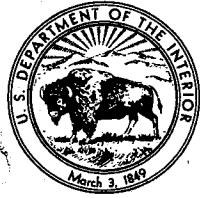


AFR-146

IN REPLY REFER TO:  
H 30



UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Harpers Ferry National Monument  
Harpers Ferry, West Virginia

May 3, 1960

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<input type="checkbox"/>	RANGER ACT'S	

Memorandum

To: Regional Director, Region Five

From: Superintendent, Harpers Ferry

Subject: Stabilization of Bldg. No. 43, McCabe-Marmion Building

In compliance with Acting Regional Director Palmer's memorandum of April 19 we are forwarding the estimate requested for the reconstruction of the front wall of Building No. 43.

Mr. William Shreve of Buckeystown, Maryland has quoted us a figure of \$6,057.50 for this masonry job using the original stones from the old wall which we stockpiled here. Architect Franzen considers it important to stabilize at the same time Building No. 44, the Richardson Building. Mr. Shreve's estimate for this job is \$416.00. We regret the delay in replying to Mr. Palmer's inquiry. The delay was the result of some family difficulty of Mr. Shreve's which prevented his prompt attention to our request.

*John  
this  
9/6*

*Frank H. Anderson*

Frank H. Anderson  
Superintendent

In duplicate

Info	OPERATIONS	Act	Initial and Date
	Lands		
	Engineer		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Architect		RMC 5/16
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Land Archt Programs		OWS 5/17

Harpers Ferry National Monument  
Harpers Ferry, West Virginia

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(SGD) FRANK H. ANDERSON

Frank H. Anderson  
Superintendent

In duplicate

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Harpers Ferry National Monument  
(Area)

FILE CODE: H30

HISTORIC BUILDING REPORT

PART I, (REVISED)

for

BUILDING NO. 43,

THE McCABE MARMION BUILDING

Prepared by:

Herbert H. Kissling  
Park Historian  
Dated April 14, 1960  
6 pages  
HF-20

**IMPORTANT**

This file constitutes a part of the official records of the National Park Service and should not be separated or papers withdrawn without express authority of the official in charge. All Files should be returned promptly to the File Room. Officials and employees will be held responsible for failure to observe these rules, which are necessary to protect the integrity of the official records.

**FROM:**

**TO:**

HF 146

HISTORIC BUILDING REPORT  
PART I, (REVISED)  
for  
BUILDING NO. 43,  
THE McCABE-MARMION BUILDING

Harpers Ferry National Monument

Prepared by:

Herbert H. Kissling  
Park Historian  
Date April 14, 1960  
6 pages  
HF-20

APPROVAL SHEET

Recommended:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Director

Recommended:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Regional Director

Recommended:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chief, E.O.D.C.

Approved:

.....  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Superintendent

Harpers Ferry National Monument

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SECTION I - ADMINISTRATIVE DATA (REVISED)

A. Name and Number of Building:

"McCabe-Marmion Building." Building No. 43.

B. Proposed Use of the Structure:

We agree that there is considerable merit in Architect Franzen's proposal for the stabilization of the ruin by means of the installation of an extensive framework of steel as illustrated in Mr. Franzen's Drawing NMHF 3099. His idea of the eventual reconstruction of Bldg. No. 43 to incorporate therein an auditorium also merits serious consideration. We have often felt the need for just such a feature.

1959  
Nevertheless we fail to see why further deterioration of a ruin, caused by the recent collapse of sections of wall, should be the occasion for a complete reversal of our former thinking on this structure. Historian Snell recommended, we concurred, Acting Chief of Design and Construction Dick Sutton concurred, by memorandum of August 1, 1960, and Regional Director Tobin recommended, the stabilization of Bldg. No. 43 as a ruin. The relative cost of the two proposals is an important additional consideration, particularly in view of the high costs of restoration already programmed for Harpers Ferry. The estimated cost of stabilization vs. reconstruction at the time of our earlier report was \$15,000 and \$60,000 respectively. The same reasons for our preference for stabilization at that time still exist. Many visitors enjoy the ruin of Bldg. No. 43 despite the fact that it is nonhistoric.

The chief reason for maintaining a ruin at this site in spite of the changed circumstances is that if we can stabilize now the remaining ruin still retains an interesting architectural appearance. We have reason to believe that stabilization can be accomplished without the interim measure proposed by Architect Franzen. An estimated cost of the steel involved in this treatment is \$6100.00. Any such mass of steel would present an intrusion on the townscape for at least four or five years since the reconstruction of this structure would necessarily have low priority. We believe the project can be handled by the installation of braces anchored to dead men in the ground fastened thru the existing poorly supported wall to prevent movement in either direction of this interesting standing wall. Part or all of the front wall can then be reconstructed to add further support and to prevent entrance inside because of the safety hazard.

Our thinking has changed from that expressed in our memorandum of April 7, 1960, largely because, after more careful study, we are convinced that the ruin is still extremely interesting and the wall with the "shadow" of the former adjoining structure should be retained.

We therefor agree with Historian Kissling and recommend that the most economical means of stabilizing Bldg. No. 43 be determined and that it be stabilized and retained as a ruin.

C. Provisions for Operating the House (None):

No funds are currently programmed for the reconstruction and restoration or for the stabilization of this building.

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

The estimate cost of the reconstruction and restoration of Bldg. No. 43 is \$60,000.

The estimated cost of the stabilization of the building is \$15,000.



## SECTION II - HISTORICAL DATA

### 1. SUMMARY OF HISTORICAL DATA:

The lot on which this building was erected was part of the land known as the "Wager Six Acre Reservation". These six acres were reserved from Government purchase in 1796. In 1835 due to financial difficulties, the Wager property was divided by court action between the three Wager children. Lot No. 47 was given to James B. Wager and subsequently sold at auction. It is believed, on the basis of the best information available, that this lot was purchased jointly by Dr. Nicholas Marmion and Martin Grace on November 1, 1836. It was a vacant lot at the time of purchase and the price paid was probably about \$600. The lot which fronted on Shenandoah Street was divided in equal parts of 20 feet each. The northeast section went to Martin Grace and the southwest half became the property of Dr. Marmion. Dr. Marmion retained control of his half of the lot until after the Civil War. Martin Grace died in 1849 and his share of this property passed into the hands of the McCabe family, the owners during the Civil War.

It appears that Building No. 43 was erected by Dr. Marmion and Martin Grace in 1845. It was a 3½ story stone store and residence which fronted 40 feet on Shenandoah Street and was 31 feet 4 inches deep. The building was divided in the center by means of a brick partition wall and the original roof was probably slate. Dr. Marmion's section was perhaps operated as a tailor or shoemaker shop in 1859 and the McCabe side was probably the grocery store of J. & J. Mathews. The upper floors of the building were being used as a boarding house.

The McCabe-Marmion Building has the qualities and characteristics of the majority of historic buildings in the lower town section of Harpers Ferry National Monument. It was built before 1865 and was a store on the first floor and a residence above. There is no known special historical value associated with the structure beyond its part in the historic scene which is being restored.

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The information embodied in this section was taken from Snell, Charles W., "Historic Building Report, Part 1, for Building No. 43, The McCabe-Marmion Building" dated July 9, 1958, 32 pages. This report was recommended as the Part 2 of the same subject building.

2. STRUCTURAL FAILURE OF BUILDING NO. 43:

At 5:50 AM on March 29, 1960, a structural failure occurred in Building No. 43. The final loss consisted of the entire front and all interior framing and support for the building. The situation on March 30 was as follows: the majority of three walls of the structure remained as a hollow shell and there was an obvious necessity to support the surviving ruin in order to retain it. Temporary support has been provided to hold the shell until a decision can be made on the means of handling the situation.

3. PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE SITUATION AFTER ITS FAILURE ON MARCH 29, 1960:

Photographs of the condition of the ruin of Building No. 43 following its failure on March 29, 1960, are to be incorporated in the Architectural Section of this report.

4. HISTORICAL PRINTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS:

For historical prints and photographs of the building, reference may be made to Appendix 1 of Historian Snell's Part I of the Historical Building Report for Building No. 43.

5. HISTORICAL PLANS OF BUILDING NO. 43:

No historical plans of Building No. 43 have been found. Modern measured drawings of the structure are contained in Drawing No. NM-HF 3066, "Building No. 43, The Watt Store and similiar Adjacent Building" dated September 6, 1956, 10 sheets.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS:

It had formerly been the recommendation of the Superintendent and the historians of the Harpers Ferry National Monument staff that Building No. 43 be stabilized as a ruins. This had been concurred in

by the Regional Director and the Director of the National Park Service. With the structural failure of a part of the building and the subsequent loss of the entire front and interior support and framing, the appearance of the ruin has been greatly altered and new considerations have resulted.

Remaining are the northeast and southwest walls and the major portion of the rear walls. There are several interpretive values in the surviving segments of the structure. Of prime importance is the obvious evidence of the existence of a structure on this site. This contributes to the visitor's appreciation of the fact that the limited available space was utilized in construction. Already two lots in this block are vacant and the total loss of a third building would lessen the visitor's understanding of this fact. On the exterior of the northeast wall is evidence of a former structure on the presently vacant adjoining lot. The "shadow" on this wall is both an interesting and valuable interpretive feature. The interior evidence on both the northeast and southwest walls of the fireplaces is now clearly visible, while formerly the view was obstructed by the front wall. There is now also an unobstructed view of the rear walls which show a most interesting use of the natural rock hillside in combination with masonry walls in the construction of the building. The ruined condition of the structure attests to the effects of fire and neglect which are features of the whole Harpers Ferry picture. Although this is not a war-damaged building, it mirrors the military destruction visited upon the town during the Civil War. Finally, it is felt

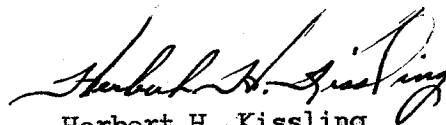
that artists, photographers, and visitors in general find the ruins appealing and would be critical of either its reconstruction or demolition. These factors in addition to the known age of the building amply justify our best efforts to preserve the surviving remains.

Consideration has been given to utilizing the surviving remnants of the structure in rebuilding it. It should be borne in mind that this now must be considered a reconstruction rather than a restoration and that our present goal is the exterior restoration of surviving structures rather than the reconstruction of the lower town of Harpers Ferry. The interpretive values of the ruin in the opinion of this writer far outweigh the interpretive values of the reconstructed building.

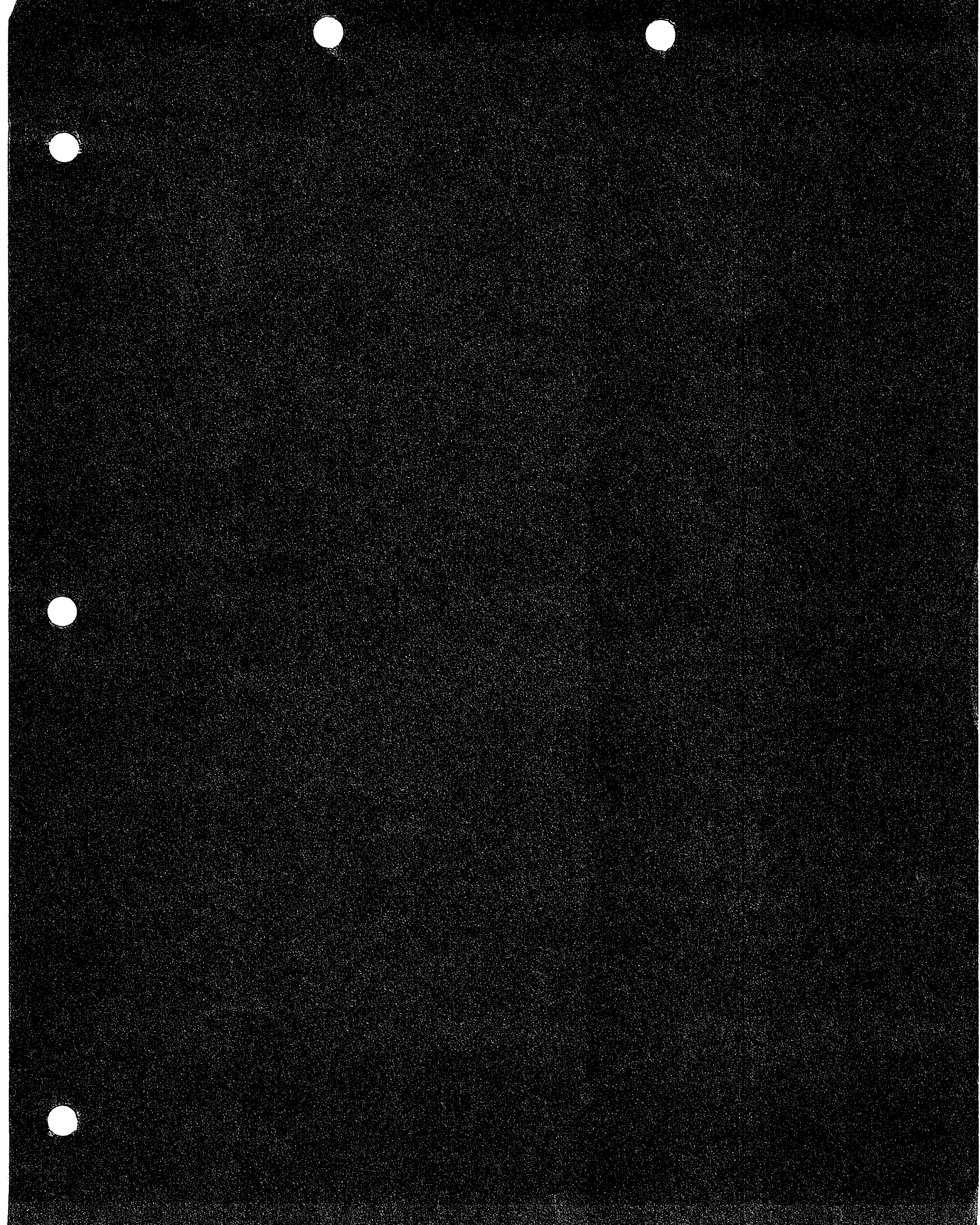
It is my recommendation, therefore, that this structure be stabilized as a ruined building primarily on the basis of its present interpretive values. Care and expert judgment must be employed in this stabilization. I feel very strongly that only the barest minimum of reinforcement should be employed consistent with visitor safety and the preservation of the ruin. Much of the interpretive value of this exhibit building would be lost if any extensive intrusion of steel is introduced and thereby block the visitor's view. Such a situation would require serious reconsideration of the justification of saving this fine ruin. There are, after all, means of interpreting the building even if it is completely demolished. This, however, would be a less desirable alternative to having the ruin. The

minimum quantity of steel that should be used in the stabilization should be camouflaged with wood to be less intrusive. The lower part of the front wall should be rebuilt to a height that would deter entry into the structure, but would not obscure the view of the interior of the ruin. The lower sections of the historic door and window openings should be a part of this reconstruction. It is recognized that some portions of the remaining ruin, due to their present condition, may have to be sacrificed in the stabilization of the structure. Those portions should be removed by hand to insure that no stable segments or sections that can be stabilized are lost.

Only under the most compelling circumstances should the building be reconstructed. These circumstances could be the discovery of new historical data which would give to the structure a significance well above and beyond that of the some two dozen historic buildings in the lower town section of Harpers Ferry National Monument. The historical evidence presently available does not meet that criterion. It has heretofore been determined that the ruin be stabilized. The recent loss of a greater portion of the building cannot in my opinion justify a change in that decision from an interpretive point of view. It is my recommendation that the ruin be stabilized.



Herbert H. Kissling  
Park Historian  
April 14, 1960





**UNITED STATES**  
**DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**  
 NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
 Harpers Ferry National Monument  
 Harpers Ferry, West Virginia

H30

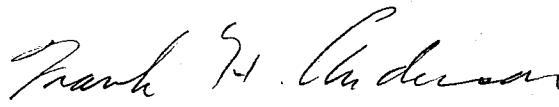
April 15, 1960

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Memorandum

**To:** Regional Director, Region Five  
**From:** Superintendent, Harpers Ferry  
**Subject:** Historic Building Report, Part I, Revised, for Bldg. No. 43,  
 Research Project No. HF-20

Enclosed please find four copies of the Historic Building Report, Part I, Revised, for Building No. 43, the "McCabe-Marmion Building," 6 pages, dated April 15, 1960. This report has been prepared by Historian Herbert H. Kissling and I have prepared the Administrative Data Section.

  
 Frank H. Anderson  
 Superintendent

In duplicate

Attachments (4)