HISTORIC
HARPERS FERRY
IN JEFFERSON COUNTY, WEST VIRGINIA

Gateway of the Shenandoah

by
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COVER DESIGN

The crest on the cover of this book was designed by the author to highlight various factors in early Harpers Ferry history. It is not intended as a serious attempt to produce a coat-of-arms, but merely as a pleasing combination of significant symbols.

The eagle represents the wild native beauty of the locality, and also the centering of national interest at the Ferry. The Stevens cabin is a reminder of the conquest of the wilderness by rugged early settlers. The foliage is an authentic drawing of the rare Asplenium stotleri, found only at Harpers Ferry. The saltire is formed of Hall’s rifle, manufactured at Hall’s Rifle Works at the Ferry from 1820 to 1861, and the Minie rifle, which for a short time was made at Harpers Ferry. The fess of railroad track is reminiscent of an exciting period in the Ferry’s history, when the B&O raced the C&O Canal to bring transportation to this important point. The millstone stands for the early Harper mill, and the milling and manufacturing interests concentrated at one time on the Island of Virginius. It is a symbol, too, of the tremendous water power which is one of Harpers Ferry’s greatest natural blessings.
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JEFFERSON'S ROCK

From this unique vantage point a magnificent panorama unfolds. Few scenes in America have been sketched, painted or photographed as often as this. Thomas Jefferson, writing his "Notes On Virginia" at this beautiful spot, declared, "This scene is worth a voyage across the Atlantic!"
LOCATION AND GEOLOGICAL FORMATION

Harpers Ferry is situated in Jefferson County, West Virginia, at the confluence of the Potomac and the Shenandoah Rivers. The distance from Washington is sixty miles, and from Baltimore sixty-six miles.

Geologically as well as historically, Harpers Ferry is of outstanding interest. The great volcanic rock of the Blue Ridge stood impregnable for centuries before the waters, gathering into rivers, slowly began to etch tiny pathways on its face. The rivers rose, and held back by the tremendous ridge, formed a huge lake that covered what we now know as the Valley. At last its liquid persistence won, and a fissure appeared in the rock. Millions of years of erosion cut the fissure into a deep gap. The lake drained off, leaving silt and shells of countless billions of sea-creatures to form beds of sandstone, limestone and shale in the Valley. Some of the first plants to exist have left their traceries in the Carboniferous shale, formed later. On the Harpers Ferry banks, a rare fern was discovered, unheard of anywhere else in the world. The passing of ages has left visible marks here, easily read by the geologist or botanist. Geological expeditions have come repeatedly to study the rock formations and flora of the region. And even the average layman feels that the rushing rivers are still carrying out a plan that is far beyond the span of mere human existence or comprehension. Harpers Ferry is an inspiring spectacle of natural forces.
NATURAL FEATURES

The beauty of Harpers Ferry was perhaps most memorably phrased by Thomas Jefferson. From the vantage point of the rock that today bears his name, he remarked that the view was well worth a trip across the Atlantic. But writers through the years have tried to express the majesty and grandeur of the Ferry's rugged cliffs, and stirring strength of the rivers.

Today, B&O Railway trains run through a tunnel at this point on the Maryland shore of the Potomac; while the bridge (right) has been swept away by a disastrous flood.
The union of the Shenandoah and Potomac is spectacular. Muddy waters meet clear blue in a swift torrent of rapids. Strengthened by union, they flow on to cut their long passage to the sea.

Moving cloud effects and shifting light and shadow pick out strange natural sculptures in the cliffside of Maryland Heights. Old records refer to the well-defined head of George Washington, which can still be seen. Eagles once built an eyrie over it, romantically enough, and wheeled dramatically over its brow.

A traditional beehive of enormous proportions is said to be hidden at an inaccessible point near a hawk's nest. The hawks soar daily over their fortress, and flocks of crows flap in at sunset from marauding missions.

The perpendicular streets of Harpers Ferry and the crumbling red brick houses clinging to the cliff give it a romantic old-world flavor. Since the coming of the railroads, the B&O has burrowed deeply into the base of Maryland Heights. The curling plumes of smoke from engines emerging from the tunnel enhance rather than detract from the beauty and power of the scene.

It would be difficult to imagine a more magnificent backdrop for the pageant of history.
EARLY HISTORY
AND THE COMING
OF ROBERT HARPER

Traces of tribal wars waged between the Catawbas and the Delawares have been found in the Harpers Ferry region, as well as seven-foot skeletons of the Tuscaroras and artifacts of the Shawnees. The name of the Shenandoah River is of Indian origin, although historians disagree as to its exact meaning. Tradition has established its translation as “Daughter of the Stars,” which is certainly beautiful enough to be completely satisfying.

In the spring of 1668, an expedition was sent out by Sir William Berkeley to “find out the East India Sea.” The party arrived at the summit of the Blue Ridge. From the description of the point by John Lederer, a German physician in the group, it must have been the junction of the rivers at what is now Harpers Ferry.

In 1731, Joist Hite, pioneer from Pennsylvania, brought 16 families of settlers by way of the Ferry to their permanent location near present Winchester, Va. The following spring, a man named Peter Stevens who had been in Hite’s party, returned. He brought with him an Indian with the intriguing name of Gutterman Tom. They became the first settlers of the vicinity, building a log cabin and canoe and planting a cornfield.

Early travellers referred to this rugged location as “the Hole,” and Stevens acquired the odd name of “Peter in the Hole.” He built a few boats to operate for the occasional wayfarers. And so the Ferry began.
Robert Harper was a native of Oxford, England, who had emigrated to Philadelphia and established himself as a skillful architect and millwright. In 1747, he was engaged by the Society of Friends to build a meeting-house on the Opequon Creek near the present location of Winchester, Va. He broke his tiring journey through the wilderness by lodging at an inn near what is now Frederick, Maryland. At this hostelry he met Peter Hoffman, an itinerant trader, who persuaded Harper to alter his intended course and proceed by way of the shorter and more beautiful route of “the Hole.”

Hoffman agreed to accompany Harper as guide, and they arrived the following night at Stevens’ ferry. Overwhelmed by the primeval beauty of the spot, Harper bought out Stevens for a few guineas. Historians disagree
as to the exact amount, but whatever the sum, it pur-
chased only Stevens' cabin, canoe, cornfield and good will. He had never held any title except “squatter's rights” to
the 125 acres he sold Harper. It was therefore necessary
for Harper to obtain legal title from Lord Fairfax, prop-
rietor of the Northern Neck of Virginia. This trans-
action was effected for the sum of sixty guineas, or $315.00.

Harper and his wife then moved to the Stevens place,
and he divided his time between his work at Winchester
and development of his own holdings at the Ferry. He
improved the road and ferry, and built several mills in
the vicinity, including one for himself on the Shenandoah
River.

Unhappily, during the winter of 1747-48, deep snows
caused a terrific flood which drove the Harpers from their
cabin to higher ground.

In March of 1748, a surveying party laying off tracts for
Lord Fairfax arrived at the Ferry. Included in the exp-
edition were two very young surveyors, George Wash-
ington and George William Fairfax. Tradition states
that Harper's lands were surveyed by this group. It is
an historical fact that George Washington's interest, be-
ginning with this visit, prompted him later to insist on
Harpers Ferry as the site for a national arsenal and
armory. By this selection, the Ferry was destined to fame
in the pages of history books.

Mr. Harper's ferry across the Potomac to the Maryland
shore was established in March, 1761. About 1775, he
began a substantial stone house on a rock ledge half-way
up the cliff that is now called Cemetery Hill. Work on
his home was delayed by lack of workmen, because most
of the able-bodied men of the region had left to join the
army of Washington.

The Harper house is still standing, as a unit in a solid
block of four houses. The three others were built at later
periods, joining one another. The composite effect is of
a single long, narrow building, most picturesque, with
beautiful panelling in door and window reveals and interesting old hardware. The narrow courtway formed by the ledge in the cliff is solid rock, allowing almost no foliage. The whole picture is sombre, but not lacking in charm and atmosphere.

It does seem a lonely spot for Robert Harper to have chosen for his home, since there were only two other houses at the Ferry at the time of his death, in 1782. He was buried in a spot he had chosen, on the cliff summit above his home. His will bequeathed several acres of ground to become a permanent burial ground, with his own grave in the center, and many later participants of historic events in Harpers Ferry have joined the founder in this peaceful little cemetery.

**THE HARPER HOUSE**

Robert Harper literally observed Scriptural advice, for he built his house on living rock, as evidenced by the narrow street or walk which borders his home.
FOUNDING OF THE ARSENAL AND ARMORY

In 1794, war clouds were gathering over Europe. An alarmed Congress, realizing the inadequacy of the existing arsenal and armory at Springfield, Massachusetts, and the arsenal at Carlisle, Pennsylvania, enacted legislation to permit establishing an additional arsenal and armory.

The following year President Washington recommended in a letter to the Secretary of War that by virtue of unexcelled water power and available land, Harpers Ferry was the logical site for this important government property.

The government acted on George Washington's recommendation, which was based on thorough familiarity with the wealth of essential resources at Harpers Ferry. Washington had made a comprehensive study of the region on surveying and military expeditions over a period of many years.

On June 15, 1796, the government purchased 125 acres of Robert Harper's land from his heirs. This was Harper's original tract, located in the triangle formed by the Potomac and Shenandoah Rivers. An additional purchase of 310 acres was made from a Mr. Rutherford. This is the section now occupied by Bolivar. A lease in perpetuity was signed with Lord Fairfax for timber rights on a fine tract of 1395 acres on the Loudoun Heights across the Shenandoah from the Ferry.
Work on the extensive shops and warehouses for the new Armory and Arsenal was rushed, and production of arms began late in 1796. Although both gunsmiths and machinery were inadequate for full-scale production until 1800, the selection of Harpers Ferry for the second National Armory made it one of the most important defense points for strategic military purposes in the struggling young country.

ARSENAL AND ARMORY

President Washington's familiarity with the area surrounding Harpers Ferry led to his recommendation that a U. S. Government Arsenal and Armory be established in the town. Great water power, natural resources, strategic location and ease of transportation figured in this decision.
SUPERINTENDENTS
OF THE ARMORY

With the Armory the hub of military production, an exciting amount of military and political controversy revolved around its superintendents. They were all able men, whether civilian or military, but one of the most bitterly wrangled issues of the day was the question of which faction should be in control of the National Armory.

The first superintendent at Harpers Ferry was a quiet but capable English Moravian, Mr. Perkins, who served for fourteen years and died at the Ferry.

He was succeeded in 1810 by Colonel Stubblefield. Twice during his nineteen years of service the Colonel was subjected to undeserved trial by court-martial. Charges were trumped up by his political enemies. Although Stubblefield was both times fully acquitted, he resigned in 1829, after the second trial.

The third superintendent was Colonel Dunn, a rigid disciplinarian. An employee named Ebenezer Cox considered himself unjustly treated by Dunn. On the morning of January 29, 1830, he armed himself and appeared at the main office, where he held a brief conversation with Dunn, pulled out his pistol and shot the superintendent through the heart. Subsequently, Cox was jailed, sentenced and publicly executed at Charles Town.

General George Rust, appointed to fill Dunn's place, conducted the affairs of the Armory for a comparatively quiet seven years. This was the era of transport develop-
ment, and during General Rust's regime, the C&O Canal and the B&O Railroad both reached Harpers Ferry.

In 1837, Colonel Edward Lucas, a native of Jefferson County, was placed in charge. Colonel Lucas was a highly respected member of a fine old County family, and had served as Congressman from the Valley district. He was an uncle of Daniel Bedinger Lucas, Shenandoah poet, orator and statesman.

During Colonel Lucas's superintendency, the Armory water power canal was improved, a stone wall built to protect the property from high water, several feet of ground reclaimed from the Potomac, and twelve good houses built for the use of employees.

The titles of Colonel Lucas and his predecessors were popularly awarded through courtesy and respect. They were not army officers, but civilians holding officership in the militia. The appointment of Major Henry C. Craig in April, 1841, was noteworthy because it marked a new policy of employing military instead of civilian heads for the National Armory.

In the nation-wide bickering over this measure, local feeling became intensified against the change. In 1842, a number of Harpers Ferry employees chartered a canal boat and went to Washington to present their protest to President Tyler. They received small satisfaction, but the advice that they must go home and hammer out their own salvation. Major Craig remained as superintendent in spite of their protest until 1844.

He was replaced by Major John Symington, another military officer. Major Symington's superintendency was made memorable by a fearful scourge of Asiatic cholera which swept the town in 1850. Over a hundred people died in the epidemic, and business was temporarily abandoned.

In 1851, Colonel Benjamin Huger, also an army officer, arrived. By this time, civilian demands for control of the Armory were becoming embarrassing to the military
faction. To ease the unrest, The Secretary of War ordered, in 1852, that houses and lots owned by the Government at the Ferry should be sold to responsible workers. A considerable portion of government property was bought at this time by employees of the Armory.

Major Bell, who came in 1854, was the last of the military superintendents. The civilian contestants won the long-fought political battle in that year, when a bill was introduced in the House of Representatives restoring civilian control to the National Armory.

Henry M. Clowe, a “worthy mechanic,” was appointed in 1855, but after a bitter quarrel with the district representative in Congress, he was also removed from office.

He was replaced by Alfred M. Barbour, a young lawyer from western Virginia. Mr. Barbour was in charge when John Brown struck at the Ferry, and registered his sympathies with the Confederate forces when the Armory was destroyed by Union troops in 1861.

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**HARPERS FERRY TODAY**

John Brown’s “Fort” stands today on Storer College campus. Monument marking the original location of the “Fort” at the Armory.

Administration Building at Storer College, a co-educational teacher training school for Negroes.
"CAMP HILL"

During the administration of John Adams, in the year 1799, a considerable army was mustered by the government for defense in the anticipated war with France. General Pinkney was chosen to command forces to protect the vital government interests at Harpers Ferry.

Pinkney set up his camp on the slope leading up from the Ferry, the same steep bluff where Storer College is now located. This section is still known as "Camp Hill."

The feeling of bitterness between the Federalists and Republicans was at its height. A certain Captain Henry, ardent Federalist in General Pinkney's army, took his company one day to the rock where Thomas Jefferson, idol of the Republicans, had sat to compose his "Notes on Virginia." To symbolize his hatred of the Jeffersonians, Captain Henry ordered his men to overthrow the top rock, a marvelously balanced natural wonder which Jefferson had marked with his name. Captain Henry was immediately challenged to a duel by an outraged young Republican, but General Pinkney intervened by arresting both contestants.

Many of General Pinkney's soldiers remained after the war clouds had disappeared. Some had become interested in the rapidly growing activity of the Arsenal and Armory, and stayed on as permanent residents and workers. Others, who had died during their occupancy of the Ferry, were left involuntarily permanent in the military graveyard on the west slope of the hill. Old residents say that
the latter are restless, and that fife and drum can be heard to this day. Fine old residences in the vicinity were vacated for many years because of these unhappy spirits.

During the War Between the States, Camp Hill was again used to quarter troops. As Harpers Ferry was taken and retaken by the opposing armies, Union and Confederate troops were alternately stationed there.

CAMP HILL

Strategically located for defense, and commanding a magnificent view, Camp Hill was first used as a camp site in 1799, and again during the War Between the States. Today Storer College, with its handsome buildings and attractive campus, is located on the Hill.
HALL’S
RIFLE WORKS

In 1817, Mr. John Hall, inventor and gunsmith from the State of Maine, was sent by the government to Harpers Ferry, to direct the production of his newly invented breech-loading gun, the first of its kind manufactured. Previously, the Armory had been producing a limited number of muzzle-loading muskets after the French infantry design of 1763. They were operating under extreme difficulty with this design, as they had not the necessary machinery nor workmen.

Having proved the merits of his design with 100 trial guns, Hall was awarded in 1819 a contract for 1000 breech-loading flintlock rifles for army use. In addition, he was made assistant armorer of Harpers Ferry, a post of considerable distinction. Gunsmithery was the first highly technical mechanical manufacturing, and the gunsmiths and master armormers were the best skilled technicians and craftsmen of that time.

Two new buildings were assigned to Hall’s exclusive use on the Island of Virginius in the Shenandoah River about a quarter of a mile away from the Armory. Other buildings were later added, and comfortable homes for the workers. The location became known as “Hall’s Rifle Works.”

Here the inventor successfully perfected and manufactured an excellent long-range rifle, which a board of investigators in 1837 declared to be superior to any other rifle available in the world. The government found Hall’s
rifle particularly adaptable for cavalry use because of its rapid reloading facility and long range. The precision of its design was said to be without equal.

Production of Hall's rifle drew to Harpers Ferry finely skilled metal artisans and craftsmen from other American cities and Europe. By 1821, two years after Hall's first 1000-rifle contract, 250 carefully trained workmen were producing 1000 rifles and muskets a month for the United States government. In that day before the development of the production line in industry, this was probably the most important mechanical achievement in the country, and it established Harpers Ferry prominently in national interest. Eventual production exceeded 2000 rifles and guns per month, an amazing total for the time.

RUINS OF HALL'S RIFLE WORKS

Taken from an old photograph, the sketch shows the Rifle Works after the plant was fired by Union troops in 1861. Disastrous floods have reduced the buildings to heaps of rubble, but traces of the old power canal and power plant remain.
In addition to his rifle, Hall designed a number of machines necessary to the manufacture of his gun. A genius at his craft, Hall also helped in the fine execution of the designs of other inventors.

Hall was one of the first to make use of the principle of interchangeability of parts, which he developed to a high degree. His accomplishment was a forecast of our present-day production lines.

Mr. Hall remained at Harpers Ferry for twenty years, and some of his descendants still live in the town.

On April 18, 1861, at the outbreak of hostilities, Lieutenant Roger Jones, then in military command at Harpers Ferry, set fire to the Rifle Works on government order, to prevent the Confederates from capturing this valuable source of military material. Virginia's Colonel Ashby, however, rescued most of the buildings and all of the arms-producing machinery, which was shipped to Fayetteville, North Carolina, to produce arms for the Confederate forces.

HALL RIFLE

The development of this breech-loading rifle resulted in the building of Hall's Rifle Works, and John Hall's appointment as assistant armorer at Harpers Ferry. Hall, a mechanical genius of his day, was a pioneer in the employment of interchangeable parts in his various inventions.
THE ISLAND OF VIRGINIUS

For sheer romantic interest, the Island of Virginius in the beautiful Shenandoah at Harpers Ferry is deserving of special note. Today it is a ghost island, without trace of human enterprise. All that is left are crumbling foundations. But in the 1850's and 60's the island's 13 acres held the Rifle Works' foundry and machine shop, 28 substantial homes built for the rifle workers, and a flour mill, cotton goods factory, carriage factory and sawmill.

At this time, the island was owned by Mr. A. H. Herr, a wealthy manufacturer, who sold the site of the rifle factory to the government. The six manufacturing concerns he had concentrated on the island constituted a sizable production center for this period.

In 1867, Mr. Herr sold out his interests to a firm named Child and McCreight, who put the buildings into excellent repair and furnished employment in their mills to many families. New houses were constructed to shelter an influx of mill workers.

In 1869, Congress ordered that the site of the Rifle Works and Armory should be sold at public auction. It was bought on December 1st by promoters who represented themselves as acting for Northern capitalists in a projected promotional development of Harpers Ferry. Great hope was entertained for an extensive manufacturing program for the island. A real estate boom developed,
and a good many citizens invested heavily in the enterprise.

But on October 1st, 1870, the great flood of that year swept the island into a shambles from which it never recovered. It was a horrible, devastating nightmare to those who survived and forty-two lives were lost. All houses and other buildings were totally destroyed, and the personal property loss brought financial ruin to those who lived through the dreadful tragedy.

Shortly afterward, residents of Harpers Ferry who had invested in the promotional scheme of the Rifle Works purchasers discovered that the whole plan was a gigantic fraud. The perpetrators had only been interested in obtaining ownership of the Armory site to furnish an excuse for a right-of-way suit against the B&O Railroad. They had hoped to collect a fantastic sum from this scheme, but were defeated. Unfortunately, the deluded residents who had paid inflationary prices for real estate during the infamous promotion were the real sufferers.

Following immediately after the tragedy of the flood, this costly hoax completed the discouragement of the residents, who abandoned the island and all hopes for its restoration. Only the old foundations remain today of what was at that time a flourishing manufacturing town, and of the once internationally famous Hall's Rifle Works.

ROBERT HARPER'S GRAVE
TRANSPORTATION

In the immediate vicinity of Harpers Ferry, the entire history of transportation can be traced.

Early travellers, battling their way through rugged wilderness on foot or horseback, reached the confluence of rivers, where they crossed by means of Peter Stevens' crude ferry boats. Indians maneuvered their canoes through the tumbling waters. The wilderness road used by young George Washington over the mountain gap from Harpers Ferry to Winchester was widened and improved by passing traders, explorers and travellers between the frontier and Baltimore.

In 1787, on the Potomac at nearby Shepherdstown, a Maryland farmboy named James Rumsey successfully demonstrated the first crude steamboat by running it upstream. Rumsey's boat made use of the principle of jet propulsion, used in today's most advanced aircraft.

On June 3, 1788, George Washington recorded in his diary a visit to Harpers Ferry, where he spent the day inspecting construction work preparatory to the building of a canal along the Potomac, a project he personally had fostered and planned. Apparently the work was suspended, or proceeded at snail's pace, for on October 20, 1823, a meeting was called in Washington to plan the improvement of navigation in the Potomac. This meeting, attended by several of Washington's relatives and other prominent gentlemen of the country, launched the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, the materialization of General Washington's dream.
In 1830, the Virginia General Assembly passed an act that incorporated a turnpike company for the construction of a road between the Ferry and Middleway. The same year, a charter was granted to the Harpers Ferry and Summit Point Turnpike Company.

Two cents a mile was charged by these companies for the passage of a horse and buggy. One old stone tollhouse still stands on the turnpike between Harpers Ferry and Baltimore.

By 1830, a semi-weekly stagecoach service also connected the Ferry with Washington. The trip, one way, consumed an entire day, and the fare was four dollars.

The C&O Canal reached Harpers Ferry in 1833, providing relatively cheap and pleasant water transportation for travellers from Washington. The following year, the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad arrived, runner-up in the bitterly contested race between the canal and railroad companies.

The arrival of the first train at Harpers Ferry on December 4th, 1834, was a gala event. The train carried over a hundred passengers from Baltimore to the Ferry, taking six hours en route. Still greater excitement occurred the following year, when the Winchester and Potomac Railroad began operation between Winchester and the Ferry. The first train, which left the Ferry on March 9th, 1836 and returned on March 14, was crowded with passengers, some riding on the car roofs.

On the last day of March, the train carried the committee on arrangements, and the president and other officials of the B&O to Winchester. The elaborate plans for celebration there included ceremonious speeches by the presidents of the two railroads, salvos of artillery and a sumptuous banquet at the old Virginia House.

In recent years, the C&O Canal has been abandoned, but the old canal bed and locks remain. The B&O freight trains still steam majestically out of the tunnel's mouth, and crack passenger trains such as the Cincinnati streak through daily in streamlined splendor.
JOHN BROWN
OF KANSAS

In 1855, a tall, spare man followed several of his sons from their home in Ohio to Kansas, where talk of an abolition movement was beginning to boil. They took an active part in the political ferment, and emerged as abolitionist fanatics, murdering and robbing those who opposed their plans for freeing slaves throughout the South.

At Pottowatomie Creek, in 1856, they murdered five men for no other reason than that they were Southerners, though none were slave owners nor offered any resistance.

Having gathered a force of thirty deluded young fanatics, some of them Negroes, the abolitionist John Brown staged a battle from ambush at Ossowatomie, Kansas, against 400 Missouri Regulars sent out to capture him. The Missourians were routed, leaving thirty-one killed and fifty or sixty wounded, but as they retreated they set fire to the homes of Brown and his companions. "Ossowatomie Brown," as he afterwards styled himself, watched the fires from a hilltop, and dedicated his life and those of his sons to the cause of abolishing slavery.

After another outrageous murder committed by the party, the President recognized in Brown a dangerous fanatic and renegade, and placed a price of $3000 upon his head. Brown withdrew secretly from Kansas to Chatham, Canada, where he and his followers met and drew up a fantastic plan for a new government of the United States. They drafted a Constitution, with Brown
as Commander-in-Chief and John Henrie Kagi, the self-taught scholar, as Secretary of War. Brown’s government included a full Cabinet and a Congress, but no Senate. This Constitution was privately printed and distributed among Brown’s men. At least one copy has been preserved, and is now in a safety deposit box in Charles Town.

Selecting the site of the National Arsenal, Armory and Rifle Works as the most strategic prize, Brown had been laying his plans for attack on Harpers Ferry for almost two years, with amazing detail. From the pockets of dead raiders’ clothing, after the fateful event, were removed officers’ commissions signed by John Brown as Commander-in-Chief. One of these papers has also been carefully preserved with the John Brown Constitution in Charles Town. Letters were found among Brown’s papers at the Kennedy farm from prominent abolitionists in the North, indicating that he had powerful financial backing.
JOHN COOK

In June of 1858, the abolitionist John Brown sent a young man named John Edwin Cook, a native of Connecticut, into Harpers Ferry, to act as advance agent. He was to obtain first-hand information concerning the exact number of slaves within a radius of ten miles of the Ferry, and to win their confidence and potential assistance.

Posing variously as book-agent, prospector and historian, Cook appeared at the surrounding farms all during that year, quietly inciting discontent among the servants by discreet questionings and verbal portrayal of Brown as their saviour.

He rented a room in the Kennedy home at the Ferry, and when Mrs. Kennedy's attractive young daughter, Mary Virginia, came home from boarding school, the personable young abolitionist courted and married her, keeping her in complete ignorance of his plans.

Shortly afterward, he obtained the position of lockkeeper for the C&O Canal, where he was in an excellent vantage point to forward information to John Brown concerning the Armory and Arsenal and details about the railroad schedule.

Several months before the raid, Cook arranged an apparently casual meeting in Bolivar with Colonel Lewis Washington of Beall Air, the Washington home still standing near Halltown, about four miles west of Harpers Ferry.

Cook expressed interest in the trophies, and was invited by the hospitable Colonel to his home to examine them. While there, Cook took careful note of the number of servants and general details about the household.

HARPERS FERRY FROM LOUDOUN HEIGHTS

This old view of Harpers Ferry shows the town's picturesque setting. The Shenandoah River is in the foreground, the Potomac at the upper right.
JOHN BROWN'S RAID

In July of 1859, a patriarchal old man arrived by train at Harpers Ferry. He introduced himself and three young companions as Isaac Smith and his three sons, prospectors for minerals in the Maryland Heights. Inquiring for available lodgings, they were directed to the home of Ormond Butler, a mile down the Potomac at Sandy Hook.

A week later, the newcomers had rented the old Kennedy Farm, five miles northeast of Harpers Ferry, in Maryland. To this address came innumerable mysterious wooden boxes, labelled "tools." These boxes were shipped in by rail, received at an office the strangers had opened in Chambersburg, Pa., and were then hauled to the Kennedy place by horses.

One by one, twenty other strangers straggled in, were "hired" by the old man to join his prospecting expedition, and were lodged at the farm.

On Sunday night, October 16, the God-fearing, highly respected newcomer, "Isaac Smith," preached a well-attended sermon at the Dunkard Church. Following the service, he and his men retired to the Kennedy farm, where they broke open the boxes marked "tools" and armed themselves with the pistols, muskets and pikes contained within. About eight o'clock, they left the farmhouse, three of their number staying behind on guard.

At ten o'clock, Mr. William Williams, watchman on the railroad bridge at Harpers Ferry, was surprised to find
himself surrounded by an armed band of twenty-one men. Two men were left to guard the bridge, and the party proceeded to the Armory, taking Williams with them as prisoner.

Spurred on by initial success, half of the raiders then descended on Hall's Rifle Works, half a mile up the Shenandoah. They seized Mr. Williams' father, who was watchman there, and returned to the Armory with their prisoners, leaving two men under Kagi to guard the Rifle Works.

At midnight, Patrick Higgins, night watchman of the railroad, arrived to take his place upon the bridge. Finding it totally dark, he called loudly for Williams. Two men suddenly appeared, presented guns at his breast and ordered him to halt. Under guard, he was marched toward the Armory, but suddenly turned on his captor, struck him with his fist, and raced for Foukes' Hotel while the man was still struggling for breath. Stumbling over an obstruction on the bridge, his pursuer shot wild, and Higgins reached the hotel in safety.

At one o'clock Monday morning, the express from Wheeling thundered onto the bridge. It was stopped by the raiders, and at the same time the telegraph wires were cut to prevent news of the invasion from being spread. Ordered to remain aboard, the passengers were confused and terrified, and gave exaggerated reports next day of hundreds of abolitionists springing from the ground in the darkness. These reports misled later rescuers, who were uncertain as to the actual number of the raiders. The express conductor, Mr. Phelps, succeeded in having

THE KENNEDY FARM

Here, five miles from Harpers Ferry, John Brown and his band plotted the details of their raid.

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his train released after a long argument with the raiders, and reached Baltimore at noon.

Some time after one o’clock in the morning a free Negro porter named Heywood Shepherd walked to the bridge, looking for Higgins. He was ordered to halt, but through bewilderment failed to comply with the command. He was shot through the body, but managed to drag himself painfully away into the railroad office, where he died in agony at three o’clock the following afternoon. By this strange quirk of fate, the first casualty of the abolitionists’ raid was a free member of the race they had dedicated themselves to free.

The raiders’ leader had taken up his station in the Armory enclosure, and sent out a detachment under John Cook to bring in Colonel Lewis Washington with his Negroes and the coveted Washington trophies. Cook presented himself at the Colonel’s home, Beall Air, and with proper expressions of regret for this violation of Washington’s previous kindness and hospitality, he took the Colonel prisoner, seized the famous sword and pistols, and set off toward the Ferry with Washington and three of his Negroes in the Colonel’s own wagon.

On the way, the party stopped at the home of John Alstadt, which still stands near the Ferry. They commanded Alstadt and his sixteen year old son Thomas, and a number of slaves, to join them. According to an account written by Thomas Alstadt in his later years, the Negro raider Shields Greene, alias “Emperor,” who was set to guard the boy, was brutal and threatening in manner. An elderly lady cousin by the name of Hall, tried to

BEALL AIR

Col. Lewis Washington and his servants were routed out and held as hostages.
bar the Alstadts from leaving with the raiders, but was thrust aside roughly by Shields Greene.

The party was met at the Armory enclosure by the bearded stranger they had sheltered and admired. He held out his hand for Washington’s sword and buckled it about his own thin middle. “I am Ossowatomie Brown of Kansas,” said the patriarch.

A desultory watch was kept over the prisoners in the enclosure by the captured Negroes, who were given pikes and told to stand guard over their masters. Here we find the weakest spot in John Brown’s careful planning. He had been perfectly sure that, given the opportunity, all Negroes in bondage throughout the South would rise up against their masters to swell his forces. If they had done so, he might have succeeded, at least for a time. But whenever Brown turned away, the Washington and Alstadt servants dropped their pikes and fell to moaning among themselves. It didn’t seem right, they kept saying, to be guarding the Colonel.

One of the Alstadt servants, Phil, was ordered by Brown to cut a porthole in the brick wall. His work drew fire from the townsmen outside. “Marse John!” he cried out in fright, “It’s getting too hot for Phil!” and dropping his tools, he ran to Alstadt for protection. Brown picked up the tools, and finished the porthole himself.

Another Negro, belonging to Washington, succeeded in escaping from the engine house, but was drowned while swimming the river on his way to summon help.

Cook was sent with Washington’s wagon and twelve Negroes to a schoolhouse halfway between the Kennedy

THE ALSTADT HOME

John Cook and his raiders seized members of the Alstadt household.

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farm and the Ferry, to deposit a portion of the two hundred guns and thousand pikestaffs Brown had had shipped to the farm during the months of preparation. These were apparently to be in readiness for the hundreds of slaves who would rise up from the countryside around at the first call of freedom. But the grapevine had already carried the message of Heywood Shepherd's death, and not one Negro voluntarily arrived to claim the pikestaffs, which were collected afterward as souvenirs by local residents. One can be seen today in the John Brown Fort at Harpers Ferry.

A little before daylight on Monday, James Darrell, bell ringer for the Armory, arrived at his post, carrying a lantern. He was halted by an armed Negro, whom he mistook for one of Mr. Foukes' servants on a drunk. Cursing the colored man, he swung at him with his lantern. The Negro raised his gun, and would have shot Darrell except for the intervention of a white man in Brown's party. Darrell was taken to the enclosure along with another arrival, Mr. Kemp, who was bartender at Foukes' Hotel.

As morning broke, small groups of early workers began to approach the Armory and the Arsenal which was across the street. To their great astonishment, they were packed off as prisoners to the Armory enclosure. Mr. George Cutshaw, an old resident of the Ferry, was peremptorily seized as he returned from escorting a lady across the bridge to her packet boat on the Canal.

A Mr. Thomas Boerley, who kept a small saloon across the street from the Armory enclosure, approached the Arsenal and fired at the invaders. He was painfully shot in the groin and lay for hours dying, the first white victim of the raiders.

At nine, Mr. Daniel J. Young, master machinist at the Rifle Works, was stopped at the Armory gate, but because the enclosure was already overcrowded with ill-guarded hostages, he was allowed to escape, and was able to warn other workers on their way to the shops.
By this time, the shocking news had spread throughout the countryside. In Charles Town, the Courthouse bell clanged wildly, and the report ran like wildfire that hundreds of abolitionists had seized the Ferry. The sheer impossibility of any normal person attempting such a feat of treason with any lesser force than a formidable army gave substance to the reports of a great invading host.

The Jefferson Guard left Charles Town at nine-thirty, 100 strong, under command of Col. John T. Gibson. Arriving at Harpers Ferry, they seized the Potomac bridge, cutting off Brown's escape route into Maryland.

Shortly after, the Hamtramck Guards marched in from Shepherdstown. The Jefferson Volunteers joined the growing defense, under command of Colonel Robert Baylor. A company of militia under Captain Roderick took a position on the railroad northwest of the Armory.

Brown's position was fantastic. With a handful of youthful followers, he had seized vital government property, and was now baffling a sizable army. All morning from the Rifle Works Kagi was sending him urgent messages to surrender. But Brown was still expecting large reinforcements, and his opponents were confused and frightened by the same possibility.

The militia attacked the Rifle Works, driving those raiders, including Kagi, into the river, and shot them as they struggled to escape.

A third company of militia, under Captain William H. Moore, crossed the Potomac and marched down the Maryland side to seize the railroad bridge. Seeing the armed men approaching, Brown cried out to his followers that their reinforcements were at last arriving. When his mistake was discovered, Brown realized the hopelessness of his position, and sent two of his prisoners under two of his own men to negotiate with Captain Moore for permission to withdraw from the enclosure without attack. As they approached the Gault house, one of Brown's men
was shot down. It was Brown’s son, Watson. The other three made their escape, all wounded, into Foukes’ Hotel.

Brown called the pitiful remnant of his band together, picked nine of the most important prisoners as hostages, and retreated into a small brick building, which was the fire-engine house, near the Armory gate. This little building, later famous as “John Brown’s Fort,” was sold and shipped for exhibition at the 1893 World’s Fair in Chicago. Returned to Harpers Ferry, it was reassembled in 1910 in a new location on the campus of Storer College, where it stands today.

Brown had barely accomplished his retreat when the Armory enclosure was invaded by the aroused citizenry, under direction of the Berkeley County militia from Martinsburg. They kicked in the windows of the building Brown had been using for shelter, and released the dozens of prisoners Brown had abandoned there when he fled to the engine house.

About 2 p.m. a Mr. George Turner, a graduate of West Point, approached the scene on horseback by way of High Street, intending to see to some private business in town. Apprized of the situation, he took aim at a raider across the street, but a stray bullet struck him in the shoulder and he fell, second white victim of the raid.

Mr. Alstadt, imprisoned in the engine house, was told that Dangerfield Newby and Shields Greene were both

THE ENGINE HOUSE
When cornered, Brown and his men retreated to this fire engine house and held off a sizeable army. Marines under Col. Robert E. Lee finally forced the door and captured the raiders.

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firing in the street when Turner fell, and that one of them had fired the fatal shot. While Alstadt watched, these two Negroes went into the Arsenal, across the street from the Armory enclosure. Then, apparently frightened by the fire of the citizens, they made a break for the Armory yard. Greene succeeded in reaching the enclosure. Newby died in the road. His body lay where it fell until Tuesday, rooted by hogs and scorned by passers-by.

Mr. Fountain (or Fontaine) Beckham, the beloved mayor of Harpers Ferry, maneuvered himself into a position to observe the raiders, under shelter of a watering shed on the railroad. He was heartbroken over the killing of Shepherd, who had been his freed servant and friend. He wanted, he said, to see for himself what manner of devils these were, bringing death to a peaceful community. "If he peeks out again, I'm going to shoot!" Coppic told his fellow raiders from his shelter in the doorway of the engine-house. Beckham peered out again, and Coppic, carefully calculating the angle, shot him through the heart.

Infuriated by their loss, the townspeople descended on Foukes' Hotel, seized Brown's wounded young emissary, Thompson, and hurried him off to the railroad bridge. He tried to escape by dropping through the bridge to the river, but was shot as he fell. All day long his white face stared up from the water, a target for vindictive bullets.

One of the invaders, Lehman, tried to escape by swimming the Potomac. An officer waded out into the river and shot him as he struggled up onto a rock. He then removed from Lehman's pockets the Captain's Commission and copy of the John Brown Constitution still preserved in Charles Town.

John Cook, returning from his trip to the schoolhouse in Maryland, analyzed the position from the hilltop, and prudently escaped into Pennsylvania. Only five of Brown's party remained with him uninjured. His young son Oliver lay painfully dying, crying out for water, and later begging to be put out of his misery. "If you must

Before dusk, Brown had called for a volunteer among his captives to go out on the bridge and ask for a cessation of firing from the forces outside, promising a return pledge of no further gunfire. A Mr. Israel Russell volunteered, but disappeared with his mission unaccomplished. Later the firing ceased, from fear that the prisoners would be injured, but the citizens were in an uproar, and kept up a noisy guard all Monday night. About eleven o'clock, Brown again attempted to open negotiations for a guarantee of safe escape for his company, but failed.

Sometime during the night, Colonel Robert E. Lee, afterward General, arrived with a force of United States Marines. At seven o'clock Tuesday morning, Colonel Lee sent Lieutenant J. E. B. Stuart, also destined to later fame, to ask for surrender of the garrison. The Colonel watched with his marines from the hillside, and after a brief parley, he saw the figure of Lieutenant Stuart jump aside, waving his flag. Colonel Lee gave the signal, and the marines swarmed down upon the fort. At first they tried to break down the door with sledge-hammers, but failing, picked up a large ladder and used it as a battering-ram.

Inside the engine house, Brown had barricaded the heavy door with a small fire-engine pulled across the opening. Colonel Washington stood talking to Mr. Benjamin Mills, the master armorer. A bullet passed through Washington's beard. The gentlemen stepped back a few paces and resumed their conversation. "That was close," said Brown mildly, from his place on the fire engine.

Brown was fighting futilely, his few men loading and reloading their muskets. The ramming blows increased on the doorway. A narrow crack of light appeared, then widened. Lieutenant Green struggled through the opening, sword in hand. "That's Ossowatomie," said Colonel
Washington, wearily. Lieutenant Greene lunged at Brown, but his light blade was bent back by some obstruction, tradition says by the buckle of Colonel Washington’s famous sword. The Lieutenant seized the blade in both hands, and struck again, until Brown fell unconscious.

Colonel Washington paused to draw on a pair of handsome green kid gloves before stepping through the shattered doorway. His friends surrounded him. “Will you stop for a little something at the hotel, Colonel?” “Thank you, I believe I will,” said Colonel Washington. “It seems like months since I have had any.”

The bodies of Brown’s men were collected from the streets and rivers and buried in a deep pit on the south bank of the Shenandoah, about half a mile above Harpers Ferry. All but one, Anderson, who had been bayoneted by the marines in the engine house and lay on the flagged walk, dying. A farmer passing to another part of the Armory enclosure eyed him bitterly, and on his return some time later spat and remarked, “Well, it takes you a hell of a long time to die.”

So thought some physicians from Winchester, who were in need of material for dissection. Selecting Anderson as a fine specimen, they seized the cadaver as soon as death finally occurred, and crammed it ignominiously into a barrel for transport. One wonders what austere office is graced by this interesting skeleton.

Forty years later, the other bodies were disinterred and reburied in North Elba, New York, near the body of their leader.

John Brown, Stevens, Edward Coppic, Hazlett, and John Cook, whites, and John A. Copeland and Shields Greene, Negroes, were taken to Charles Town for imprisonment, pending trial. They were given a fair trial, which droned on for days. Brown spent much time during his imprisonment writing letters. Copies of his speech to the Court are sold today in the Fort at Storer College. It was a well-calculated speech, designed to set off ready tinder in the North.
Brown was sentenced to hang, but a month elapsed between the trial and execution. Charles Town was under martial law. Wild reports of approaching rescue parties brought Virginia’s finest militia companies into town, a total of more than a thousand soldiers. There was talk of a reprieve, but Brown refused. “I am worth infinitely more now to die than to live.”

Governor Wise came, to sign the death warrant and to interview John Brown. While they were talking, news came of the death of Watson Brown, John Brown’s son who had been one of the men wounded at the Gault house. “It is a great cause to die for,” said John Brown, resuming his interrupted conversation.

On the second day of December, a parade was formed in the sunny streets of Charles Town. John Brown sat erect on his coffin, drawn on a creaking wooden wagon. The sheriff, jailer, and undertaker accompanied him. Marching guards followed after. The townspeople streamed in the wake of the procession, on horses, wagons and afoot. At the edge of the town, John Brown ascended the scaffold and stood looking out over the peaceful countryside, hazy in the morning sun and mist. “This is a beautiful country,” said John Brown.

In thirty-five minutes, the ceremony was over. Colonel Preston made the final solemn pronouncement: “So perish all enemies of Virginia!” But less than two years later, John Brown’s Body was a marching song.

**BROWN’S WEAPONS**

John Brown’s sword and pistol are shown here together with one of the pikestaffs with which Brown had hoped to arm hundreds of slaves. No volunteers appeared to use them, however, and the pikestaffs were eagerly collected as souvenirs.
HARPERS FERRY
DURING THE WAR
BETWEEN THE STATES

The bitterness aroused between abolitionists and Southern sympathizers in the months that followed John Brown's raid was intensified by the election of Abraham Lincoln in November, 1860. The Gulf States seceded, and the Legislature of Virginia called a convention to determine action. Virginia's secession was declared on April 17, 1861. The following day, a minor riot took place in the streets of Harpers Ferry during speeches by opposing local representatives to the convention. Forty-two regulars had been stationed in the Ferry by the government since Brown's raid, for the protection of government interests there. Lieutenant Roger Jones, in command, called for volunteers among the townspeople. The first citizen to take up arms at his call was an Irishman named Donovan, who stood guard at the Armory gate. He faced, across a very short distance, a Southern soldier named John Burk, who was standing guard at the telegraph office. Local antagonism was whipped into a frenzy by sight of the opposing guards. Realizing the futility of trying to hold the Ferry with a small force against anticipated Confederate attack, Lieutenant Jones reported to his superiors, and received instructions to set fire to the Government Installations and abandon Harpers Ferry if capture seemed unavoidable. On April 18, Superintendent Barbour of the Armory secretly called the workmen together, to inform them that the Virginia militia was converging on the Ferry, and to
urge his men to stay loyal to the Southern interests. Knowledge of Barbour's action warned Lieutenant Jones, who ordered gunpowder and rifles stacked in one of the buildings, and to make ready to fire the whole plant at his command.

A small group of volunteers mustered from his force and from Union sympathizers among the townspeople advanced to meet the Virginia militia of about two thousand men. The little handful of Unionists succeeded in briefly engaging the vanguard of the militia near Bolivar, but as the number of Southerners increased, an explosion was heard which warned the Unionists that Lieutenant Jones had carried out his instructions to fire and abandon the Ferry, and the small band dissolved into the darkness.

The Virginians, under command of gallant Turner Ashby, hurried on to the Ferry, arriving just at midnight. They found the Arsenal completely destroyed, and most of the Armory and Rifle Works damaged. The machinery was saved, however, and later removed to Fayetteville, North Carolina, where it was operated for the Confederacy.

The following day, news came of a riot in Baltimore, and Maryland was reported ready for revolt. In a few days, troops arrived at the Ferry from Mississippi, Alabama, Tennessee, and Kentucky. Martial law was substituted for civil, with General Harper, a militia officer from Staunton, temporarily in command.

Harper was soon replaced by a young and virtually unknown colonel of the Virginia militia, Thomas J. Jackson. Later in his career, at Manassas, a chance remark of General Lee's labelled Jackson for all history as "Stonewall Jackson," but he arrived in Harpers Ferry as an inexperienced officer direct from the Virginia Military Institute at Lexington.

Colonel Jackson proved his potential value immediately by excellent strategic moves. He set about organizing the raw troops into a well-drilled fighting force. Realizing the importance of its location overlooking Harpers Ferry,
he seized Maryland Heights, a move of military value in defense of the Ferry.

Coal from pro-Union western Virginia mines was being transported in quantity to Washington over the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. Colonel Jackson sent word to the president of the road that the noisy freight cars were disturbing the sleep of his camp at night, and that all freight traffic must be restricted to the daytime. The railroad obliged, since the Confederate force was in control of the Ferry. Colonel Jackson then requested that freight traffic be confined to the hours of eleven till one in the daytime. The railroad, more grudgingly, again complied.

With all freight traffic now neatly concentrated, Colonel Jackson sent Captain Imboden across the Potomac at Harpers Ferry to stop all east-bound freights, and ordered Colonel Harper to stop all west-bound trains at Martinsburg. In all, the Confederates seized in this trap some 56 locomotives and more than 300 cars. These Colonel Jackson held at Martinsburg.

On May 24, 1861, Colonel Jackson was replaced by an older and more experienced officer, General Joseph E. Johnson. This move indicated the importance of Harpers Ferry as a strategic military post. Jackson was also retained at the Ferry, as brigadier general, in command of the First Brigade of Virginians, under General Johnson. His men, representing some of the finest old families in the Valley, were known after Manassas as the Stonewall Brigade.

In June, the Union General Patterson arrived in Martinsburg, but General Jackson managed to slip in ahead of him, to burn forty-two of the locomotives he had bottled up. The remainder he dismantled and dragged with horses, at night, all the way down the Valley Pike to Strasburg, where they were put to use for the Confederate forces. General Johnson set fire to the railroad bridge at the Ferry on June 15, and withdrew his forces into Winchester.
On the 21st of July, General Patterson removed his army from Charles Town, where he had grown tired of observing General Johnson’s apparently unimportant operations in Winchester, and occupied the Ferry for several days. This was a difficult period for the residents, as Patterson's army freely foraged and ransacked the town, carrying off everything portable. General Johnson meanwhile slipped out of Winchester, and moved his men swiftly down to Manassas, where they strengthened General Beauregard’s army at exactly the right moment to turn the anticipated Union victory into a rout.

After General Patterson’s men crossed into Maryland, a period of quiet descended on the Ferry. Both armies had apparently decided that Harpers Ferry was untenable against any considerable force, for when General Banks of Massachusetts was sent with a large army to observe and guard Harpers Ferry, he was stationed at Sandy Hook, on the Maryland side. Except for scattered firing between his men and Confederate supporters in the Ferry, there was no military action in the immediate vicinity until fall.

Herr’s flour mill on the Island of Virginius had been partially burned by the Federal troops to prevent its use by the Confederacy. Early in October, the loyal Unionist Mr. Herr enlisted the services of other Union sympathizers in the Ferry to transport by boat to the army in Maryland a large quantity of wheat he had accumulated at the mill.

On the 16th of October, word reached the wheat carriers that Colonel Turner Ashby of the Virginia militia was advancing from Charles Town to put an end to this activity. Colonel Geary, at the head of three Union companies, crossed the river from their Maryland base and engaged Colonel Ashby’s men at Bolivar Heights, where a fierce skirmish took place. Both sides claimed victory, but both retreated after considerable loss of life. A few days later, the Confederate troops returned and finished the destruction of Mr. Herr’s mill.

Some Union spies, returning by skiff to the Maryland shore, were shot at, and one killed. Colonel Geary retali-
ated by commanding the burning of a considerable portion of Harpers Ferry, including Foukes' Hotel.

On February 22nd, 1862, General Banks' army crossed the Potomac to join General Shields in a forward movement to Winchester. The Ferry was held by Union troops from then until May 25th, when General Banks retreated from Winchester. During their occupancy, in March, the Union government seized the Winchester and Potomac railroad and employed the B&O to run it. The Ferry became an important supply base, and many citizens returned to their homes to engage profitably in small supply businesses.

Having defeated General Banks and driven him back from Winchester, General Jackson re-occupied the Ferry briefly while directing operations at Charles Town, then moved up the Valley. Union troops regained occupancy.

After the second battle of Manassas, or Bull Run, the capture of Harpers Ferry became strategically important to General Lee, who was entering Maryland. While General Lee, with the main body of Confederate troops, crossed the Potomac and marched on Frederick, General Jackson was sent to capture the Ferry.

From his earlier knowledge of the locality, Stonewall Jackson realized that he must control both the Loudoun and the Maryland Heights. He therefore sent McLaw to scale the Maryland Heights, and Walker to seize the Loudoun Heights. These missions were accomplished with
the greatest difficulty, as roads had to be cut to drag the
guns up the steep slopes. Under cover of darkness, Jack-
son posted troops in the ravines along the Shenandoah,
and artillery at the foot of the Loudoun Heights.

At dawn on September 15, he attacked the Union forces
from both heights, and obtained surrender of 11,000
prisoners, 73 pieces of artillery and 13,000 small arms, as
well as other military supplies. General Jackson did not
wait to carry out the details of surrender, but hurried by
way of Shepherdstown to join General Lee at Antietam.

It was during General Jackson's siege of Harpers Ferry
that the Union forces quartered their horses in the Epis­
copal Church, using the Roman Catholic Church as a
hospital. The natural stone steps leading up the cliffside
to the church became so slippery with the blood of
wounded soldiers carried up that it became impossible to
use them. They are still referred to as the "Bloody Steps."

From Bolivar Heights, above the Ferry, it is possible
to see nearly all of the ground covered by both Union and
Confederate armies in the maneuvers of the Battle of
Antietam. Both sides claimed victory, but General Lee
retreated, abandoning Harpers Ferry. General McClellan
moved in, concentrating his men around the Ferry, where
they remained about two months, resting.

In November, General McClellan proceeded south,
leaving a sufficient guard at the Ferry. The Union forces
remained in control until July 4, 1864, except for a brief
occupancy by General Lee during his disastrous Gettys­
burg campaign, in June, 1863. In the intervening months,
fairly constant skirmishing and raids, but no major
battles, took place in the surrounding towns and villages.

On July 4th, 1864, the Union forces were again driven
out by a portion of General Early's army from Winchester.
The Federal soldiers retreated to Maryland Heights, then
fell back toward Washington, followed by General Early.
Failure of the Confederates to capture Washington, and
their return into Virginia, placed the Ferry again under
Union control. This was the last change of hands before
General Lee’s surrender at Appomattox Court House in April, 1865.

A measure of the extent to which Harpers Ferry suffered by these successive changes is the fact that the railroad bridge at the Ferry was destroyed and rebuilt nine times in the four years of the war.

Swept by a major flood, and by periodic inundations, ravaged by fire, visited by plague, and tossed like a disputed bone back and forth between two armies, it is small wonder that the Ferry today contains an abandoned section that has become a ghost town. But it has a great many loyal citizens, too. Some of them are descendants of the sturdy pioneers, colonial farmers, skilled craftsmen, soldiers and industrial workers who took part in the early history of the Ferry. To them, Harpers Ferry is not dead, but very much alive, and holds not only a happy present, but hope for the future.

THE BLOODY STEPS

These old steps, carved out of living rock, led from the lower town up to the public walk and the two churches. The Catholic church served as a hospital during the long siege of Harpers Ferry, and the halting footsteps of the wounded gave rise to the name, "The Bloody Steps," by which they are still known today.
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