

HISTORIC BUILDING REPORT PART 1

for

Building No. 36

"New Master Armorer's Quarters"

Harpers Ferry National Monument

PART II WRITTEN MARCH 10, 1959

*See back of book for Revised
Report
mailed 2/16/65*

Report Prepared
by

Herbert H. Kiseling
Park Historian

October 1, 1957

Revised Jan. 22, 1958.

23 PP

Proj Sect No. HF-1

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APPROVAL SHEET

Eldg. No. 36

Name of Area Harpers Ferry National Monument

Prepared by Park Historian Robert H. Bissling
Name and Title

Date 10/1/58
Rev. 1/22/58

RECOMMENDED

Superintendent

Date 1/29/58

Chief, Eastern Off., Div. of Design and Construction

Date _____

Regional Director

Date _____

Chief of Design and Construction

Date _____

APPROVED

Director

Date _____

Region Five
421 Walnut Street
Philadelphia 6, Pa.

April 11, 1958

Memorandum

To: Superintendent, Harpers Ferry National Monument

From: Regional Director

Subject: Addendum to Part I, Historic Building Report, New
Master Armorer's Quarters (Building 36), Harpers Ferry

Pages 20-23 of the Historical Data Section of this report were sent in to be added to this report which was distributed at an earlier date to all offices concerned; but which received only the approval of this Office and the Washington Office, no formal approval being made by either the EODC or the Superintendent.

We wish to commend all concerned in the preparation of this report for an excellent presentation, and are pleased to recommend its approval as an interim plan for rehabilitation, development and use pending the preparation and approval of an overall Interpretive Plan for the park.

(Sgd.) Daniel J. Tobin

Daniel J. Tobin
Regional Director

In duplicate

Copy to: Director
Chief, EODC

SECTION I: ADMINISTRATIVE DATA

A. Name and Number of Building:

Building No. 36, "New Master Armorer's Quarters"

B. Proposed Use of Structure:

Under MISSION 66 Planning it has been suggested that the first floor of the building be used as the most appropriate setting to tell the story of the Armory, Arsenal and Rifle Works. There is ample space available in Building No. 36 to exhibit arms manufactured at the Armory and to present the general story of its operation. The first floor, under this plan, would thus be used as a small museum.

The second floor of Building 36 lends itself readily to use as office space.

C. Provisions for Operating the House:

No funds have yet been programed for refurbishing the house. No cooperative agreements have been executed or proposed for furnishing and operating the house. Money will be needed to establish a museum on the first floor to tell the Armory story.

D. Preliminary Estimate of Cost for Rehabilitating the Structure and Grounds:

P.C.P.-E-3 January 17, 1955	
Heating System	\$ 8,000.
P.C.P.-E-9-Portion July 31, 1957	
Rear two story porch replacement	2,500.
P.C.P.-E-10-Portion August 6, 1957	
Re-roof	4,540.
Rake and repoint masonry	3,150.
Gutters and downspouts	200.
Exterior paint	200.
	<u>\$ 18,590.</u>

It is estimated that an additional \$25,000. will be required to complete restoration of the house. This figure cannot be accurately estimated until a complete architectural study can be made.

	\$ 25,000.
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Installation of a museum on the first floor would require approximately \$5,000.

	<u>5,000</u>
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Total Estimated Costs	\$ 48,590.
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SECTION II: HISTORICAL DATA

1. Introduction:

Building No. 36, incorrectly named and known as the Paymaster's Residence, was built by the Government shortly before the Civil War as the residence of one of the Armory officials. Following the Civil War the house was used as office and residence by an Ordnance Officer, for town purposes and finally as a residence again.

This report will present the presently known facts concerning the construction of the building and the historical associations of the structure. The building should be renamed and documentary evidence will be presented to substantiate a correct and suitable name. The importance of the position held by the officer for whom the house was built adds historical value to the structure in presenting the story of the Armory-Arsenal operation. This association has a bearing on the final determination of the use to which the building will be put in developing Harpers Ferry National Monument.

2. Location of Building No. 36:

By deed dated April 25, 1751, Robert Harper was granted a tract of land by Lord Fairfax, Proprietor of the Northern Neck of Virginia.^{1.} This 125 acres is the present site of Harpers Ferry and part of the estate of Robert Harper which passed on his death in 1782 to his neice. The neice, Sarah Harper, married a John Wager and in this way the Wager family came into possession of the Robert Harper holdings. In 1796 in order to establish an Armory and Arsenal at Harpers Ferry the Government bought the original Harper tract with

1. Northern Neck Grants, Book 6, p. 496, Virginia State Library Richmond, Virginia.

the exception of six acres which were reserved by the Wagers.

Building No. 36 was built on a lot of ground which remained in the hands of the Government from 1796 until 1884 and all records pertaining to the structure were therefore necessarily property of the Government during the pre-Civil War period.

3. Construction of the Building:

The construction of this house was part of a program to provide housing for the Armory officials. In a letter dated June 28, 1856, from H. K. Craig, Colonel of Ordnance, to H. W. Clowe, Superintendent of the Armory, Clowe was notified that \$18,000.00 had been allotted for the erection of three quarters.² These three houses were planned for two clerks and the Master Armorer. Superintendent Clowe proceeded to have a set of plans drawn up for these houses and carried them to Washington for the consideration of the Department.³ This is shown by the letter to Superintendent Clowe returning the plans for slight modification on September 5, 1856.

The plan of Quarters for Master Armorer and Clerks, left by you at this Office is returned herewith. On examining it, there appears to be a defect in making the width of the steps at the front entrance too small, and bringing the two middle columns too close together. In putting up the buildings, two of which for clerks may be commenced on the hill, it will be well to correct these defects. The third building of those authorized by my letter to you of the 28th June last, for the Master Armorer, had better be located on or near the site of his present quarters. If such location should require any modification of

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2. Letters to Ordnance Officers, No. 16, p. 243, R.G. 156, National Archives.
 3. One of the problems faced in regard to Government buildings at Harpers Ferry is that even then the Superintendent could and did travel to Washington to discuss matters personally. As a result there undoubtedly is much information of value which was never put in writing.

the plan, or should increase the cost of the building please inform me.⁴

The two clerks referred to in the above letter were the Chief Clerk and the Paymaster's Clerk.⁵ The location of these houses is not presently known, nor is it known whether they still exist, but if still standing they would not be on present Monument property.

The question of where the Master Armorer's quarters should be built caused a considerable delay in its construction. Colonel Craig was evidently interested in pushing for a decision on the matter and in a report of his inspection of Harpers Ferry Armory sent to Secretary of War Jefferson Davis dated September 14, 1856, he referred to it as follows:

Two of the dwelling houses for Clerks that were authorized to be erected and paid for out the proceeds of sale of lots, will be soon commenced on the Hill near the Armory; the House for the Master Armorer, will be erected nearer the Armory as it is thought advisable that one of the officers should at all times be near the shops and stores.⁶

In the following November there appeared an article in a County newspaper concerning the Master Armorer's house. The writer was quite critical of the procedure followed by the Government in the construction of the building.

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4. Letters to Ordnance Officers, No. 16, p. 324, R.G. 156, National Archives.
 5. Ibid., No. 18, p. 111, R.G. 156, National Archives.
 6. Ordnance Office Special File, Box No. 28, R.G. 156, National Archives. Starting in 1852 the Government had sold lots and houses which were considered excess to their needs to the Armory workmen. One object was to attract a more stable working force through the ownership rather than the renting of houses. The money collected from these sales was used to finance housing and to remodel and repair older houses.

Amongst the many improvements being made at Harpers Ferry, we observe a large and handsome dwelling intended for the Master Armorer on Shenandoah Street. It will no doubt be very comfortable and convenient. What the cost will be must be left to conjecture. Under the Military System, proposals for all public works were issued and completion elicited, but as "Kissing goes by favor", no published proposals are made, and we take it, that the contractor, whoever he may be, is not losing by the job.⁷

The article leads one to the incorrect conclusion that the building is already under construction. This is not true for it was another eighteen months before work was begun. Evidently the newspaperman had seen the plans for the house. ^(Appropriations?) Inasmuch as the Secretary of War did not approve the plans for the house until May 19, 1858, it is // understandable why the writer could not learn either the cost of the building or the contractor. This letter is illuminating on three points when combined with a letter from the Superintendent. Colonel Craig wrote to Superintendent Clowe as follows in reply to his letter of April 3, 1858:

I have to inform you that the Secretary of War has now approved the plan for the Master Armorer's Quarters transmitted to the Office with your letter 3d April last; and that the building may be commenced without further delay.⁸

Superintendent Clowe's letter to which the Colonel refers reads as follows:

I learn from W Byington, that you have suggested that the Quarters of the M. Armorer, at this Armory, to be built on the south end of the

7. Virginia Free Press, November 18, 1856.

8. Letters to Ordnance Officers, No. 18, p. 113, R.G. 156, National Archives.

Arsenal Square, should be built somewhat larger, or on a different plan, hence, I have had prepared a ground plan of a House, varying from that already adopted.

A House built on the plan now proposed can be built for about Seven thousand dollars.

Be pleased to instruct me, whether I may vary in the erection of this House, from the plan already adopted for those on Camp Hill. Those on Camp Hill, have exceeded the amt. appropriated for them about 800\$ Each, owing to the location, and consequent expense of the transportation of materials &c.

The original plan can be constructed at the site on the Arsenal Square for about Six thousand dollars or less.⁹.

The Secretary of War's decision of May 19, 1858, put at rest a problem which had been more or less at issue for some four years.

In 1854 a Board of Officers had recommended that the Master Armorer's house be located on the hill and thus removed from the Arsenal Square.¹⁰

However, because of the importance of the position of the Master Armorer the opinion prevailed that he should live close to the Armory where he could act in a protection capacity if his services might be so needed. Again reflecting the importance of the position was the decision to build a larger and more expensive house than originally planned. The two letters quoted above show that the modified plan submitted April 3, was accepted even though it cost at least a thousand dollars more to build. There is a hint in Colonel Craig's letter of disgust at the amount of time it took to get official approval for the building when he said "the building may be commenced

9. Office Chief of Ordnance, Document File 1797-1894, Box No. 161, No. 132, R.G. 156, National Archives.

10. Memorandum from Major Bell to Colonel Baker dated July 19, 1854. Ordnance Office Special File, Box No. 28, R.G. 156, National Archives.

without further delay". There is also in Superintendent Clowe's letter the implication that the work would be completely a government operation. When he learned that a larger house was being considered he said, "I have had prepared a ground plan of a House,...". He did not say that he had the contractor or architect prepare a plan which he was submitting.

There is further evidence to support the theory that the construction of this house was accomplished by the use of men in the employ of the Government rather than by a private builder. Superintendent Clowe wrote to Colonel Craig that he had been forced for want of instructions to halt the work of excavating for the foundation walls on April 22, 1858.¹¹ It was not until May 19 of that year that the Secretary of War finally approved the plan and the order issued to begin work. It is hardly likely that a private citizen would have anticipated approval and have begun work. Further the Superintendent in this letter specifically said, "...I was unable to continue the necessary excavations for the foundation walls."¹²

The construction of the house may well have been under the immediate supervision and direction of the Master Builder of the Armory. Although we have no evidence at present to definitely substantiate this, it is true that the position was filled in 1850 by a man named Fuss.¹³ If Mr. Fuss, Master Builder, was removed

11. Office Chief of Ordnance, Document File 1797-1894, Box No. 161, No. 181, National Archives.

12. Ibid.

13. List of Houses, 1850. Judge Advocate General, Abandoned Military Reservation File No. 34, R.G. 153, National Archives.

or transferred between 1850 and 1858, it is equally probable that his position would have been filled and the new Master Builder would have supervised the work.

The plans for the Master Armorer's Quarters if they still exist have not yet been discovered. There are references to the plans in letters between Washington and Harpers Ferry, but such enclosures are no longer with the letters.^{14.}

The construction which was authorized on May 19, proceeded quite rapidly during the summer. By October 4, 1858, of the estimated \$7,000.00 cost only \$2,624.50 was still needed to complete the house.^{15.}

There is no further correspondence concerning the house to indicate any complications in its construction. On April 8, 1859, the then Superintendent Barbour reported, "The newly erected quarters for the Master Armorer of this Armory, will be ready for use in a few weeks...."^{16.} Then on the 5th of July, Barbour wrote, "....The work is done at the Master Armorer's new Quarters, on Shenandoah Street,..."^{17.} The final communication in regard to construction of the house was a letter from Superintendent Barbour to Colonel Craig on July 16, 1859, in which he reported the new quarters were completed and occupied as directed by the Secretary of War.^{18.}

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14. Apparently the file of drawings and building plans of the Ordnance Department pertaining to Harpers Ferry has been destroyed. It is still possible that they have been mis-filed, but that appears to be a small possibility.
15. Office Chief of Ordnance, Document File 1797-1894, Box No. 161, No. 418, R.G. 156, National Archives.
16. Ibid., Box No. 168, No. 219, R.G. 156, National Archives.
17. Ibid., No. 434.
18. Ibid., No. 466.

The New Master Armorer's Quarters were begun in 1858, probably immediately after the Secretary of War's approval was forwarded to the Superintendent on May 19, 1858, and completed by July 5, 1859, when it was so reported. The building probably cost \$7,000.00 and was probably under the immediate supervision of the Master Builder of the Armory. Every reference in presently available correspondence indicates that this was strictly a Government project rather than one which was contracted to a private individual.

4. Interior Decoration of the House:

We have no direct historical evidence concerning the interior decoration of this house, but we do have indirect evidence. At the same time that the Master Armorer's Quarters were being constructed the Paymaster's Quarters ^(Building No 32 Storey College 1869 MAP) were being remodeled. The Paymaster asked the Superintendent to paper the downstairs of his quarters rather than finishing the walls with a "plaister of Paris Coating". The Superintendent did not feel that he had the power to make the decision and so forwarded the request to Colonel Craig.¹⁹ Colonel Craig replied immediately on November 11, 1858, refusing the request. He pointed out that, "The building regulations (page 140, Ord: Reg:) contemplate the walls being plastered, as the finishing of them."²⁰ It should be safe to assume that these regulations to which he referred were not drawn up solely for the remodeling of the Paymaster's Quarters at Harpers Ferry, but applied to all Government buildings being built or remodeled. The Master Armorer's Quarters then would not have had papered walls since these regulations were effective during the period of its construction.

19. Ibid., Box No. 161, No. 474.

20. Letters to Ordnance Officers, No. 18, p. 360, R.G. 156, National Archives.

5. Outbuildings:

In the construction of the New Master Armorer's Quarters there was no provision for the construction of outbuildings. Actually the Superintendent had evidently planned to use the outbuildings of the Old Master Armorer's Quarters when that house was razed. He was so confident that this would be the case that he had the new house built in such a way that it would be very difficult and unsatisfactory to provide outbuildings on the same lot. Superintendent Barbour on July 16, 1859, explained the situation:

....The outhouses attached to the old house, are wanted for the use of the occupant of the new one; if the old house is retained, new outhouses will have to be built for the new house, and for these, there is not sufficient space upon the lot, without materially marring the appearance and enjoyment of the grounds.²¹

No decision was forthcoming on the matter of outbuildings for the new quarters and the subject was again raised later. This time it was brought up in the Estimate for 1861-1862 and included with outbuildings for other officers' quarters.

The funds for the construction of the quarters [officers' quarters] derived altogether from the sale of lots at the Armory, having been exhausted in the erection of the buildings themselves, no outside conveniences, such as a stable, meat-house or other necessary buildings could be erected. This item of the estimate includes the building of a stable for the paymaster...and for like purposes at the other quarters. The erection of these outhouses is rendered the more essential through the fact that these quarters are far removed, except that of the Master Armorer, from the business part of the town, and the tenants suffer

21. Office Chief of Ordnance, Document File 1797-1894, Box No. 168, No. 466, R.G. 156, National Archives.

great inconvenience from the want of needful supplies which cannot be secured in advance in consequence of having no suitable places in which to store them. 22.

It is most unlikely that the construction of the outbuildings referred to in this Estimate was begun before the intervention of the Civil War put an end to the Harpers Ferry Armory and Arsenal. Today the remains of only one outbuilding, a small pit toilet, are the only evidence of outhouses for this house and it was not considered in this report quoted above. Although archeological study might uncover new evidence in this regard, present knowledge makes it appear that such work would be unfruitful. Further there is no evidence that a decision was ever made on whether or not to remove the old quarters and until a decision was made it is unlikely new outbuildings would have been erected.

6. War Damage to the House:

There is at present no direct evidence in regard to this building and possible war damage which may have occurred. There are other structures which are specifically noted as having been damaged by the troops rather than the fighting. In the report of an 1865 inspection of the property the inspector noted damage done to the Superintendent's and Paymaster's quarters as well as other valuable buildings not specifically listed which belonged to the Government. Certainly one of the valuable houses was this Master Armorer's Quarters and by inference we may assume a presently unknown amount of war damage.

22. Office Chief of Ordnance, Estimate Book No. 51, p. 77, R.G. 156, National Archives. \$2,000.00 was the estimate for this item.

7. Location of New Master Armorer's Quarters:

Harpers Ferry National Monument Building No. 36 has been incorrectly known as the Paymaster's Residence. This building was not used for the living quarters of the Paymaster and was never intended for such use. The Paymaster's Quarters were located in a house which was much older than this one and one which at the time this house was built was remodeled. On June 3, 1858, Superintendent Glowe submitted an estimate of the cost of raising the Paymaster's Quarters one story, but would not recommend an attic.^{23.} By June 25, having received no reply on this matter, he wrote again pointing out that then was a good time to do the work.^{24.} Apparently his second letter resulted in a favorable decision for on September 27 he was able to report, "The work on the Paymaster's Quarters is rapidly progressing completion, so also that on the M. Armorer's;..."^{25.} This establishes the existence of a Paymaster's Residence at the time of the erection of the New Master Armorer's Quarters. More than this it is evidence that there was no intention of building the new house to replace the Paymaster's Quarters. Also in the letter referred to immediately above the Superintendent points out that the "Paymaster is desirous of occupying his [quarters] this Autumn." There can be no question that the Paymaster's Quarters and the house built in 1858-1859 were two different structures.

*← Building no. 320
storey
college*

There is also no question from the evidence that Building No. 36 and the New Master Armorer's Quarters are the same structure.

23. Office Chief of Ordnance, Document File 1797-1894, Box No. 161, No. 222, R.G. 156, National Archives.

24. Ibid., No. 246.

25. Ibid., No. 409.

The building is located on Shenandoah Street and very close to the Master Armorer's Quarters on the Arsenal Lot.^{26.} For further corroboration reference is made to certain maps on which are located both the Old Master Armorer's Quarters and the Paymaster's Quarters.^{27.}

8. Post-Civil War History of Building No. 36:

Following the Civil War the Government made no attempt to re-establish the Armory or Arsenal. An Ordnance Agent, Mr. Zadok Butt, was in charge of the Government property in 1872 when the town authorities negotiated for acquisition of the building.^{28.} In a letter to the Secretary of War, W. W. Belknap, on July 5, 1872, the town requested that Lot 2, Block B, with the brick house on it be made available. The town wanted to use it for a school-house, jail or otherwise as they saw fit. It was pointed out that they had no town house and that the jail and school houses for white children had been destroyed during the war. Also the rent which the Government received was absorbed in repairs. At this time three people rented rooms in the building and one of these, named Koonce, owed for fourteen months rent amounting to \$56.00. As a result it was decided to evict Koonce and transfer his rooms and any other vacant

26. Ibid., Box No. 168, No. 466.

27. Records of the Office of the Chief of Engineers, Fortification File, Map Dr. 150, sheet 78-1, 78-2 and 82-2. Reproduced as part of the Master Plan, Harpers Ferry National Monument, Drawing No. NM-HF 3002, Sheets 1 and 2. Building 36, New Master Armorer's Quarters, was built immediately next to the building marked Master Armourer and between it and the Arsenal Buildings indicated on the maps.

28. This building, New Master Armorer's Quarters, was referred to after the Civil War as being located on Lot 2, Block B. Reference is to an 1869 Plat of Harpers Ferry reproduced as part of the Master Plan, Harpers Ferry National Monument, Drawing No. NM-hf 3001, Sheet 1.

9. Importance of Master Armorer's Position:

The Master Armorer was always one of the most important of the officers of the Armory. In the Inspection Report of 1835 there is found a description of the duties of the Master Armorer as follows:

....The Master Armorer's duties are ably fulfilled and it is a matter of great regret that the pay provided by law is so inadequate a compensation for his multifarious labors. A large part of the duty which properly appertains to the office of the Superintendent devolves upon the Master Armorer - from causes which are well known. The labor of preparing the new model muskets, with all the tools, gauges and appurtenances, is one of great extent and of the highest importance. It is truly an extraneous and separate matter and in strict justice he should receive a special allowance for it. In the absence of the Superintendent he necessarily fills that office, with no relaxation of his ordinary duties, and some provision should be made for a suitable compensation to him, when this state of things continues beyond a limited period.³³.

The Master Armorer's significantly important position in the organization and operation of the Armory makes his residence more important in the interpretation of the Armory story. It is also a good example of the type of house the Government provided for its officers in the pre-Civil War period. For these reasons the house should be renamed the "New Master Armorer's Quarters" or an other suitable name for this important building.

10. Master Armorer's Residence:

Although Building No. 36 was designed and built for the Master Armorer and so designated in all correspondence during the planning stage and while it was being built, the Master Armorer never did

33. Ordnance Office Special File, Box No. 28, R.G. 156, National Archives.

live in it.

During the period of construction there was a change in Master Armorer and a new arrangement was effected. In a detailed letter from Superintendent Clowe to Colonel Craig dated November 26, 1858, are the facts in the case. At a meeting of the Colonel, the Superintendent, the Secretary of War and Mr. Mills, Master Armorer, verbal permission was granted for the Superintendent to decide where the Master Armorer should live. Colonel Craig had opposed it, but when the Secretary of War agreed, he did likewise. It was Craig's opinion that the Master Armorer should live close to the Armory. At the time of the letter Mr. Mills is requesting a final decision on the location of his quarters. Since the time of the meeting above referred to the Master Armorer and the Paymaster's Clerk had exchanged residences and such an arrangement was agreeable to both. The Paymaster's Clerk was living in the old Master Armorer's Quarters until the new was completed. Mills was very emphatic about the matter and said that he could not consider moving to the Ferry because he considered it too unhealthy for his family and should he be required to do so he would have to return to Kentucky. He desired an immediate decision for he had offered his property in Kentucky for sale and if he was going to return, it would have to be soon before the property was sold. Superintendent Clowe felt that he was too good a man to lose over what he considered the minor point of which house he should occupy. Clowe then recommended that the present arrangement be continued and that the Paymaster's Clerk be assigned the new Master Armorer's

Quarters when completed.^{34.} In replying to this letter, Colonel Craig conceded the issue and approved allowing the Master Armorer to live on Camp Hill even though he disapproved.^{35.} This settled the matter and on July 16, 1859, Superintendent Barbour confirmed the accepted fact in a letter reporting the completion of the new Master Armorer's Quarters and the assignment of it.

The new Quarters built for the Master Armorer on the Arsenal lot, on Shenandoah St., and now by the decision of the Hon: Secy. of War, occupied by Mr Daingerfield, Paymaster's Clerk, rather than the present M. Armorer, who occupies the Quarters on the Hill, are finished and thus occupied.^{36.}

Although the Master Armorer did not live in the house, it was built for him and should be considered in much the same light as if he had occupied it. It should be remembered that originally the plans had been to construct three houses, two for Clerks and the one for the Master Armorer, on the same building plan. This however, was changed and the Master Armorer's Quarters were enlarged and this enlargement which cost a thousand dollars more reflects the relative importance of the positions of Master Armorer and Clerk in the Armory organization. To consider this a Clerk's house even though the Clerk occupied it is to diminish the relative values of the two types of jobs.

11. Summary:

Harpers Ferry National Monument Building No. 36 which has been

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34. Office Chief of Ordnance, Document File 1797-1894, Box No. 162, No. 508, R.G. 156, National Archives.
35. Letters to Ordnance Officers, No. 18, p. 392, R.G. 156, National Archives.
36. Office Chief of Ordnance, Document File 1797-1894, Box No. 168, No. 466, R.G. 156, National Archives.

incorrectly known as the Paymaster's Residence was actually built for the living quarters of the Master Armorer. It is correct, as formerly accepted, that this was built by the Government on Arsenal property which was acquired by purchase in 1796. It was not intended or used as a residence by the Paymaster. Although built for the Master Armorer, he did not live in the house. Because of personal reasons the Master Armorer exchanged residences with the Paymaster's Clerk who actually lived in the house.

The actual construction began in the spring of 1858 and was completed and occupied in July, 1859. The estimated cost of the house was \$7,000.00 and it was probably constructed by Government workmen under the immediate supervision of the Master Builder of the Armory. Although building plans were drawn for the structure and reference is made to them, they have either been destroyed or remain undiscovered.

There were probably no outbuildings constructed for this house except a small pit toilet. The remains of this structure exist, but the Civil War occurred before other buildings were authorized. The walls in the house were not papered due to a regulation prohibiting finishing them in this manner.

Following the Civil War the house was used for an office and was also rented to private individuals. During the last half of 1872 the town officials negotiated with the Government for the acquisition of this house and this was effected completely in January, 1873. Until 1884 the Town of Harpers Ferry had free use of the building under condition they maintain it and return it upon the request of

the Government. In 1884 the house and lot were auctioned and purchased by a private individual and with that it returned to its original intended use - a home. At the time of the sale the Post Office was located in part of the house.

Either the house should be referred to by number only or a new name selected which would reflect its pre-Civil War historical importance and association as the intended residence of the second ranking official of the Armory, the Master Armorer.

12. Photographs, Drawings and Sketches:

Reference may be had to Drawing No. NM-HF 3067, sixteen sheets, August 6, 1957, for a complete set of measured drawings of the building.

Photographs and sketches of this building will be forwarded under separate cover as soon as copies can be obtained. Historic photographs and sketches as presently available are limited in number.

Report Prepared
By

Herbert H. Kissling
Park Historian

October 1, 1957

rooms to the town on condition that the town would keep them in repair and return them on the request of the Government. On July 16, Mr. Butt was ordered to turn over the five rooms and cellar occupied by Koonce on condition the town sign the agreement referred to above. Two days later the back room which Butt wanted for an office was granted to the town. The other tenant had sublet part of her rooms and finally it was decided that these should also be loaned to the town. The Ordnance Department made the directive to Mr. Butt on January 3, 1873, and with that the Town of Harpers Ferry came into full possession of the house built in 1858-1859 for the residence of the Master Armorer.²⁹ In 1880 one room of the building was used for the Post Office.³⁰ Also in 1880 we find a report of some of the expense to which the town went to maintain their free building. These included a new fence, a new back house and new spouting in front to replace that damaged by heavy snow.³¹

The Government reclaimed the property in 1884 and it was included among the seventy-three lots in Harpers Ferry offered at public auction. At this time the Post Office was still operating in the building.³² At this sale the property passed into private hands and remained a residence until acquired for inclusion in Harpers Ferry National Monument.

29. Executive Document No. 6, 43rd Congress, 1st Session, p. 24-30.

30. Public Buildings Service, Harpers Ferry Case No. 155, R.G. 121, National Archives.

31. Ibid.

32. Document in Historians' file, Harpers Ferry National Monument.

13. Comments:

This structure which was completed in 1859 was originally intended for the use of the Master Armorer as his residence. It is therefore historically significant to our interpretive program and should be an integral part of that program. Situated as it is immediately next to the "Old Master Armorer's Residence" an excellent opportunity is presented to provide visitors with a comparison in styles of government building at different periods of time for the same officer.

There is sufficient space on the first floor to display the arms manufactured at the Armory and to tell the story of that operation. The structure is centrally located in the lower town section of the Monument and is along the walking tour route. The second floor is well suited to office use as presently utilized and it could be continued in such service.

There should be an exterior restoration to the 1859 period and an interior adaptation to museum purposes without materially altering the structure. Although the rear porches may be altered from their original appearance, there is photographic evidence that they did exist in the period with which we are concerned. At present there is no conclusive evidence as to the roofing material used. However, in the period following the construction of the railroad through Harpers Ferry in the middle 1830's the government buildings were constantly threatened with fires caused by the locomotives. As a result well before the construction of this house the government buildings were reroofed with slate and it should be safe to assume that in the construction

of this house slate was the roofing material. Situated as it is very close to the railroad tracks, it would have been a departure from accepted policy to use anything but slate on the roof.

After its completion the house was occupied by the Clerk of the Paymaster rather than the Master Armorer. Further correspondence which has been located indicates that the officials of the Ordnance Department still considered it the Master Armorer's residence. Shortly before the outbreak of the Civil War there was to be a change in Master Armorer. It was felt that the new Master Armorer should occupy this house, but before the question could be settled the Civil War closed the matter permanently. Although the Master Armorer did not live in this house, it was designed and built for his use and officially considered as such by Ordnance Department officials. Therefore, we should adopt the name "New Master Armorer's Residence" which would conform to its designation in the historic period and differentiate it from the "Old Master Armorer's Residence" which is located immediately next to it.

Administrative

1. Paymasters Office

Building No. 36

Name tentatively assigned in 1955, subject correction on basis of Historical research. We recommend renaming "Armorer's House" (Ref. Data this report.)

2. Building Report File No. Not Prepared.

3. HANS Measured Drawings, as of August 1956. Photographs of exterior and typical interior to follow.

4. Included, as presently available. Further research required.

5. Temporarily, as Monument Headquarters and Visitor Center. Finally, to house displays, etc, necessary to present to visitors the Arsenal-Armory Story.

6. Does not apply at this time.

4. Narrative statement of the known historical importance and association.

This building which is presently used as Temporary Headquarters and Visitor Center is located on what was Arsenal property before the Civil War. It has been accepted that this was built by the Government for the use of the Paymaster of the Armory as his residence and office. It has now been established that this is not entirely accurate. Although it was built by the Government, it was never intended for the Paymaster.

From the correspondence between the Superintendent of the Armory and the Colonel of Ordnance, it becomes clear that the house was built for the residence of the Master Armorer. These letters substantiate the newspaper report of the construction of "a large and handsome dwelling intended for the Master Armorer on Shenandoah Street."

Before the house was completed in 1859 a new Master Armorer was appointed. He strongly preferred to live on Camp Hill and although especially the Colonel of Ordnance opposed this, it was approved in preference to losing the Armorer's services. With the Master Armorer living in other quarters, these were assigned to the Paymaster's Clerk.

Following the Civil War when the Armory operation was not resumed a small controversy developed in regard to this building. In 1869 when the bulk of the property still belonging to the Government was offered for sale, this house was withdrawn from the sale. The building and its location evidently appealed to the town authorities.

In July, 1872, the town requested the Secretary of War to make this structure available to them for a "town-house, school-house, jail, station house or otherwise" as they judged most necessary. This was contrary to the wishes of the local Ordnance Agent who desired to maintain his office here. The town authorities felt it was of little value to the Government and the rent received was absorbed for repairs and care of the building.

The Secretary of War referred the request to the Chief of Ordnance and by the end of six months of correspondence the entire building had been "loaned" to Harpers Ferry. The town held it on condition they would maintain the building and return it to the Government upon request.

It was not until 1884 that the Government finally did sell the property. At that time it was used in part as the Post Office. After 1884 the house was used as a private residence until purchased by West Virginia for inclusion in Harpers Ferry National Monument.

Architectural

4. The construction of this house was approved in 1856 when \$18,000 was allocated for the erection of three quarters.¹ One of these three was to be the Master Armorer's residence. Plans were drawn for the houses and Superintendent Clow took them to Washington for review.² The plans were returned with the comment that, "...there appears to be a defect in making the width of the steps at the front entrance too small, and bringing the two middle columns too close together." With this correction permission was given to build the two houses for Clerks on Camp Hill, but the one for the Master Armorer would have to wait for a final determination of its location.³

Construction of the building was postponed for almost two years until May 19, 1858. On that day a letter was written to Superintendent Clow informing him that the Secretary of War had then approved the plan for the Armorer's quarters and that it could be commenced without further delay.⁴ The cost of the house as estimated by the Superintendent was "about six thousand dollars or less."⁵

With the approval of the Secretary of War the way was cleared for the long deferred action on a new residence for the Master Armorer. There is no evidence of any complications in the construction and on July 16, 1859 Superintendent Barbour reported the house completed and occupied.⁶

There are no building plans which can be located on this structure. Apparently the file of drawings and building plans of the Ordnance Department which would have been voluminous has been destroyed, probably for lack of file space, sometime prior to the establishment of the National Archives in 1935. Enclosures in letters which are referred to have also disappeared. The building today is in exterior appearance to all indications substantially if not exactly the same as when it was completed in 1859.

1. Letters to Ordnance Officers, No. 18, p. 243, National Archives.
2. One of the problems faced in regard to government buildings at Harpers Ferry is that even then the Superintendent could and did travel to Washington to discuss matters personally. As a result there undoubtedly is much information of value that was never put in writing.
3. Letters to Ordnance Officers, No. 18, p. 324, National Archives.
4. Ibid, No. 18, p. 113.
5. Ordnance Office COO - Document File, 1797-1894, National Archives.
6. Ibid

Architectural

1. Ordnance Department of the War Department, United States Government.
2. Began in 1858 and completed in 1859.
3. The name of the architect, etc, is not known at present. A contemporary newspaper report states, "... no published proposals are made, and we take it, that the contractor, whoever he may be, is not losing by the job."
4. Narrative and references attached.

Vouchers and contemporary plans believed to have been destroyed by Government.

5. Not documented. Believed to be of minor nature; no evidence of major changes detected. Present use prevents detailed study.
6. Reference narrative data, 4 above. The two houses on Camp Hill are not presently certainly identified. Investigation continuing.
7. Restore to original condition. Conditions now believed to be substantially as were when first built.
8. Reference HABS measured drawings as of August 1956. Rear 2-story porch deteriorated, to be replaced.

Masonry required repointing.

First floor trim and floors damaged by repeated flooding, will require extensive repair and/or replacement.

Installation of heating system.

Incidental work.

9. In present and contemplated use wiring is and will be required to provide illumination. Temporary comfort station, now installed on first floor, serves temporary visitor center, will be removed when permanent visitor center is constructed. Central heating with distribution throughout the house is necessary now and in contemplated use. In contemplated use, facilities for visitors will include display cases, plates and other interpretive aids.

CIVIL WAR SKETCH

"GENERAL STEVENSON'S HEAD-QUARTERS"

-1865

Building 36 in center with rear porches

Building 34-35 immediately to right of Building 36

Corner of Building 9 in right foreground

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VIEW IN HARPERS FERRY.—GENERAL STEVENSON'S HEAD-QUARTERS, LOUDON HEIGHTS IN THE DISTANCE.—[SKETCHED BY A. R. WAUD.]

CIVIL WAR PHOTOGRAPH

"CONTRABAND CAMP"

Building 36 is large, white structure in center rear

Building 9 in right rear

Photograph taken from Armory Yard.

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