ground..." 17

Mr. Gilleece's main line of business, however, continued to be the iron foundry. In September, 1842, the newspaper editor commented:

"Few persons are aware of the extent and capacity of the Foundry of Mr. Hugh Gilleece at Harper-Ferry. An Iron Shaft, for the public works (U. S. Armory at Harpers Ferry), was lately cast by Mr. G., weighing about 3600 pounds, and Castings of almost every variety are daily prepared at his establishment." 18

In December, 1842, Mr. Gilleece himself advertised:

"GRATES! GRATES!

Persons in want of Stone-Coal GRATES, are requested to call at Harpers-Ferry Iron Foundry, and they can be accommodated on reasonable terms.

Orders received by mail for Grates, of CASTINGS of any kind, will be promptly attended to." 19

In July, 1843, Mr. Gilleece provided us with the following description of his products:

"HARPERS-FERRY
IRON FOUNDRY.

The following is a statement of the kinds of Castings that can be had at the Harpers-Ferry Foundry.

16. Virginia Free Press, February 11, 1841, p.3, c.5.

17. Ibid., February 17, 1842, p.3, c.5.

18. Ibid., September 29, 1842, p.2, c.1.

19. Ibid., December 29, 1842, p.4, c.3.

"MILL GEARING

Of every description, and the patterns for Saws made to order;
Thrashing Machines of various kinds,
Among which are three different sizes of large patterns, Also, patterns suitable for Brooking's Machine, Corn Shellers, Straw Cutters and Windmill Irons. Turning Lathes of different patterns,
McCormick's and Loudoun Mouldboards, which we are prepared to furnish low to merchants or plough makers by the quantity,
Wagon Boxes from 5½ inches down to the smalles size that is required.
Andirons, a new style, of various patterns and sizes.
Flat Irons by hundreds, which can be retailed by the single pair at 6½ cents pound, and to merchants, by the quantity, for less,
Ground and complete Cast Iron Railing, suitable for churches, porches, porticos, &c. Also, for enclosures in grave yards, which is much neater for that purpose than the kind of fences that have been heretofore used, which is of but little more cost than the old. Persons who wish to have lots enclosed for family burying places, will please give the proper dimensions of the lot, and the order will be filled promptness, and I will, if desired, deliver it.

COAL STOVES, GRATES, &C.

I have got a sample of the small sizes on hand at this time, and in the course of a few weeks I will have some splendid patterns from the North, suitable for parlors. As there is a pattern-maker constantly employed, I am enabled to furnish patterns for Mill Gearing or Machinery at short notice.

I have made arrangements with Mr. John Wernwag, whose extensive machine shop is convenient to the Foundry [located on Tract No. 4 of the Island], for the turning and fitting up of every description of Castings--His name as a Machinist, is a sufficient guarantee for the manner in which the work shall be done. Mill Spindles made and repaired.

The above named work and Castings, shall be done on accommodating terms. Letters directed to the subscriber shall be met with prompt attention." 20

A month later Mr. Gilleece announced:

"GREAT WESTERN COOK STOVE.

The subscriber would respectfully inform the public generally that he has secured the right of making and vending the above named STOVE in several counties. A model of the Stove can be seen at the Harpers-Ferry Iron Foundry [The advertisment also contains a fine drawing of the stove], and in the course of a few weeks I shall have a number of the Stoves on hand.--I deem it unnecessary to say much concerning this Stove in my advertisment, as I have no fears but it will recommend itself to every

20. Virginia Free Press, July 27, 1843, p.3, c.1.

"person that will examine it. I will merely state that it is adapted either for the burning of coal or wood, and that it is so constructed that in case the cooking is required to be done very soon, a portion only need be heated--that is when the family is not very large. The price of the large Stove is $33, the small one $22, complete. Persons who may want a Cooking Stove are requested to give me a call, and after trying the Stove if they are not pleased with it, I will take it back." [21]

In October, 1843, the newspaper editor remarked of Gilleece's work:

"SUPERIOR CASTINGS.

Persons disposed to encourage Home Industry, (and who in this quarter is not?) will do well to examine the Castings which are daily turned out from the Foundry of Mr. Hugh Gilleece, on the Island of Virginius, near Harpers-Ferry. Mr. Gilleece has on hand some very superior specimens of Railing for Porticoes, Gardens, Grave-yards, &c; and his Coal Grates are equal to anything we have seen of the kind from any quarter. Some of the latter specimens are now at the store of Mr. John P. Brown, Charlestown; and those who desire to provide themselves with comfort for the winter will do well to look at them in good time." [22]

Mr. Gilleece continued to engage in the above business from 1835 through 1844.[23]

In summary, then, as to Tract No. 1 from 1835 to 1844, the property was sold by the heirs of Townsend Beckham to Hugh Gilleece and William Apsey on December 8, 1838, for $5,000. On October 12, 1839, Gilleece purchased Apsey's interest in the tract for $4350. On April 28, 1840, Gilleece then sold Alexander Brown a one-third interest in the property for $1.00. Thus in 1844 Hugh Gilleece held a two-thirds interest and Alexander Brown a one-third interest in Tract No. 1.

21. Virginia Free Press, August 10, 1843, p.3, c.2.

22. Ibid., October 12, 1843, p.2, c.4.

23. Ibid., December 19, 1844, p.4, c.5.

PROPERTY OF
HARPERS FERRY NATIONAL MONUMENT
HARPERS FERRY, W. VA.

The old Tannery was apparently dismantled in 1839. Hugh Gilleece rented part of the Tannery Lot in 1835 and converted the Oil Mill (Bldg. No. 1 on the 1834-35 maps or Bldg. B on the 1844 map) into a foundry. A new chopping mill, probably Bldg. No. C on the 1844 map, was erected by Gilleece in 1840. Bldgs. A and D on the 1844 map (Bldgs. No. 2 and 5 on the 1834-35 map) were probably the two dwelling houses mentioned in the advertisements, and Bldg. E on the 1844 map (or No. 4 on the 1834-34 maps) a stable or shop. Bldgs. No. 3, 6 and 7 on the 1834-35 maps were apparently demolished by 1844. Thus Tract No. 1 in 1844 contained five buildings.

TRACT NO. 2, THE ISLAND MILL LOT, 1835-1844

This property in 1834-35 was owned by Fontaine Beckham. The merchant Flour Mill situated on the lot and known as the "Island Mill", was under lease in 1835 by Jacob Staub.[24] In June, 1836, the mill was leased by a new firm who advertised:

"MILLING FIRM.

Having located ourselves in the Milling Business, at Harpers Ferry, one of the best situations in Virginia, (having the advantages of both Rail-road and Canal at the spot, and unlimited water power, and the Mills undergoing a general repair, to make 200 barrels of flour per day, if required,) we can say to farmers, with confidence, that we can afford to give more for Wheat delivered in our Mills, than any other Mills west of the Blue-Ridge. Having information every day from both markets, enables us to take choice, by Rail-road to Baltimore, or the Canal to the District (The B. & O. R.R. did not have a direct line from Harpers Ferry to Washington, D. C., until after 1865). Those disposed to favor us, either in grinding or selling their wheat, will find it to their advantage.

Wheat can be delivered to us at the different depots from Harpers-Ferry to Winchester, as well as by wagons to the Mills, and also conveyed

24. Virginia Free Press, August 13, 1835, p.3, c.4; also advertisement of F. Beckham same page and column of same issue.

"down the Shenandoah and Potomac. We will also buy Rye and Corn, pay cash, and make reasonable advances, if required.

Ground Plaster will be kept at the Mills for sale, and delivered at the different depots and at our Warehouse in Winchester.

ROWLAND, HEFLEBOWER & CO." 25

26

This firm continued to operate the "Island Mills" through 1837.

In September, 1837, it was announced:

"PUBLIC SALE.

By Authority of a decree, pronounced on the 28th day of August, 1837, by Judge of the Circuit Superior Court of Law and Chancery of Jefferson county, in the case of Jacob Albert, &c. against Fontaine Beckham, &c., and in pursuance of a deed of trust executed by said Beckham to Edward Wager and Armstead Beckham, bearing date on the 28th December, 1824, the undersigned, trustees appointed by said decree, will sell at public auction, on Saturday the 28th day of October next, in front of Gibson Hotel (which was located on Lot No. 5 in the Ferry Lot) at Harpers-Ferry,

ALL THAT VALUABLE
MILL PROPERTY,

on the Island of Virginius, conveyed by said deed of trust, and therein particularyly described; being the same which is now in the occupancy of Rowland, Heflebower & C.

Three thousand and one hundred dollars will be required to be paid in hand--the balance of the purchase money to be divided into five equal annual instalments, the first of which to be paid on the first of July next, and the other four on the first day of July in each of the years 1839, 1840, 1841, and 1842; bonds to begiven for the deferred payments, to be secured by a deed of trust on the property.

JOS. T. DAUGHERTY,
ANDREW HUNTER,
PROVINCE M'CORMICK." 27

This sale took place on May 1, 1838, when the Trustees sold Tract No. 2 to Henry Rowland, Carter Williamson, and Samuel Heffle-bower for $14,607.28

25. Virginia Free Press, June 23, 1836, p.3, c.4.

26. Ibid., May 4, 1837, p.4, c.7.

27. Ibid., September 7, 1837, p.4, c.2.

28. Deed of B. & S., dated May 1, 1838, recorded March 15, 1841, in Deed Book No. 24, pp.513-515.

The lot was described as:

"part of the island of Virginius, being the same land, by deed of 28 December 1824 was sold by Fontaine Beckham to Edward Wager and Armstead Beckham, trustees, with the exception of a certain strip of said land which was heretofore sold by deed by said Beckham to Lewis Wernwag, and with the further exception of the ground now occupied by the Winchester and Potomac Rail Road as at present located. The land hereby conveyed being the Merchant Mill property and the land thereto attached on the said island of Virfinius near Harpers Ferry, now in the possession of Rowland, Hefflebower and Company..." 29

In October, 1838, the new owners advertised:

"NOTICE, FARMERS & OTHERS!
GRAIN WANTED.

The undersigned, milling under the firm of Rowland, Heflebower & Co. will give the highest market prices for any quantity of grain of all kinds. Our Mills are now completed and under full operation, and are able to make 150 barrels of flour per day. We will grind for toll, and give the usual facilities..." 30

In February, 1839, disaster struck the mill; the newspaper reported of this event:

"FIRE.---We regret to learn that the large and valuable flour mill, owned by and in the occupancy of Messrs. Rowland, Heflebower & Co., on the Island of Virginius, near Harpers-Ferry, was entirely consumed by fire on Monday night last, together with twenty thousand bushels of wheat. The mill had lately undergone a thorough repair at a heavy expense, and was adjudged to be worth twenty thousand dollars. The entire loss, therefore, is about fifty thousand dollars--only seven or eight thousand of which, we learn, is secured by insurance. We have not heard how the fire originated. This is the second calamity of the kind which has befallen these gentlemen within the last two years. (Their mill near Winchester had apparently burned)." 31

29. Deed of Trust, dated May 1, 1838, for $11,537, from Rowland, Williamson & Hefflebower to Daugherty, McCormick and Hunter, trustees for the Court, Deed Book 24, pp.167-168.

30. Virginia Free Press, October 25, 1838, p.3, c.3.

31. Ibid., February 7, 1839, p.2, c.1.

The following week the newspaper reported:

"THE LATE FIRE AT HARPERS-FERRY.--Our statements last week were based upon what we deemed good authority; but the Winchester Virginian of yesterday says--'We have ascertained from one of the gentlemen connected with the firm, (Messrs. Rowland, Heflebower & Co.) that the amount of insurance on the mill was $15,000, and about twelve thousand bushels of wheat and from two to three hundred barrels of flour burned, instead of the quantity mentioned by the Free Press. The fire is now fully ascertained to have been the work of some malicious incendiary." 32

From this article it is clear that Fontaine Beckham's old stone mill of 1824, a building 60 by 40 feet, was destroyed in February, 1839. As a further result of this fire, several involved changes of ownership in Tract No. 2 occurred which we shall narrate in chronological order of their occurrance, although the deeds were not recorded in that order.

First, it appears that on May 1, 1838, Carter Williamson sold his undivided one-third interest in Tract No. 2 to Lysander D. Childs by a deed which was never recorded.[33] In 1839, probably to pay Luther I. Cox for his construction of a new stone flour mill to replace the mill destroyed in February, 1839, Henry Rowland, Samuel Hefflebower, Carter Williamson and Lysander Childs sold Luther I. Cox for $11,000 an undivided two-thirds interest in tract No. 2. The deed for this transaction, which was not recorded until July 1, 1840, states in part, that Cox was sold "a certain portion or parcel of the island of Virginius"

32. Virginia Free Press, February 14, 1839, p.2, c.3.

33. This is so stated in the Deed of B. & S., dated July 1, 1840, Deed Book 25, pp.152-153. Also Deed of Trust, July 1, 1840, Cox to Andrew Hunter, as Trustee, Deed Book 25, pp.155-156.

having upon it several dwelling houses and other improvements, together with a large flour merchant mill, now being erected by said Luther I. Cox, that part of the island being conveyed is the same as to Rowland, etc, by deed of May 1, 1838 from Hunter. The said Carter Williamson having sold his one undivided third part of said property to Lysander D. Childs by Deed of 1st May 1838 [which, as is noted above, was never recorded][33a].

On January 1, 1840, and before Cox's above-mentioned deed was recorded on July 1, 1840, Luther I. Cox sold the undivided two-thirds interest he had acquired from Rowland, Hefflebower, Williamson, and Childs for $11,000 in Tract No. 2, to Daniel Snyder and Benjamin Ford for $23,133.78.[34] Snyder and Ford thus operated the Island Mills from 1840 to the summer of 1842, at which time all the partners were hailed into court and the property was taken over by Court, as the following notice suggests.

"NOTICE.

My connection with the present business and accruing liabilities of the Island Mill at Harpers-Ferry, will be understood by the public, when I state, that for all Grain delivered to the Mills to be ground on the terms heretofore usual with the Millers in this county, I will be responsible, For grain purchased by contracts with myself, and delivered in the Mills according to the rules of Millers, and the receipt brought to me, I will pay the cash on the presentation of the receipt.

I have made arrangements to be supplied with money at the shortest notice, and I will give the fair market price for grain as delivered."

33a. This is so stated in the Deed of B. & S., dated July 1, 1840, Deed Book 25, pp.152-153; also Deed of Trust, July 1, 1840, Cox to Andrew Hunter, as Trustee, Deed Book 25, pp.155-156.

34. Deed of B. & S., January 1, 1840, Deed Book 24, pp.156-157; also Deed of Trust, Snyder & Ford to Andrew Hunter as Trustee for Cox, dated January 1, 1840, Deed Book 25, pp.158-159.

"The same arrangements comprehend also the sales or storage of Flour made at the Mills, and the prompt payment of the proceeds of sales, and the purchase of any articles required by the customers of the Mills.

Flour will be given at any time in exchange for Wheat delivered in the Mills. Wm C. Worthington." 35

In June, 1843, it was announced:

"PUBLIC SALE OF VALUABLE SHENANDOAH MILL PROPERTY IN JEFFERSON CO. VA.

By Virture of a deed of trust, dated 1st May 1838 by Henry Rowland, Carter Williamson, Samuel Hefflebower, and by virture of a decree of the Circuit Superior Court of Law and Chancery...rendered at the May Term 1843, the undersigned, as surviving trustees, will sell, at public auction...on July 29, 1843, that large and valuable FLOUR MANUFACTURING MILL on the Island of Virginius, recently in the occupancy of Ford & Snyder together with the MILL LOT and all the Buildings...

ANDREW HUNTER,
PROVINE McCORMICK." 36

The actual sale of the property, however, was postponed until 1844 and in the meantime the mill was leased by Philip Coons, the gentlemen who erected the houses now known as Bldg. No. 10, 10-A and No. 44 in Harpers Ferry. Mr. Coons advertised in August, 1843:

"WHEAT WANTED.

The undersigned having leased the ISLAND MILLS, would respectfully inform the farmers of Jefferson and the adjoining Counties, that he is desirous of purchasing

A LARGE QUANTITY OF WHEAT,

for which he will at all times pay the highest prices in Cash. Those who wish to exchange their Wheat for Flour can be accommodated, in the usual way, at the shortest notice.

He trusts that by punctuality in engagements, he shall secure the favor of his friends and merit a share of the public patronage.

PHILIP COONS." 37

35. Virginia Free Press, September 1, 1842, p.3, c.2.

36. Ibid., June 15, 1843, p.3, c.2.

37. Ibid., August 31, 1843, p.1, c.3.

Tract No. 2 was again put on the market in January, 1844, by the trustees, Hunter and McCormick; the sale this time was to be held on March 2, 1844.[38]

On March 2, 1844, Hunter and McCormick finally sold to John Herr and Abraham Herr for $14,000 the following described property:

"A certain piece of land having upon it a large merchant flour mill, and divers other improvments, situated on the Island of Virginius, in the Shenandoah River, formerly called Stubblefields Island-being the same parcel of land and mill property, which by deed of December 28, 1824, was conveyed by James Stubblefield to Fontaine Beckham, and by the latter on the same day reconveyed to Edward Wager and Armstead Beckham-as trustees to secure the purchase money thereof-with the exception, that is excepting from this deed, a certain strip of the said piece or parcel of land, which strip was heretofore by deed March 23, 1830, conveyed by Fontaine Beckham to Lewis Wernwag, and with the further exception from said original piece of land, of the ground now occupied by the Winchester and Potomac Railroad as at present located- and being, that is to say, the premises hereby intended to convey, the same which is now occupied by the said John and Abraham H. Herr..." [39]

In July, 1844, the new owners advertised:

"THE ISLAND MILL,
HARPERS-FERRY.

The undersigned have purchased that well-known and extensive Merchant Mill, on the Island of Virginius, at Harper's Ferry, known as the ISLAND MILL, and are now ready to grind Wheat for the neighborhood, and to purchase at the highest market rate, for cash.

An extra price will be given for White Wheat.
Reference--Andrew Hunter and F. Beckham, Esqs. HERR & BROTHER." [40]

In October, 1844, Herr & Brother also announced:

38. Virginia Free Press, February 15, 1844, p.3, c.7.

39. Deed of B. & S., dated September 2, 1846, when the Herrs apparently completed payments for the lot, in Deed Book 28, pp.292-293.

40. Virginia Free Press, July 18, 1844, p.3, c.1.

"PLASTER & SALT
FOR SALE.
375 TONS Plaster, fresh ground $6.25 per ton;
355 sacks Salt, ground alum $1.75 and fine $2 per sack, warrented large factory filled sacks.
The highest cash price will be given for Wheat." 41

During the 1835 to 1844 period, then, Tract No. 2 was owned by Fontaine Beckham, 1835-38, and sold at a trust sale on May 1, 1838, for $14,607 to Henry Rowland, Carter Williamson, and Samuel Hefflebower. Williamson, in turn, on May 1, 1838, sold his one undivided third interest to Lysander D. Childs. Following the destruction of the flour mill by fire in ~~January~~ February, 1839, an undivided two-thirds interest in Tract No. 2 was sold by Rowland, Hefflebower, Williamson and Childs for $11,000 to Luther I. Cox, sometime in 1839, although the deed was not recorded until July 1, 1840. Cox rebuilt the mill and sold this undivided two-third interest to Daniel Snyder and Benjamin Ford for $24,133.78 on January 1, 1840. Tract No. 2 was sold at a trustees' sale on March 2, 1844, to John Herr and Abraham Herr for $14,000.

As mentioned above, Fontaine Beckham's "Island Mills", a stone merchant flour mill, was destroyed by fire in February, 1839, and a new mill was erected in the same general location of the old mill in 1840 by Luther Cox. The new mill was also called the "Island Mills".

The flour mill was operated from 1834 to 1835 by Jacob Staub. From June, 1836, to January, 1839, it was run by Rowland, Hefflebower

41. Virginia Free Press, October 24, 1844, p.3, c.2.

& Co. From 1840 to 1842 it was operated by Daniel Snyder and Benjamin Ford. In September, 1842, William C. Worthington, apparently acting as an agent of the Court, took over the operation of the mill. In 1843, Philip Coons ran the "Island Mills" under a lease granted by the Circuit Court, and in 1844, the new owners, John and Abraham Herr, took over the operation of the mill.

In 1834 Tract No. 2 had contained four dwelling houses and one coopers shop, in addition to the flour mill. The 1844 map indicates that there were only three buildings beside the flour mill standing on Tract 2 at that date. These included Bldg. M the new flour mill; Bldg. H (probably Bldg. No. 13-the Coopers shop on the 1834 map); Bldg. G. was probably a dwelling house, either new or perhaps Bldg. No. 11 or 12 on the 1834 map had been relocated because of the construction of the Winchester and Potomac Railroad. Bldg. I on the 1844 map was probably a dwelling House, i.e. Bldg. No. 9 on the 1834 map. Bldg. No. 10, 11 and 12 on the 1834 map are not shown on the 1844 map and were probably demolished; No. 11 and 12 being removed to make way for the construction of the new railroad.

TRACT NO. 3, 1835 to 1844, THE RAILROAD DEPOT

Tract No. 3 had been purchased by John B. Gildea from the heirs of Edward Wager in 1833 for $4,000. On May 13, 1835, for the sum of $4,650, Mr. Gildea sold Tract No. 3 to the Winchester & Potomac Railroad Company. This deed reads in part:

"...a certain lot of land situated on the island of Virginius, adjoining the lands of Fontaine Beckham (Tract No. 2) & Smith and Wernwag (Tract No. 4), bounded as follows Beginning, on the south side of an arm of said river a corner to Fontaine Beckham, thence S 13 W with the line of said Beckham 10.8 poles to a stake in the middle of the Street, thence with a line of Smith and Wernwag S77 E 11.5 poles to a stake, thence N 11½ E 10.8 poles to the aforesaid arms of the river, thence up, and with the meanderings of the same to the beginning..." [42]

The Winchester and Potomac Railroad Company had been organized in April, 1831.[43] Actual construction of the railroad was begun in 1833[44] and by November, 1835, the track had been laid from Winchester to Halltown, with work on the final stretch, Halltown to Harpers Ferry being then in progress.[45] The grand opening of the line, Winchester to Harpers Ferry, took place on March 31, 1836.[46]

In July, 1837, Fontaine Beckham, acting as a trustee, placed the following notice in the newspaper, which yields considerable data on the buildings then located on Tract No. 3:

"TRUST SALE.

By virture of a deed of trust executed to the subscriber on the 28th day of September 1833...by John Gildea, to secure a certain debt therein mentioned, I shall proceed to sell to, at public auction, the highest bidder, for cash on Saturaday the 5th day of next month (August) before the door of Fitzsimmons Hotel at Harpers-Ferry, of the

LOT OF GROUND

with the Tenements thereon, situated on the island of Virginius, and now occupied by the Winchester & Potomac Rail-Road as DEPOT, either the whole or so much thereof as may be necessary to raise the sum of about $1,000. The smaller of the two stone dwellings, with the lot attached will be sold first, and the balance, including the Depot only in the event of the first providing insufficient to raise the sum required." [47]

42. Deed of B. & S., May 13, 1835, Deed Book 20, pp.338-339.

43. Virginia Free Press, April 14, 1831, p.3, c.2.

44. Ibid., December 5, 1833, p.2, c.1.

45. Ibid., November 26, 1835, p.3, c.1.

46. Ibid., April 7, 1836, p.2, c.5.

47. Ibid., July 6, 1837, p.3, c.3.

Gildea apparently paid his debt as the sale was not held.

In summary then, in regards to Tract No. 3: this lot was owned by the W. & P. Railroad Company from May 13, 1835 through 1844. Bldg. O on the 1844 map represents the new Depot Building of the Railroad Company. Bldgs. K and N on the 1844 map are the two stone-stuccoed dwelling houses that were shown on the 1834 maps as Bldgs. No. 14 and 15 respectively.

TRACTS NO. 4 AND 5, THE SAW MILL LOT, 1835 to 1844

On May 25, 1835, Joseph L. Smith and John Wernwag, the owners of Tract No. 4, sold a small piece of their property to Jesse Schofield for $500. The deed for this transaction reads in part:

"...the following land on the island of Virginius: Beginning at a point in the main street or road running through said island thence at right angles with said street, back to the millrace, thence parallel with the mentioned line, forty feet down the said mill race- thence at right angles with the said lot mentioned, and parallel with the first back to the street, thence with the said street forty feet back to the beginning-embracing the tenement now occupied by John Shackelford..." 48

The property described above is Bldg. No. 12 on the 1844 map (or probably Bldg. No. 26 on the 1834 maps). It will henceforth be known in this report as Tract No. 5.

In May, 1835, William Richards, who later became the owner of buildings in the Monument now known as No. 40 and No. 44, announced:

48. Deed of B. & S., May 25, 1835, Deed Book 20, pp.340-341.

"A CARD.

The undersigned begs leave to inform his friends and the public in general, that he has taken the Smiths Shop lately occupied by Lewis Wernwag, on the Island of Virginius, where he will be happy to serve those who may favor him with their work, which shall be done on the shortest notice, and in the best and neatest manner; and he hopes, by strict attention to business, to share a part of the public patronage. N.B.-Mill Irons made to order at the shortest notice." [49]

Mr. Richards had thus rented Bldg. No. 21 and 22 on the 1834 map or Bldgs. No. 21 and 22 on the 1844 map.

On April 21, 1835, Mr. John Wernwag married Miss Margaret Rebecca Massey of Baltimore, Md. [50]

On April 19, 1835, Joseph L. Smith and John Wernwag purchased of George and Ellen Stubblefield for $25.00:

"...a patent for a certain tract of land around the island of Virginius in the Shenandoah river, granted to the said George Stubblefield by the Commonwealth of Virginia on the 22nd November 1834...according to the survey set forth in said patent..." [51]

Meanwhile the financial difficulties of the Smith & Wernwag continued to increase, as revealed by the following notice of May, 1835:

"TRUST SALE
OF
HARPERS-FERRY
REAL ESTATE.

By virture of a deed of trust, executed on the 28th day of December, 1824, by Lewis Wernwag, to Edward Wager, now deceased, and Armstead Beckham, as trustees for the benefit of James Stubblefield, the subscriber, as the surviving trustee, and under the authority vested in him as such by said deed...will sell, at public auction, to the highest bidder, for cash, on Monday the 13th of July next, before the door of"

49. Virginia Free Press, May 7, 1835, p.3, c.6.

50. Ibid., May 7, 1835, p.3, c.3.

51. Deed of B. & S., April 19, 1835, Deed Book 20, p.531. The area purchased is shown on the 1844 map by the figures 1, 2, 3, etc., to 18 around the island and across the river. A detailed description of these buildings is given in the deed of August 24, 1847, to the Harpers Ferry & Shenandoah Mfg. Co.; see Chapter V.

"Fitzsimmons's Hotel, Harpers Ferry, that part of the valuable island of Virginius which was originally sold by James Stubblefield and wife to Lewis Wernwag, and is now in the possession of John Wernwag and Joseph L. Smith, containing on it one of the most valuable SAWMILLS in the W. States, together with a number of DWELLING HOUSES, WORKSHOPS, AND OTHER improvements. Said property will be sold to satisfy the sum of seven thousand four hundred and twenty dollars, with interest from the 1st day of December, 1834, the balance of the original purchase money remaining due to Coleman C. Beckham, as the assignee of said James Stubblefield... ARMSTEAD BECKHAM,
Surviving Trustee, &c." 52

On July 16, 1835, Joseph L. Smith put into trust with Benjamin Price, as trustee for John McPherson, a part of the island of Virginius:

"...being the same property conveyed by Louis Wernwag to Joseph L. Smith and James Hook by Deed of July 2, 1832, that is to say one moiety of the estate or entire parcel of land was then conveyed by said Wernwag and portion of one-sixth of the original whole was subsequently conveyed from the said Lewis Wernwag and wife to said Joseph Smith and Hook by Deed __ day of 1833, and said Joseph L. Smith having purchased from the said James Hook, his undivided portion of said property (for which however no deed has yet been made) his undivided proportion thereof is two-thirds of the whole originally belonging to said Lewis Wernwag-also the equitable interest, being the same proportion (to wit: two thirds) of the said J. L. Smith in and to a certain parcel of land, rocks and water, patented from the Com. of Virginia to George Stubblefield by patent dated November 22, 1834, and purchased by said Smith from Stubblefield..." 53

On July 30, 1835, Trustee Price announced:

"TRUSTEE'S SALE
OF
VALUABLE FACTORY PROPERTY
AT HARPERS-FERRY.

By virture of a deed of trust from Jos. L. Smith, Esq. to the subscriber, executed the 16th day of July inst...I will sell, at public auction to the highest bidder, on Friday the 4th of September next...before the door of Fitzsimmons's Hotel, Harpers Ferry, all the right, title and estate of said Joseph L. Smith, in and to"

52. Virginia Free Press, May 14, 1835, p.3, c.5.

53. Deed of Trust, July 16, 1835, Deed Book 20, pp.409-410.

"THE ISLAND OF VIRGINIUS.

It may be confidently affirmed that this is one of the most valuable pieces of property for manufacturing purposes in the United States. Situated in the falls of the Shanandoah, it is above the reach of inundation; and, without a dam, commands nearly the whole force of the river, by means of a canal which has been cut through the centre of the Island.

Two bridges connect the Island with Harpers-Perry on the main land, and two more are in progress of construction by the Winchester and Potomac Rail Road Company, whose road passes over it. This work, together with the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal and the Baltimore and Ohio Rail Road, (distant not more than 250 yards,) affords this property unrivalled advantages.

The Improvements are several dwelling houses, extensive work shops and one of the largest and most valuable SAW MILLS in the country.

The property will be sold entire, or in lots, as may be found expedient on the day of the sale..." [54]

This sale, however, was not held for a year later in June, 1836, Mr. Price announced that Smith's interest would be sold at auction on the 4th of August, 1836.[55] Again the property was not sold, for on September 5, 1836, Joseph L. Smith declared himself bankrupt and sold for $1.00 to the Sheriff of Jefferson County:

"The equity of redemption, or interest of said Smith in the island property near Harpers Ferry, purchased by him from Lewis Wernwag, being an undivided two-thirds thereof, subject to a deed of trust, Smith to Benjamin Price, trustee for John McPherson, dated July 16, 1833..." [56]

In November, 1836, John Fitzsimmons again announced:

"TRUSTEE'S SALE.

Under the authority of a deed of trust to the subscriber from Lewis Wernwag, dated the 29th day of August, in the year 1836...for the benefit of Joseph L. Rusell, I will on the 10th day of December next, on the premises, sell at public auction, to the highest bidder, for cash, one half of the ISLAND OF VIRGINIUS...near Harpers-Ferry, described in said deed."

54. Virginia Free Press, July 30, 1835, p.3, c.3.

55. Ibid., June 9, 1836, p.3, c.4.

56. Deed of B. & S., September 5, 1836, Deed Book 21, pp.232-233.

"I will sell, to satisfy the balance due upon an assignment by Jas. Hook & Joseph L. Smith, to pay to said Russell, the amount of their purchase from said Wernwag, of the property above described." [57]

In June, 1837, Mr. Fitzsimmons, acting as trustee, again advertised that he would offer the above Described interest of Lewis Wernwag in the Island of Virginius at public auction on July 22, 1837.[58] In a similar manner, trustee Benjamin Price gave notice in November, 1837, that he would offer for sale at public auction on December 18, Joseph L. Smith's interest in Tract No. 4.[59]

John Wernwag apparently raised the money to protect his interest by mortgaging for $6,300 to Josias Pennington of Baltimore a piece of property in Baltimore and:

"one undivided third part of all that portion of the Island of Virginius in the Shenandoah River near Harpers Ferry being the lower part of said Island adjoining the portions belonging to Fontaine Beckham & Edward Wager's heirs being for...all that undivided portion of said Island which was sold & conveyed by Lewis & Elizabeth his wife to the said John Wernwag by their Indenture dated 31st July 1833..." [60]

Joseph L. Smith's undivided two-thirds interest in Tract No. 4 went into Court, through bankruptcy proceedings, and was finally sold by Commissioner Andrew Hunter, acting for Sarah Ann Price, the sole heir of Benjamin Price and John McPherson, for $8,000 to Jessie Schofield on July 3, 1844; that is, the deed for purchase was granted on that date. This deed reads in part:

57. Virginia Free Press, November 10, 1836, p.3, c.4.

58. Ibid., June 29, 1837, p.3, c.4.

59. Ibid., November 16, 1837, p.3, c.4.

60. Mortgage, January 20, 1840, Deed Book 24, pp.108-109. Also Microfilm Reel 11, V. 1, pp.37-41.

"...being an undivided two thirds part of that portion of the Island of Virginius, in the Shenandoah River...which was conveyed from Lewis Wernwag and wife to the said Joseph L. Smith and James Hook by Deed, dated July 2, 1832-that is to say one moiety of the estate or entire parcel of land was then conveyed by said Lewis Wernwag and wife-and a further portion of one sixth of the original whole was subsequently conveyed from the said Lewis Wernwag and wife to said Smith and Hook, by deed of 1833, and being, two thirds of that portion of said Island and now in the possession of said Schofield and a certain John Wernwag. Also an undivided two-third parts of a parcel of land, rock and water adjacent to the said island patented from the Common Wealth of Virginia to George Stubblefield by patent of November 22, 1834 and purchased from Stubblefield by Smith and Wernwag. And finally to make the extent of this conveyance and assignment more explicit, it is hereby declared to embrace the entire right and title of the said Joseph L. Smith and also of the said James Hook or his children, heirs, as fully, and to all intents and purposes as the same was held by them at the time of the execution of the deed of trust of July 16, 1835..." 61

While the above legal tangle was being straightened out, the factories and shops located on Tract No. 4 were still in production.

In 1837 Lewis Wernwag advertised:

"PATENT CUTTING BOX

The subscriber has for sale, at his manufacturing establishment on the Island of Virginius, near Harpers-Ferry, the above valuable article, patented by himself. It is well adapted for cutting provender of every description for stock; and is considered by good judges to have decided advantages over any other article of the kind ever offered to the public. It may be seen at the Tin Shop of Thomas Rawlins & Son, Charlestown, or on the Island of Virginius." 62

In March, 1839, Jesse Schofield and George Mauzy announced:

"NOTICE.

The subscribers have rented the Saw Mill, situated on the Island of Virginius, lately in the occupancy of Lewis Wernwag. They have also made arrangements to get a large quantity of Timber down the Shenandoah river, and will be able to fill bills at short notice.-- They will also continue to Saw country logs upon the shares, or otherwise, to suit customers; and will be prepared to furnish Plastering Laths of any description. From their known disposition to please, they hope for a reasonable share of public patronage." 63

61. Deed of B. & S., July 3, 1844, Deed Book 28, pp.172-173.

62. Virginia Free Press, May 11, 1837, p.3, c.4.

63. Ibid., March 28, 1839, p.1, c.1.

This partnership appears to have continued to operate the saw mill through July of 1840.[64] From August until November 25, 1840, the co-partnership of Joseph P. Shannon and Jesse Schofield operated the saw mill.[65]

On May 29, 1839, William Wernwag, Junior, 36 years old, died of consumption.[66]

The machine shops on Virginius, Tract 4, were operated by the Wernwag family from 1835 to 1843.[67] Among their products were Turning Lathes, Saws and Farham's Patent Washing Machines. On August 24, 1840, Abraham D. Wernwag, 27 years old and a son of Lewis Wernwag died.[68] Lewis Wernwag, Senior, died at some date in 1843 (before August 5th) and his personal property, tools and six-wheeled railroad car were auctioned off on September 18, 1843.[69]

From at least August 5, 1843, through 1844 the machine shops on Tract No. 4 were operated by John Wernwag and Joseph P. Shannon.[70]

64. Harpers Ferry Constitutionalist, July 23, 1840, p.3, advertisement of George Mauzy for timber to sell.

65. Virginia Free Press, December 10, 1840, p.3, c.5; notice of dissolution of partnership.

66. Ibid., June 13, 1839, p.3, c.2.

67. Ibid., Notices of in February 27, 1840, p.3, c.2; September 22, 1842, p.3, c.4; March 31, 1842, p.4, c.6,7.

68. Ibid., September 3, 1840, p.3, c.2.

69. Ibid., September 7, 1840, p.3, c.2; notice of sale with list of items.

70. Deed of Trust, August 5, 1843, Shannon to G. B. Wager, trustee for Jesse Schofield, Deed Book 26, pp.435-436; second deed of trust, same date and between the same parties in Deed Book 32, pp.63-65.

It is probable, however, that Shannon had been a member of the Wernwag firm since 1830.[71]

By 1844 then, Tract No. 4 was held by John Wernwag, with an undivided one-third interest in the property, and by Jessie Schofield, with a undivided two-thirds interest in the lot and improvements. These two gentlemen, in May of 1844, entered into an agreement with James Giddings in an effort to dispose of Tract No. 4 at a profit. The 1844 map of the island of Virginius, prepared by James M. Brown, which is presented at the end of this chapter, was drawn to assist Mr. Giddings in this endeavor.

Two documents were signed between the parties and we quote from each as follows:

1. "Articles of Agreement made and entered with by and between Jesse Schofield and John Wernwag...of the first part and James Giddings of Frederick County and State of Maryland of the second Part, witnesseth, that whereas the said parties of the first part together with their respective wives, have this day (May 16, 1844) by their deed of bargain and sale of equal date with these presence, conveyed to the said party of the Second part certain real estate being and lying in Jefferson County in the State of Virginia, adjoining Harpers Ferry and containing ___acres of land more or less, & being the same property that was owned by Lewis Wernwag, which said deed is recorded...The said land being conveyed by deed to said Giddings in trust, to sell the same for the purposes therein mentioned. And whereas by the said deed these articles of agreement are referred to for the purpose of ascertaining the amount of commission or compensation to be allowed to said Giddings for his trouble and responsibility in selling said real estate and paying out and distributing among the parties thereto entitled.

The purchase money arising from the sale of said real estate, and as a full compensation for the discharge of all his duties as trustee under and by virture of said deed of trust, Now it is hereby agreed by and between the said parties of the first and second part, that the said

71. Mortgage, January 20, 1840, Reel 11, V.1, pp.37-41 mentions the firm of Shannon and John Wernwag.

"Giddings shall not sell said property within a period of two years from the date of said deed, unless he can (receive) at least the sum of thirty thousand dollars for all said property, unless the said parties of the first part shall agree to a sale at a less price or sum, in which event, he shall sell for such sums as the said parties of the first part shall agree that he shall take for the same, Either for a part or for the whole. That is, the said Giddings may sell a part or parts of said property, or the whole, at such prices, less then sum of thirty thousand dollars for the whole, or at that rate, as the said parties of the first may agree he shall sell the same for. And the said Giddings shall be entitled to receive and deduct from the purchase money after the payment of all expenses, as is provided for in said deed of trust, at the rate of ten percent, on all sales up to the said sum of thirty thousand dollars, and should he sell the said property for more than said aggregate of $30,000 dollars he shall receive fifty per cent, or the one half of whatever sums or amount he may get or sell said property for, over and above the said sum of thirty thousand dollars, That is, if he shall sell the property for $32,000 said giddings shall be entitled to deduct & retain in his hands, as his compensation and comission for all his services as trustee as foresaid ten percent on the 30,000 dollars, over and above the costs and charges as herein before stated, and fifty percent on the 2,000 dollars, or the one half thereof, and so in proportion on any larger or smaller sum over and above the said 30,000 dollars that he may be able to sell said property for.-

And it is further agreed by and between said parties to this agreement that the said Giddings may, if he thinks proper, take an interest in and be considered as a purchaser of one part of said property, not exceeding one third part thereof, at such price or sum as the part be taken would amount to, estimating the entire property at the said price or sum of thirty thousand dollars, that is if the said Giddings shall agree to become the purchaser of one fourth part of said property, and to be the owner of that extent he shall pay for such one fourth part the sum of $7,500 dollars and so of any quarter on less interest, in said property not exceeding a third part thereof as aforesaid. Should said Giddings determine to become interested as purchaser as aforesaid he must give notice to that affect to the said parties of the first part on or before the first day of January 1845 next." 72

2. Deed of Trust, dated May 16, 1844, granted by Jesse Schofield and his wife Mary Ann, and John Wernwag and his wife Margaret R., to James Giddings:

72. Articles of Agreement, May 16, 1844, Reel 11, V.4, pp.372-375.

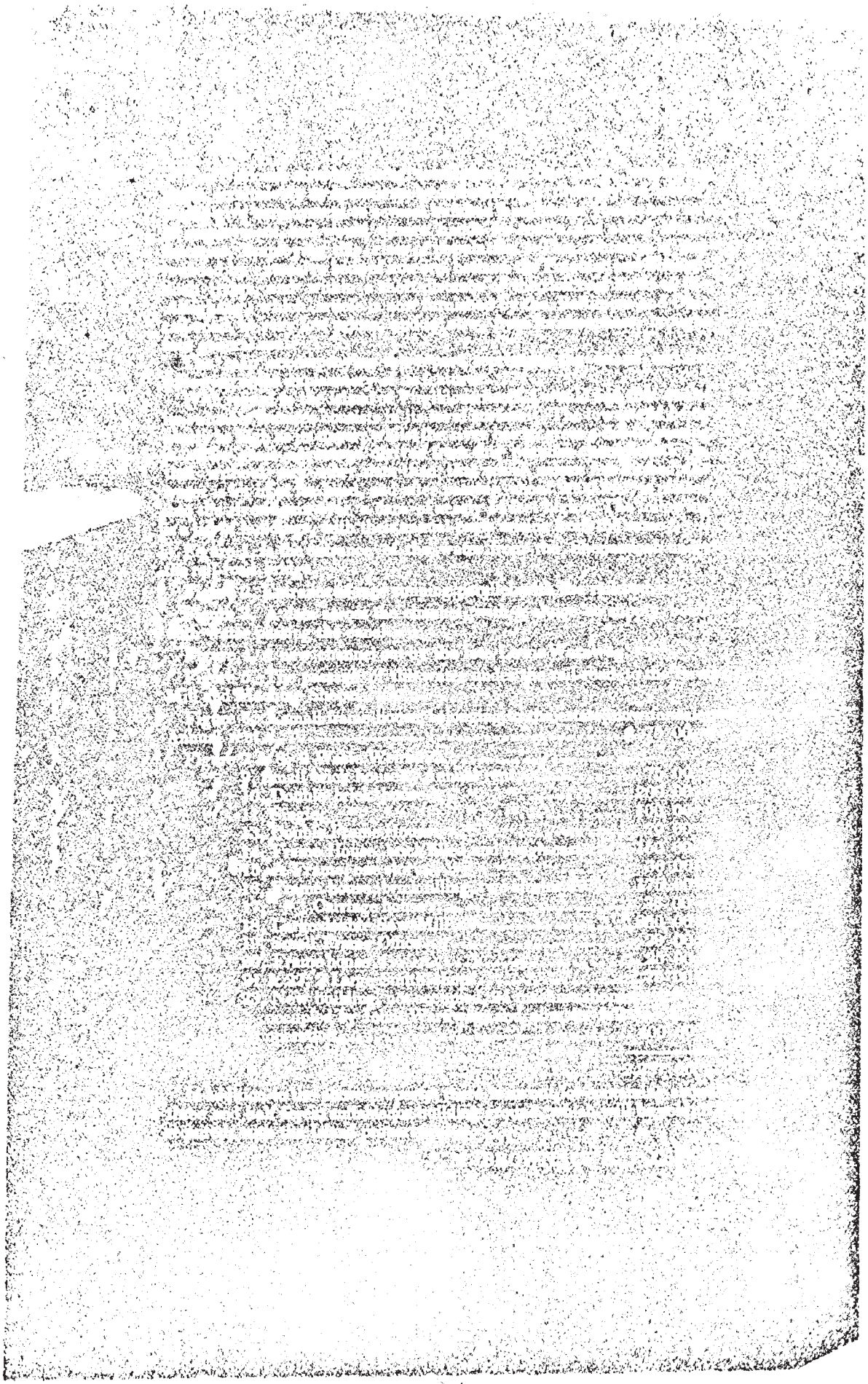
"Whereas the parties of the first are desiring to have sold to the best advantage the property hereinafter mentioned and for that purpose have selected the said James Giddings, who has agreed to advance to the said parties of the first part, to be affixed in payment of debts due by them and for which the property aforesaid is bound, the sum of two thousand dollars...the said two thousand dollars to be secured to said Giddings in the manner hereinafter mentioned and the said Giddings having agreed to have the said property conveyed to him upon the trust and for the purposes hereinafter more particularly set forth and faithfully to discharge the said trust so to be confided to him by the said parties of the first part...(the Schofields and Wernwags convey to Giddings)...constituting part of a larger tract now called and known by the name of 'Virginius", so being also a part of an Island in the Shenandoah River adjoining Harpers-Ferry, and beginning for said piece or portion of land at a Gudgeon standing in the middle of a street laid out, it being a corner of the "Merchant Mill' property and running thence with the lines of the same south twelve and a half degrees west five poles and eight links to the north edge of the dam, thence up the wall north eighty two and a quarter degrees west fifteen poles and three links to a cedar stake, thence leaving the mill dam and running north seven and three quarters degrees east four poles and four links to a stake in the other mill dam, thence up the same South eighty three degrees west thirteen poles and five links to a small cedar, thence South eighty nine and a half degrees west twenty three poles and six links to two saplings from one stump thence South eighty two degrees west twelve poles and five links to the south post of the guard gate at the head of the Island, thence South forty five degrees west seven poles to two Ash saplings on the bank of the river, thence down it with the meanders South seventy eight and a half degrees east eleven poles to a pile of stones, thence North eighty two and a quarter degrees east, twenty six poles to the upper end of the race wall at the edge of the river, thence South eighty and three quarter degrees east, twenty four poles Thence South eighty nine and a quarter degrees east seven poles and eight links to the upper corner of the purchase from J. Stubblefield, continuing with said purchase along the meanders of the river, South eighty nine degrees East, seven poles and three links, South sixty two degrees and 20 minutes East, nine poles and five links, South eighty three degrees east, five poles, North eighty seven and three quarter degrees east, twenty poles and nine links to three Ash on the East end of the Island. Thence crossing the stream until it intersects the United States line, thence up the River with said line to a sycamore, Thence crossing the stream to the point of a rock at the waters edge corner to Edward Wagers lot (Tract No. 3), Thence with the same to the middle of the street at a stake. Thence up the middle of the street to the beginning containing five acres, three Rods and one perch, more or less. Excepting out of said land a two story brick house

"now occupied by the said Jesse Schofield and the lot of ground on which the same stands, [Tract No. 5] and which said lot is now enclosed by a fence round the same and which said house & lot is marked Number 12 on the plat recently made out for said James Giddings by James M. Brown the Surveyor of Jefferson County in the State of Virginia, which said plat is now in the possession of said Giddings. which said house and lot of ground is to be and continue the property and estate of said Jesse Schofield as he has heretofore held and enjoyed the same, and his title to and possession of the same to be in no way affected or disturbed by virture of this deed...And the said parties of the first part do hereby further grant...all that tract or parcel of land containing forty acres, situate in Jefferson County aforesaid including a part of the River Shenandoah some Islands, Rocks & so forth, and which was granted by the Commonwealth of Virginia unto George Stubblefield by its grant or patent bearing date the twenty second day of November 1834 and recorded in Book D. No. 2 page 297 in the land Office of said Commonwealth of Virginia...that were by said George Stubblefield conveyed by his deed...to the said John Wernwag and a certain Joseph L. Smith and by the said Smith conveyed to a certain Benjamin Price and by the said Price...to the said Jesse Schofield...(also all title to three acres, one rod and 39 perches of land located in South Bolivar)...that is to say, in trust that the said James Giddings shall and may at any time or times within two years from the date of this deed sell and dispose of, either at public or private sale, and on such terms as he may deem best, all or any part of said property or real estate conveyed to him. And in making said sale or sales or dispositions of said property or in part, the said Giddings is to have full power and authority to so divide and parcel out the same inlots or otherwise, as in his Judgement he may think best..." 73

Armed with these two documents, James Giddings set forth in 1844 to sell tract No. 4 on the Island of Virginius. To assist him in this project, Mr. Giddings had the PLAN AND REPORT WITH A DESCRIPTION VIEW OF THE ISLAND OF VIRGINIUS, AT HARPERS FERRY, VIRGINIA, printed in 1844. 74 Copies of the report and tracings of the plan of the Island follow on the next pages of this chapter.

73. Deed of Trust, May 16, 1844, Deed Book 27, pp.144-145, also Microfilm Reel 11, V.3, pp.225-233.

74. National Archives R. G. 153, War Department, Judge Advocate General Office, Reservation File, Harper's Ferry, West Virginia, Miscellaneous Papers File 7. For Plan see pp. 74-80



In summarizing the history of Tract No. 4 from 1835 to 1844, a two story brick house (Bldg. No. 17 on the 1844 map) and small lot was sold off from Lot No. 4 in 1835 to Jesse Schofield to become Tract No. 5. Tract No. 4 was owned by Joseph L. Smith and John Wernwag from 1835 to 1836, with Smith holding an undivided two-thirds interest and Wernwag an undivided one-third interest in the property. Both partners were in financial difficulties during this period and in September, 1836, Smith declared himself bankrupt. His interest therefore passed into the hands of the Court, where it remained from September, 1836, until about 1840. Smith's two-thirds interest was then purchased from the Court for $8,000 by Jesse Schofield, final payment being made on July 3, 1844. Thus in 1844 John Wernwag and Jesse Schofield owned Tract No. 4.

The Smith Shops located on Tract No. 4 in 1835 and probably to 1844 were leased and operated by William Richards. The Saw Mill from 1835 to 1836 was operated by Joseph L. Smith. From March, 1839, until July, 1840, they were leased by Jesse Schofield and George Mauzy. From about August, 1840, until November the Saw Mill was run by Schofield and Joseph P. Shannon and then by Schofield alone from December, 1840, until 1844.

The machine shops located on Tract No. 4 were operated by the Wernwag family and probably Joseph P. Shannon from 1835 until 1844. A detailed description of the buildings on Tract No. 4 will be found in the conclusion to this chapter.

THE FLOODS OF 1843

Before proceeding to the General Summary and consideration of the 1844 map, we present here data on the three floods that struck the Island of Virginius in 1843. On April 20, 1843, the newspaper reported:

"GREAT FRESHET

The water of the Potomac and Shenandoah Rivers were higher on Saturday evening last, at Harpers-Ferry, than they have been since the memorable flood of 1810, and great damage has been done in the flooding of the cellars and lower apartments of the houses, and in the carrying away of lumber from every accessible point.--Mr. Lewis Wernwag, whose enterprise and usefulness are proverbial, was a loser to the amount of several hundreds of dollars, and the Public Lumber Yard [Armory] was almost literally stripped of timber, plank and wood--much of which might have been saved, if workmen had been directed to make the effort on Saturday morning.

The water was over the streets of the village, and all the little garden spots were inundated, and the early labors of the occupants completely destroyed. The great Rail Road bridge over the Potomac was in imminent danger, the stream being within 18 inches of the timbers, and the drift-wood in many instances broke off the plank which lined the frame work.

Immense damage has been done to the embankments of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, as far as heard from, East and West--and we fear that, in the present deranged condition of the finances of the Company, the means of repairing this damage will not be easily commanded.

The flood was produced by the continued rains of the last week, and the melting of the mountain snows which for months had been gathering in the fastnesses..." 75

Two floods struck in September, 1843; the newspaper reported of the first flood:

"DESTRUCTIVE RAIN AND FLOOD.

"The rain, which commenced falling on Wednesday night the 6th, about 9th o'clock, was awfully heavy, and disastrous beyond calculation. It seems as if the Heavens had been opened, as in the deluge of old, and in a few hours the town [Charles Town] run was swollen into an angry and terrible river, carrying destruction in its train

75. Virginia Free Press, April 20, 1843, p.2, c.3.

"throughout its whole length, from its source to the Shenandoah River (It poured for four hours, and after a long description of damage in and near Charles Town, the editor continued)

The damage has been great in various directions. The Winchester and Potomac Rail Road, from Cameron's to Harpers-Ferry, was a good deal damaged. The loss will be several thousand dollars. The Baltimore and Ohio Rail Road, from Sleepy Creek to Harpers-Ferry, was also materially injured, but the travel has been resumed...Every hour brings us report of damage, and we may expect an endless detail of disasters from this memorable storm. We fear its consequences will be further felt, in the way of sickness, unless great care be taken to clean out and purify the cellars..." 76

The second flood followed immediately on the first, and the paper reported:

"ANOTHER DESTRUCTIVE FLOOD.

The rains of the last week, beginning on Monday, and with intervals continuing until Friday have resulted in a tremendous flood in the Potomac and Shenandoah, and their tributaries, and great destruction to crops, fencing, and timber, has ensued. The wind on Thursday night, from the South East, was very violent, and the corn throughout its range has been prostrated in the fields, which are saturated to overflowing. The small streams have surpassed in volume any thing remembered by the 'oldest inhabitant.'...

At Harpers-Ferry, however, the flood has been the most disasterous. Both Rivers were up on Saturday morning three feet above the highest point of the flood last April, and more than a foot over the memorable flood of 1810. On Shenandoah street, boats were used, and the water was in the first story of almost every house. The street between Carrell's (located on Wager Lot No. 6, 7, part of 8 and 9, in the Ferry Lot) and Walling's (located on Wager Lot No. 5 in the Ferry Lot) Hotels was several feet deep, and the premises of both so filled that their cooking for hundreds of...(travellers was impossible?) The water was touching the Rail Road Bridge, and the rise of another foot must have swept that costly work away. The Rail Roads, we believe, have suffered no injury, but the Canal has been seriously damaged. The lift lock at Harpers-Ferry has been swept out, and the banks in many places are entirely gone...

But to recur to Harpers-Ferry. The damage to the premises of the workmen, on Shenandoah street especially, is a most serious matter. Their little gardens, upon which many of them depend for winter supplies, have been entirely ruined, and their losses in various ways have been quite heavy. Those residing on the Potomac, between the

76. Virginia Free Press, September 14, 1843, p.2, c.1.

"River and the Armory Canal, were also much incommoded; and the loss of all, in addition to their want of regular employment the last year, will prove a serious drawback upon them. Indeed, if ever the government were called upon to exercise a paternal guardianship over the affairs of their workmen, the present is the time. Means should at once be applied to restore the injured premises to their former state, if possible, in order to prevent sickness, which is now so justly apprehended.

The Island premises (Virginius) were also overflowed, and the lumber, &c. of the Wernwag family had scarcely a dry spot to rest upon--The water filled the gardens and cellars, and in some instances was upon the first floors of the dwellings. Indeed, it is impossible to give the reader, who has not seen the ravages, any idea of the amount of damage and derangement occasioned by this unprecedented floor. Half the injury is probably unknown to us, but we hear that effect of the storm have been felt thro'out the whole of this and the neighboring counties. The amount of loss is incalcuable, and the two freshets of September will be matters for remembrance for the present generation, more eventful than any to which their predecessors can refer them." 77

SUMMARY AND 1844 MAP: 29 BUILDINGS ON THE ISLANDS

TRACT NO. 1 (Five Buildings). Owned in 1844 by Hugh Gilleece and Alexander Brown. (Shown in blue on map)

Bldg. A. A dwelling house, (standing in 1834)

Bldg. B. Gilleece's Iron Foundry. (1834 Oil Mill converted into a foundry in 1835.)

Bldg. C. Probably the Chopping Mill erected by Gilleece in 1840.

Bldg. D. Probably a dwelling house (standing in 1834)

Bldg. E. Probably a stable or shop (standing in 1834)

TRACT NO. 2 (Four red buildings). Owned in 1844 by John and Abraham Herr.

Bldg. H. probably a coopers shop or dwelling house (standing in 1834)

77. Virginia Free Press, September 21, 1843, p.2, c.2.

Bldg. G. probably a dwelling house (either new or relocated after 1834)

Bldg. I. a dwelling house (standing in 1834)

Bldg. M. a stone merchant flour mill known as the "Island Mills", this structure was erected by Luther I, Cox in 1840 approximately on the site of the earlier mill that had been destroyed by fire in February, 1839.

TRACT NO. 3. (Three green buildings) owned in 1844 by the Winchester & Potomac Railroad Company

Bldg. K. a one family stone-stuccoed dwelling house (standing in 1834)

Bldg. N. a large two family stone stuccoed dwelling house (standing in 1834)

Bldg. O. a new Depot Building, erected 1835-37, by the Railroad Company

TRACT NO. 4 (16 orange buildings) owned in 1844 by John Wernwag and Jesse Schofield.

Bldg. No. 6. a small frame dwelling house (standing in 1834)

Bldg. No. 9. a small brick dwelling house (probably standing in 1834)

Bldg. No. 10. a double brick dwelling house (probably standing in 1834)

Bldg. No. 11. a single brick dwelling house (probably standing in 1834)

Bldg. No. 13. double frame dwelling house (probably standing in 1834)

Bldg. No. 14. a frame house, brick filled and rough cast, (probably standing in 1834)

Bldg. No. 15. a frame house, one story, brick filled and rough cast, (probably standing in 1834)

Bldg. No. 16. frame house, two stories, brick filled (probably standing in 1834)

Bldg. No. 17. frame carriage house, erected after 1834

Bldg. No. 18. large double saw mill (standing in 1834)

Bldg. No. 19. small frame office, (probably standing in 1834)

Bldg. No. 20. frame house (probably standing in 1834)

Bldgs. No. 21 and 22. two large Smith Shops (at least one of which was standing in 1834)

Bldg. No. 23. new building, not occupied

Bldg. No. 24. machine shops occupied by John Wernwag, and now in full operation (standing in 1834)

Explaination of other Figures on Map connected with Tract No. 4

Figure 1, is the entrance of the water from the Shenandoah under rail-road bridge (guard gate on 1834 maps)

Figure 2, Entrance of race running parallel with the railroad

Figure 3, a dam across the channel, with a sluice to supply boats with water passing the canal. (probably erected after 1834)

Figure 4, a new channel cut by the late Lewis Wernwag after 1834.

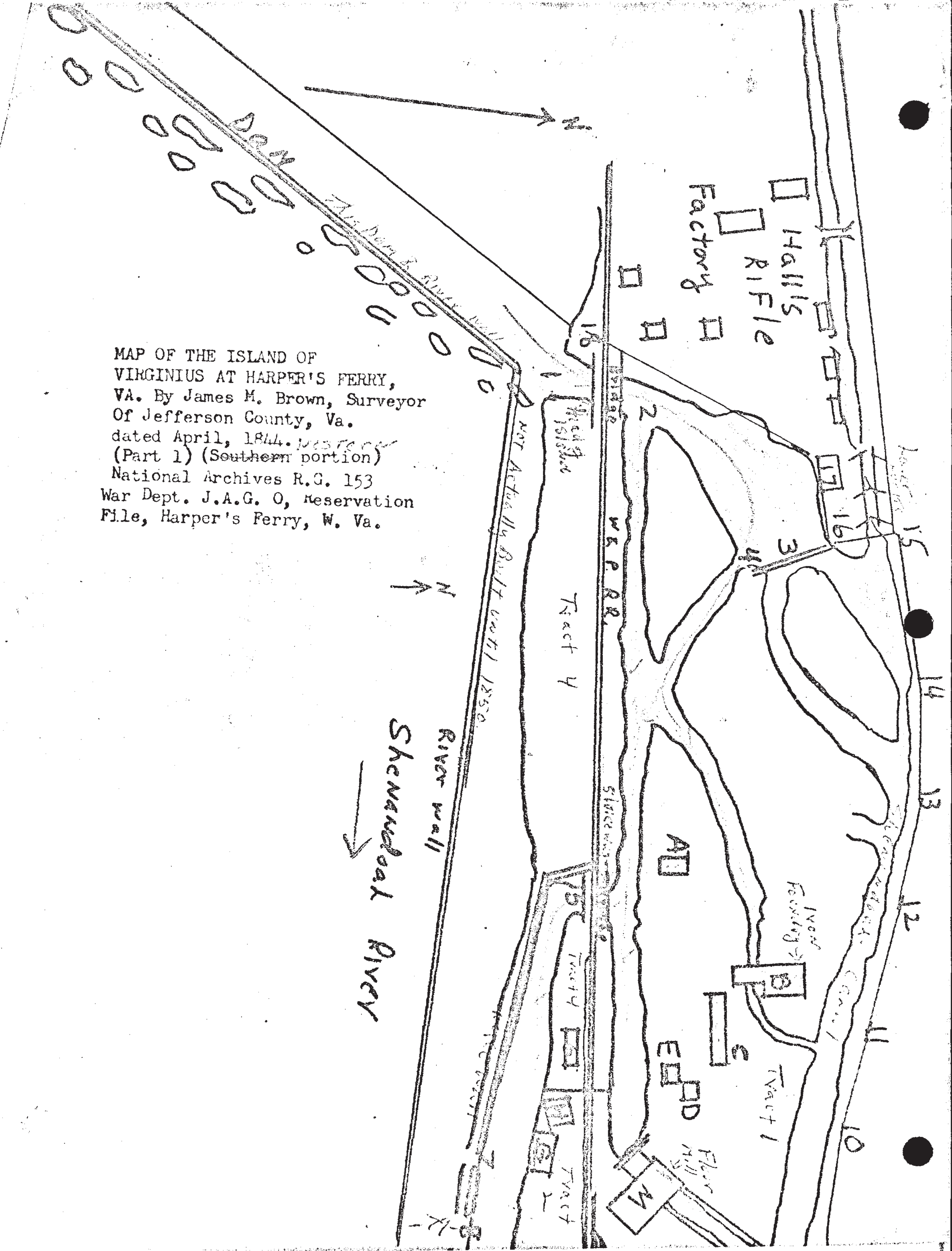
Figure 5, the passage of the water under the rail-road to the Saw Mill and Machine Shops.

Figure 7 and 8, two waste weirs in the Race Wall.

The dam across the Shenandoah River is a projected dam and was not actually constructed until 1850. (see next chapter)

TRACT NO. 5 (one purple colored building) owned in 1844 by Jesse Schofield.

Bldg. No. 12, a brick two-story dwelling house (probably standing in 1834)



MAP OF THE ISLAND OF
VIRGINIUS AT HARPER'S FERRY,
VA. By James M. Brown, Surveyor
Of Jefferson County, Va.
dated April, 1844.
(Part 1) (~~Southern~~ portion)
National Archives R.G. 153
War Dept. J.A.G. O, Reservation
File, Harper's Ferry, W. Va.

MAP OF THE ISLAND OF VIRGINIUS AT HARPER'S FERRY, VA. By James M. Brown, Surveyor of Jefferson County, Va. dated (April, 1844. (Part 2-northern part).

-80-

CHAPTER V

ISLAND OF VIRGINIUS, 1845 to 1852, THE HARPERS FERRY AND SHENANDOAH MANUFACTURING COMPANY.

In this chapter we shall consider the rise and fall of the Harpers Ferry and Shenandoah Manufacturing Company as well as the history of the other tracts on the island of Virginius. The chapter will conclude with a study of the 1848-51 map of S. Howell Brown which shows buildings on the Island as of those dates.

TRACT NO. 1 - The Foundry Lot. This tract was owned by Hugh Gilleece and Alexander Brown from 1845 through 1852.[1] Mr. Gilleece continued to operate the iron foundry throughout this period. A typical advertisement of his reads:

"COAL STOVES

The attention of those in want of COAL STOVES is invited to the improved kind that is now being manufactured at the Harpers-Ferry Foundry, which consist of five different sizes, suitable for Offices, Shops, Stores, Churches, &c. Also on hand, Hot-Air Cooking Stoves, which will be delivered and set up in any section of the country they may be wanted.

WANTED--A large quantity of Old Copper and Brass, and old Cast and Wrought Iron, which will be taken in exchange, at the highest price, for anything in my line." [2]

The 1848 map indicates that Tract No. 1 contained five buildings at that date just as it did in 1844. The census of 1850 also reveals the following data on Mr. Gilleece, who either living or having a

1. Deed of Trust, June 19, 1848, Gilleece to John Moler as trustee for Abraham H. Herr, Deed Book 30, pp.38-39. Also Deed of Trust, September 16, 1854, Gilleece to Moler & Fouke, Trustees for A. H. Herr, Deed Book 34, p.229.

2. Virginia Free Press, November 13, 1845, p.2, c.7; also January 7, 1847, p.1, c.1; October 21, 1852, p.3, c.2.

drink at the Carrell Hotel when the census taker found him:

"Hugh Gilleece, 40 years old, male, Foundry, Value of Real Estate owned: $5,000, born in Connecticut." [3]

TRACT NO. 2, the "Island Mills" Lot. This property was owned from 1845 to January, 1848, by the brothers John Herr and Abraham H. Herr, who, under a partnership, operated the merchant flour mill known as the "Island Mills". On January 24, 1848, John Herr sold for $5.00 to his brother Abraham H. Herr:

"...all right to the Island of Virginius, an undivided moiety of land having upon it a large merchant flour manufacturing mill..." [4]

thus ending their partnership. Abraham H. Herr therefore became the sole owner of Tract No. 2 in the 1848-1852 period and operated the "Island Mill" by himself. This lot contained four buildings in 1844, but the 1848 map indicates that it contained only three structures at this later date. Bldg. No. H on the 1844 map is missing from the 1848 map. The census of 1850 reveals the following data on the Mr. Herr and his millers: Living in one house was

"Abraham H. Herr, 35 years old, male, Miller, Value of Real estate owned; $40,000, Born in Penn.
Narcissa Herr, 21, female, Born in Virginia. Married within the year."

Living in the second house were:

"Ferdenand R. Butler, 39 male, miller, Born in D.C." and six other members of his family and also "Samuel H. Cates____(?) 24, male, born in Maryland," [5] and wife.

3. National Archives R. G. 29, Population Schedules of the Seventh Census of the United States 1850, Virginia, Volume 12, p.841. on Reel 10, V.2, p.133.

4. Deed of B. & S., January 24, 1848, Deed Book 28, pp.320-321.

5. Census of 1850, Vol. 12, p.807, Reel 10, V.2, p.98. See next Chapter

TRACT NO. 3. This lot was owned by the Winchester and Potomac Railroad Company from 1845 to 1847 and on it was located their railroad depot until 1847. On July 1, 1847, the W. & P. R.R. Co. sold most of Tract No. 3 to Jesse Schofield for $1,500. This deed reads in part:

"Two houses and lots at Harpers Ferry as the same were enclosed on the first day of November last, one of them occupied by Ritenour and Fitzsimmons and the other by Mr. N. Evans, together with the vacant ground East and west of the said houses now in possession of said company (purchased of Gildea) and south of the rail road track of the said company, so as not to interfere on the south side of said tracks with the said tracks as they are now laid and in use by the said company, and also so much of the vacant ground of the said company north of these tracks and opposite to said houses and lots, as is now enclosed by said company to wit: the ground lately occupied by a depot of said company now taken away, except that the south line of said lot is to run from the east corner of the said lot now enclosed, direct to the front of the shop of said Schofield (being the front of the shop and not the porch) leaving entire room for the levers of the turn around [switches] of said company as they are now used and worked by the said company, also so much of the ground aforesaid enclosed as is north of a line drawn 30 feet from the aforesaid east corner of said enclosed lot to Herr's lot being the ground lying north of said line down to the river or Canal, said line drawn to run parallel with the track of the said Rail Road which is laid nearest to said enclosed lot or the most northern track..." [6]

On August 28, 1847, Jesse Schofield and wife conveyed this same portion of Tract No. 3 to the Harpers Ferry and Shenandoah Manufacturing Company for the sum of $1,600.[7] This company held title to most of Tract No. 3 from 1847 through 1852. The 1848 map shows Tract No. 3 as containing two dwelling houses at that date and the Rail Road Depot Building is missing from the lot.

6. Deed of B. & S., July 1, 1847, Deed Book 29, pp.112-113.

7. Ibid., August 28, 1847, Deed Book 29, p.439.

TRACT NO. 4, The Saw Mill and Machine Shop Lot

On February 20, 1845, the firm of "Wernwag & Schofield" announced:

"SAW MILL NOTICE.
The subscribers feeling grateful for past favors would return their thanks for the liberal patronage extended them, and would respectfully solicit a continuance. They are prepared to saw at the following prices: 40 cents per 100 ft. board measure; 20 cents per 100 feet running, for shingling lathing and paling; or we will saw for the third log..." 8

In May, 1845, they announced that the firm of Wernwag and Schofield had been dissolved and "the subscribers having rented the (Saw Mill), will continue the business under the firm of Schofield & Wernwag..." 9

In June of 1845 Nelson Faulkner advertised:

"PUBLIC SALE
The subscriber, intending to close up his present business, will sell at public sale his entire stock of
NEW FURNITURE,
On Saturday the 14th of June next, at his Shop, on the Island Virginius, consisting of the following articles:
1 Mahogany Sideboard;
Dining and Breakfast Tables;
Bureaus, Safes, Bedsteads;
1 small Turning Lathe, Work Benches;
A quantity of Plank and Stuff, &c..." 10

On May 12, 1844, Jesse Schofield and John Wernwag and their wives had signed two documents that granted James Giddings a two year period within which Giddings was to attempt to sell Tract No. 4. Mr. Giddings used every effort in an attempt to interest Northern capitalist in the Island of Virginius, but was unsuccessful. Mr. Giddings wrote later of

8. Virginia Free Press, February 20, 1845, p.3, c.2.

9. Ibid., May 15, 1845, p.3, c.1.

10. Ibid., June 5, 1845, p.3, c.3.

these events: "No Sale was made within the two years named in said deed (dated May 16, 1844) though an informal arrangement was made by all parties for a sale which is more particularly spoken of hereinafter. At the expiration of the two years my authority to make such sales was continued for another year on the same terms as was before stipulated according to the best of my recollection, the terms are named in the deed of May 16, 1846..." [11] Three days earlier on May 12, 1846, the trio had signed the following agreement which was not recorded (i.e, kept secret)

"It is hereby agreed that the property on the Island of Virginius, with all the water power and water rights-as now owned by Jesse Schofield and John Wernwag-are conveyed by them to James Giddings by a deed of trust shall be sold to the Harpers Ferry and Shenandoah Manufacturing Company for the sum of Thirty Seven thousand dollars- three fourth of which shall be paid for in cash and that the house and lot in the occupancy of Jesse Schofield and in which he now lives - shall be sold to said company for the sum of three thousand dollars- and for which Jesse Schofield binds himself to make a deed and also to procure his wife to join in the same-Whenever said Company shall think it convenient to require the same-on their paying said Schofield the above sum for the same. In witness thereof we have hereunto subscribed our hands and seals this twelfth day of May, 1846.

Jesse Schofield (signed)
John Wernwag (signed)

Witness James Giddings." [12]

Returning to Mr. Giddings' statement made in 1855, he further wrote of these transactions:

"during the continuance of my authority under the first deed (May 16, 1844) I made the most strenuous efforts to sell said property and not being able to find a purchaser through my efforts and with the approbation and concurance of all parties interested in said property,

11. James Giddings answered to questions proposed by Commissioners of the Court, dated May 16, 1855, Reel 11, V.3, p.284. For the deed of trust, May 15, 1846, see Reel 11, V.3, pp.214-224, or Deed Book 28, pp.122-124.

12. Reel 11, V.4, p.370.

"a charter was obtained from the Virginia Legislature January 15, 1846 to incorporate the Harpers Ferry & Shenandoah Manufacturing Company, with the expectation that said Company, when organized, would purchase said property, I used every action to obtain subscriptions to said Company and agreed myself to take $8000 dollars in the stock of said Company and pay for it in Cash. All this was done with the express approbation of all the parties interested in said property. And the price at which said property was to be sold to the said company was expressly agreed to by all the parties interested in it before said Company was formally organized and on the 12th of May 1846 the said parties Schofield and Wernwag expressed their agreement to this sale in writing... On the 23d of June thereafter the Company was formally organized..." 13

On June 11, 1846, the following notice appeared in the newspaper:

"NOTICE.

A meeting of the subscribers to the stock of the Harpers-Ferry and Shenandoah Manufacturing Company, will be held at Harpers-Ferry, on Tuesday the 23d instant, for the purpose of electing a Board of Directors and President for said Company, and for designating a day to lay the foundation stone of the first Factory--and also to make preliminary arrangements for the permanent organization of said company.

JAMES GIDDINGS,
G. B. WAGER,
JOHN WERNWAG,
JESSE SCHOFIELD,
A. B. HENSON,
HUGH McALEAR,
CALVIN PAGE." 14

On July 2, 1846, the newspaper commented on these developments:

"THE MANUFACTURING COMPANY.

The proceedings of the "Harpers-Ferry and Shenandoah Manufacturing Company" will be found in our columns to-day. It will be seen that the first step has been taken, and we trust that complete success will crown the efforts of those engaged, which we think must be the case. We learn from the Frederick Citizen, that there is already about seventy thousand dollars of Stock, taken in this Company, the charter of which authorizes a capital stock of three hundred thousand dollars, and the holding of property to the amount of one million. We understand that the President and Directors have already taken action to prosecute their enterprise with energy, and that the corner stone of the Factory, will be laid as early as the 11th of this month."

13. Reel 11, V.3, p.285.

14. Virginia Free Press, June 11, 1846, p.3, c.3.

"James Giddings, Esq., a gentleman in every way qualified for that responsible position, has, we are informed, been elected President of the Company." 15

On July 16, 1846, the President of the new Harpers Ferry and Shenandoah Mfg. Co., James Giddings, advertised:

"TO CONTRACTORS.

Sealed Proposals will be received by the subscriber, (as Agent for the Harpers-Ferry and Shenandoah Manufacturing Company,) until Monday the 27th instant, inclusive, for materials and labor for building a COTTON FACTORY, 100 feet long, and 45 feet wide, in the clear, and 4 stories high above the foundation. First--for building the foundation of good strong stone work, 4 feet thick at the base, about 16 feet high, and three feet thick at the tip. The bids for this work must include all materials and scaffolding, and complete the work.---Second--the bids for the four stories above the foundation, will be received for both brick and stone, and must include all materials of every description, and complete the work. Separate proposals will be received for the furnishing three hundred and twenty thousand bricks; and also for the laying the brick in the wall, finding lime, sand, and scaffolding. Also, for completing the carpenter's work of said Factory.

A description of the kind of work to be done, may be known by calling on the subscriber, or on Mr. R. S. LITTLEJOHN, Harpers Ferry, with whom the plan of the building will be left after the 20th." 16

President James Giddings informed the company stockholders, early in October, 1846: "that they will have the foundation of the first cotton Factory completed up to the Brick by the 22d inst. (October). And on that day the Corner Stone of the building will be laid, with appropriate ceremonies of the Masonic Fraternity..." 17

While the new factory was in process of being constructed, certain real estate transactions that concerned Tract No. 4 were also underway in 1846. On September 1, 1846, apparently to close out their former

15. Virginia Free Press, July 2, 1846, p.2, c.4.

16. Ibid., July 16, 1846, p.3, c.3.

17. Ibid., October 8, 1846, p.3, c.2. See October 29, 1846, p.2, c.2,3 for an account of the laying of the Cornerstone.

partnership and also to insure their sole title to Tract 4, Jesse Schofield and John Wernwag purchased of Joseph P. Shannon, Isaac Wernwag, Lewis Wernwag and Thomas Wernwag for $5.00:

"all that portion of the Island of Virginius...which portion was purchased of a James Stubblefield by Lewis Wernwag, deceased, and conveyed to said Lewis Wernwag by deed of December 28, 1824...and all right to the piece on the island conveyed by Fontaine Beckham and wife to Lewis Wernwag by deed of March 23, 1830..." 18

In September, 1846, Special Commissioner Andrew Hunter also advertised:

"PUBLIC SALE
OF
VALUABLE REAL ESTATE ON THE ISLAND OF VIRGINIUS.

The undersigned, as Special Commissioner appointed for the purpose, by decree of the County Courty of Jefferson, rendered on the 21st instant, in the cause of Hunter, guardian, vs. Beckham's children, &c. will proceed to sell at public auction, to the highest bidder, on...the 16th day of next month, October, 1846, in front of Herr's mill, near the premises,

A STRIP OF LAND,

Lying on the upper (west) and south side of the island of Virginius--between the Railroad and the main branch of the river, containing as is supposed 2 acres 3 roods and 1 perch--from which however is to be expected so much of it as is occupied by the W. & P. Railroad..." 19

This piece of property, a part of Tract 4, was purchased by the Harpers Ferry and Shenandoah Manufacturing Company for $555.00 on January 24, 1847. The deed describes the tract as follows:

Beginning at a cedar stake in the North edge of Saw mill dam thence N 73¼ E 4.4 poles to a stake in the line of Herr mill lot (tract No. 2) thence up the same S 83 W 13.5 poles to a small cedar at the south edge of said dam thence continuing up the dam S 89½ W 23.6 poles to two Saplings sprouting out of one stump thence S 82 W 12.5 poles to the south post of the guard gate at the head of the Island thence 45 W 7

18. Deed of B. & S., September 1, 1846, Deed Book 28, pp.293-294.

19. Virginia Free Press, September 24, 1846, p.3, c.1.

'poles to two ash saplings thence S 78½ E 11 poles to a pile of stones at the south edge of the Island thence continuing down the river with its meanderings N 82¼ E 26 poles to the upper end of the race wall at the edge of the river thence with the same S 80 3/4 E 24 poles to a ____thence S 89¼ E 7.8 poles to what was formerly Wernwags corner now the property of ____thence with the line of said last mentioned parties crossing the saw mill dam N 12½ E 4.7 poles to a point in said line at the North edge of the saw mill dam thence up the stone wall which bounds the same N 82¼ W 15.3 poles to the beginning containing Two Acres three rods and one pole..." 20

A further idea of the products manufactured on Tract 4 may be obtained from Schofield and Mauzy's notice of September, 1846:

"FOR SALE

The subscribers have for sale a stationary Engine and Boiler, of eight horse power, which may readily be run up to ten or twelve. The boiler is 24 feet long and 30 inches in diameter in the clear. Also, a double Saw Mill, of Crosbey's Patent, together with two carriages, Straps, and all the Irons belonging to said Mills, and two Circular Saws, of about 24 inches in diameter, and all the Straps belonging thereto, Also one of Mr. John Wernwag's make of Stavecutter and Jointers--the whole of which will be sold low for cash or good paper." 21

Returning to the new factory being erected, the newspaper reported on the progress of construction in January, 1847, writing:

"HARPERS-FERRY WATER POWER.--

That splendid water power at Harpers-Ferry, the best probably in this country, next to Niagara Falls is beginning to be brought into use. A large cotton factory, one hundred by forty five feet in the clear, by four stories in height, is being put up under the superintendence of Mr. Giddings, for a company with a capital of forty thousand dollars. The machinery is being built by Danforth, of Patterson, N. J. Sooner or later that splendid water power must come into use for general manufacturing. It has long been waiting only for some bold spirits to make a beginning." 22

20. January 24, 1847, Deed of B. & S., Deed Book 32, p.432.

21. Virginia Free Press, September 3, 1846, p.3, c.4.

22. Ibid., January 7, 1847, p.3, c.2.

The first annual report of the Company, issued in June, 1847, spoke of this construction as follows:

"...The committee beg leave to state also, that they made a cursory examination of the building and other works connected with the Factory, and that they were highly gratified with the rapid process made in every department of the work. The arrangements made for securing the steady and uninterrupted advancement of the work exhibits great prudence and foresight, and the committee feel assured that they cannot speak in terms too complimentary of the ability and success with which, so far, the President has conducted the various and complicated affairs of the company..." [23]

In July the newspaper also reported: "The Harpers Ferry and Shenandoah Manufacturing Company have nearly completed their Factory building, and so great is the confidence of those who have shares in the Company, that in many instances they are purchasing additional stock. The Company owes a great deal of its success to the untiring industry of its President, JAMES GIDDINGS, Esq." [24]

The Smith Shops were apparently in operation in 1847, for in August of that year George Wissinger advertised:

"BLACKSMITH WANTED:
I wish to employ a Journeyman Blacksmith who is of industrious habits, and who understands country work generally. To such a one liberal wages will be given. Virginius..." [25]

On August 24, 1847, there occurred the sale of Tract No. 4 to the new company. On that day Jesse Schofield and wife, John Wernwag and wife, and James Giddings sold Tract No. 4 to the Harpers Ferry and Shenandoah Manufacturing Company for $37,000. One-quarter of the sum was to

23. Virginia Free Press, June 24, 1847, p.3, c.1.

24. Ibid., July 8, 1847, p.2, c.4.

25. Ibid., August 5, 1847, p.3, c.4.

be paid in cash and the other three-fourths was to be paid in stock of the company. By this transaction the Company received the following four pieces of land:

"all that land situate on the Island of Virginius...which is bounded as follows: viz: beginning at a stake in the middle of the street, and running thence South 12½' West 10 poles and 22½ links to the south side of a stone wall, thence down the same South 89' East 7 poles and 8 links, thence with the meanderings of the river S 62' 20" E 9 poles and 12½ links, thence S 83' E 5 poles, thence N 87' 45" E 20 poles and 22½ links to three ashes on the end of the island, thence crossing the stream until it intersects with the line of the United States, thence up the river with the United States line to a sycamore, thence crossing the stream to a point of a rock at the water's edge, corner to E. Wager's (now the Winchester and Potomac Rail Company's (Tract No. 3)) lot, thence, with the said Wager's line to a stake in the middle of the street, a corner to said Wager's lot, and thence up the middle of the street to the beginning, containing three acres, be the same more or less, being the same tract or parcel of land which James Stubblefield and wife by deed bearing date on the 28th day of December, 1824, conveyed to Lewis Wernwag (excepting and reserving, however a certain lot of land, part of the tract just described, on which the said Jesse Schofield now resides-and which, by deed bearing date May 25th 1835 was conveyed to the said Jesse by Joseph L. Smith and the said John Wernwag and Margaret his wife-The said lot of land so reserved and excepted from the operation of this conveyance is bounded as follows, viz: beginning at a point in the main street or road running through the said island of Virginius-running thence at right angles with said street south, back to the millrace-thence parallel with the street and at right angles with the last mentioned line forty feet down the said millrace, thence at right angles with the said last mentioned line, and parallel with the first, back to the street, thence with the said street forty feet back to the beginning-said corners on the street are indicated by stakes driven in the ground,)-Also one other tract or parcel of land, adjacent to the tract just described, and situate, lying and being in said County of Jefferson, bounded as follows: Beginning at a cedar stake, in the north edge of said Lewis Wernwag's (now said Schofield and John Wernwag's) saw mill dam, thence N 7 3/4 E 4.4 poles to a stake in Fontaine Beckham's (now Herr's) mill dam, thence up the same S 83' W 13.5 poles to a small cedar at the south edge of said dam, thence continuing up the dam S 89½' W 23.6 poles to two saplings spouting out of one stump, thence S 82' W 12.5 poles to the South post of the guard gate at the head of the island, thence S 45' W 7 poles to two ash saplings, thence, S 87½' E 11 poles to a pile of stones at the south edge of the Island, thence continuing down the river with its meanderings N 82¼' E 26 poles to the upper end of the race wall, at the edge of the river, thence with the same S 80 3/4' E 24 poles - thence S 89¼' E 7.8 poles to said Lewis Wernwag's (now said Jesse Schofield and John Wernwag's) corner, thence with his line crossing the saw mill dam N 12½'

"E 4.7 poles to a stone wall in said line, at the north edge of the saw mill dam-thence up the stone wall which bounds the same N 82½' W 15.3 poles to the beginning, containing two acres, three rods and one pole-being the same tract or parcel of land which Fontaine Beckham and wife and James Stubblefield, by deed bearing date the 23rd day of March 1830, conveyed to Lewis Wernwag. Also all estate, right, title and interest of the said parties of the first part...in and unto a certain tract or parcel of land, containing forty acres, situate in the said County of Jefferson, including a part of the river Shenandoah, some islands, rocks, & being the same tract or parcel of land, which, by patent bearing date on the 22nd day of November 1834, was granted by the Commonwealth of Virginia to George Stubblefield, and bounded according to the said patent as follows: Beginning at a red elm tree standing on the south bank of the Shenandoah River about 3 poles above Harding's Ferry landing, thence crossing the river N 5½' W 28 poles to an old sycamore stump, also a few poles above the landing, and in a line of the stone wall that incloses the United States Lumber yard, thence up the river keeping with said wall S 89'W 11 poles, N 58' W 11 poles, N 41' W 2.3 poles, Joseph L. Smith & Co. foot bridge to the Island, the course continues with a wall in all 20.8 poles to an old stooping sycamore tree, a patent corner to the United States land, thence keeping with the wall built by the United States on the margin of the river N 64' W 3.1 poles, thence N 78½' W 17.2 poles, thence north half a pole to an elm tree at Mars' necessary, thence N 77½' W 9 poles, bridge to Island [of Virginius] continued in all 19.5 poles, thence N 80' W 7.5 poles to an elm tree standing in the wall, thence N 82' W 9.5 poles to a locust, thence N 84 W 11.4 poles to a Mulberry tree, thence S 85' W 9.8 poles to a stooping sycamore, thence S 74' W 13 poles to an angle in said wall opposite foot of steps below lock gate, thence S 19' E, crossing boat course 5.2 poles (passing a sycamore tree near the waste gate from dam) to the dam, thence up the wall of the same passing the back of the large blacksmiths shop S 73' W 7.1 poles to the S. W. corner of the said shop, thence through the N. W. edge of the dam S 23 W 20 poles to the second spur of the guard wall above the inlet for water to the island, it being on the lower end of the island on which stands Capt. Hall's works, thence crossing the river S 35¼' W about 75 poles to an iron bolt on the west side of a large split in a large rock, thence with the meanders of the river to the beginning-[These boundaries are laid down on the 1844 map] Also six undivided sevenths (the remaining seventh being the property of the heirs of Wernwag deceased) of one other tract or parcel of land situated, lying and being in the said County of Jefferson and bounded as follows, viz. beginning at a stake at the edge of a drain, thence S 14¼ W 14.2 poles to a rock, thence S 72½' W 8.8 poles to Herrington's corner, thence S 32¼' W 6 poles to White's corner, thence S 74¼' W 13 poles, thence N 6¼' E 29.9 poles, thence S 77 3/4' E 26 poles to the beginning, containing three acres, one rood and thirty nine perches, be the same more or less, being the same tract or parcel of land which was sold by George Roweles in his life time to Lewis Wernwag, and of which a plat (which is now in the possession of the said Harper's Ferry and Shenandoah Manufacturing"

"Company) was made by a certain A. H. Glaser, and is hereby referred to for a more particular description (this last tract was located in South Bolivar)..." 26

On August 28, 1847, the Company also purchased from Jesse Schofield and his wife for $1,600 most of Tract No. 3 (see page 83 of this report), thus uniting Tracts No. 3 and 4 under a common ownership.

In September, 1847, the newspaper reported:

"FACTORY AT HARPERS-FERRY.

We made a hasty examination on Tuesday last, of the fine building erected on the Island of Virginius, under the direction of James Giddings, for the new Cotton Manufacturing Company. The building is 100 feet by 45 in the clear, four stories high, and built in the most substantial and elegant manner. The machinery will be in operation in a few months..." 27

In March, 1848, the following advertisement appeared:

"TO DRY GOODS MERCHANTS,

The undersigned would respectfully call the attention of Merchants to the article of YARD-WIDE SHEETING & SHIRTINGS, now manufactured by the Harpers-Ferry and Shenandoah Manufacturing Company at Harpers-Ferry.

He believes that the goods of their Mill to be fully equal to any manufactured in the country, and therefore colicits the attention of purchasers.

The contiguity of the Mill to the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, the Winchester & Potomac Railroad, and the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal, will enable the undersigned to fill orders for any portion of Western Virginia with promptness, and at less than Baltimore prices. He would ask Merchants to give these goods a trial before purchasing elsewhere.

W. GIDDINGS,
Agent for the Harpers-Ferry & Shen. Man. Co." 28

This notice, of course, indicates that the new cotton mill was in full production by March, 1848.

26. Deed of B. & S., August 24, 1847, Deed Book 30, pp.178-181, also on Reel 11, V. 3, pp.252-261.

27. Virginia Free Press, September 16, 1847, p.3, c.1.

28. Ibid., March 11, 1848, p.3, c.3.

The same day the newspaper also reported:

"ANOTHER PAPER FACTORY.

It has been intimated that a Company will be shortly formed for the erection of a Paper Factory on the Island of Virginius, Harpers-Ferry, contiguous to the present Cotton Factory. The active head of the Cotton Factory, James Giddings, Esq., has energy of character and indomitable perseverance, and we have little doubt of his entire success in rearing another edifice devoted to manufacturing purposes.

This, with the one proposed to be erected by Mr. Ellis, a short distance above Harpers Ferry, will render our County quite a paper mart." 29

This proposed building, as we shall see, was completed in July, 1849, and was actually utilized as a second Cotton Factory.

In October, 1848, however, certain dark financial clouds appeared on the horizon. On October 5, 1848, Richard Parker, John Moler, and A. H. Herr reported to the Borad of Directors of the company:

"The undersigned to whom was referred the resolution of the Board of May 1, 1848, directing them to arrange and settle all matters in reference to the rights and titles of the real estate belonging to this company, and to receive, have executed and recorded the proper evidences thereof, beg leave to report, that a deed conveying to the Company in fee simple the property purchased by it from Jesse Schofield and John Wernwag was on the 24th of August of last year sealed and acknowledged by all the grantors-but has not yet been delivered to the Company, nor recorded because of this difficulty of making the payments arising from the fact that John Wernwag, one of the Grantors, had several years ago executed a mortgage or deed of trust to Josiah Pennington of Baltimore upon his interest in said property. This debt thus made an incumbrance upon this property amounts to the sum of Six thousand Dollars, with interest thereon from the 1st day of July last. And being entirely the debt of said John Wernwag, it is, in the opinion of this Committee but proper that it should be thrown exclusively upon John Wernwag and his interest in the cash and stock to be paid for the said property, provided the Company can be rendered secured and not exposed to embarrasement by so doing."

29. Virginia Free Press, March 11, 1848, p.2, c.1.

" Two Thousand Dollars, part of said mortgage debt, has been called for by Mr. Pennington, and the President of this Company is now about to pay the sum out of the cash payment to be made to Schofield and Wernwag, and the undersigned feel assured that, by meeting the interest punctually, the remainder of said debt will not be required for a reasonable time, and if called for by Mr. Pennington, its amount would be readily advanced by any one having money to invest, who would take an assignment of the security to himself, And from this, the committee is of the opinion, that the Company would be perfectly secured from loss on account of this debt of the above named incumbrance, by retaining in it own account for its security from the sum to be paid in cash by it, the sum of Twenty two hundred dollars, and from the stock to be delivered by it Forty eight Hundred dollars-Thus reserving seven thousand dollars to meet an incumbrance of Six thousand Dollars. And whereas the proportions, in which the cash and the stock agreed to be paid and delivered to the said Schofield and Wernwag shall be divided between them, has been fixed and agreed on by said Schofield and Wernwag, and this Committee thinks that the amounts above proposed to be retained should be deducted exclusively from the share of said John Wernwag-is that the entire amount of cash to be paid and of stock to be delivered to Jesse Schofield may be paid or issued and delivered to him, so that no further difficulty may exist to stay the delivery of the deed aforesaid to this Company. Now this Committee recommend to the Board that the said sum of Twenty Two Hundred Dollars in cash, and Forty Eight Hundred Dollars in Stock, be retained by this Company, out of the cash to be paid, and the stock to be delivered to said John Wernwag, to meet the said debt from his to said Pennington-and that the residue of the cash payment and of the stock payment be settled with the parties at once, taking care that not more than Thirty Thousand Dollars in cash and stock be paid or delivered on account of this said property-and also that the conveyance aforesaid be at the same time delivered to the Company, so that it may be duly recorded..." [30]

On November 9, 1848, to secure $10,000 borrowed from Abraham Herr, the Company put into trust with William T. Daugherty three tracts of land, Tract No. 4 conveyed by Jesse Schofield and John Wernwag on August 24, 1847, Tract No. 3 as conveyed by Schofield on August 28, 1847, and one from John W. Moler that was recorded in Deed Book No. 29 on page 260. [31]

30. Reel 11, V.3, pp.376-377.

31. Deed of Trust, November 9, 1848, Deed Book 30, pp.617-619.

On January 1, 1849, the Company also received from Richard Parker, Special Commissioner in the case of Jesse Schofield & wife and John Wernwag & wife verus the heirs of George Rowles, the deedto the undivided six-seventh interest in the lot in Bolivar.[33]

The money borrowed of Herr in November, 1848, may have been used to construct a new factory on Tract No. 4. In any event, the new factory building was completed in July, 1849, as the newspaper reported at that time:

"VALLEY COTTON FACTORY,
HARPERS-FERRY.

We paid a flying visit to this establishment on Friday last, which has just commenced operations under the charge of Messrs. STANBROUGH & JOHNSON. This factory is capable of manufacturing 400 lbs. of Cotton yarn, 1100 lbs of Batting, and 50 lbs. of Candle wick per day. The building is of brick, 4 stories high--57 by 48 feet in the clear. The Machinery consists of seven Carders, four Spinning frames (called the Danforth Cap Frame,) two Reels, and Warning Mill, &c. This establishment employs some of the best and most experienced hands now in this country--some of them from establishements in Manchester, England.

It is to be hoped that these enterprising gentlemen will find ready sale for their yarn, &c., as we believe, from inspection, their articles will compare advantageously with those of any other in this country.--Let Merchants and others of the Valley, give them a trial, and we doubt not they will be fully compensated..." [34]

The new firm itself advertised:

"NOTICE
VALLEY MILLS, HARPERS-FERRY, VA.

The subscribers are happy in being able to inform the people residing in the Valley of Virginia and surrounding country, that they have in full operation their COTTON MILL, and are now manufacturing all Nos. of Cotton Yarns used by the woollen manufacturers and planters, warped and sized in the manner used by them.

Our machinery is new and of the most improved kind; made by Charles Duffield, of Patterson, New Jersey. We have spared no pains or expense in having it fitted up in the best manner, and feel justified in saying

33. Reel 11, V.3, pp.271-274, Deed Book 30, p.217.

34. Virginia Free Press, p.2, c.3. August 2, 1849

"that we can manufacture as good an article aforesaid as any Mill in the Country, having the most experienced men and operatives.

We hope the citizens of the Valley and surrounding country will give us their patronage to promote the spirit of enterprise begun in this part of Virginia, that has so long remained dormant with such facilities in her power. Merchants before going east will find it to their advantage to give us a call and examine our stock, as we manufacture Cotton yarn, Warp, Batting, Candle wicking, &c. STANBROUGH & JOHNSON." [35]

Cornelius Johnson and Ira Stanbrough continued to operate the Valley Factory through 1850.[36] In May, 1850, James Giddings was again elected president of the Harpers Ferry and Shenandoah Manufacturing Company; members of the Board of Directors at that time were: C. Page, J. M. Kunkle, John Moler, A. Rhuleman, Wm. F. Alexandria, W. A. McCormick, John Yates,[37]

In April, 1850, A. S. Ruddock advertised:

"TO THE PUBLIC
LUMBER FOR SALE.

The subscriber has rented the Saw-Mill on the Island at Harpers-Ferry, called the Wernwag Mills, and has on hand 40 to 50,000 feet of Pine Plank for sale, from Naked Creek, Page County. Said Lumber is fit for use, the greater share of it being Kiln-dried, and is of first-rate quality. Also, on hand, a large quantity of Timber unsawed, to fit bills of most any dimension, from one foot up to two in thick- and from twenty to sixty feet in length. Persons wishing bills of lumber, will have them attended to at short notice. Farmers wishing sawing done for their own use, will be accommodated as soon as they will bring their logs to the mill..

N.B. The subscriber will always be found at his office on the Island to attend to calls." [38]

35. Virginia Free Press, August 2, 1849, p.3, c.2.

36. Deeds of Trust in Deed Book 31, January 4, 1850, p.4; January 5, 1850, pp.4-5; January 10, 1850, p.6; January 11, 1850, p.7.

37. Virginia Free Press, May 9, 1850, p.2, c.3.

38. Ibid., April 25, 1850, p.3, c.1.

John Wernwag apparently leased the machine shop from the Company for in August, 1850, he advertised for sale "WINDOW SASH FASTENERS, manufactured by Wernwag of Harpers Ferry."[39]

Data on the people who lived and worked on the Island of Virginius in 1850, will be found in the Records of the Census of 1850, Volume 12, pp.806-810 (on microfilm reel 10, Volume 2, pp.98-103). Approximately 186 persons were living in 31 dwelling houses on the Island in 1850. Many of these people were from the North and some from England.

In 1850 the Harpers Ferry and Shenandoah Manufacturing Company threw a dam across the Shenandoah River, and constructed a new river wall, as shown on the 1848-1851 map at the end of this chapter. This construction is revealed by correspondence between Major Symington and General Talcott of the Ordnance Department in January, 1851, over the damage being caused to the water wheels of the rifle factory on the island above Virginius by backwater from the new dam. The government went to court to force the company to make adjustments in the dam to correct this situation.[40]

In April, 1851, President James Giddings advertised:

"NOTICE.
FOR RENT, THE LARGE SAW MILL, AT
HARPERS-FERRY, VA.

39. Virginia Free Press, August 9, 1850, p.1, c.1.

40. National Archives. Brig. Genl. Geo. Talcott to Major Symington, January 11, 1851, Reel 19, V.5, p.444; Symington to Talcott, January 15, 1851, Reel 24, V.3, pp.287-288; Talcott to Secretary of War Conrad, January 16, 1851, Reel 20, V.1, p.70. Conrad to John C. Clark, Solicitor of the Treasury, January 21, 1851, Reel 14, V.12, p.1172; Talcott to Symington, January 25, 1851, Reel 19, V.5, p.446. Symington to Talcott, April 23, 1851, Reel 24, V.4, pp.347-348. Talcott to Symington, April 24, 1851, Reel 19, V.5, pp.456-457; and Symington to Talcott, May 1, 1851, Reel 24, V.4, p.354.

On November 22, 1848, in pursuance of the recommendation of the Committee to the Board of Directors of the Harpers Ferry and Shenandoah Manufacturing Company, James Giddings, Jesse Schofield and John Wernwag were induced to sign the following document:

"Upon a settlement of the accounts of the Harpers Ferry & Shenandoah Manufacturing Company with Jesse Schofield and John Wernwag for the purchase of the real property purchased by it from them on the island of Virginius and in Bolivar, made this 22nd day of November 1848- There is found due from the Company on account of said purchase in cash Seven Thousand and Fifty Dollars-and in stock Eighteen Thousand Two Hundred and Fifty Dollars-of which cash we direct said Company to pay to James Giddings Three Thousand Five Hundred and Fifty Three Dollars forty cents ($3554.40)-and the balance of said cash, being Three Thousand Four Hundred and Ninty Six Dollars sixty cents ($3496.60) is to be paid to Jesse Schofield-of the stock Seven Thousand Dollars will be delivered to James Giddings and the balance ther-of; being Eleven Thousand and Two Hundred and Fifty Dollars, to Jesse Schofield.

This settlement embraces the sum of Four Thousand Eight Hundred Dollars in stocks, and Two Thousand Two Hundred Dollars in cash, together making the one sum of Seven Thousand Dollars, retained by the Company to meet a mortgage or incumbrance granted some years ago, (and now for Six Thousand Dollars with interest from the first day of October last,) by John Wernwag to Joaisa Pennington of Baltimore-This debt of $6,000 is to be paid by the Company- and the said sum of Seven Thousand is retained by it to provide against loss. In this settlement John Wernwag is also charged with the sum of Four Hundred Forty Three Dollars two cents ($449.02) the amount appearing against him on the books of the Company-leaving now a debt from him to said Company, exclusive of all matters introduced into this settlement, of One Hundred and Forty Nine Dollars forty seven and a half cents-which sum is charged to him on the books of this Company as of this date.

The said cash to be paid to said Giddings and to said Schofield shall have interest at 6 per cent per annum from the 1st day of April 1847.

This settlement has been made by us the day aforesaid, and was excepted, and hereby take it as a full settlement of all matters relating to said joint real property purchased by said Company of said Wernwag & Schofield. In testimony whereof we hereunto set our hands the day & year first herein written, the said James Giddings, President of said Company being authorized so to do by an order made by the Board of Directors of said Company on the 12th day of October 1848..." 32

32. Reel 11, V.3, pp.275-277.

"This Mill has a Circular and set of Lathe Saws attached. The Mill will cut lumber 50 to 60 feet long and is in good working order. Also, two LARGE ROOMS, 45 by 60 feet, and 11 feet between stories, with water power for any kind of machinery. This location is well adapted for a Woollen Mill, or Cotton and Woollen mixed..." [41]

On September 4, 1851, the Company put all of the property purchased from Jesse Schofield and John Wernwag on August 24, 1847, into trust with George B. Beall to secure $5,000 owed the Bank of the Valley at Charles Town.[42] This event apparently marked the beginning of the end for the company and the firm was soon involved in court action.

A general meeting of Stockholders of the Company was held on the Island of Virginius on February 19, 1852. Officers of the Company at this time were J. M. Kunkel, President, and the Directors were: A. B. Hanson, James Giddings, Calvin Page, John Moler, George B. Beall, W. B. Alexander, W. C. McCormick, Adam Rhulman. Mr. Abraham H. Herr was Secretary.[43]

At this meeting it was apparently decided to sell the property, for on April 8, 1852, Secretary A. H. Herr advertised:

"FOR SALE: EXTENSIVE REAL ESTATE, WATER POWER AND FACTORY AT HARPERS FERRY.
On May 19, 1852.
"...The Improvements consist in part, of two large Brick Factory Buildings, designated No. 1 and No. 2, of the most permanent character. No. 1 is 104 by 48 feet, and No. 2 60 by 49 feet, both Four Stories and Tin Roofs...(We quote here only the section about the second factory as this information is omitted from the advertisement that follows and which is quoted in full)"

41. Virginia Free Press, April 4, 1851, p.3, c.3.

42. Deed of Trust, September 4, 1851, Deed Book 32, pp.50-51, also Reel 11, V.3, pp.247-251. Also Deed of Trust, September 4, 1851, to Lowe, Deed Book 32, pp.52-53.

43. Virginia Free Press, February 12, 1852, p.3, c.2.

"FACTORY NO. 2"

"...Two stories, leased and occupied for the manufacture of Cotton yarns, etc.

...The aggregate annual rent now receiving is $1,920." 44

The Circuit Superior Court for Jefferson County, however, intervened to prevent the sale in May, 1852, but ordered such a sale to be held in January, 1853. The notice of the Court sale gives us our fullest description of Tract No. 4 in 1852 and we, therefore quote it in full:

"SALE OF VALUABLE WATER-POWER
AND
FACTORY PROPERTY,
AT HARPERS-FERRY, VA.
UNDER DECREE OF COURT.

By Virture of a Decree of the County Court of Jefferson, rendered at the November term, 1852, in the chancery cause therin depending between A. B. Davidson & Harris, plaintiffs, and the Harpers-Ferry and Shenandoah Manufacturing Company, the undersigned, as Special Commissioners appointed in said decree, will proceed to sell, at public auction to the highest bidder, on Saturday, the 22nd day of January next, 1853,

ALL THE PROPERTY,
REAL AND PERSONAL,

on the Island of Virginius, belonging to or in the possession of said Manufacturing Company, embracing as to the real estate about six acres of land, &c., situated on said island, adjoining Harpers-Ferry, with its appurtenant Water-Power.

THIS WATER POWER, if properly developed, is capable of driving almost an unlimited amount of machinery.

The improvements consist in part, of a large BRICK FACTORY BUILDING, of the most permanent character, 104 by 48 feet, four stories high, with tin roof.

The Factory is filled with the most approved machinery; built by Charles Danforth. of New Jersey, in 1848, to wit:

CARDING DEPARTMENT.

One Pattent (sic) Cotton Opener and Cleaner, new; 2 Pickers for double operation; 18 thirty-six inch Carding Engines, with railway and heads attached; 3 Patent Drawing Frames, very superior; 6 Double Roller Beam Speeders.

SPINNING DEPARTMENT

18 Frames, each 132 Spindles--2,376.

44. Virginia Free Press, April 8, 1852, p.3, c.2.

"DRESSING DEPARTMENT

4 Dressing Frames, with Copper Steam Heaters; 6 Cradle Warpers, new, best class.

WEAVING DEPARTMENT.

97 Looms, 87 of which are now in operation, for 4-4 Sheetings, driven by two new iron Turbine wheels, 5 feet 10 inches in diameter each, from the Establishment of E. C. Kilburn & Co., Fall River, Massachusetts.

Iron Shafting, Gearing and Pullies of the most approved finish, with Composition Boxes.

One Cloth Press; 1 Scraper and Brush Machine, Banding Machines; Lathe and Tools for Roller covering, &c.

REPAIR SHOP.

One new 12 foot iron Turning Engine Lathe, with Screw apparatus attached. One ditto ditto Hand Lathe.

The Factory is heated by steam with pipes, on the most approved plan.

There is an Office, Store Room and Waste House attached to the Factory.

These further improvements are a STONE MACHINE SHOP, 50 by 30 feet, 3 stories high, leased and occupied (FACTORY NO. 2 is ommitted in this account)

A SAW MILL, 100 by 36 feet, weather boarded, with iron Water-Wheel and occupied by the Company.

A two story BRICK BUILDING, occupied by the Company, as a Store. Four large DWELLING HOUSES, two stories, stone and rough cast; Five BRICK TENEMENTS, two stories; and five WOODEN COTTAGES, one and a half stories.

A more detailed description of said property is deemed unnecessary, as those who may desire to purchase will doubtless carefully examine the property for themselves--it is believed however that such an opportunity for profitable investment in manufacturing property has rarely if ever been offered in the United States. A. H. Herr, Esq., residing on the island, will show the premises to any one desiring to purchase.

The Winchester and Potomac Railroad runs through the premises, and within 100 yards of the Factory--thus offering every facility for transportation.

Terms of Sale, by direction of said decree, are as follows, to wit: One-fourth of the purchase money cash on the day of the sale, and the residue in three equal annual payments, each deferred to bear interest from the date of sale, and to be secured by the bonds of the purchaser, and a deed of trust upon the premises, so drawn as to secure the payment of each instalment (sic) as they respectively become due.

Sale to take place on the premises at about 12 o'clock, N., of the day above mentioned. ANDREW HUNTER,

Special Commissioner." 45

45. Virginia Free Press, December 9, 1852, p.3, c.3.

Thus in April, 1852, Tracts No. 3 and 4, which were owned by the Harpers Ferry & Shenandoah Manufacturing Company, contained two cotton factories, one saw mill, one machine shop and 15 dwelling houses or a total of 19 buildings. The description of Factory No. 2 in the April 8, 1852, advertisement and its ommission in the December, 1852, notice probably indicates that the Factory erected in 1849 was destroyed in the great flood of April 18, 1852.

FLOODS AT HARPERS FERRY, 1845-1852

Before considering the 1848-1851 map, we shall first present the evidence available on floods that struck the Island of Virginius and Harpers Ferry during the period 1845 to 1852. Two minor and one major flood struck this area in that period.

On November 5, 1846, the newspaper reported:

"HEAVY RAINS--HIGH WATERS

The fall of rain on Saturday, Sunday and Monday last was constant, and at times heavy. The sun has been obscured entirely since Friday, with the exception of a ray or two that darted through some misty clouds on Monday afternoon. We have great fear that the heavy fall of water will be productive of an immense deal of damage along the various water courses. The Potomac and Shenandoah rivers were rising rapidly on Tuesday afternoon, and a gentleman who has lived all his life near the Potomac, states that it was within two feet of the highest water mark, when he left, and was then rapidly rising, at the rate of a foot an hour.

P.S. The water of the Shenandoah and Potomac are doing a great deal of injury at Harpers Ferry. Families have been driven from their homes, which were almost completely inundated.

The water is knee deep in a portion of Shenandoah street, and some five or six feet in the kitchen of Capt. Abell of the U. S. Hotel (which was located on Lots No. 6, 7 and part of 8 in the Wager Ferry Lot)

We left Harpers-Ferry at nine o'clock on Tuesday night; the water was within a foot of the Rail Road Bridge, and still slowly rising--about two inches an hour. Great fears are entertained for its safety.

We learn from passengers in the Cumberland train, that the small water courses further up the Potomac are higher than ever before known,

"and when we take into consideration that this water is yet to pass down, it may well strengthen the fears for the safety of the Rail-Road Bridge at Harpers-Ferry.

We have not heard of any loss of life." 46

The railroad bridge, however, was not destroyed. The second minor flood occurred in November, 1847. The newspapers reported of this event:

"HIGH WATER AGAIN!

The heavy rains of last week caused the Shenandoah River to rise higher than during the memorable freshet of October last. Its effect at Harpers-Ferry, however, was not half as disastrous as during the great rise of the Potomac in October. The last named river was quite high, but fortunately not in proportion to that of the Shenandoah. In some of the shops connected with the Armory business was suspended for a short time, in consequence of the inundation, and many of the cellars of houses were filled, particularly on Shenandoah street, where many families were compelled to leave their dwelling and seek shelter elsewhere.

We would suggest to the authorities at Harpers-Ferry, whether it would not be right and proper to make an abatement in the rent of those (Armory dwellings) houses on Shenandoah Street, owned by the Government, in view of the great losses the occupants are constantly subjected to, the disadvantages they labor under, and inconvenience experienced in removing so frequently from their homes; besides, the expense and labor attendant upon a proper cleansing and ventilation of the several premises. Certainly, such a reduction could not be viewed in any other light than most commendable and praise worthy." 47

Rents on the Government Dwelling Houses located on Shenandoah Street were remitted by the Armory to their employees on this occasion for one-quarter of the year. 48

The major flood of this period struck Harpers Ferry on April 18, 1852; the newspaper described it as follows:

46. Virginia Free Press, November 5, 1846, p.2, c.1.

47. Ibid., December 7, 1847, p.2, c.6.

48. Snell, Charles W., "Historic Building Report, Part I and II, for Bldg. No. 48,-an Armorer's Dwelling House, October 31, 1958, p.105 and also remitted in 1852.

"GREAT FRESHET AT HARPERS-FERRY.

Our county has been visited by an awful calamity.--The oldest inhabitants never before witnessed such a rise in the waters of the Potomac and Shenandoah river.--The inundation came upon us like an avalanche--sudden, unexpected and overwhelming.

It commenced raining about 4 o'clock P.M. on Saturday last, and continued without intermission, until Tuesday at noon. It fell, however, so gently that no one anticipated more than an ordinary swelling of the streams. On Monday, fearful forbodings began to be entertained by the now sorely stricken inhabitants residing near the junction of the two rivers, but still there was no dread that the "high water-marks," known for a century--would become submerged--that the ever memorable freshet of 1847, would be a purling stream, compared with the angry, terrible and devastating torrent that was quickly to rush upon them, drive them from their firesides and leave their habitations look afar, like islands dotted over the sea. There was no thought or expectation like this, and consequently no extraordinary effort made to remove their household effect, even their food and garments, out of reach of the destructive element.

By Tuesday morning the streets of Harpers Ferry, had become channels for mighty rivers, and the second and third stories and house-tops, resting places for its distressed inhabitants.

Boats, gondolas and rafts were brought into requisition to remove many families from their cherished homes to the neighboring hills, where they could behold, with frightful minds and sore hearts, their every earthly comfort become a prey to the "unbridled flood." Who, unless his heart were made of stone, could witness scenes like these and not shed tears of blood?

...persons were borne into eternity upon the troubled bosom of this inland ocean. Two families were heard at midnight, amid the din of this war of elements crying for help, but before morning's dawn, their habitations were no more to be seen--having been carried away by the resistless current.

If there ever was a time when it should become the citizens of Jefferson--the acknowledged garden spot of this good old Commonwealth--to give substantial evidence of their charity, of their philanthropy, of their humanity, in a word, of the possession of those noble traits of character which should adorn the character of human being formed after the image of their Maker, THAT TIME HAS COME. Then will He, whose afflictive disponsation brought on these woes, reward them ten fold.

P.S.--The destruction of property is beyond all description. Every house on Shenandoah and Potomac streets was almost entirely submerged--the water being six feet higher than at any other period within the recollection of man. All the bridges save one, on the Winchester Rail Road from Shenandoah City to the Ferry, together with the trestle work, and a portion of the road is gone--also the bridge leading the Herr's Mill [the bridge to the Island of Virginius from the mainland]. Great damage has also been done to the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal. Although the water was up to the Potomac Bridge, yet it withstood the tide, and is safe."

"The loss of property belonging to the U.S. Armory, as well as to private citizens, cannot at present be estimated, but is very great. We will endeavor next week to give particulars.

We trust our Representative in Congress will make an effort to procure an appropriation for the relief of the artizans of Harpers-Ferry. They are part and parcel of the government; and they should not be permitted to sustain the heavy losses without remuneration." [49]

SUMMARY AND 1848 MAP

This summary has been prepared by comparing James M. Brown's 1844 map of the Island of Virginius with S. Howell Brown's 1848 "Map of Harpers Ferry-Prepared in compliance with Letter to Major Symington, April 22, 1848," and both maps supplemented with evidence from the documentary sources presented in this chapter. The original of the 1848 map (reproduced in the Harpers Ferry Master Plan as Drawing No. NM-HF 3000) bears evidence of having been prepared by two different hands and at different dates. The questions of by whom and when, are of course, of some importance. The answer to these questions has now been solved. All of the original of the 1848 map drawn and lettered in black ink (Legend No. 1 to 42 inclusive, plus letters B to Z on Drawing No. HF 3000) was prepared in 1848 by S. H. Brown and shows conditions as of 1848. All features, letters, and numbers drawn on the original map in red ink (or Legend No. 43 to No. 51 on Drawing No. NM-HF 3000) were added by Major John Symington, Superintendent of the Armory, in January, 1851, to show how the new dam in the Shenandoah River was causing a backwater that was injuring the water wheels of the Hall Rifle Factory. [50]

49. Virginia Free Press, April 22, 1852, p.2, c.1.

50. Brigadier General George Talcott to Major Symington, January 11, 1851, Reel 19, V.5, p.444. Symington to Talcott, January 15, 1851, Reel 24, V.3, pp.287-288.

Thus this map shows conditions generally in Harpers Ferry as of 1848 and in relation to the Island of Virginius in particular, is amended and corrected down to January, 1851. In addition, the two mills, drawn crudely in red pencil on the original 1848 map, over Bldg. 20, 21, 22 at the Hall Rifle Factory, and Bldg. No. 11 in the Musket Factory tract (or on Drawing No. NM-HF 3000 over Bldgs. No. 39 to 41 and over Bldg. No. 11), were added to the original map after 1869.

TRACT NO. 1 - The Iron Foundry Lot: (Five blue colored buildings as in 1844) Owned in 1852 by Hugh Gilleece and Alexander Brown.

Bldg. No. 1: Iron Foundry (An oil mill standing in 1834 that was converted into an iron foundry in 1835 by Mr. Gilleece).

Bldg. No. 26: A chopping mill (erected by Hugh Gilleece in 1840).

Bldg. No. 24: Probably a dwelling house (standing in 1834).

Bldg. No. 25: Probably a stable or small shop (standing in 1834).

Bldg. No. 27: A large dwelling house (standing in 1834).

TRACT NO. 2 - The "Island Mills" Flour Mill Lot: (Two red colored buildings) Owned in 1852 by Abraham H. Herr.

Bldg. No. 2: The large stone flour mill known as the "Island Mills", constructed by Luther I. Cox in 1840.

Bldg. No. 22: A dwelling house (standing in 1834).

Bldgs. H and G, shown on the 1844 map, are not shown on the 1848 map. It is probable, however, from the census of 1850, that there was actually a second dwelling house standing on the property in 1848 even though this building is no delineated on the 1848 map.

TRACT NO. 3 and 4: (17 orange colored buildings on the map) From

documentary sources, however, it is known that there were 19 buildings on the property in 1852. These two tracts were owned by the Harpers Ferry and Shenandoah Manufacturing Company in 1852.

Bldg. No. 3: Saw Mill, 100 by 36 feet, weather boarded, with iron water wheel (standing in 1834).

Bldg. No. 4: Stone Machine Shop, three stories high, 50 by 30 feet (standing in 1834).

Bldg. No. 5: Cotton Factory erected in 1849, 60 by 49 feet, brick building four stories high, with Tin Roof. Probably destroyed in flood of April, 1852.

Bldg. No. 6: Cotton Factory erected in 1847, 104 by 48 feet, four stories high and built of brick on stone foundation, tin roof. Factory heated by steam and lighted with gas.

Bldg. No. 7: Frame house (probably standing in 1834).

Bldg. No. 8: Smith Shop (standing in 1834).

Bldg. No. 9 and 10: Removed in 1849 to make way for construction of Cotton Factory-Bldg. No. 5.

Bldg. No. 11: Frame carriage house (standing in 1844).

Bldg. No. 12: Frame House, two stories, brick filled (probably standing in 1834).

Bldg. No. 13: Frame house, one story, brick filled and rough cast (probably standing in 1834).

Bldg. No. 14: A frame house, one story, brick filled and rough cast, (probably standing in 1834).

Bldg. No. 15: (Tract 3) Two family stone stuccoed house, standing in 1834.

Bldg. No. 16: (Tract 3) One family stone stuccoed house, standing in 1834. Note: Depot of W. & P. R.R. Co. moved from Tract 3 in 1847.

Bldg. No. 18: Single brick dwelling house (probably standing in 1834).

Bldg. No. 19: A double brick dwelling house (probably standing in 1834).

Bldg. No. 20: Small brick dwelling house (probably standing in 1834).

Bldg. No. 21: (not shown on 1844 map) probably a two story brick dwelling house.

Bldg. No. 23: A small frame dwelling house (standing in 1834).

Dam: Across Shenandoah erected by Company in 1850.

Bridge: Island to mainland destroyed in flood of 1852.

TRACT NO. 5: (one purple colored building).

Bldg. No. 17: A two story brick dwelling house. House and lot owned and occupied in 1852 by Jesse Schofield.

The 1848-51 map shows 25 buildings being located on the Island of Virginius in 1851. Documentary sources, however, indicate that there were probably at least 28 buildings on the island in 1852.

Note: Bldg. No. 21 on 1848 Map: The following data probably relates to House No. 21:

"COMMISSIONER'S SALE.

Under the authority of a decree of the Circuit Superior Court of Law and Chancery for the county of Jefferson, render in a cause depending in said Court, wherein G. W. Sappington and others are plaintiffs, and James B. Wilkins and others are defendants, I shall, as a Commissioner appointed by said decree, offer for sale, on Saturday the 30th day of August, inst. [1845]..., a

BRICK HOUSE,
AND THE
LOT OF GROUND,

"Situated near the Island Mills, Virginius--being the property sold by J. Schofield and others to said Wilkins.

The title is deemed indisputable, the sale authorized by the decree being directed for the payment of the balance on the purchase money...

WM. C. WORTHINGTON, Com'r." [51]

On October 15, 1851, Commissioner William Worthington sold to Jesse Schofield for $451.00 the following lot:

"...a certain piece or parcel of ground and the house thereon, which is described in the papers & proceedings of a suit pending in the said Court in the name of George W. Wappington & others plaintiffs and James B. Wilkins & other defendants as follows 'a certain house and lot now (then) occupied and in the possession of Joseph Shumaker on the Island of Virginius and bounded on the west by the line of Roland Heflebower & Co. (Tract No. 2), and running back about ninety five feet and fronting on the street about fifty one & half feet that is from the upper or cross line to four feet below said Shumaker house and thence running back parallel with the upper line the same distance to the bank of the saw mill race" all of which will more fully appear by a paper in writing, being Articles of agreement between Jesse Schofield & John Wernwag and James B. Wilkins dated December 12th 1837 and which is made an exhibit in said cause..." [52]

NOTES: Stone for the foundation of Cotton Factory, Bldg. No. 6, was quarried from the rock cliffs located on the North side of the Harpers Ferry Turnpike Road, as it lead from Harpers Ferry to the Rifle Factory. Permission was granted Mr. Giddings by the Armory to quarry this rock at that point, which was owned by the United States, as the road was very "narrow and the rock rises from it almost perpendicularly to a height of 200 feet or more." [53] Similiar permission was granted Mr. Abraham Herr and brother in April, 1847, to quarry rock for building purposes in the same location. [54]

51. Virginia Free Press, August 7, 1845, p.3, c.2.

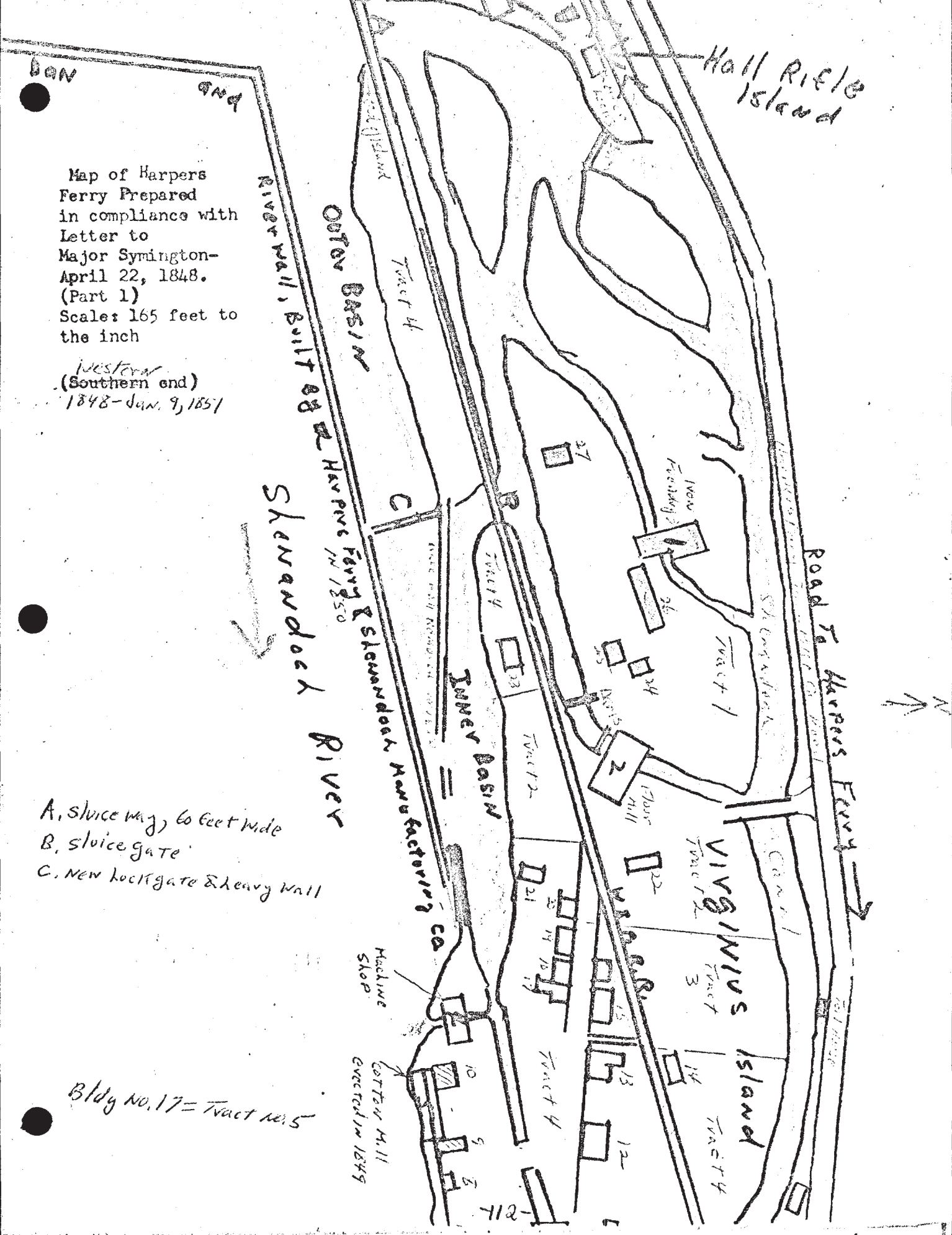
52. Deed of B. & S., October 15, 1851, Deed Book 32, pp.75-76.

53. Supt. John Symington to Lt. Col. George Talcott, Ordnance Office, August 1, 1846, Microfilm Reel No. 23, V.7, pp.666-667; Talcott to Symington, August 5, 1846, Reel 19, V.3, p.260.

54. Talcott to Symington, April 5, 1847, Reel 19, V.5, p.297.

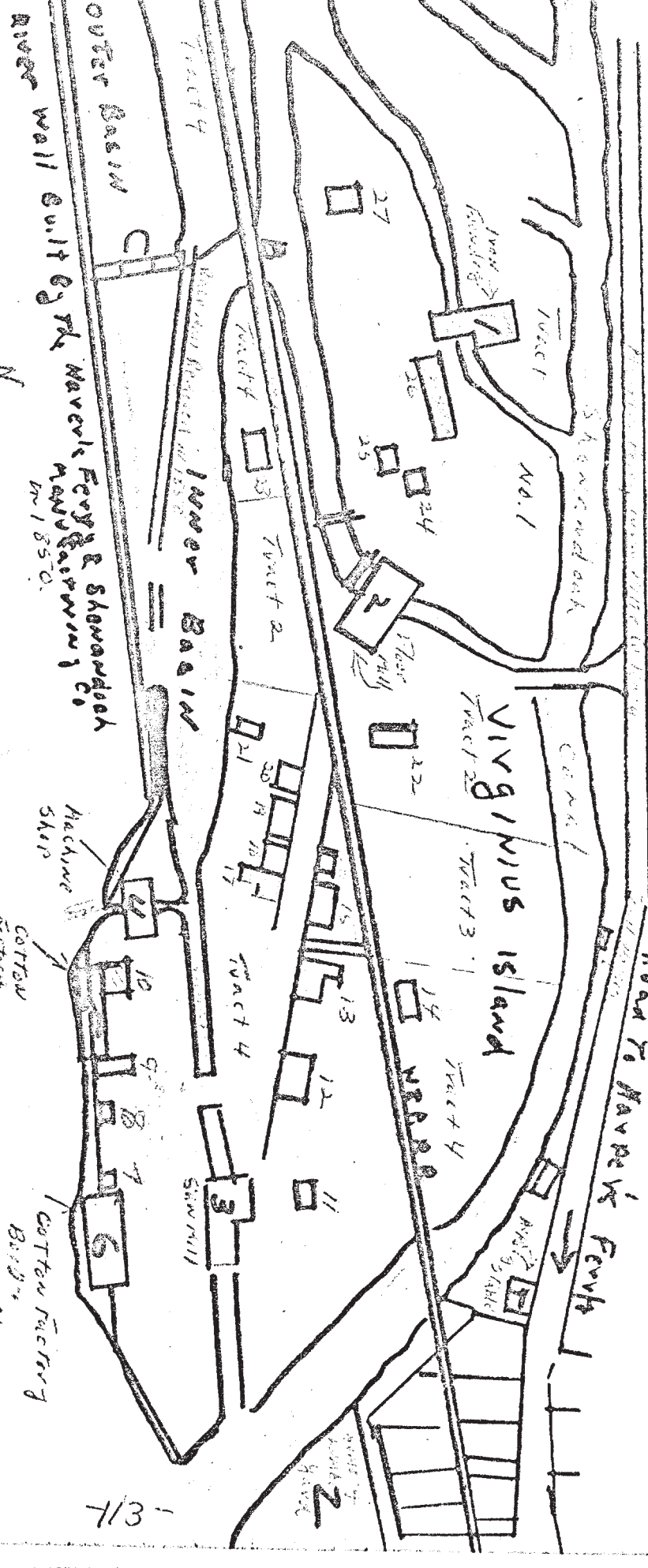
In March, 1850, Herr again requested permission to quarry rock on Government land, writing: "...I am about building four small tenament for the foundation of which I want Stone..." Permission was again granted Mr. Herr to quarry stone from the cliffs north of the Turnpike Road.[55] This last item also indicates that four houses were added to Tract No. 2 in 1850 that would, of course, not appear on Brown's 1848 map.

55. Herr to Talcott, March 19, 1850, Reel 24, V.2, p.112; Symington to Talcott, March 23, 1850, Reel 24, V.3, pp.109-110.


Map of Harpers Ferry Prepared in compliance with Letter to Major Symington- April 22, 1848. (Part 1)
Scale: 165 feet to the inch
(Southern end)
1848-Jan. 9, 1851
Hall Rifle Island
Road To Harpers Ferry
Virginius Island
Tract 4
Tract 1
Tract 2
Tract 3
Tract 4
Tract 4
Tract 4
Inner Basin
Outer Basin
River Wall, Built 48 & 49
Shenandoah River
Harpers Ferry & Shenandoah Manufacturing Co
Machine Shop
Cotton Mill
erected in 1849
Iron Foundry
Saw Mill
Grist Mill
Paper Mill
Carpenter Shop
Blacksmith Shop
Gun Factory
Armory
Canal
Rail Road
A
B
C
R
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
112
A, Sluice way, 60 feet wide
B, Sluice gate
C, New lock gate & heavy wall
Bldg No. 17 = Tract No. 5

Map of Harpers Ferry
Prepared in compliance
with letter to Major
Symington-April 22, 1848.
(Part 2)
Scale 165 feet to the inch.

(Northern end)
1848- Jan. 9, 1851



B, Sluice gate
C, New lock gate & heavy wall

Bldg No. 17 = Tract No. 5

"By virture of a Decree of the Circuit Court of Jefferson County, Va., rendered on the 27th of May, 1854, in the chancery cause therein depending between A. H. Davidson & Harris, Pltffs, and the Harpers-Ferry and Shenandoah Manufacturing Company, dffs, and with the concurrence of the authorities of said company, the undersigned, as special commissioners appointed in said decree, will proceed to sell, at public auction, to the highest bidder, on the Tuesday the 21st day of next month, July, 1854, all the PROPERTY Real and Personal, on the Island of Virginius...

Terms of sale, by direction of said decree, are as follows, to wit: 'One~~O~~tenth of the gross amount of sale to be paid down in cash at the time of sale; one other tenth part of said gross amount to be paid at the next ensuing term of said Court, (which commences October 18th, 1854), upon confirmation of the sale; the residue to be divided into four equal sums, to be paid, one-fourth at the end of one year, one-fourth at the end of two years, one-fourth at the end of three years, and the remaining fourth at the end of four years from the date of confirmation of the sale; each of said four instalments (sic) to bear legal interest from said date of confirmation until paid--and to be secured by deed of trust upon the property. The agreement of sale to provide for the forfeiture by the purchaser of the one-tenth to be paid on the day of sale, in case he shall fail to come forward and complete his purchase.

ANDREW HUNTER,
ROBERT Y CONRAD." 2

The newspaper reported of the second sale:

"SOLD.

The valuable Water Power and Factory Property, at Harpers-Ferry, advertised for several weeks in our paper, was sold on Tuesday last by Messrs. Hunter & Conrad, Commissioners for $25,000.--A. H. Herr, Esq., the purchaser. This property, including machinery &c., for a Cotton Factory, cost the company about $100,000--but it came under the beneficial influence of the tariff of 1846. So much for home protection." 3

Mr. Herr completed his payment of the $25,000 for Tracts No. 4 and 3 in 1859, for on February 14, 1859, the Commissioners granted him the following deed, which reads in part:

2. Virginia Free Press, June 8, 1854, p.3, c.1.

3. Ibid., July 27, 1854, p.2, c.1.

"...all the property both real and personal, belonging, at the time of said sale, to the said Harpers Ferry and Shenandoah Manufacturing Company, on or adjacent to, or connected with the island in Shenandoah river near Harpers Ferry, formerly known as Virginius but now embraced with the corporation limits of Harpers Ferry excepting a hand lathe, at the time of said sale in the saw mill on said premises, and excepting also a small stock of merchandize and store furniture, at the time of sd. sale under the charge of Mr. Adam Young. The real estate included in this deed, and hereby intended to be conveyed embraces about six acres of land, lying immediately upon said island, and chiefly constituting the lower part of it & having upon it a large Factory building, and a number of other buildings and valuable improvements & part in the river and on the south and east side of the river..." 4

Thus on July 21, 1854, Tracts 2, 3 and 4 were united under the common ownership of Abraham H. Herr.

TRACT NO. 5

Tract No. 5 was owned by Jesse Schofield from 1853 to 1855. On June 23, 1855, Mr. Schofield sold this property to Abraham H. Herr for $2,000. The deed reads in part:

"...A certain Brick House and Lot or parcel of land on the Island of Virginius in the Shenandoah River near its Junction with the Potomac at Harpers Ferry, being all that lot or parcel of ground, with buildings thereon, which is now owned and occupied by the Said Schofield as a Dwelling House for his family, and the same which was excepted and reserved from sale by him, in Certain Deed of Conveyance of the said Island of Virginius executed
by Jas. Giddings, John Wernwag and the said Jesse Schofield and others, to the Harpers Ferry and Shenandoah Manufacturing Company...And being also in part, the same lot which was conveyed by Joseph L. Smith, John Wernwag and Margaret R. his wife to the said Jesse Schofield by deed dated 25th May 1835, and of record in like manner in Deed Book No. 20 folio 345, whereby 40 feet front on the Street leading through the said Island and 40 feet on the Mill Race was conveyed--The said Lot now fronts on the south side of the said street 67 1/12 feet, and runs back to the Said Mill Race, at right angles with the Said Street, the residue of 26 6/12 feet having been subsequently purchased by the Said Schofield as part of the entire interest of Joseph L. Smith in and to the said Island and conveyed to the said Schofield by Benja. (Price) Trustee of J. L. Smith, by Deed..." 5

4. Deed of B. & S., February 14, 1859, Deed Book 38, pp.315-316.

5. Ibid., June 23, 1855, Deed Book 35, pp.100-101.

On October 25, 1855, the newspaper reported: "A large number of citizens of Harpers Ferry left for the West a few evenings ago—among them Jesse Schofield and Family. Adam Young & Family and R. H. Hoffman, the whole number amounting to 27."[6]

TRACT NO. 1

Tract No. 1 was owned from 1853 until 1855 by Hugh Gilleece and Alexander Brown. On September 16, 1854, Mr. Gilleece put Tract No. 1 in trust to secure a debt owed to Abraham H. Herr.[7]

On September 28, 1854, Fontaine Beckham & Son announced:

"IRON FOUNDRY

The undersigned have leased the well known IRON FOUNDRY, at Harpers-Ferry, in the County of Jefferson, Va.; lately occupied and worked by Hugh Gilleece. The facilities of the lessees of procuring the best stock, and at all times, afford a guarantee to their customers of prompt and workmanlike Castings. They have engaged the very best workmen and solicit the patronage of the public.

They are prepared to furnish all kinds of Castings, either from their own, or patterns supplied by their customers-and the prices as low as can be afforded any where in the neighborhood." [8]

On August 31, 1855, Hugh Gilleece and Alexander Brown sold Tract No. 1 on the Island of Virginius to A. H. Herr for $6,250,00.[9] Thus Mr. Herr in August, 1855, had become sole owner of the entire Island of Virginius.

Island Industries and Manufacturers, 1853-1861

6. Virginia Free Press, October 25, 1855, p.2, c.1.

7. Deed of Trust, September 16, 1854, Deed Book 34, p.229.

8. Virginia Free Press, October 5, 1854, p.3, c.2; also May 31, 1855, p.4, c.2.

9. Deed of B. & S., August 31, 1855, Deed Book 35, pp.49-50.

In 1856 Brown cottons were being manufactured on the Island of Virginius by Cramer & Hawks at the Cotton Factory.[10]

The operations of the "Island Mills" merchant flour mills in 1859-60 is revealed by the following notice:

"DISSOLUTION OF CO-PARTNERSHIP.

The firm of WELCH, LEGG & CO., was this day dissolved by mutual consent, by the withdrawal of Mr. Geo. W. Legg. The business of the firm will be settled by Messrs. Herr & Welch.

JAS. S. WELCH.
GEO. W. LEGG.
A. H. HERR.

CO-PARTNERSHIP.

The undersigned having this day formed a Co-partnership under the style of HERR & WELCH, will continue the Milling Business, and will be the sole manufactures of James S. Welch's best Family Flour.

A. H. Herr,
Jas. S. WELCH." [11]

In 1857 John W. Rohr and George Rohr opened a new industry in a new building on the Island of Virginius, advertising:

"WAGON MAKING
AND
BLACKSMITHING.

The undersigned having formed a co-partnership under the firm and style of

ROHR & BROTHER.

for the purpose of carrying on the business of WAGON MAKING AND BLACKSMITHING, respectfully solicit a share of the public patronage.

Plows and all kinds of farming implements on hand, or made to order.

All kinds of repairing, Threshing Machinery, &c. &c., done at the shortest notice, and in the best manner. Also, Mill Irons made and repaired. New brick shop, Island Virginius, near Herr's Mill, Harpers-Ferry." [12]

10. Virginia Free Press, December 11, 1856, p.3, c.6.

11. Ibid., July 19, 1860, p.2, c.7.

12. Ibid., June 25, 1857; July 8, 1858, p.1, c.2; December 8, 1859, p.4, c.6.

In 1860 the firm also advertised:

"ROHR & BROTHER,
MANUFACTURERS OF
CARRIAGES, WAGONS, &C.

Would inform the public that they have on hand, and are now finishing an assortment of

CARRIAGES,
ROCKAWAYS
AND
BUGGIES,

Which they will sell on reasonable terms. Their Carriages, &c. are made of the best materials, and finished in the best possible style, and warranted for twelve months.

WAGONS of all sizes, from Six Horse down to the light Express Wagon, on hand or made to order, which they will insure for twelve months.

The above named articles manufactured by them, shall and they warrant them to compare with any in the country.

All kinds of REPAIRING in the above line will be done at the shortest notice. All orders will be promptly attended to." [13]

The census of 1860 indicates that there were approximately 207 people living on the Island of Virginius in 31 houses in 1860.[14] Among these were John Wernwag, "50 years old, male, Machinist, born in Pa.; John Rohr, 28 years old, male, wagonmaker, born in Md.; George Rohr, 30 years old, Wagonmaker, Born in Md.; Abraham H. Herr, 45 years old, male, born in Pa. Value of Real Estate: $200,000, Value of Personal Estate: $30,000; George Mauzy, 60 years old, male, Agent for River Co., born in Va."[15]

13. Virginia Free Press, July 26, 1860, p.3, c.5.

14. National Archives R. G. 29. Records of the Bureau of the Census, Population Schedules of the Eighth Census of the United States 1860. Virginia, Volume 13, pp.200-206; Microfilm Reel 10, Volume 2, pp.179-185. Virginius is included as a part of Harpers Ferry but names and trades reveal their location.

15. Ibid.

FLOODS, 1853 to 1861

Harpers Ferry experienced three more floods during this period. The first came in September, 1859, and the newspaper reported of the event:

"RAINS.

The heavy rains of Friday and Saturday last, caused all the streams to be very high. The Shenandoah and Potomac Rivers were much swollen, though not as much so as on many former occasions. The basements of the houses on Shenandoah Street, Harpers-Ferry, were of course filled.

The Charlestown Run was also very high, but no damage was done.

On all the streams, however, the fencing adjacent suffered. Many trees were also prostrated." 16

In November, 1860, a second flood struck Harpers Ferry; the newspaper described it as follows:

"GREAT FLOOD.

We learn that during Friday and Friday night, the Alleghanies, particularly on their Eastern slopes, in western Maryland and Virginia, were visited by rains of extraordinary steadiness and volume. All the streams forming the sources of the Potomac, as well as those emptying into it, near Cumberland and Piedmont rose to a great height on Saturday.

Much damage has been done the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal--it being reported that the grand Bank at Dam No. 3, is entirely washed away.

The Shenandoah River was also very high, and our Harper's Ferry citizens will be much injured by the mud, &c., in their houses." 17

The final flood to hit Harpers Ferry before the outbreak of the Civil War occurred in April, 1861. Again the newspaper reported:

"GREAT RAIN FRESHET.

The heavy rains have swollen the Potomac, Shenandoah and other streams to a very great height. Nothing like it has been seen since 1852.

The Baltimore & Ohio Rail Road has been submerged between Martinsburg and Cumberland--though the tonnage (freight) trains passed by Saturday Night."

16. Virginia Free Press, September 22, 1859, p.2, c.2.

17. Ibid., November 8, 1860, p.2, c.1.

"At Harpers Ferry the water was within four feet of the R. R. Bridge--the streets and Armory yards were completely inundated." 18

A VIEW OF THE ISLAND OF VIRGINIUS, 1856-1859

No historical map of the Island of Virginius for the period 1853 to 1861 has been found, but we have located a "View of the Island Virginius, in the Shenandoah, at Harpers Ferry. Taken near Jefferson's Rock." Taken from Nature by Th. Sachse, Lith. By E. Sachse & Co., Sun Iron Buildg., Baltimore, no date. Mrs. James Edwin Bear of 1102 Westwood Avenue, Richmond 27, Va., permitted us in October, 1958, to obtain a copy negative of the very rare original lithograph in her possession. While the drawing is undated, a comparison of the print with the 1848-51 map and Photographs HF-29, HF-70, and HF-119, all photos that were made just after the Civil War, indicate not only that the lithograph must have been made between 1856 and 1859 but that the drawing is remarkably accurate in its detailed representation of the buildings on Virginius.

1859 HISTORICAL BASE MAP OF VIRGINIUS

Using "The Map of Harpers Ferry, Plat of Harpers Ferry Armory Property laid off into Lots for Sale in Pursuance of the Act of December 15th 1868, and Designed, Projected & Mapped by S. Howell Brown, Surveyor, from the Original and Subsequent Surveys in his Possession by Order of Capt. Dan'l J. Young Mil. Storekeeper of Ordnance Harpers Ferry under the instructions of the Ordnance Department, Washington City, D. C. Dated April 2nd 1869, April 26, 1868", as the basic map

18. Virginia Free Press, April 18, 1861, p.2, c.2.

we herewith present an historical base map of the Island of Virginius in 1859. This historical base map is based on James M. Brown's Map of 1844, S. Howell Brown's map of 1848-51, Lithograph HF-490, and Photographs HF-29, HF-70, and HF-119, as well as the data from documentary sources presented in the earlier chapters of this report.

LEGEND FOR 38 BUILDINGS STANDING ON THE ISLAND OF VIRGINIUS IN 1859

Bldg. No. 1: A one story stone building, the Iron Foundry, erected by 1824 by Townsend Beckham as an Oil Mill and converted in 1835 by Hugh Gilleece into an Iron Foundry.

Bldg. No. 2: The "Island Mills" Flour Mill, a 3½ story stone building erected by Luther I. Cox in 1840 on approximately the site of the earlier flour mill erected by 1824 by Fontaine Beckham and destroyed by fire in 1839.

Bldg. No. 3: The Saw Mill, a 1½ story frame building, 100 by 36 feet, with an iron water wheel, erected by 1824 by Lewis Wernwag. The canal or saw mill race serving the saw mill was also constructed by Lewis Wernwag by 1824.

Bldg. No. 4: Machine shop, a three story stone building, 50 by 30 feet, constructed by Lewis Wernwag before 1834.

Bldg. No. 5: Cotton Factory, a 60 by 49 feet, four story brick building erected in 1849, with tin roof. This building is missing from the 1856-1859 lithograph and what appears to be the foundation ruins of this structure are to be seen in Photograph HF-70, which was taken about 1865. It therefore appears likely that the building was demolished or

destroyed by the great flood of April, 1852.

Bldg. No. 6, Cotton Factory: Erected in 1847 by the Harpers Ferry & Shenandoah Manufacturing Company, 10¼ by 48 feet, stone foundation and four stories, brick, with tin roof. Heated by steam and lighted by gas.

Bldg. No. 7: A one and a half story frame dwelling, probably dating from 1834.

Bldg. No. 8: One story smith shop, probably frame and dating from 1834.

Bldg. No. 9: Probably a small one story frame office for the saw mill, standing in 1844.

Bldg. 10: Probaly a one and a half frame dwelling house.

Bldg. No. 11: One story frame carriage house (standing in 1844).

Bldg. No. 12: Three and half story Frame Dwelling House, brick filled, enlarged from a two story house after 1844.

Bldg. No. 13: Two and a half story frame house, brick filled and rough cast, this dwelling house was enlarged from a one story house after 1844.

Bldg. No. 14: A one story frame dwelling house, brick filled and rough cast, probably standing in 1834.

Bldg. No. 15: A two and a half story two family dwelling house, stone stuccoed. The building was standing in 1834.

Bldg. No. 16: A two story one family dwelling house. This stone stuccoed building was standing in 1834.

Bldg. No. 17: A two story brick dwelling house, probably standing in 1834.

Bldg. No. 18: A two story one family brick dwelling house, probably standing in 1834.

Bldg. No. 19: A two story two family brick dwelling house, probably standing in 1834.

Bldg. No. 20: Two story, one family brick dwelling house, probably standing in 1834.

Bldg. No. 21: A two story brick dwelling house, standing in 1848.

Bldg. No. 22: A two story stone dwelling house, standing in 1834.

Bldg. No. 23: A small frame dwelling house, standing in 1834.

Bldg. No. 24: A one and a half frame dwelling house, standing in 1834.

Bldg. No. 25: Probably a one and a half story frame dwelling house.

Bldg. No. 26: A one and a half story frame building, a chopping mill erected by Hugh Gilleece in 1840.

Bldg. No. 27: A two story dwelling house, probably brick, standing in 1834.

Bldg. No. 28: A one story building, probably frame and a carriage house, standing in 1834.

Bldg. No. 29: A two story dwelling house, probably brick, erected after 1848.

Bldg. No. 30: A one-story frame building, probably a storage shed.

Bldg. No. 31: One story frame building, probably a carriage house, erected after 1848.

Bldg. No. 32: Two story brick dwelling house, erected after 1848.

Bldg. No. 33: A two story dwelling house, brick, erected after 1848.

Bldg. No. 34: A two story dwelling house, brick and erected after 1848.

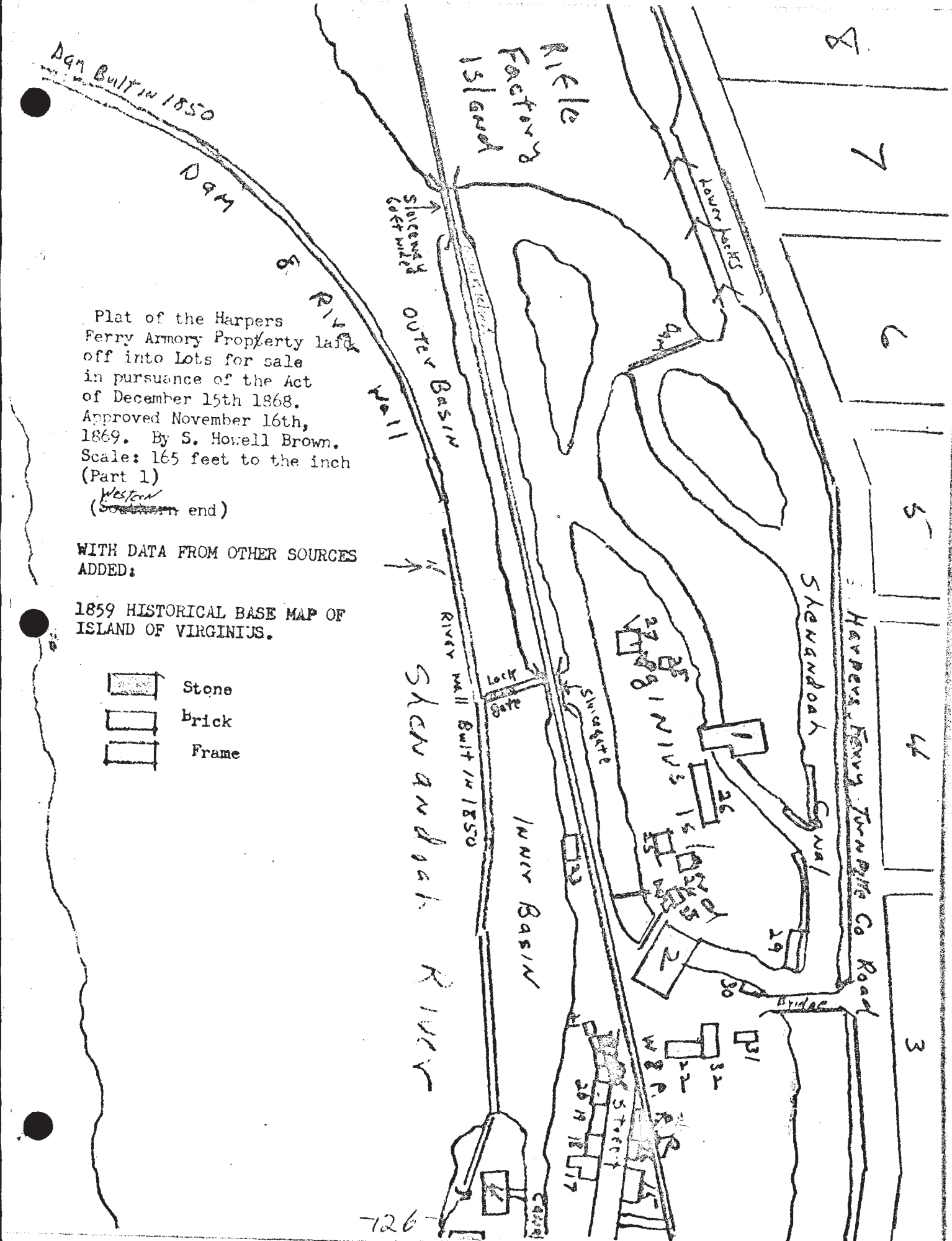
Bldg. No. 35: A two story dwelling house, brick, erected after 1848.

Bldg. No. 36: A two story dwelling house, brick, and erected after 1848.

Bldg. No. 37: One Story Frame building, probably a dwelling house erected after 1848.

Bldg. No. 38: A one and a half story frame building, with "gingerbread" trimming shown on HF-490, erected after 1848 and probably a dwelling or carriage house.

Dam and River Wall: Erected by the Harpers Ferry and Shenandoah Mfg. Company in 1850.



Plat of the Harpers Ferry Armory Property laid off into Lots for sale in pursuance of the Act of December 15th 1868. Approved November 16th, 1869. By S. Howell Brown. Scale: 165 feet to the inch (Part 1)
(~~Southern~~ Western end)

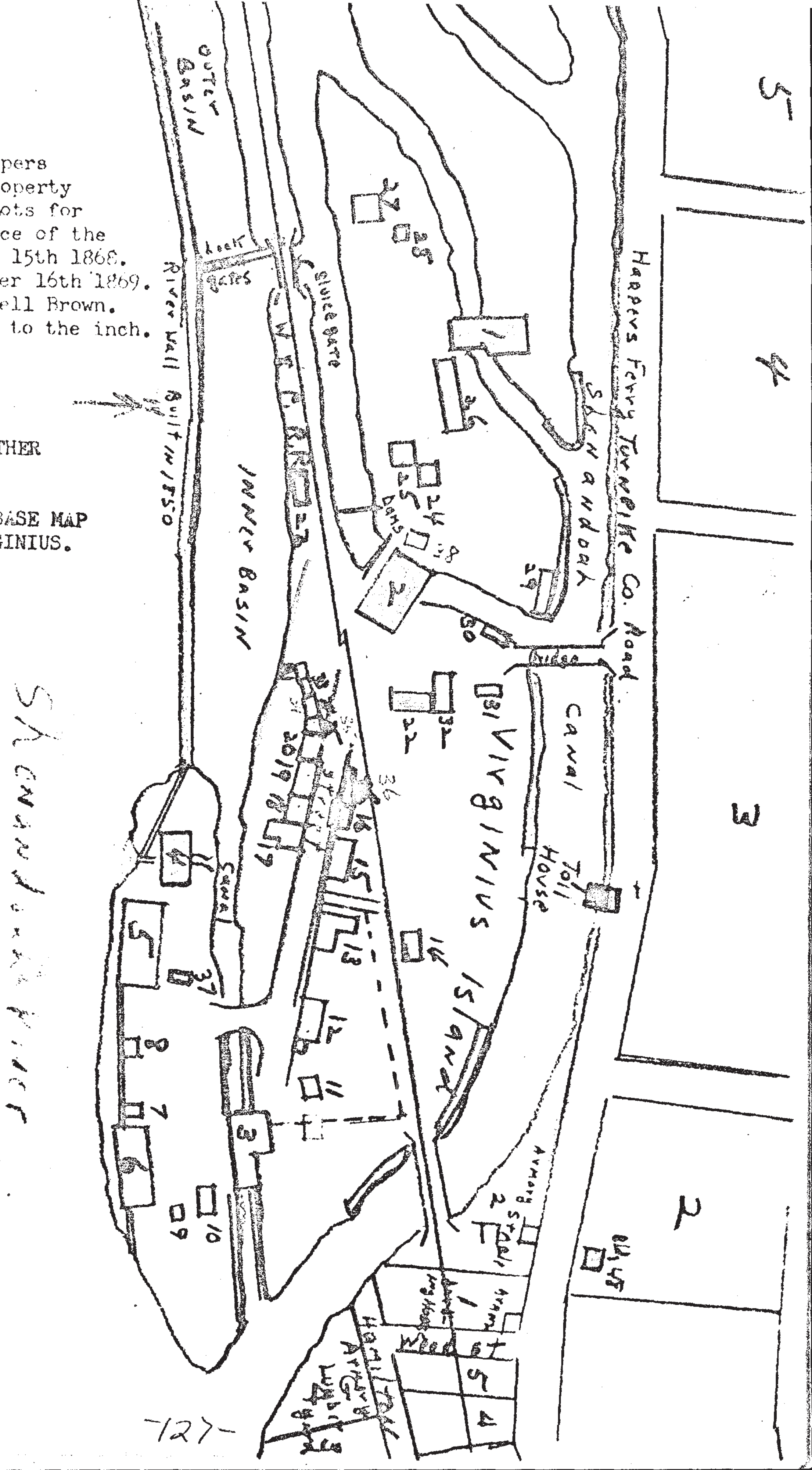
WITH DATA FROM OTHER SOURCES ADDED:

1859 HISTORICAL BASE MAP OF ISLAND OF VIRGINIUS.

Plat of the Harpers Ferry Armory Property laid off into Lots for sale in pursuance of the Act of December 15th 1868. Approved November 16th 1869. Drawn by S. Howell Brown. Scale: 165 feet to the inch.
(Part 2)
(~~Northern~~ Eastern end)

WITH DATA FROM OTHER SOURCES ADDED:

1859 HISTORICAL BASE MAP OF ISLAND OF VIRGINIUS.



Legend	
(shaded box)	Stone
(box)	Brick
(box)	Frame

CHAPTER VII

ISLAND OF VIRGINIUS, 1861 to 1870.

WAR AND FLOODS

In this chapter we shall present data and maps relating to the Island of Virginius after 1861. As a year will be devoted to special research on the physical history of Harpers Ferry during the Civil War, we will therefore in this study limit our remarks to local historian Joseph Barry's account of the story of Virginius in the Civil War.

Mr. Barry wrote:

"Early in October [1861] Mr. A. H. Herr, proprietor of the Island of Virginius and the large flour mill on it, having a large quantity of wheat which he could not grind into flour-his mill haveing been partially destroyed by some federal troops under Lieutenant Colonel Andrew, brother of the governor of Massachusetts, in order to prevent the confederates from using it - and being a union man at heart, invited the government troops to remove the grain to Maryland. There being no bridge across the Potomac at the time, a large boat was procured and a company of the 3rd Wisconsin regiment impressed the few able-bodied men then at the place to take the wheat from the mill to the boat and ferry it across with the aid of the soldiers. The citizens were promised a liberal per diem, but that, like many other good promises and intentions, forms a part of the pavement of certain region where it never freezes. Even the sacred person of the future historian [Barry] of the town was not spared, and many a heavy sack did he tote during several days,...

Suddenly, on the 16th of October - the second anniversary of the Brown raid - while the citizens and soldiers were busy working at the wheat, a report reached them that Colonel Ashby, at the head of the Virginia militia, was approaching from Charlestown to put a stop to their work...[Barry then narrates the story of the battle of Bolivar Heights]

In a few days after this skirmish a party of confederate cavalry entered the town and burned Mr. Herr's extensive mill, thereby inflicting an irreparable loss on the people of the place. As before noted, Lieutenant Colonel Andrew had partially destroyed it-that is-he broke up a part of the machinery - just enough to render the mill incapable of being worked. This damage could have been easily repaired"

"and if no further harm had been done to it, the mill could have been put into working order in a few days. The confederates, however, destroyed it completely and the shattered and toppling walls are still to be seen [in 1903], a monument of vandalism and a reproach to civilized warriors." [1]

On July 24, 1867, Abraham H. Herr sold the Island of Virginius to Jonathon C. Child$ and John A. McCreight for $75,000. This deed reads in part:

"...The Island in the Shenandoah River...above its mouth at Harpers Ferry; having upon it a large Factory building, designed as a cotton factory-The ruins of a large Flour manufacturing mill; together with other buildings, Dwelling houses, &c, being the same heretofore known and chartered by the General Assembly of Virginia as the town of Virginius,..." [2]

On August 12, 1868, Child and McCreight sold Solomon V. Yantis and Horatio R. Riddle an undivided third interest in the island property for $15,000.[3] On December 29, 1869, the firm entered into a contract or Agreement with the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company, granting the railroad a right of way to the cotton factory (Bldg. No. 6).[4]

On the next page of this report we include a tracing made from a portion of S. Howell Brown's 1869 map of Harpers Ferry - the portion thereof showing the Island of Virginius. It is clear from evidence already presented and that which will follow, that the 1869 map

1. Barry, Joseph, The Strange Story of Harper's Ferry, Martinsburg, W. Va., Thompson Brothers, 1903, pp.131-132, 133-134.

2. Deed of B. & S., July 24, 1867, Deed Book 2, 1865, pp.285-287.

3. Ibid., August 12, 1868, Deed Book 5, pp.324-325.

4. Contract, December 29, 1869, Deed Book 4, 1869-1870, pp.464-469 and a plat.

Plat of the Harpers Ferry Armory Property laid off into Lots for sale in pursuance of the Act of December 15th 1868. Approved November 16th, 1869. By S. Howell Brown. Scale: 165 feet to the inch (Part 1)

only shows the major buildings standing on the island in 1869 and that Brown, who was interested in the Government land, made no attempt to delineate all of the structures actually standing on the island at that date (See Photographs HF-29, HF-70, HF-119).

Historian Joseph Barry remarked of these developments:

"In July, 1867, Mr. A. H. Herr, an extensive manufacturer and the owner of the Island of Virginius,...sold his interest at Harpers's Ferry to the firm of Child & McCreight, of Springfield, Ohio, - both now [1903] deceased. This property is romantically situated on the Shenandoah which bounds it on the south. On the north and east it is bounded by the canal, constructed to facilitate the navigation of the Shenandoah, and on the west by a waste way of the canal communicating with the river. The island contains thirteen acres on which were, before the war, twenty-eight neat dwellings, one flour mill, one cotton factory, one carriage factory, one saw mill, a machine shop and a foundry. It will be remembered that in 1861, shortly after the skirmish at Bolivar, a party of confederates visited the town and destroyed the flour mill. From that time there was no business conducted on the island until the sale of that property to the above mentioned firm. These gentlemen, having availed themselves of the talents of Mr. William F. Cochran, then so well known for his thorough knowledge- theoretical and practical- of machinery, immediately commenced fitting up the cotton factory for a flour mill. A large force of men was kept in employment for fifteen months, preparing the building and putting up the machinery, under the direction of Mr. Cochran. The works were of the most approved description, set in motion by four turbine wheels, the power being that of three hundred horses. There were ten run of buhrs, which turned out five hundred barrels of flour daily and, on the whole, it was said by adepts in that business, to be a marvel of ingenuity, which greatly added to the previous and well established fame of Mr. Cochran...

Messrs. Child & McCreight, the new proprietors of this desirable property, soon won for themselves golden opinions among the people of the place for their courteous demeanor, and the success which at first attended them, gave unalloyed pleasure to all with whom they came in contact. They associated with them as a partner, Mr. Solomon V. Yantis, an old resident and long a merchant of Harper's Ferry, where his character was of the very best as a business man and a good citizen generally. Of the twenty-eight dwellings on the island nearly all were put in repair and the work performed on them, as well as on the new flour mill, gave employment to many who otherwise must have suffered from extreme destitution..." 5

5. Strange Story, pp.169-171.

On September 30 and October 1, 1870, Harpers Ferry was struck by a great flood. We here quote from Letter of Mrs. John C. Child, who was living on the Island of Virginius, to Mrs. Sallie B. Child and Miss Lucy Child of East Thetford, Vt.:

Letter from Emily E. Child (Mrs. J. C. Child) to Mrs. Sallie B. Child
Miss Lucy Child
East Thetford, Vt.

Envelope Heading
Return to Child, McCreight & Co.
Manufacturers of Flour
Harpers Ferry, W. Va.

Harpers Ferry, Oct. 7th, 1870

"Dear Mother & Sister:

I snatch a few minutes to give you a few particulars of the disaster that has happened to us here. The valuable property belonging to the firm of which john is a member is a mass of ruins and we have barely escaped with our lives. We have no idea of the danger until it was too late to escape from the Island. Last Friday towards evening the water commenced rising rapidly. Before two hours every way of escape and all hope of rescue was cut off from us. So we were compelled to stay within the crumbling walls which sheltered us from the terrible water which seethed and dashed around us. There were two bridges connecting the Island with the mainland, one wooden one near our house and the railroad bridge. So violent was the water that these were torn to fragments and carried away.

As soon as we saw there was danger of the water coming into the house we commenced to tear up carpets and moving furniture upstairs but so hurried were we that we were compelled to leave some and some was overlooked so though we saved the bulk of our furniture, still we lost many indispensible and some valuable articles. But our hearts are overflowing with gratitude that God has spared our lives, that our loss though heavy, is, we hope, not impossible.

Twelve buildings on the Island (some of them heavy stone and brick walls) are leveled to the ground. Our house is considered the strongest residence on the Island and yet everyone thinks if it had not been for the walls of the old mill (Bldg. No. 2 on 1859 historical base map) which stands west of us, it would have been swept away like chaff before the wind as was our stable and a brick house standing in our yard. Our back kitched and all our outhouses and many trees are entirely gone so completely that we can scarcely realize they stood there. Across the track from us stands a row of twelve brick houses (Bldgs. 21-33, 34, 35, 29, 19, 18, 17), all occupied by tenants with the exception of one family ((our minister, Dr. Dutton). All put their goods upstairs and left their houses before dark. Three families took refuge with us, the others went onto Camp Hill north of us. None"

"of those houses are entirely destroyed, but the kitchens and all of the outhouses are carried away. Doors and blinds are wrenched from their hinges, partition walls torn down, staircases shattered and floors torn up. In two of them the entire front walls fell out.

Sunday, Oct. 9th

The foundry (Bldg. No. 1), sawmill (Bldg. No. 3), carriage shop (Rohr's) and machine shop (Bldg. No. 4) were carried entirely away. The office to the mill was also destroyed and Mr. McCreight lost all his private papers.

The one bright spot in the picture, next to the saving of our lives, is the Mill (Bldg. No. 6) which is comparatively uninjured. They lost several hundred barrels, some feed and one of their scales but if it were not for the destruction of the race, could go to grinding in a few days, but the race is the greatest calamity of all. The head gates are gone, walls are torn down and the race filled with sand. It will cost several thousand dollars to repair it. They have already commenced work on it if the weather is favorable, hope to get it in shape before winter sets in. Mr. Hathaway, one of the partners who moved here from Pa. last year is going to move back this week. Mrs. McCreight and children are going to start for Springfield (Ohio) this week to spend the winter with Mrs. McCreight's sister so I shall be left here all alone in this desolate place. Their houses were more injured than ours and very damp (as ours also is) and they were afraid to stay in them for fear of sickness. I suppose we are assuming some risk in staying here but our things are here in confusion, our doors are off the hinges and down the river, so that we could not shut up the house and though we were invited to stay at the Yantis' who live on the hill until the house was dry, I decided to stay and do what I could to save such things as were
injured. I cannot say that I feel very cheerful with the prospect.

To make matters worse our woman has not come back since the day after the flood. She keeps saying she is coming but has broken herr word so far. Until last Friday we had Mr. Taylor's family consisting of eight. She was brought here in the bed clothes not being able to sit up. We have had to do all our cooking by a fireplace upstairs until yesterday and have now to cook down and eat upstairs as it is too damp to eat downstairs.

Anna has worked like a beaver and Emily has done all she could. Anna is one of the noblest and sweetest girls I ever saw and is the admiration of everyone that knows her. We have all worked very hard since we have been here in order to save what we could until business got started and had just begun to breathe easier when this disaster came. I have done all our sewing, dressmaking and millinery with Anna's help since we have been here and felt that my eyes and strength were fast giving out, but instead will take a new start and work on until I can see a resting place.

"We want to keep George in school if possible and had hoped to send him away after Christmas but all prospect of that is over now. I feel more anxious about the children's education than any other earthly thing and there are no suitable advantages for them here.

Well, I think you must be tired of this long chapter of unpleasant facts and I hope I shall be able to write a more cheerful letter next time.

Our school house was swept away and all the children's books with it. They seem, Anna especially, to mourn over them more than anything else. I have written in haste and don't know as you can read it. I must close now and hope to hear from you soon--do write often for we shall be very lonely. With love from us all, I am,

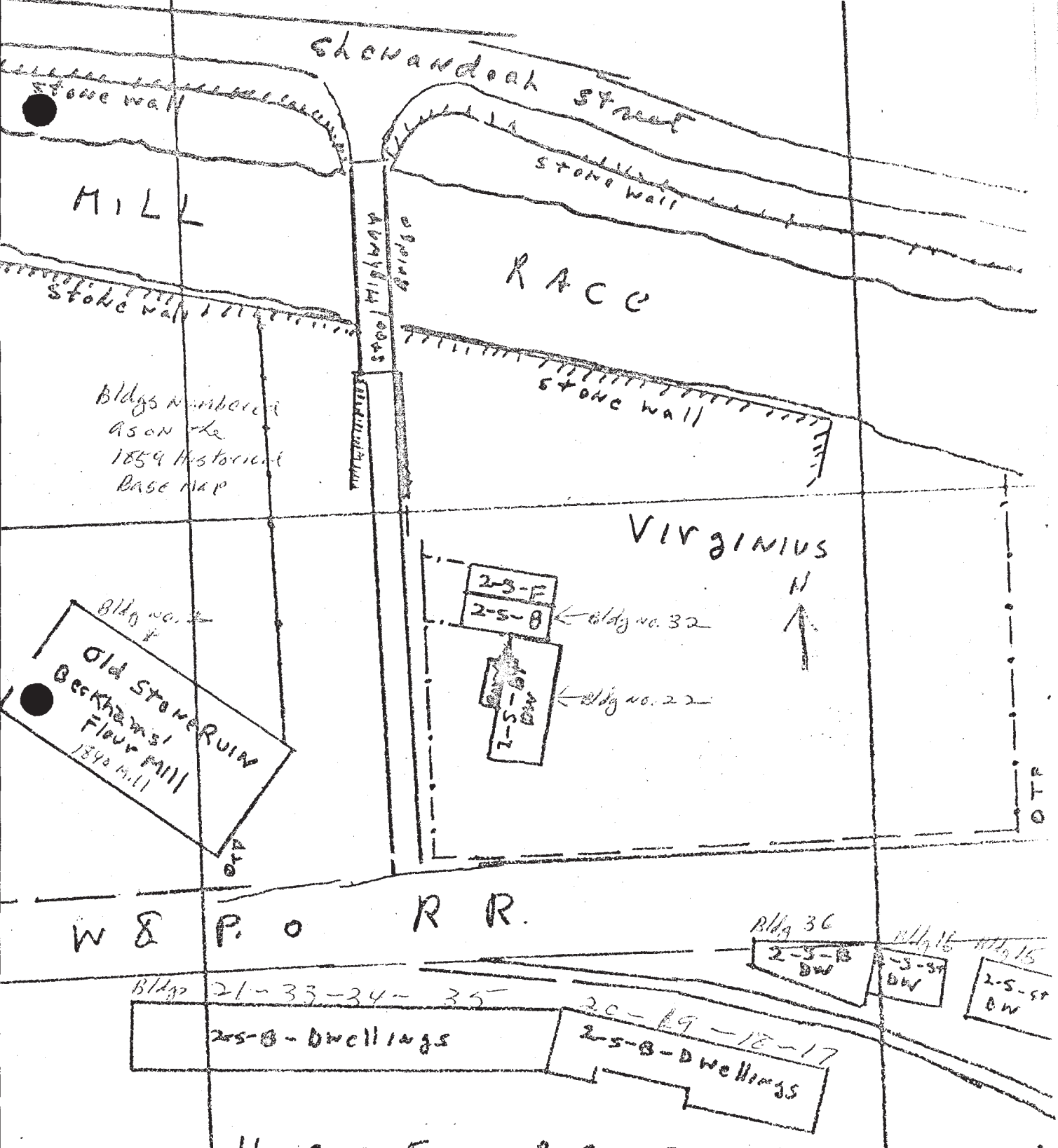
Ever your affectionate daughter
and sister,

E. E. Child"

Joseph Barry's account of the 1870 flood will be found on pages 175 to 196 of his Strange Story of Harper's Ferry.

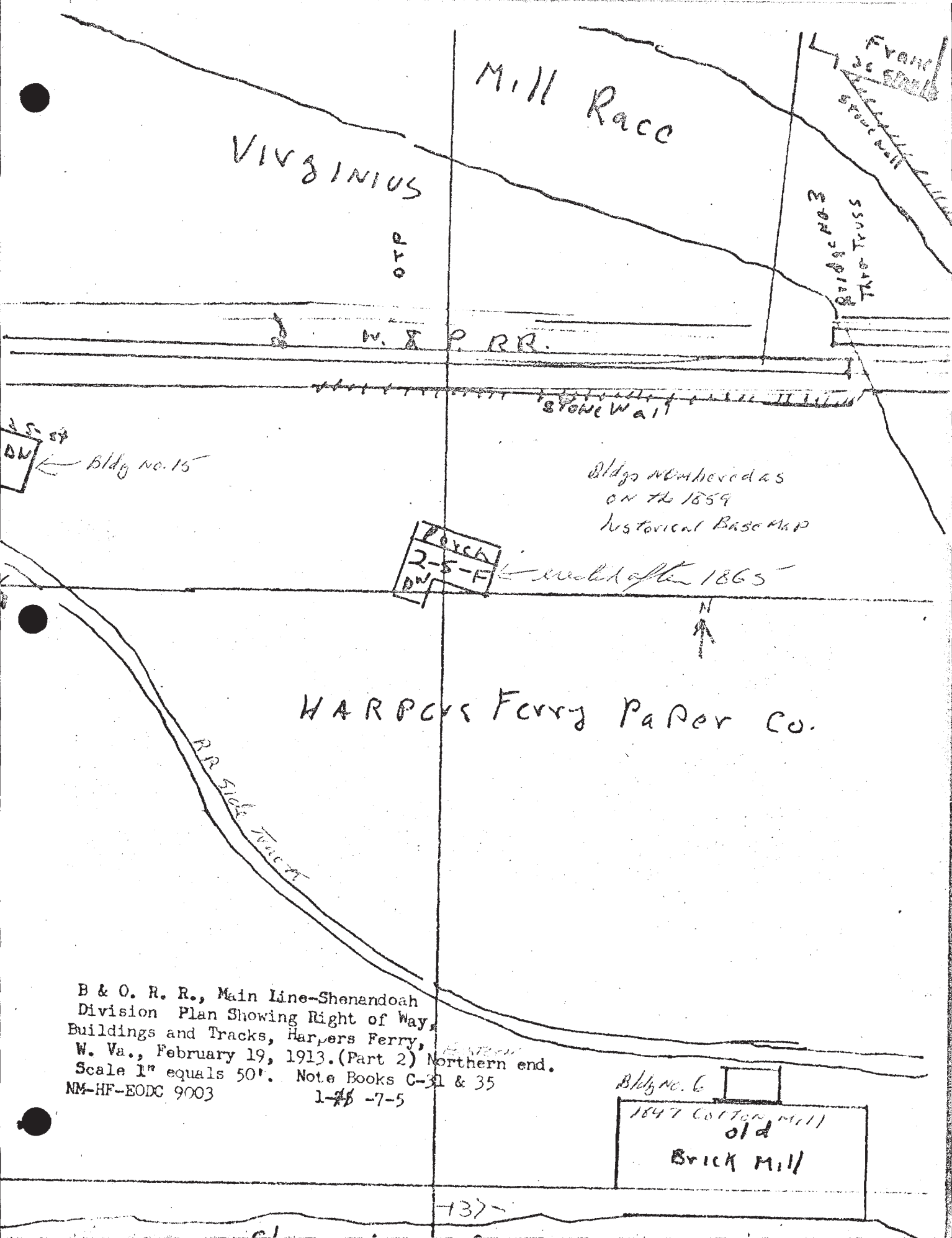
We conclude this chapter by presenting tracings made from portions of two maps. The first of these is a 1913 map from the Archives of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Company, entitled "Plan Showing Right of Way, Buildings and Tracks Harpers Ferry, W. Va. dated February 19, 1913," This map shows buildings standing on the Island of Virginius at that date. I have numbered surviving pre-Civil War structures with the same set of numbers used on the 1859 Historical Base Map that is presented in Chapter VI of this report.

The second map, entitled "Blue print, The Harpers Ferry Paper Co., 1925," was donated to the Monument by Mrs. James Cox Savory, R. D. #2, Kennett Square, Pa., in May, 1958. The 1925 map gives the width of the Island of Virginius at various points, the width of the old Shenandoah Canal and the depth of the water in the canal at various points as of that date.



B. & O. R. R., Main Line-Shenandoah Division
Plan Showing Right of Way, Buildings and Tracks
Harpers Ferry, W. Va. Scale 1" equals 50' (Part 1) Note Books C-31 & 35
February 19, 1913. (~~Southern~~ Northern part) 1-7-5

-136-



B & O. R. R., Main Line-Shenandoah Division Plan Showing Right of Way, Buildings and Tracks, Harpers Ferry, W. Va., February 19, 1913. (Part 2) Northern end. Scale 1" equals 50'. Note Books C-31 & 35
NM-HF-EODC 9003 1-~~15~~-7-5

CHAPTER VIII

SUMMARY OF HISTORICAL DATA, 1751 to 1861

The Island of Virginius from 1751 until 1816 was undeveloped land. In 1816 Daniel McPherson, surveyor for Jefferson County, Va. took out a patent for the island from the State of Virginia as unclaimed land and in 1817 sold the property to John Peacher for $1,000.

Seven years later, in August, 1824, Peacher sold the entire island "together with all and singular Mills, mill house, machinery..." to James Stubblefield for $15,000. It is thus apparent that the initial development of Virginius occurred between 1817 and 1824.

On August 31, 1824, Mr. Stubblefield signed an agreement with the Shenandoah Canal Company that provided for the improvement of the water channel that passed the island on the north side or inner side by means of the construction of a dam, locks and turning basin for the boats. Stubblefield was also granted the right to erect a dam across the Shenandoah. Under this agreement the canal was deepened and a dam erected just below the lower locks to provide and control the supply of water for the canal, and also furnishing enough water so that the canal at this point could be used as a turning basin. These improvements were apparently found to be sufficient in themselves, as the locks mentioned in the agreement were never constructed. The dam across the river, mentioned in the 1824 agreement, was not erected until 1850.

On December 28, 1824, Mr. Stubblefield divided the island into four tracts, which were to exist as basic units until 1854-55, and sold these lots to four individuals for a total of $28,500. Information

included in the deeds describing the boundaries of each tract indicates that by 1824 the basic industries to be associated with each tract until 1861 has already been established. Also most of the dams, river walls, water channels, canals, and streets that are to be seen on the 1833-34 map, were already standing by December 28, 1824. Tract No. 1, sold to Townsend Beckham for $7,500, thus contained an "oil mill" and tannery in 1824. Tract No. 2, sold to Fontaine Beckham for $10,500, contained a 60 by 40 feet stone merchant flour mill in 1824. Tract No. 3, sold to Edward Wager for $3,000, probably contained two stone dwelling houses in 1824, Tract No. 4, sold to Lewis Wernwag for $8,000, contained a saw mill in 1824.

In 1827 the island was incorporated as the Town of Virginius, but at some date after 1851 and before 1859 Virginius became offically a part of the new Town of Harpers Ferry.

In 1830 the population of the island totaled 89 persons. In 1840 it numbered 113 people. In 1850 approximately 186 individuals resided on the island in 31 houses and 1860 approximately 207 persons were living in 31 houses on Virginius.

HISTORY OF THE INDIVIDUAL TRACTS: 1824 to 1861

Tract No. 1: This property was owned by Townsend Beckham from 1824 until 1838. It contained a tannery and was operated as such by Beckham from 1823 until his death in 1832. In November, 1835, Tract No. 1 was leased by Hugh Gilleece, who converted the Oil Bark Mill into an Iron Foundry. Mr. Gilleece continued to lease the property until 1838, when he and William Apsey purchased Tract No. 1 for $5,000. In October, 1839,

Gilleece purchased Apsey's interest at a trust sale for $4,350. In April, 1840, Gilleece sold Alexander Brown an undivided one-third interest in Tract No. 1 for $1.00. Tract No. 1 was thus owned by Gilleece and Brown from 1840 until 1855 and the Iron Foundry situated on this lot was operated by Gilleece from 1835 until 1854. In August, 1855, Gilleece and Brown sold Tract No. 1 to Abraham H. Herr for $6,250. In September, 1854, and through at least 1855, the iron foundry was leased from Mr. Herr and operated by Fontaine Beckham & Son. The iron foundry was in operation until 1861 and was still standing in 1867, when Herr sold the entire island to Childs and McCreight. The Iron Foundry building was destroyed in the 1870 flood.

TRACT NO. 2: This property was owned from 1824 until 1838 by Fontaine Beckham and contained a merchant flour mill known as the "Island Mills". On March 23, 1830, Beckham sold a portion of Lot No. 2 to Lewis Wernwag. In 1830 the mill was operated by Beckham, and in 1831 by Beckham in partnership with Daniel Snyder. From 1834 to 1836 the mill was leased and run by Jacob Staub. From June, 1836, until 1838 the mill was then leased and operated by Rowland, Hefflebower and Company. On May 1, 1838, Henry Rowland, Carter Williamson, and Samuel Hefflebower purchased Tract No. 2 for $14,607. On May 1, 1838, Williamson sold his one-undivided third interest in Tract No. 2 to Lysander D. Childs. In February, 1839, their mill was destroyed by fire. A new 3½ story stone mill was built by Luther L. Cox in 1840. Rowland, Williamson, Hefflebower, and Childs, sometime in 1839, sold a two thirds interest in Tract No. 2 to Cox for $11,000. On January 1, 1840, Cox sold this

undivided two thirds interest to Daniel Snyder and Benjamin Ford for $24,133.78. Snyder and Ford operated the mill from 1840 to 1842.

By 1842 the firm was financial difficulty and the mill was leased out by the Court until the legal questions could be settled. Thus in 1843 the "Island Mills" were leased for a year by Philip Coons. On March 2, 1844, Abraham H. Herr and John Herr, his brother, purchased Tract No. 2 from the Court for $14,000. In July of 1844 they began to operate the "Island Mills" themselves. In January, 1848, the partnership of Herr brothers was dissolved and John Herr sold Abraham Herr his interest in Tract No. 2 for $5. Mr. Abraham Herr thus became the sole owner of Tract No.2 from 1848 until he sold the entire island to Childs and McCreight in 1867. Herr also operated the Island Mill merchant flour mill from 1848 until 1861. In October or November of 1861 the mill was completely destroyed by Confederate troops, who left only the ruined walls standing.

TRACT NO. 3: This property was owned by Edward Wager from 1824 until his death in 1832 and from then until 1833 by his estate. Tract No. 3 was purchased by John B. Gildea on September 28, 1833 for $4,000. The lot at that date contained two stone dwelling houses. In May, 1835, Mr. Gildea sold Tract No. 3 to the Winchester & Potomac Railroad Company for $4,650. This new railroad, running from Winchester, Va., to Harpers Ferry, was constructed in 1835 and 1836; was first in operation on March 31, 1836. Between 1835 and 1837 the Company constructed their Depot building and switches on Tract No. 3. In 1847 the Company removed their Depot from this lot and on July 1, 1847, sold all of the property except that occupied by their switches, to Jesse

Schofield for $1,500. Mr. Schofield, in turn, sold Tract No. 3 to the Harpers Ferry & Shenandoah Manufacturing Company for $1,600 on August 28, 1847. This company held title to Tract No. 3 until the general sale of its property on July 21, 1854, when it was acquired by Abraham H. Herr. Mr. Herr owned Tract No. 3 until 1867, when he sold it and the entire Island of Virginius to Childs and McCreight. Tract No. 3 was used from 1824 until 1867 as a residental area. From 1836 to 1847 it also contained the Depot of the Winchester & Potomac Railroad and from 1836 to 1861 the switches of that Company. Three pre-Civil War dwelling houses were still standing on this lot as late as 1913.

TRACT NO. 4: This property was owned by Lewis Wernwag, Sr., from 1824 until 1832. The lot contained a large saw mill, a machine shop and a number of dwelling houses. Tract No. 4 was enlarged on March 30, 1830, when Mr. Wernwag acquired a portion of Tract No. 2 from Fontaine Beckham. The saw mill and machine shop were operated from at least 1830 until 1832 by the firm of L. Wernwag & Sons, which was composed of Lewis Wernwag, Sr., John Wernwag, Joseph P. Shannon, Lewis Wernwag, Jr., and William Wernwag.

On July 2, 1832, Lewis Wernwag, Sr., sold one undivided half-interest in Tract No. 4 to Joseph L. Smith and James Hook for $10,000. From 1832 until 1833 Wernwag, Smith and Hook operated the saw mill under the firm name of Joseph L. Smith & Co. In July, 1833, Joseph L. Smith took over the entire operation of the saw mill and ran the lumber business until he went bankrupt in 1836.

On July 10, 1833, Lewis Wernwag, Sr., sold Joseph L. Smith an additional one-sixth undivided interest in the island and on July 31, 1833, Wernwag, Sr., also sold to his son John Wernwag, his remaining undivided one-third interest in Tract No. 4; thus in 1833 Smith owned an undivided two-thirds and John Wernwag an undivided one-third interest in Tract No. 4. John Wernwag and Joseph P. Shannon operated the machine shop from 1833 until 1847.

Both owners were involved in financial difficulties in 1836. John Wernwag, however, managed to save his undivided third interest by mortgaging it for $6,300 to Josias Pennington on January 20, 1840. Joseph L. Smith, however, was forced to declared himself bankrupt on September 5, 1836, and his two-thirds interest in Tract No. 4 was, therefore, thrown in Court until July 3, 1844, on which date it was sold by the Court to Jesse Schofield for $8,000. From March, 1839, until the final purchase of the property in 1844, Schofield had leased the saw mill and operated it. In May, 1844, Schofield and John Wernwag signed an agreement with James Giddings under which Giddings was given a two year period in which he was to attempt to sell tract No. 4 for at least $30,000. Unsuccessful in interesting northern capitalists in buying Tract No. 4, Giddings, on January 15, 1846, obtained a charter from the Virginia Legislature to incorporate the Harpers Ferry & Shenandoah Manufacturing Company. Giddings then undertook to promote and organize this proposed company, by interesting Harpers Ferry business men in this endeavor. Giddings' two year agreement with Wernwag & Schofield being about to expire, the three men executed

a new secret agreement in May, 1846, extending the time and agreeing to sell the property to the proposed company for $37,000. Giddings, in the meantime, used every effort to get the new company organized and succeeded in doing so in June, 1846. His double role was unknown to the stockholders and Giddings was elected President of the company, in which office he served from 1846 until 1851.

In 1846 the company begain the construction of a new cotton mill on Tract No. 4. This building was finished in 1847 and in production by March, 1848. On August 24, 1847, Tract No. 4 was sold to the Company by Schofield and Wernwag for $37,000; one-quarter of the sum was to be paid in cash and the other three-fourths in company stock. On August 28, 1847, the company acquired Tract No. 3 from Schofield for $1,600. In October, 1848, the stockholders were informed for the first time, that there was a $6,300 mortgage on John Wernwag's one-third interest in Tract No. 4. The stockholders had apparently relied on Giddings to make a search of the title to Tract No. 4 and he had either neglected to do so, or if he did so, he failed to inform the stockholders of the mortgage. (Giddings, while president of the Company, and negotiating the sale, was at the same time being paid by Schofield and Wernwag for selling the property to the Company for as high a price as possible.) Giddings succeeded in keeping his double role a secret but the Board of Directors withheld enough cash and company stock from the purchase money owed Wernwag to cover the interest and principal owed on the mortgage.

In 1848 a second cotton factory building was started and the structure completed and in production in July, 1849. This factory was leased and operated by Cornelius Johnson and Ira Stanbrough as the "Valley Cotton Factory" from July, 1849, until 1851. The Harpers Ferry & Shenandoah Manfacturing Company also leased out their smith shops, saw mill and machine shop during the period of 1846 to 1852 to various manufacturers. In 1850 the company also built the first Virginius dam across the Shenandoah River and constructed the river wall, with inner and outer basins and lock gates, as is to be seen on the 1859 Historical Base Map that is presented in this report.

By the spring of 1852 the company was apparently in financial difficulties and the stockholders decided to sell the company property at public auction on May 19, 1852. A great flood struck Virginius and Harpers Ferry on April 18, 1852, and apparently demolished the cotton factory (Bldg. No. 5) erected in 1849. (The factory is described in an advertisement for the sale, dated April 8, 1852, but is not mentioned in a detailed description of the property dated December 9, 1852.) Creditors of the company, however, blocked this proposed May sale and the affairs of the company were taken into court.

The company property, including Tracts No. 3 and 4, were finally purchased on July 21, 1854, by Mr. Abraham Herr from the Court for $25,000. Mr. Herr held title to this property from 1854 until 1867 when he sold the entire island to Childs and McCreight. During the period 1854 to 1861, Herr leased the Cotton Mill that

had been completed in 1847-48, the machine shop, and saw mill to various manufacturers. To these old industries was also added a new one in 1857 of wagon making. From 1861 to 1867, during and after the Civil War, these industries were closed down. In 1867, after purchasing the island, Childs and McCreight converted the Cotton Mill (Bldg. No. 6) into a Merchant Flour Mill. The saw mill (Bldg. No. 3) and machine shop (Bldg. No. 4) were destroyed by the 1870 flood. Bldg. No. 6, the Cotton Factory converted into a flour mill, stood until apparently destroyed by the 1936 flood.

TRACT NO. 5: This small lot, located in the center of Tract No. 4, contained a two story brick dwelling house, and was sold by Joseph L. Smith and John Wernwag, the owners of Tract No. 4, to Jesse Schofield on May 25, 1835, for $500. This house, used as Mr. Schofield's residence, and the lot was owned by Schofield from 1835 until 1855. On June 23, 1855, Mr. Schofield sold Tract No. 5 and the house to Abraham H. Herr for $2,000. Mr. Herr retained title to this property until 1867 when he sold the entire island to Childs and McCreight. This dwelling house was probably still standing in 1913.

PRODUCTS OF THE ISLAND, 1824 - 1861

The industries on the Island of Virginius produced flour, barrels, blacksmithing, sawed and finished lumber, furniture, machine castings, mill gearing, agricultural machines such as plows and threshing machines, iron stoves, grates, flat irons, cast iron railings and fences, cutting boxes, tools, machines, washing machines, cotton goods, patent window fasteners, wagons and carriages. From 1824 until 1832 a tannery was also in operation on the Island.

CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. THE ISLAND OF VIRGINIUS TODAY

The Water Wheels in the factories on the Island of Virginius have long been stilled and the buildings fallen into ruin. The Island today is covered with a heavy growth of new brush and young trees. On November 19, 1958, Historian Philip R. Smith, Jr., and the writer, armed with the data presented in this report and a copy of the new 1859 Historical Base Map of the Island, set forth on a tour of exploration to determine just how much of the pre-Civil War development of Virginius Island still remains to be seen. On the next two pages will be found a copy of the 1859 Historical Base Map of Virginius on which has been marked the historic ruins, that are still to be seen above the surface of the ground. To supplement this map, the writer also offers the following comments on the individual ruins.

Bldg. No. 6: 1847 Cotton Mill. Impressive ruins of the 104 by 48 feet heavy stone foundations and arches; also hundreds of old bricks lying on the ground. The heavy stone river walls along bank of river are also largely in place.

Bldg. No. 4: Machine Shop. Impressive 30 by 50 feet ruins of heavy stone foundations.

Wernwag's Canal: (running parallel to Bldgs. 4, 5, 8, 7, and 6.) This old canal is still there, but has been arched over with brick and stone and hence is now largely underground. Whether this was thus

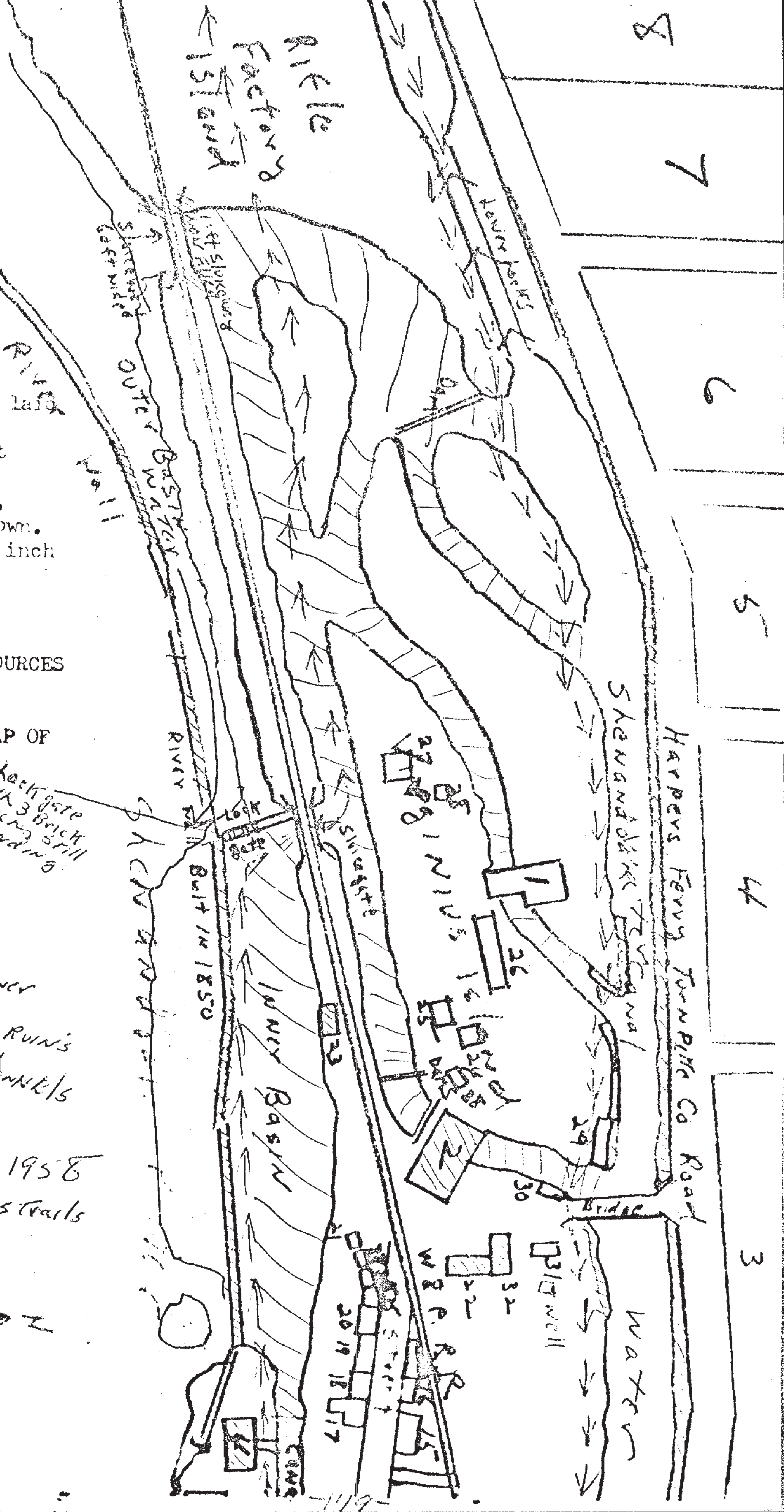
Dam Built in 1850

Plat of the Harpers Ferry Armory Propperty laid off into Lots for sale in pursuance of the Act of December 15th 1868. Approved November 16th, 1869. By S. Howell Brown. Scale: 165 feet to the inch (Part 1)

(~~Southern~~ Western end)

WITH DATA FROM OTHER SOURCES ADDED:

1859 HISTORICAL BASE MAP OF ISLAND OF VIRGINIUS.



Stone

Brick

Frame

New Land Built up By River Since 1865

– Visible Historic Ruins

Historic Water Channels Now Dry Land

VIRGINIUS

November 19, 1958

→→ Existing NPS Trails

Plat of the Harpers Ferry Armory Property laid off into Lots for sale in pursuance of the Act of December 15th 1858. Approved November 16th 1859. Drawn by S. Howell Brown. Scale: 165 feet to the inch.
(Part 2)
(~~Northern~~ Eastern end)

WITH DATA FROM OTHER SOURCES ADDED:

1859 HISTORICAL BASE MAP OF ISLAND OF VIRGINIUS.

VirgINIUS
November 19, 1958

Stone
Brick
Frame
Visible Historic Ruins
Historic Water Channels Now Dry
New Land Built up By The River Since 1865
old canal now under ground with open pits. Each pit has 2 arches on each end for Downward flow of water and 1 arch on side for flow of water to river and shop.
→ → Existing NPS Trails

Harpers Ferry Turnpike Co. Road
Canal
Toll House
Inner Basin
Outer Basin
Wall Built in 1850
Sluice Gate
Gates
Dam
Canal
Mill
Avenue
Street

-150-

covered before or after 1865 is difficult to determine. Photograph HF-490 suggests that the canal was open in 1856 while HF-70 indicates that most of it was covered by 1867 or thereabouts. From the location of the four open pits, to be described later, in relation to Bldgs. No. 6, 8, 5 and 4, however, it seems probably that at least the section from 8 to 6 and 3 was covered before 1865. In any case, opposite the sites and ruins of Bldgs. No. 6, 8, 5 and 4 there are today four open pits, walled and arched with brick and stone. Each pit has two arches in the west wall and two arches in the east wall for the downward flow of water through the old canal. The south wall of each pit has a single arch which must have permitted water to flow underground from the open pit into the shop or factory opposite the pit to work the water wheels and then on into the river. These pits are quite impressive, being perhaps 50 feet wide by about 25 feet and about 20 feet deep. These are largely filled with sand and silt so as to render complete observation difficult.

River Wall and Inner Basin

Proceeding westward from Bldg. No. 4 we found the top of the 1850 stone river wall visible above ground level. The depression which was once the inner basin, on the right as one proceeds westward, is clearly visible but is now high and dry above normal water level. The river has built a large sandy area, with grass and trees, on the south or river side of the old river wall. This large area of new land has, of course, been clearly formed since 1865 as a glance at photographs HF-119 and HF-29 will reveal. This river wall for the inner basin is intact,

but all but the top layer of stone in now below ground level.

Lock Gates: At the west end of the river wall for the inner basin, there still stands the impressive ruins of the stone lock gate. The brick three arches, as shown in Photograph HF-29, are still standing, although one is in poor condition. This work is also now above normal water level, although the river comes straight down to within about 10 feet of the lock gate before it makes a sharp turn to the south through a break in the old river wall of the outer basin.

Railroad Bridge and Sluiceway: Just to the north of the lock gate, is the old sluiceway to the inner basin. The old stone abutments of the Railroad Bridge are still in place and in use and the old water channel, still visible, now serves as a road that passes under the railroad bridge.

River Wall of Outer Basin and the Outer Basin: West of the Lock Gate and running parallel with the railroad track there are still plainly visible two sections of what must once have been the river wall for the outer basin. This is composed of rock and there are now small trees and small bushes growing on these sections.

Sluiceway, 60 Feet Wide: This sluice way, the 1824 guard gate, and original entrance for all water to the various channels and canals of the island has been filled in by the Railroad. The old stone abutments for the former bridge that once crossed this channel, however, are still in place.

Water Channels: All of the old water channels and small islands shown on the 1859 map are clearly visible as definitely depressed or low ground;

but, of course, they are now normally high and dry about the normal river level.

Bldgs. No. 15, 16, and 36: Definite stone foundations and one corner wall of these buildings were found. The trace of the street, although filled with brush and young trees is also clearly visible.

Bldgs. No. 17, 18, 19, 20, 35, 34, 33, 21, and 23: No foundation ruins of these structures were found above ground but hundreds of old bricks litter this area which is the site of brick dwelling houses.

Bldgs. No. 22, 32, and Well: Definite foundation ruins and large cellar depressions of Bldg. No. 22 and 32, two dwelling houses, were found. A few feet north of Bldg. No. 32 is a square stone wall, about 3 feet high, of what was once probably a well.

Bldg. No. 2, the Island Mills Flour Mill: Impressive stone walls and arches of the foundation of this large building are still visible. All of the walls above ground level are gone, but the foundations of the building, which sets astride the former water channel, are still there and part of the foundation walls perhaps 20 to 30 feet deep.

Other Buildings on 1859 Map: A careful search was also made for surface evidence of all the other buildings shown on the 1859 map, but nothing definite was discovered. It is quite probable, however, that much evidence lies under the ground.

From our inspection, the writer believes that the works and buildings on Virginius have been relatively undisturbed by man since 1865 and most changes and destruction has been affected by the great floods that have struck the island since that date.

2. HISTORICAL PHOTOGRAPHS

The 1856 view of the Island of Virginius will be found on page 12[of this report and all other photographs, nine in number, will be found in Appendix I of this report.

3. HISTORICAL BUILDING PLANS

No historical building plans of the structures that once occupied Virginius Island have been found and it is highly unlikely that any will ever be located. All known historical maps showing the island of Virginius, however, have been included in this report.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

As has been pointed out in Part 1 of this chapter, the Island of Virginius contains a number of very interesting historical ruins. Many of these ruins, however, are covered now with heavy underbrush and are in poor condition. None of them, however, have any meaning or significance to visitors who today walk the two trails that run along the south and north shores of the island, and many visitors undoubtedly pass by hidden ruins without even noticing them. Problems relating to the development of the island thus seem to fall into two general categories, namely preservation of the ruins and interpretation of the ruins.

In regards to the first problem, it is suggested that heavy plant growth be largely cleared away from the ruins to prevent tree roots from heaving stones out of place and thus speeding up the rate of deterioration. This work will also serve to render the ruins more readily visible for visitors to see. It is suggested that the ruins be stabilized as far as is practical in light of the known power of floods in this

particular area, so that these interesting remains will survive as long as is possible. It is also suggested that archeological exploration be carried out to identify and mark other structures that are known to have been located on the island. The Wernwag canal might also be cleared at least in part, of sand and silt, both for study and exhibit purposes. A check of the ruins of the Cotton Factory, Bldg. No. 6; machine shop, Bldg. No. 4; and Bldg. No. 2, the flour mill, might also turn up some of the old water wheels or machinery that may have been buried by past floods. It is also suggested that the former street leading from the Saw Mill, Bldg. No. 3, across the island to Bldg. No. 2, the Flour Mill, be brushed out and utilized as a cross trail connecting the two existing trails that now run parallel to each other on the north and south sides of the island.

In addition to historical interest, the Island also contains a number of features of natural interest, such as plant life, bird life, and some animal life. It is suggested that in interpreting the island that historical and nature stories be combined into one self guiding leaflet so that visitors will be given a chance of partaking of both stories as they walk over the island. A good map showing the island in 1859 and surviving ruins will be a basic requirement to enable visitors to visualize what they are viewing and to understand where they are standing in relation to other features. Individual ruins should also be marked with brief signs that give the name of the structure and also a number that will coincide with a number used in the text of the self guiding leaflet.

The cost of archeological exploration and site identification for the Island of Virginius and Hall's Rifle Factory Island has been estimated at a total of $1,500 including all work for both islands.

In conclusion, it is suggested that a search be made for examples of goods that were manufactured on the Island of Virginius before 1861 and that if any such examples are found, that they be exhibited in one of the Historic Buildings of the Lower Town Section of the Monument.

Charles W. Snell

Charles W. Snell
Historian (Park Supervisory)
December 4, 1958

APPENDIX I

HISTORICAL PHOTOGRAPHS

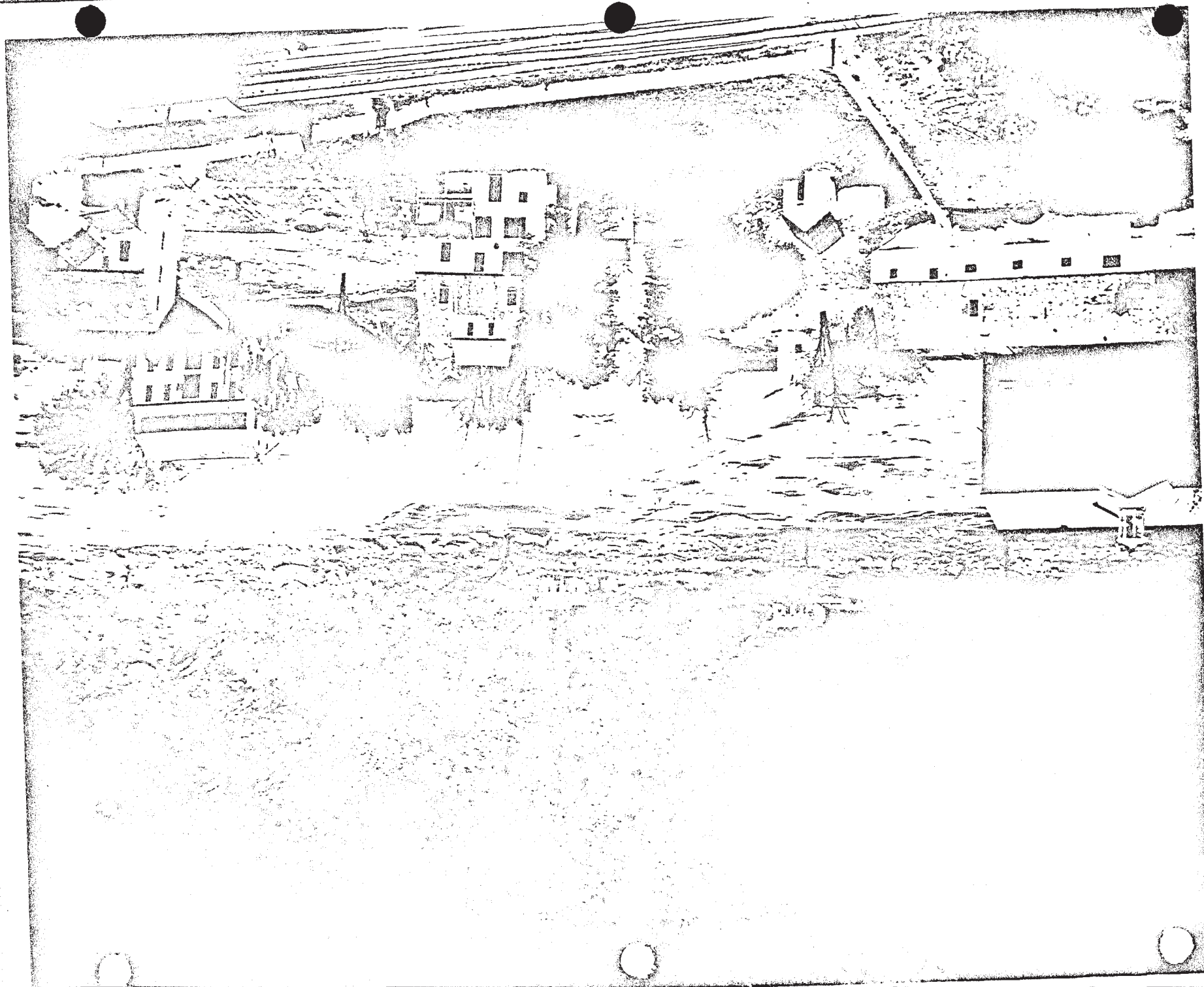
(Nine)

ISLAND OF VIRGINIUS, 1865 - 1870

Harpers Ferry Negative HF-70

This photograph was probably taken in 1865, just after the Civil War. The Bldg. numbers used here are the same ones to be found on the 1859 Historical Base Map. Reading from left to right, the large four story brick mill, Bldg. No. 6, is the Cotton Factory erected in 1847. The long low building in front of it is Wernwag's Saw Mill, Bldg. No. 3; to the right of 6, near the river is Bldg. No. 7, then 8, and the ruins of the Cotton Factory, Bldg. No. 5; By Bldg. 5 stands Bldg. No. 37, note the open canal, next to the ruins of Bldg. 5 stands the stone machine shop, Bldg. No. 4. Returning to the Saw Mill or Bldg. No. 3, to the right stands a shed, Bldg. No. 11, then Bldg. No. 12 and at the far right Bldg. No. 13. In the foreground are the tracks and switches (turning levers) of the Winchester and Potomac Railroad.

Across the Shenandoah River are two government dwelling houses and the Pipertown Road up Loudoun Heights.



VIRGINIUS OR HERR'S ISLAND, 1865 - 1870

Harpers Ferry Negative No. HF-119

This photograph was made in 1865 or just after the Civil War. In the foreground is to be seen the roof of present Bldg. No. 48, across the street the brick structure is the Armory Stable, located on Shenandoah Street, Block F, Lot 2. Behind the stable is a portion of the Shenandoah Canal and beyond lays the Island of Virginius. Bldgs. numbered as on the 1859 Historical Base Map in this report. From left to right, starting on far side of W. & P. R.R. tracks: Bldg. No. 12, Bldg. No. 13, Bldg. No. 15, Bldg. No. 16 and Bldg. No. 36. House visible between Bldgs. No. 13 and 15, across the street, is Bldg. No. 17, Bldg. No. 18, Bldg. No. 19, Bldg. No. 20, No. 35, No. 34, No. 33 and No. 21.

On closer side of R.R. Tracks, by cars, Bldg. No. 14, Bldg. No. 22 and to right 32, 31, then apparently a covered bridge to the island. The three and one-half story stone ruin is Bldg. No. 2, the flour mill, to the right of the mill is Bldg. No. 24, beyond and to right Bldg. No. 26, the chopping mill; to the right of this is what is probably the ruin of iron foundry, Bldg. No. 1; beyond and to the left of the chopping mill is House No. 27 and to its right is small Bldg. No. 28.



767 SHENANDOAH RIVER AND ISLAND
OF VIRGINIUS

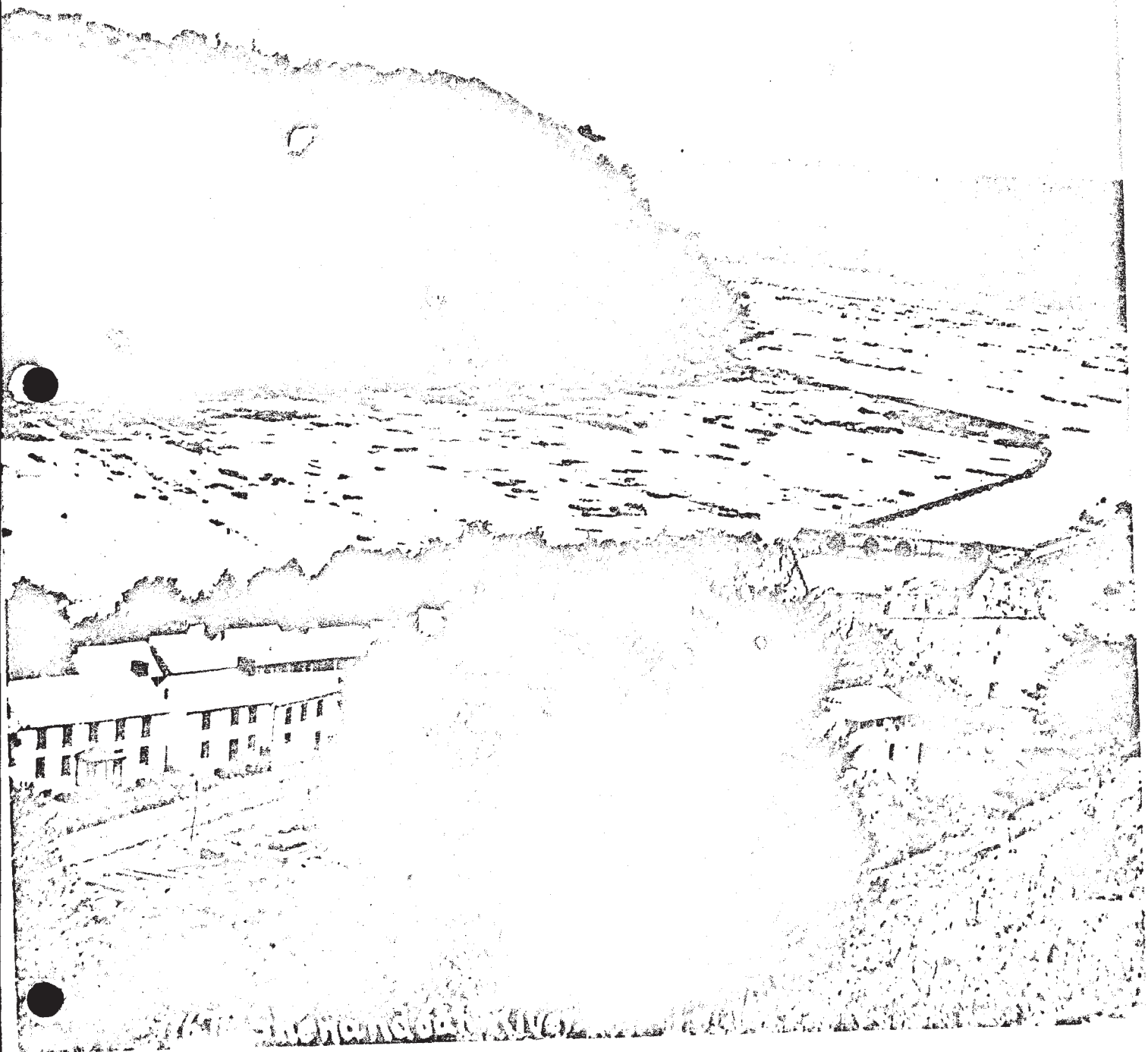
Original Glass Negative at
Gettysburg N.M.P.
Harpers Ferry Negative No. HF-29
Photograph taken in 1865 or 1866, just
after the Civil War.

Bldgs. from left to right (See Bldg. Nos. on 1859 Historical Base Map) The white stone stuccoed Bldg. next to W. & P. R.R. Track at left is Bldg. No. 15, next is Bldg. No. 16 and then Bldg. No. 36.

Across the street, and in the rear of Bldg. No. 15, is probably Bldg. No. 17 with black roof, then Bldg. No. 18, Bldg. No. 19, Bldg. No. 20, and next part of roof of Bldg. No. 35.

To the right of the photographs are the 3½ story stone ruins of the Island Mills flour mill. The two story brick house in the right foreground is probably Bldg. No. 32 on the 1859 map.

Note the dam across the Shenandoah River, with the river wall, and three lock gates dividing the area into the outer and inner basin.



VIEW OF THE ISLAND OF VIRGINIUS

Photograph by Russell of Baltimore.
Donated by Mrs. Henry McDonald,
of Storer Collegere.
Harpers Ferry Negative No. HF-364

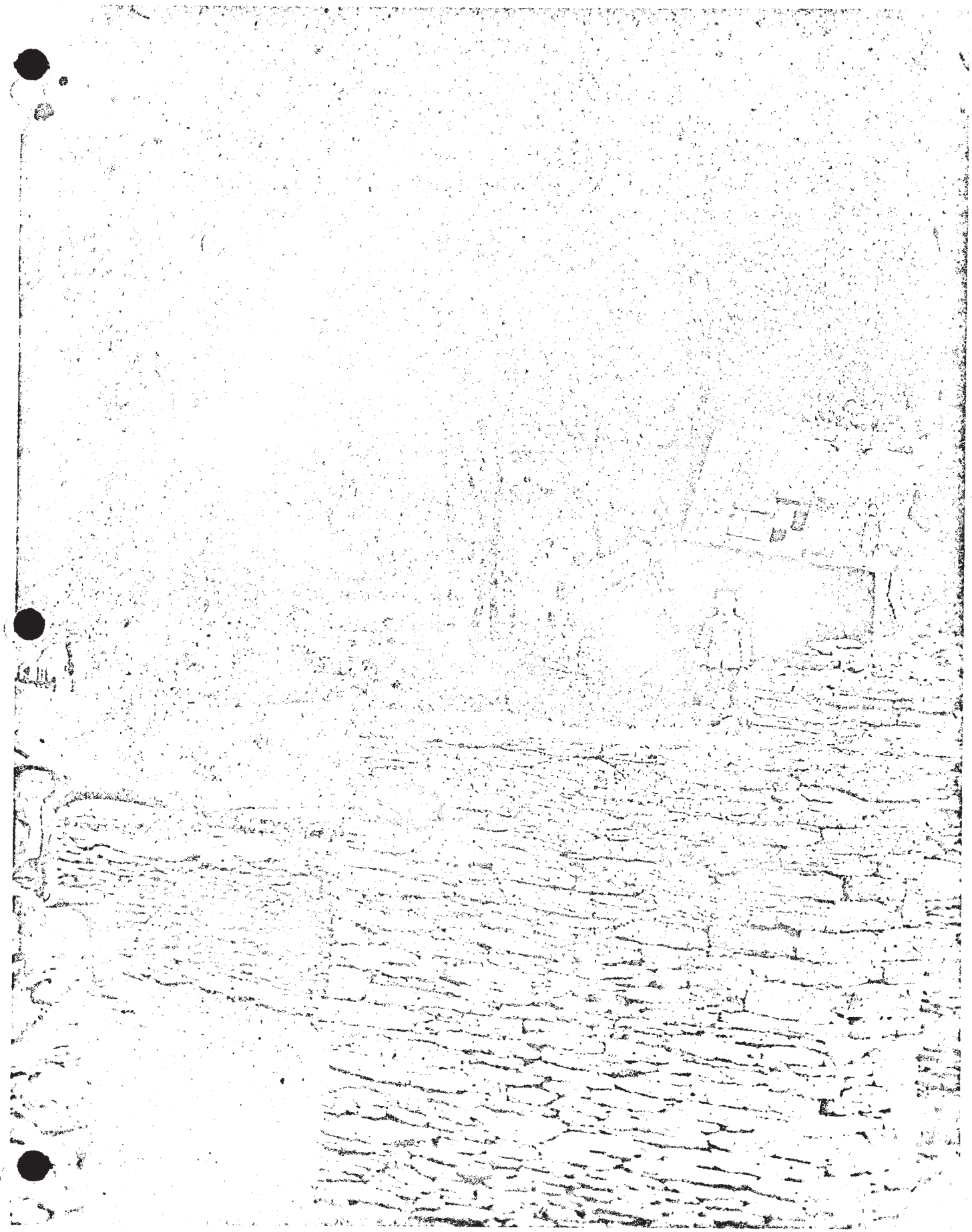
The buildings on the hill to the left are Storer College structures. This photograph was probably taken in the 1870's. To the right, on Virginius Island are to be seen the ruined wall of the Flour Mill (Bldg. No. 2 on the 1859 Historical Base Map), and slightly beyond and to the right of the mill, Dwelling Houses No. 21, 33, 34, 35, 20, 19, 18, and 17, on the 1859 map. The four story brick building beyond them in the distance is the Cotton Factory, Bldg. No. 6 on the 1859 map. In the 1870's the Child-McCreight Flour Mill.



VIRGINIUS ISLAND

National Geographic File No. 140329-A
Harpers Ferry Negative No. HF-98
Donated by John Perry, of Bolivar Heights and Pittsburgh.

This photograph shows flood damage to the island of Virginius; the wooden bridge from the mainland to the island has been washed away. The picture was taken either in 1870 or 1889.



ISLAND OF VIRGINIUS ABOUT 1900

Harpers Ferry Negative No. HF-62

This photograph was taken about 1900; note the Lockwood House on Camp Hill above the Island. To the right is to be seen the Child-McCreight Flour Mill on the Shenandoah River, the four story brick cotton factory, Bldg. No. 6 on the Historical Base Map, erected in 1847. To the left of the Railroad cars are to be seen various dwellings (compare with 1913 B. & O. map) to the far left the photograph is to be seen the ruined walls of the 1840 flour mill, Bldg. No. 2 on the 1859 Historical Base Map.



HARPERS FERRY FROM MARYLAND HEIGHTS, 1896

National Geographic File No. 140330-A
Harpers Ferry Negative No. 96

This photograph was taken in 1896, the year in which the Catholic Church was remodelled; note the scaffolding on the church. To the left of the church and on the bank of the Shenandoah, slightly above the church, is to be seen Virginius Island. The large four story brick building on the edge of the river, is Bldg. No. 6 on the 1859 Historical Base Map, the Cotton Factory erected in 1847.

