

APPROVAL SHEET

Recommended:

Director

Recommended:

Regional Director

Recommended:

Chief, E.O.D.C.

Approved:

Superintendent

Harpers Ferry National Monument

HISTORIC BUILDING SITE SURVEY

REPORT

for

WAGER LOT NO. 4

Ferry Lot Studies

"S. V. Yantis' Tobacco Shop"

Harpers Ferry National Monument

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Historian (Park Supervisory)
September 11, 1958
14 Pages

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SECTION I - ADMINISTRATIVE DATA

A. Name and Number of Building

B. V. Yantis' Tobacco Shop, Wager Lot No. 4.

B. Proposed Use of Structure and Grounds

We concur with Research Historian Snell that the entire Ferry Lot area be interpreted by means of trailside exhibits using some of the old prints and photographs contained in the Historic Building Report on Wager Lot Number 5. We believe that an excellent place for one of these exhibits would be on a suitable site (to be determined later) on Maryland Heights from where an outstanding view of the Ferry Lots may be obtained.

C. Provisions for Operating the Lot

No operation required.

D. Preliminary Estimate of Cost of Rehabilitating the Grounds

In view of the Regional Director's comments under this heading on the report for the Wager Lot No. 51, we are raising our estimate from \$400.00 to \$1,000. This figure is, of course, considered as covering the interpretation of all the Ferry Lots.

SECTION II - HISTORICAL DATA

1. OWNERSHIP OF THE LAND, 1835 to 1865

On April 2, 1835, the Circuit Superior Court of Law and Chancery for Jefferson County, Virginia, appointed Commissioners "to lay off and divide into three equal lots and parcels, the real estate at Harper's Ferry which descended to James B. Wager, Gerard B. Wager, and Sally Ann Wager, now Sally Ann Swayne, the wife of Noah H. Swayne, from their father, John Wager [Jr], deceased." ¹ The property thus being divided at Harpers Ferry was commonly known as the "Wager Six Acre Reservation and Ferry Lot," an island of land in private ownership surrounded on all sides by land owned ² by the United States Government.

On October 10, 1835, the three Commissioners reported to the Court: "To Gerard B. Wager we allot and assign the following lots as designated G. B. W. and numbered in the annexed Plat, to wit: Lots No. 2-3-4-6-12-14-18-21-22-23-30-34-36-38-43-49-50-52-and 56." ³ Thus on October 10, 1835, Wager Lot No. 4 (see blue area on plat page 2 of this report) was awarded to Gerard B. Wager. Mr. Wager retained the ownership of Lot No. 4 until his death in 1848 and his estate held possession of the property until after the Civil War.

2. CONSTRUCTION OF THE BUILDING ON WAGER LOT NO. 4

The following maps show a building standing on Wager Lot No. 4 in the

1. Gibson, etc. vs. Wager, etc., Decree, Deed Book 29, pp.140-141. Jefferson County Court House, Charles Town, West Virginia.

2. 1835 plat: "The Wager Six Acre Reservation, Drawn by James M. Brown, S.G.C." in Deed Book 29, 1847-48, p.140. See page 2.

3. Deed Book 29, p.141.



1830's: 1. A map of Harpers Ferry, drawn after 1828 and before 1835,
probably about 1834.⁴

2. "Map A - Plot of Harpers Ferry, exhibiting the limits of the ground
requisite for the passage of the Winchester and Potomac Railroad through
the Town,"⁵ an undated map but obviously a working map for Map No. 2-1835,
hence made in 1833 or 1834, probably in 1833. This map indicates that a
building about 22 feet by 54 feet occupied Lot No. 4.

3. "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., Map No. 2, 1835,"⁶
This map indicates that Lot No. 4 contained a house about 18 feet by 54 feet
in size.

4. "Sketch No. 2, Shewing two practicable Locations for the Balto. &
Ohio R. Rd. through the village of Harpers Ferry,"⁷ probably drawn 1837-
38, also shows Lot No. 4 occupied by a building but erroneously indicates
that it was a part of the tavern or "National Hotel" that was located on
Wager Lot No. 5.

The maps, however, agree that a structure was located on Lot No. 4
in the 1830's. As there is no record of its construction, it can there-
fore be assumed that it was erected by the Wager family prior to 1830 and

4. Map received from EODC, but we have no other information on it.

5. National Archives Record Group No. 77. Records of the Office of the
Chief of Engineers. Fortifications Map File, Map: Dr.150, sheet 78-1.

6. National Archives Record Group no. 77, Dr.150, sheet 82-2.

7. Ordinance Office, Drawer 5, Portfolio, No. 5. Photostatic copy of
map received from Vicksburg N. H. P.

was thus built either of wood or stone, as brick was not utilized in privately-owned buildings at Harpers Ferry until 1830. A fifth map, "Map of Harpers Ferry--Prepared in compliance with Letter to Major Symington--April 22, 1848," reproduced in the Harpers Ferry National Monument Master Plan as Drawing No. NM-HF-3000, indicates that Lot No. 4 was still occupied at that date by a building approximately 20 by 45 feet in size.

As the dimensions of Lot No. 4 were 20 feet by 55 feet, it therefore appears that the dimensions of the house, which filled the lot, were about 20 by 55 feet. Further information of the house located on Lot 4 can be gathered from the prints and photographs in the following reports: 1.

"Historic Building Site Survey Report for Wager Lot No. 5, The William J. Stephens Building," dated August 5, 1958, HF-363, p.46; HF-349, page 47; and HF-229, page 48.

2. "Historic Building Site Survey Report for Wager Lots No. 6, 7, and Part of 8, the Wager House or United States Hotel," dated August 7, 1958, HF-451, page 39 (the two-story white building visible between the Railroad Depot on the left and the 3½ story Wager House on the right).

These photographs indicate that the house on Lot No. 4 was a two-story building and probably built of stone. This building was destroyed by Union troops on February 7, 1862.

3. USE OF THE HOUSE ON LOT NO. 4, 1830-1862

In February, 1830, the following notice appeared in the newspapers:

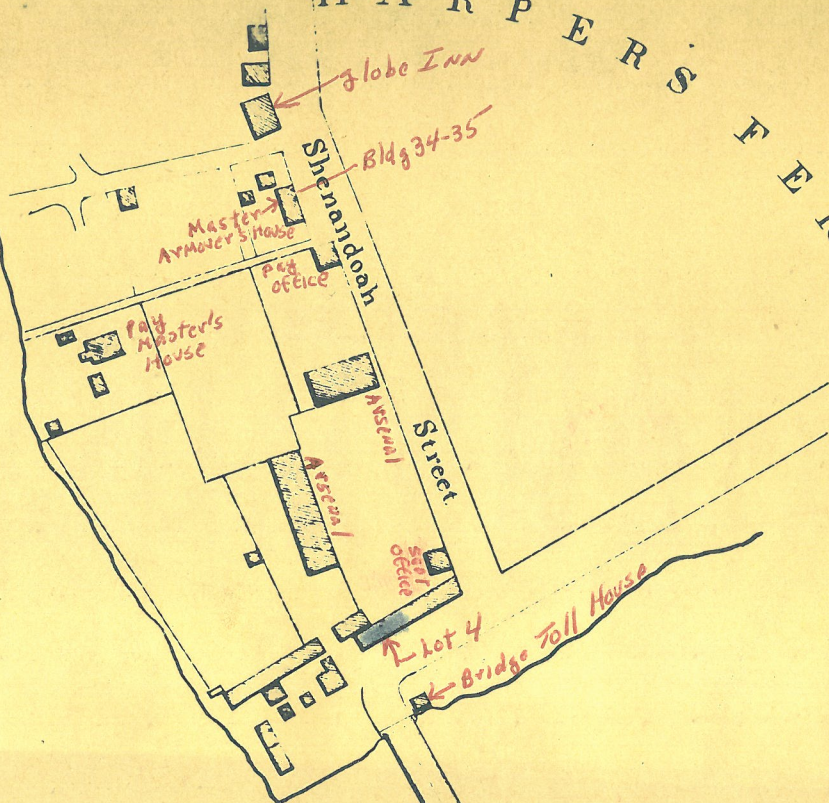
JOHN W. BENNER
TAILOR

Late from Washington City,

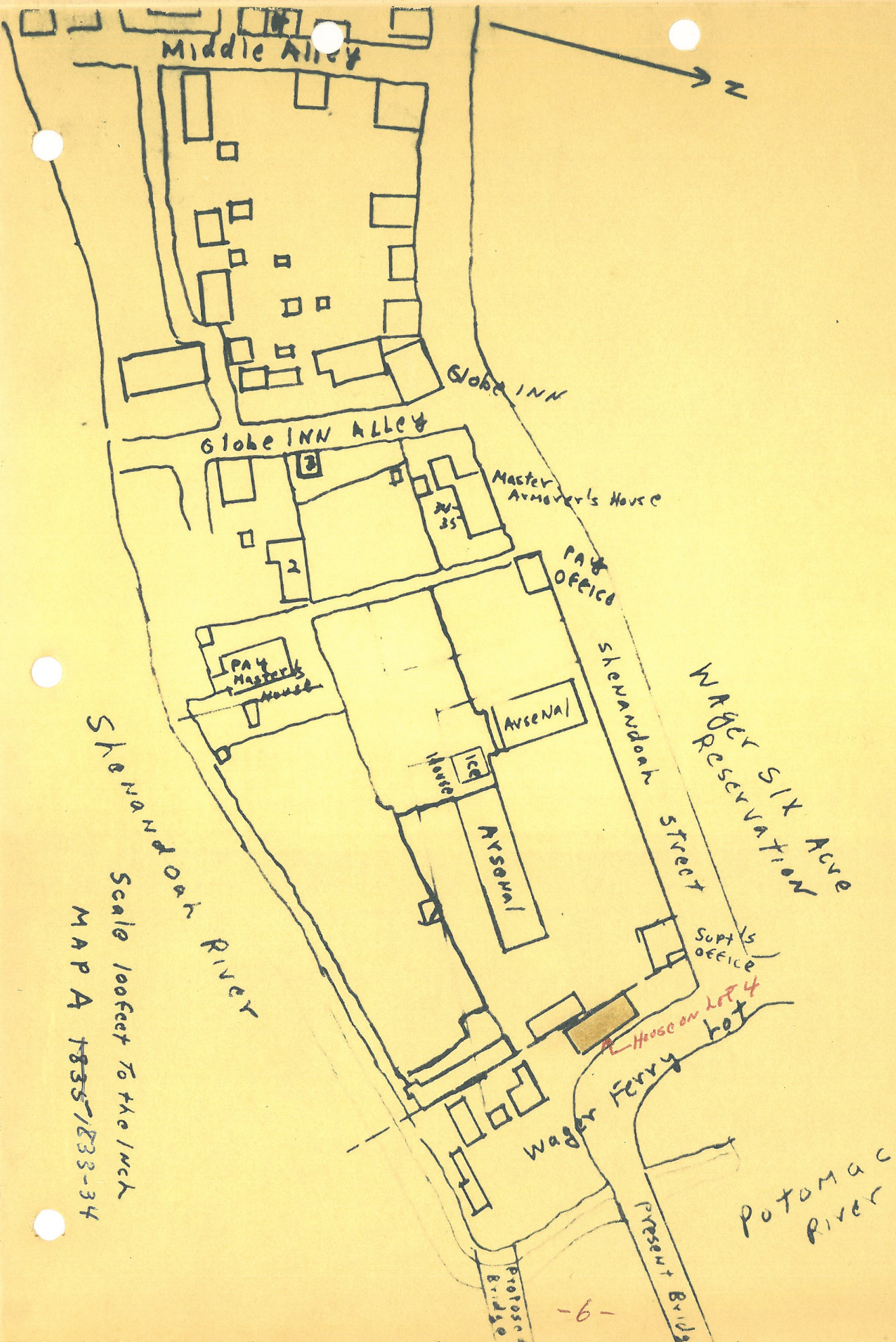
"Respectfully informs his friends and the public in general, that he has commenced the Tailoring Business in all its various branches, and on the most reasonable terms, in the shop formerly occupied by Mr. Allison [in May, 1831, Allison was located on Wager Lot No. 10], where he expects

SHENANDOAH
RIVER

HARPER'S
FERRY



A Boet 1834

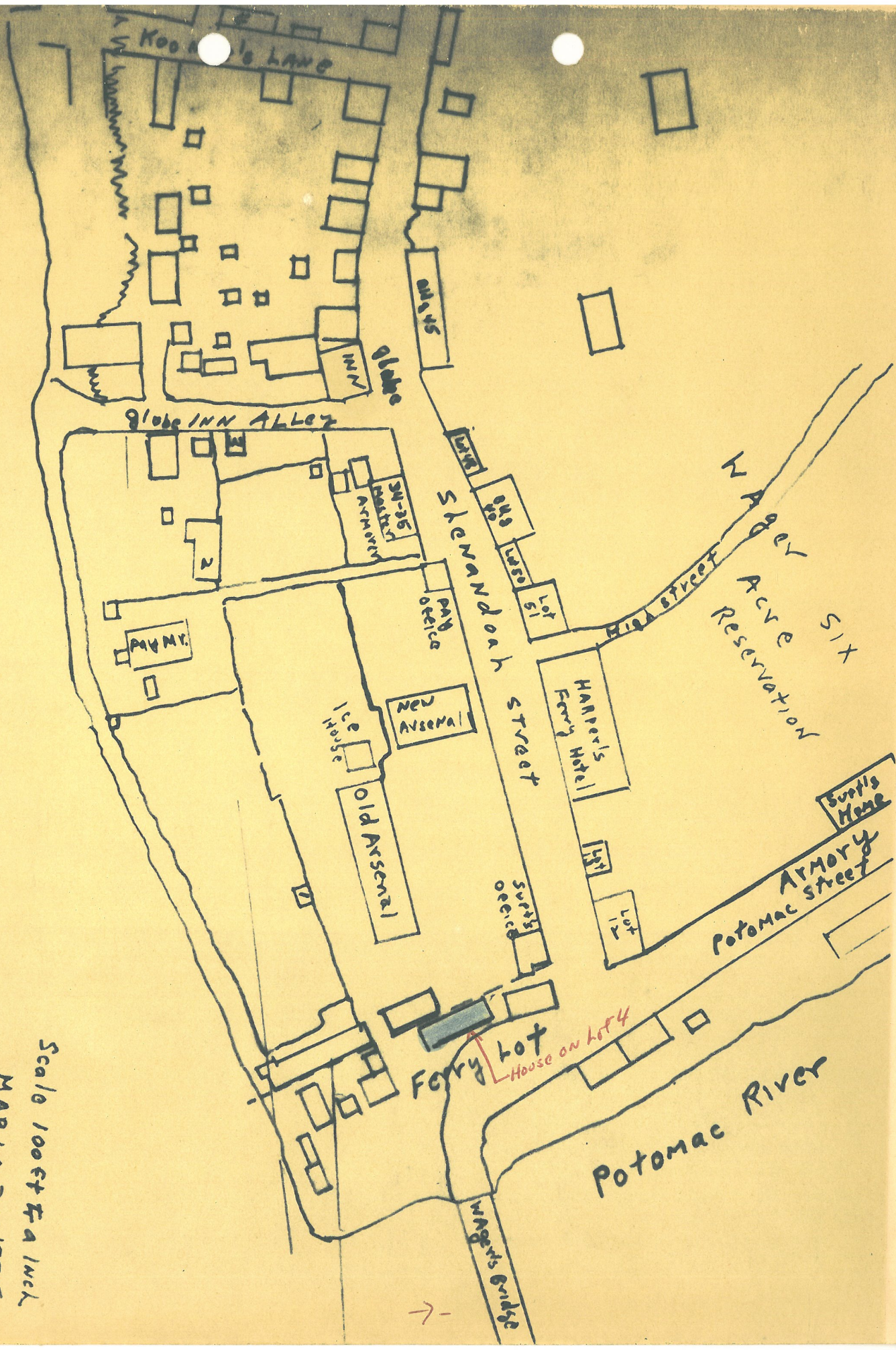


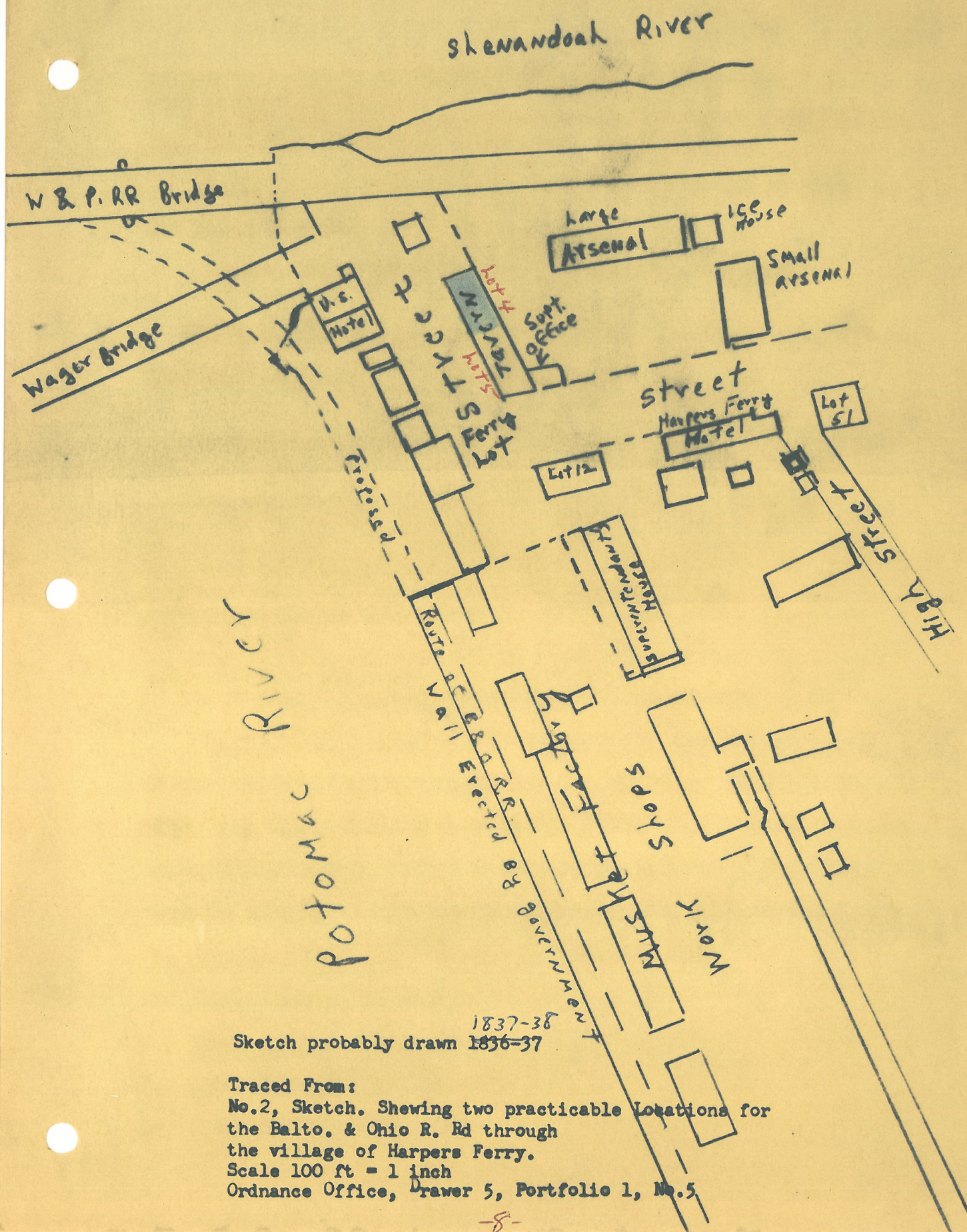
Shenandoah River

Scale 100 feet to the inch

MAP A 1835/1833-34

Scale 100 ft to a inch
MAP NO. 2-1835





1837-38
Sketch probably drawn 1836-37

Traced From:
No. 2, Sketch. Shewing two practicable Locations for
the Balto. & Ohio R. Rd through
the village of Harpers Ferry.
Scale 100 ft = 1 inch
Ordinance Office, Drawer 5, Portfolio 1, No. 5

to meet with a share of the public patronage, as his work will be done with neatness and dispatch.

N.B. The subscriber has contracted to receive the fashions regularly from the Cities of New York Philadelphia, and Washington." 8

A year later, March, 1831, Mr. Benner announced that he had moved his tailor shop to a new location. 9

In June, 1831, the following notice appeared in the paper:

FOR RENT.

"The house occupied by Alexander Gibson as a dwelling house; also the SHOP built expressly for a tailor's shop..." 10
A. Gibson."

In September, 1831, George W. Entler announced:

TAILORING.

"The subscriber respectfully informs his friends and the public generally, that he has commenced the above business at Harpers-Perry, in the shop formerly occupied by Alexander Gibson, opposite to Messrs. Russell's and Pittsimmons' store [their new building, 1831, was located on Wager Lot No. 12; Wager Lot No. 5 was vacant until 1834], where he is prepared to execute work in his line of business, in the neatest and most fashionable manner. Ladies' habits also made in the neatest manner, with or without braid. He hopes, by strict attention to business, to merit a share of public patronage. 11

The Philadelphia fashions will be received by him regularly."

In April, 1832, a new tailoring concern, George W. Cutshaw and Skeggs, occupied the house on Lot No. 4, announcing: "They have removed their shop to the building opposite Mr. Russell's store [which was located on Wager Lot No. 12], formerly occupied by A. Gibson." 12 Mr. Cutshaw apparently remained at this location until November, 1836, at which date

8. Virginia Free Press, February 24, 1830, p.4, c.3.

9. Ibid., March 3, 1841, p.4.

10. Ibid., June 2, 1831, p.3.

11. Ibid., September 8, 1831, p.3.

12. Ibid., April 5, 1832, p.3.

he relocated his business in the shop on Wager Lot No. 10.

No record of the use of the building for the period November, 1836, to March, 1847, has been established.

In April, 1848, the following notice appeared:

GENTLEMEN'S WEAR;
CLOTHS, CASSIMERES & VESTINGS,
J. R. WHITE,
MERCHANT TAILOR
Opposite Abell's Hotel
(The U.S. Hotel on Lots 6 and 7)
Harpers Ferry, Va.
Successor to T. J. W. Sullivan

(who had been located on Lot 8 from 1845 to 1847)

"Has just received a handsome assortment of fine and superfine French and English Cloths:

Fancy colored single milled Cassimeres, and black French Doe Skins;
Plain black, Fancy English and French Satin and silk, Fancy Marino, White
Figured and Embroidered Marseilles VESTINGS.

Silk and linen Cambricks Pocket Hdkfs;

Black and fancy Silk, and Jaconeti Cravats;

Suspenders, Hosiery, &c., together with some beautiful pieces of Black and
Fancy Colors;

Sashmerett's and Drap d'ete, for Spring and Summer Coats, and Pants.

ALSO, READY-MADE CLOTHING,

A general assortment, which will be sold very low. To all of which, he
invites the attention of his friends and the public generally." 14

Just how long Mr. White remained in business at this location is not
known. By May of 1854, however, the building was occupied by S. V. Yantis
as a Cigar and Tobacco store. 15

In 1855 Mr. Yantis' advertisement read:

S. V. YANTIS,
Wholesale and Retail Dealer,
in manufactured
TOBACCO, SEGARS, & SNUFF
(Sign of the Indian Girl)

13. Virginia Free Press, November 24, 1836, p.3, c.5.

14. Ibid., April 15, 1847, p.3, c.4.

15. Ibid., May 4, 1854, p.2, c.5.

Opposite the United States Hotel
(located on Lots No. 6 and 7)" 16

Mr. Yantis remained in business at this location from 1854 until 1862, when
17
the building was destroyed.

The census of 1860 reveals the following information relating to Mr.
Yantis:

"Soloman V. Yantis, 33, male, Tobacconist; Value of Real Estate: \$1,800;
Value of Personal estate: \$3,500. Born in Va.
Josephine Yantis, 31, female, Born in Va.
? Yantis, 9, male, " " "
Arnold S. Yantis, 5, male, " " "
Eleanor A. " 1, female, " " " 18
William S. White, 16, male, Tobacconist Apprentence. Born in Md."

4. HISTORICAL PHOTOGRAPHS AND PRINTS

1859-1861 photographs of the Building on Wager Lot No. 4 will be found in the two following reports: 1. "Historic Building Site Survey Report for Wager Lot No. 5, The William J. Stephens Building, dated August 5, 1958, pages 46, 47 and 48.
2. "Historic Building Site Survey Report for Wager Lots No. 6, 7 and Part of 8, The Wager House or United States Hotel," dated August 7, 1958, page 48.

5. HISTORICAL PLANS OF THE BUILDING

No historical plans of the building have been found and it is highly unlikely that any will ever be located.

16. Virginia Free Press, November 29, 1855, p.3, c.1.

17. Ibid., January 10, 1856, p.3; July 8, 1858, p.1, c.1; December 8, 1859, p.1, c.2.

18. Records of the Bureau of the Census. National Archives R. G. 29, Population Schedules of the Eighth Census of the United States, 1860. Virginia Volume 13. Jefferson County, pages 217-218.

6. SUMMARY OF HISTORICAL DATA

A. Ownership of the Land, 1835 to 1865

1. October, 1782, to October 9, 1835, owned by the Wager family.
2. October 10, 1835, to after the Civil War, owned by Gerard B. Wager till his death in 1848 and by his estate, 1848 - 1865.

B. Construction of the Building on Lot 4.

The house on Lot No. 4 was probably constructed by or for the Wager family before 1830. The stone building was about 20 by 55 feet in size and two stories in height. The structure was destroyed by Union troops on February 7, 1862.

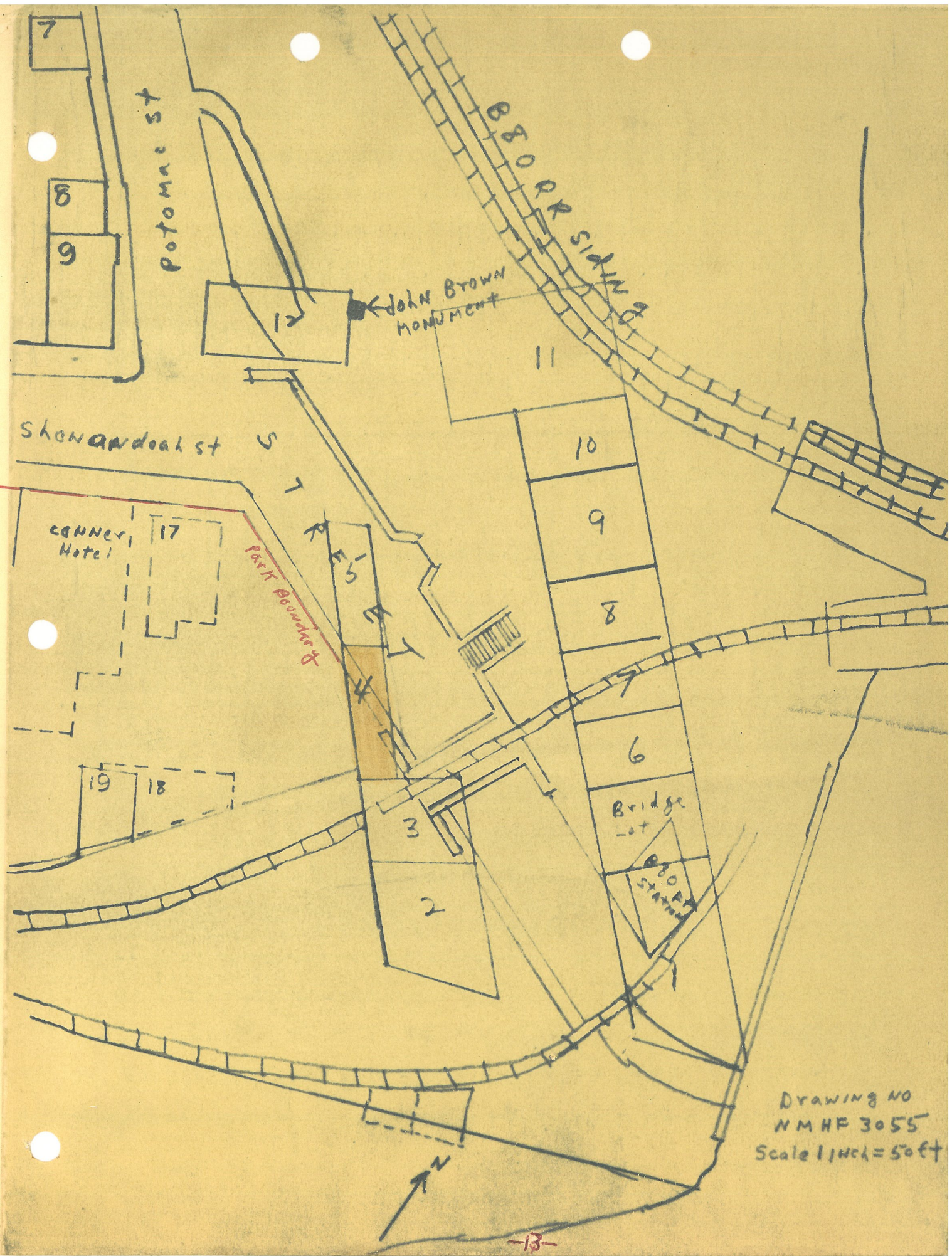
C. Uses of the Building on Lot 4, 1830 - 1862

1. 1830 - March, 1831, Tailor shop of John W. Benner.
2. September, 1831, to March, 1832, Tailor shop of George W. Entler.
3. April, 1832, to November, 1836, Tailor shop of George W. Cutshaw and Skeegs.
4. November, 1836, to March, 1847, use unknown.
5. April, 1847, to ?, Tailor Shop of J. R. White.
6. May, 1854, to 1862, Tobacco Shop of Solomon V. Yantis.
7. House destroyed on February 7, 1862.

7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

For the location of the building on Wager Lot No. 4, in relation to modern features and the Monument boundaries, see the tracing made from Drawing No. NM-HP-3655, which appears on the next page of this report.

It is suggested that the entire Ferry Lot area be interpreted by



Drawing NO
NM HF 3055
Scale 1 inch = 50 ft

means of approximately three trailside exhibits that will use some of the old photographs presented in the Perry Lot Study Reports, as well as a map that relates the old building sites to modern features.

(Sgd) CHARLES W. SNELL

Charles W. Snell
Historian (Park Supervisory)
September 11, 1958