

THE POTOMAC RIVER AND THE C&O CANAL

MAP FOUR

Catoctin Creek to Harpers Ferry

THIS SCENE IS WORTH a voyage across the Atlantic," wrote Thomas Jefferson of the view from Harpers Ferry in 1783. Today, it's still as impressive as in Jefferson's time, although the area has seen repeated industrial growth, wars, destruction, fires, and floods. Robert Harper's mills became an important arms-producing center, and east-west transportation link—and the remains of many bridges still stand in the Potomac and Shenandoah. John Brown's raid and the Civil War brought the area into national prominence. In 1859, Brown captured the federal arsenal in an attempt to secure arms for slaves. Brown was eventually captured and hanged in Charles Town, W.Va. The arsenal was blown up in 1861; in 1862, a garrison of more than 10,000 Union troops surrendered to Stonewall Jackson.

Harpers Ferry still has many remnants of its busy pre-Civil War industries. Harper House is the oldest surviving structure in the town, built around 1775, and restored by the National Park Service, which administers the Harpers Ferry National Historic Park. Other highlights include Jefferson rock, St. Peter's Catholic Church, and the Master Armorer's House. Hilltop House is a famous hotel with a view of the town below; and the remains of the Salty Dog Tavern are filled with the memories of boisterous brawls, Prohibition, and legendary moonshine operations.

