

Ferry Hill Plantation House

Historic Structure Report

NPS Project No. CHOH 74838; GWWO Project No. 0414



Prepared by GWWO, Inc. / Architects

September 2005

Ferry Hill Plantation House

**Historic Structure Report
Document No. CHOH D-223**

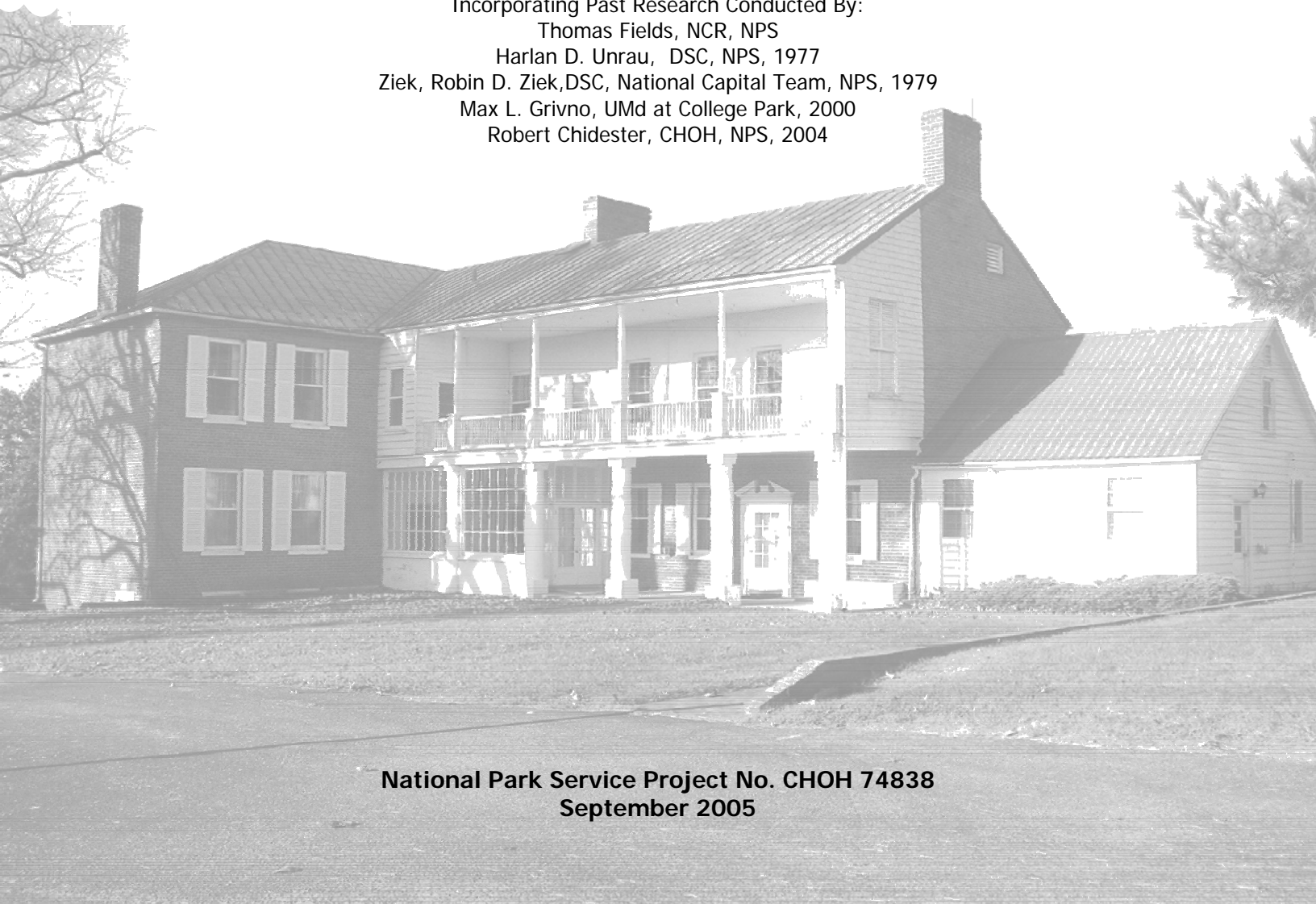
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Cover Illustration: Ferry Hill Plantation House, South Elevation. (GWWO photo, 2004.)
Title Page Illustration: Ferry Hill Plantation House, Southeast Elevation. (GWWO photo, 2004)

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Executive Summary



Fig. 1-001: Ferry Hill Plantation House seen from the southwest, (GWWO Photo, 2005.)

In September 2004, the National Park Service entered into a contract with GWWO, Inc. Architects from Baltimore, MD, to provide a Historic Structure Report (HSR) for the Ferry Hill Plantation House, Sharpsburg, Maryland. Besides the lead firm, the documentation team included Paula Reed & Associates, Inc., Historical Documentation, Hagerstown, MD; Faisant Associates, Structural Engineers, Baltimore, MD; and Henry Adams LLC, Mechanical, Electrical and Plumbing Engineers, Towson, MD. The project was managed by Kari Grabinski, Historical Architect at the National Capital Region (NCR) of the National Park Service. Representatives from the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park worked closely with the team, including Park Historian, James Perry, and Preservation Project Manager, Mike Seibert. Catherine Dewey, Architectural Conservator with the NCR, assisted the team with the paint studies undertaken at the house.

Built by 1820, the Ferry Hill Plantation House is a significant structure—considered architecturally, historically, and culturally. The property is located in the Conococheague District of the C&O Canal National Historical Park at mile-post 73.02. The house represents a fine example of rural Federal-style design. A great many of the property's character-defining features exist today in exceptional condition. The mansion's location at a promontory on the Maryland side of the Potomac River, with vistas out toward Shepherdstown, West Virginia, proved strategic during much of the Civil War, with forces from both the North and the South occupying the grounds and facilities at various time throughout the conflict. The plantation house pre-dated the construction of the C&O canal, an engineering marvel that ultimately traversed part of this property's land adjacent to the Potomac River. For six generations, under three families related by blood or marriage — the Blackfords, Douglasses, and Beckenbaughs — the property was managed as a plantation estate. Much of the social history of the property's early years has been preserved in a series of diaries written by John Blackford, adding to the significance of the complex and increasing our understanding of its operations and economics. Captain Henry Kyd Douglas, a Confederate officer under General Stonewall Jackson's command grew up in the home and wrote memoirs.

The National Park Service purchased the Ferry Hill Plantation House and adjacent property in 1974, and assumed full control in 1979. For over twenty years the property provided administrative space and visitor contact opportunities associated with the operations of the C&O Canal National Historical Park. In 2001, the administrative functions were relocated to facilities in Hagerstown, Maryland, the first step in allowing the property to assume a more public, interpretive function. A Cultural Landscape Report (CLR) for the property was completed in June 2004.

In the spring of 2005, the C&O National Historical Park reviewed six treatment options and four use options for the property, as presented in a draft development of this report. The Park established that the ultimate treatment for the property should include the following: on the exterior a restoration to the Civil War era period, with a demolition of the later east and northeast additions, and later west porch. On the interior a preservation and rehabilitation treatment of remaining spaces will best satisfy anticipated uses. The Park determined that the ultimate and best use of the property will include exterior public interpretation through the use of waysides, and interior limited public visitation by appointment. The interior will be used by the Park as an education center for interpretive activities. Space for meetings for various sized groups will be provided within the current wall configurations. Limited use for Park administrative offices can also be accommodated. Because funding for the ultimate Treatment and Use may not be immediately forthcoming, an interim approach to protect the fabric of the house and to use it for small meetings and for interpretation by appointment has been proposed.

The project team has determined that the preliminary (Class "C") cost estimate to accomplish the targeted Treatment and Use for the property is estimated at \$660,923. The cost includes the demolition of the east and northeast additions, and of the current west porch. A new wood shingle roof to replicate that of the Civil War era period is anticipated. As a separate breakdown, the cost needed to repair existing systems and building components, not included in the costs for Ultimate Treatment and Use, is estimated as \$309,224.

Administrative Data

Name: Ferry Hill Plantation House
Location: 16500 Shepherdstown Pike, Maryland Route 34
Sharpsburg, MD 21782

NPS Project Number: CHOH 74838
HSR Document Number: CHOH – D223
Drawing File No. (2005): 412/80876
Drawing File No. (1978): 412/26019

Owner: National Park Service, purchase from Frederick Morrison, April 1974.
Park: Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park (CHOH);
Mile 73.02; CHOH Conococheague District.

NPS Property #: 3100-3144.
UTM: Zone 18, Easting 259260, Northing 4369130.

National Register: Listed 08-09-79; identification number: 38-06;
National Register Information System Ref. #: 66000036.
LCS Structure #: 073.02
LCS Identification #: 011789

CHOH
General Management Plan: Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park is working to generate an updated GMP to include the future uses of Ferry Hill Plantation House.

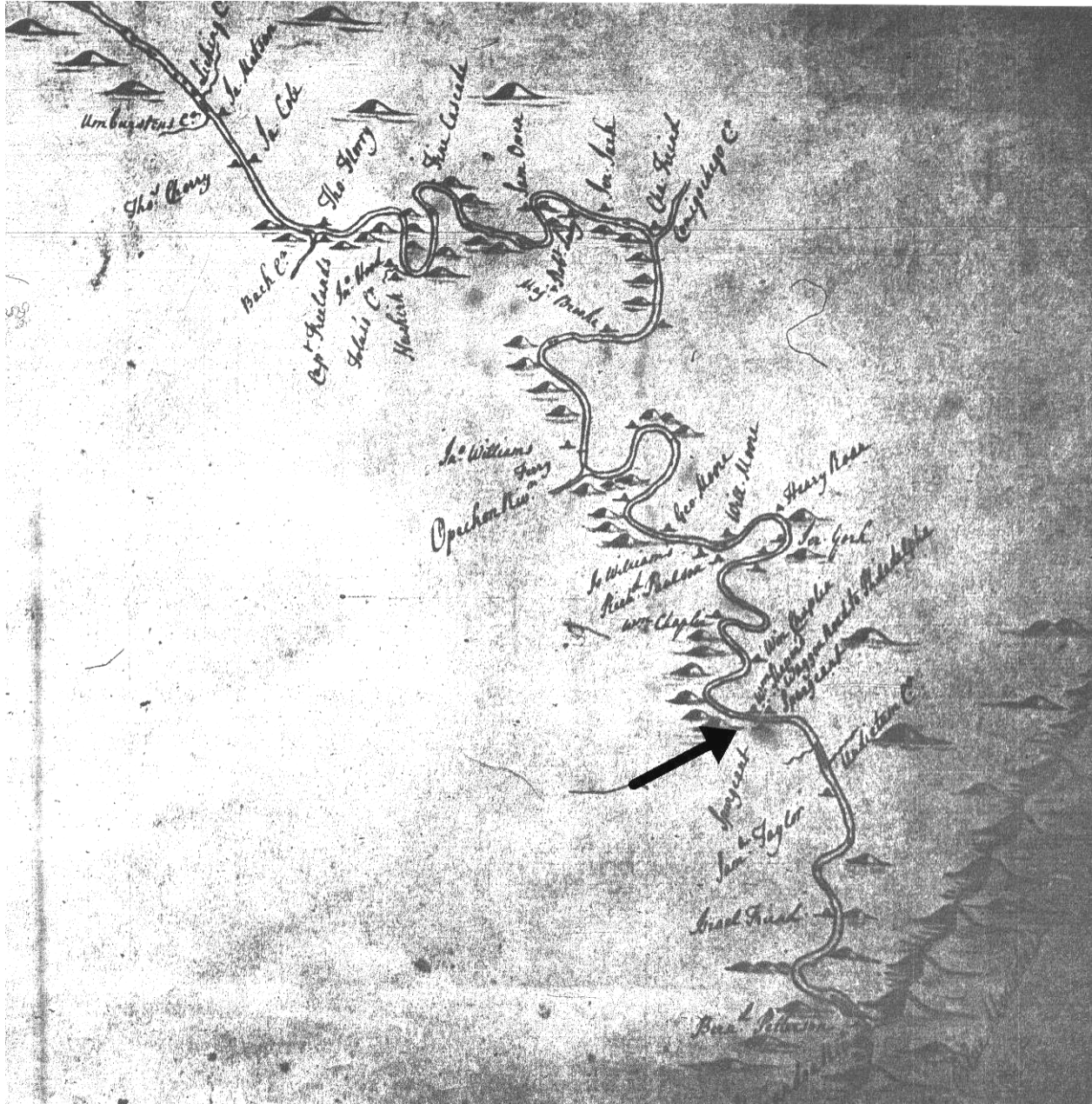
Drawing Documentation: A set of 34 measured drawings documenting the building's existing conditions was completed by DSC in August 1978. NPS drawing number: 412/26019.

Proposed Treatment: Site Treatment Options and Recommendations are included in *Cultural Landscape Report, Ferry Hill, Chesapeake & Ohio Canal National Historical Park*, June 2004, by Quinn Evans Architects for the National Park Service. Options and recommendations for treatment of the Ferry Hill Plantation House are included in this report.

Related Studies: See Bibliography. Four existing studies provided useful input: Unrau, Harlan D. *Ferry Hill Place, Historic Structure Report, Historical Data Section*. DSC, NPS: September 1977; Ziek, Robin D. *Archeological Survey at Ferry Hill*. DSC, National Capital Team, NPS: February 1979; Grivno, Max L. *Historic Resources Study, Ferry Hill Plantation*. UMD at College Park, December 2000; and Chidester, Robert. *Final Report on Historical Research, Ferry Hill Plantation*. CHOH, NPS: February 2004

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The narrative history begins with the Swearingen family whose ferry operation across the Potomac River between the Maryland shore and Mecklenberg (Shepherdstown) Virginia formed the nucleus of John Blackford's later plantation development.



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Settlement of the Back Country of Maryland and Virginia

The Commonwealth of Virginia began its attractive settlement policy in the 1720s. The migration route, known as the “Waggon Road to Philadelphia,” became active with families seeking cheap land to farm. The route led from Pennsylvania to Virginia and passed through Maryland to the Pack Horse Ford on the Potomac River. In response, the Maryland Proprietary, Fifth Lord Baltimore, opened the backcountry of Maryland for official settlement in 1732, although a few brave souls had already begun the process. John VanMetre patented land along the Monocacy River (in today’s Frederick County, Maryland) in 1726 and Henry Ballenger was documented with a mill on Ballenger Creek adjoining Monocacy by 1729.¹

The earliest known map showing the Pack Horse Ford leading from Maryland to Virginia is dated 1736, drawn by Benjamin Winslow (Fig. 2-001). A man by the name of “Spurgeant” (Spurgeon) was shown with land on both ends of the ford. The Winslow map (1736) also showed William Shepherd (father of Thomas Shepherd founder of Shepherdstown) on the Maryland side of the ford; nearby were Chapline and Moore. These were among a group of Prince Georges County families who had turned their sights to western Maryland and to Virginia as well.

Thomas Swearingen (later known as Thomas of the Ferry) was born in 1708, son of Thomas and Lydia [or Leady] (Riley) Swearingen in Prince Georges County, Maryland. His father, Thomas Swearingen (husband of Lydia or Leady) was the oldest son of Thomas Swearingen, who was the son of Garritt van Swearingen.² His younger brother Van (possibly Vandon) was born in 1719. These births were recorded in the register of St. Barnabas Church, located near Upper Marlboro, Maryland. St. Barnabas church members including Thomas Swearingen (born 1708), William Chapline (father of Joseph Chapline founder of Sharpsburg), Jonathon Simmons, Richard Butt, Lucas Ray, and others, formed the core of Maryland families who joined the Pennsylvania German migration to what would later be the Shepherdstown area in the 1730s and 40s. The Shepherd family was also from this part of Prince Georges County, but not from the same church.

¹ Frederick County, Patent Record PL 6, p. 496, “Meadow”; Certificate of Survey, Patented, PG Co. #2296, “Wett Work,” Maryland Archives, Annapolis, MD.

² MCW [Maryland Colonial Wills?], vol. 3, page 203; will written 1708, proved 1711, Maryland Archives. This Thomas may have been the son of Garritt van Swearingen of St. Mary’s City. It appears that the family Anglicized their name by dropping the “van” (and joined the Anglican Church) but maintained a relationship with the original name by naming one son in each generation “Van.” The full use of Van Swearingen as a surname appears to have returned several generations later with Henry Thomas Van Swearingen and Thomas Van Swearingen (sons of Benoni Swearingen who was son of Thomas “of the Ferry” Swearingen born 1708).

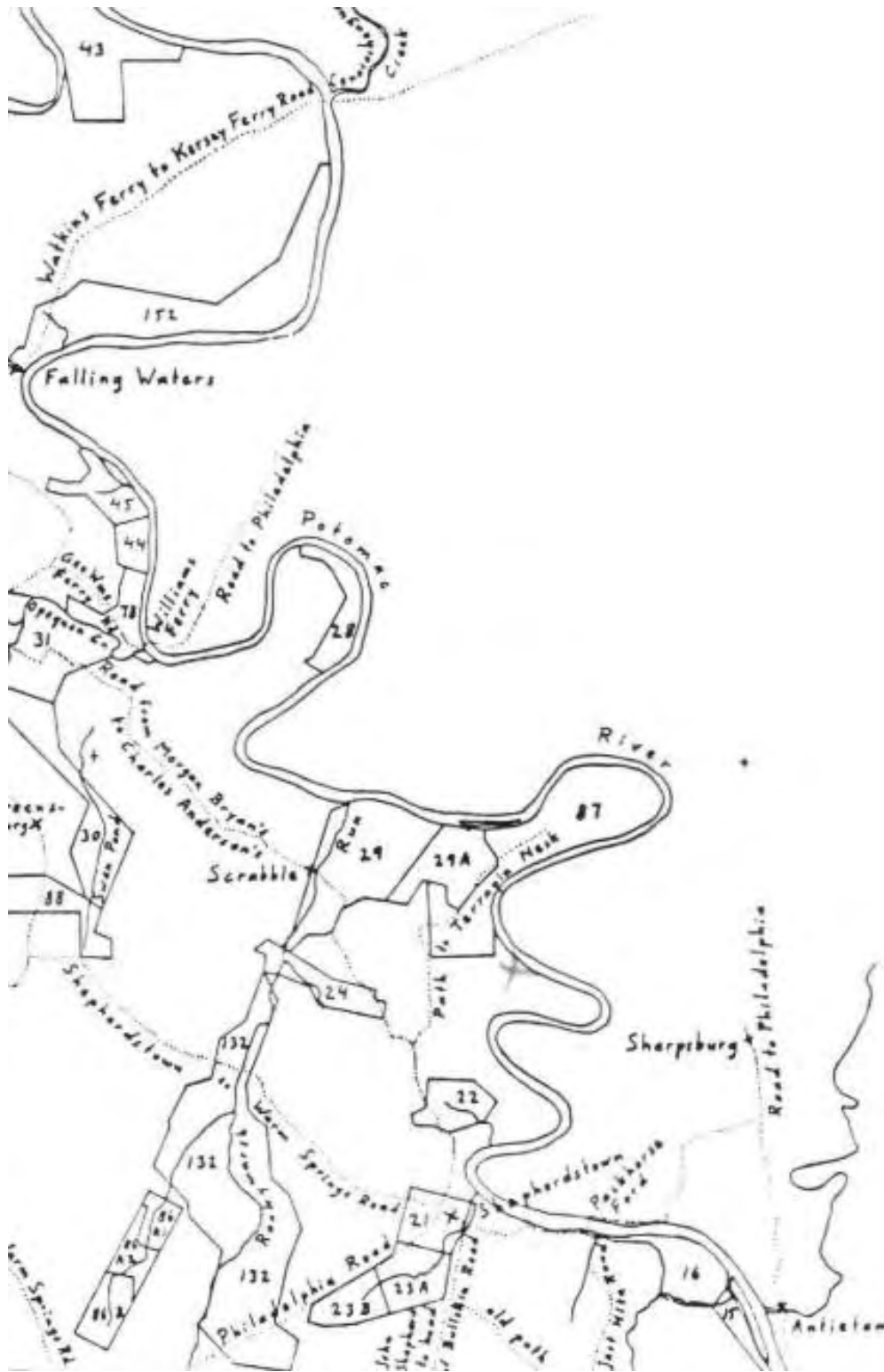
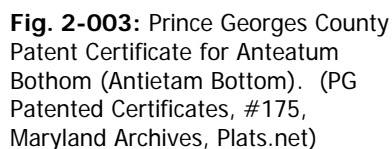


Fig. 2-002: Geertsuma Map. (Cecil O'Dell, *Pioneers of Old Frederick County, VA.*)



In 1734, Thomas Shepherd had 222 acres surveyed in Orange County, Virginia, nearly opposite his father William's land in Maryland, "on a hill of the SW side of Cohongoroota [Potomac] River, and on the East side of a Branch runing [sic] into the said River called Falling Spring Branch...."³ This was the land on which Shepherd later established his mills (1737) and town (ca.1758-1762). Significantly, the tract did not include the riverbank (Fig. 2-002), leaving enough land open to be claimed by Thomas Swearingen for his ferry landing ca.1758.

By 1739, settlement in the west country of Maryland and Virginia had progressed enough to warrant a "petition of the Inhabitants about Monoccacy [sic] and above the mountains on Potomack River on the Back part of Virginia...pray a Road may be Cleared through the Country from the City of Annapolis for the more easy Carrige [sic] of their Grain, Provisions, and other Commoditys..."⁴ Along the Potomac a tract of 300 acres called *Antietam Bottom (Anteatum Bothom)* was surveyed for John Moore (Fig. 2-003). Beginning at a tree "standing near Samuel Taylors [Ferry ?] by the side of Potomack river..." probably near the mouth of Antietam Creek.⁵ It was a long, narrow tract that appears to have followed the floodplain 1,262 perches up river (approx. 5 miles), and ended on the curve of the Potomac where the Ferry Hill Plantation was eventually located.

During this first settlement period, the western territory of Maryland remained within the boundaries of Prince Georges County. In 1748, Frederick County was divided from Prince Georges and included all of western Maryland, and in 1776 Washington County, carved from Frederick County, became the western-most county.

The Swearingen Ferry

Across the Potomac, in Virginia, Thomas Swearingen was settling in, serving as one of the overseers for a road between the Opeckon (Opequon) Creek and "Thomas Shepherd's Mill" in 1744.⁶ In 1748, Swearingen bought the 222-acre Jones' Mill tract (near today's Scrabble, West Virginia).⁷ He also purchased in May 1758 "*Spirigen Lott*, being part of a track [sic] of Land Called *Anteatum Bottom*...Beginning at a bounded Walnut Standing on the Bank of

³ Robert Brooke Survey Book, Thornton Perry Collection, microfilm copy, Ruth Scarborough Library, Shepherd University, Shepherdstown, WV. This part of Virginia's Orange Co. became part of Frederick Co. in 1738, then part of Berkeley Co. in 1772, and then Jefferson Co. in 1801; West Virginia was established in 1863.

⁴ Proceedings & Acts of the General Assembly 1737-1740, *Archives of Maryland*, Vol. 40, page 307, Archives of Maryland Online, www.mdarchives.state.md.us.

⁵ PG Co. Patented Certificates Plat #175, *Plats.net*.

⁶ Frederick Co., VA Order Book 1, page 104, microfilm copy, Handley Library, Winchester, VA.

⁷ Dan Everson, "A History of the National Conservation Training Center Property and surrounding area," (self-published, Nov. 2000), p.19.

Potomack river and at the South west Corner of a track of Land Called *Shepherds Purchase*." The 50-acre parcel, located in Frederick County, Maryland, was purchased from William Spurgeon, Jr., son of William Sr. and Mary (Molly) Spurgeon.⁸

It appears that Thomas Swearingen, with his properties on both sides of the Potomac River, was poised to begin what would become a long and profitable, if contentious, enterprise. In 1755, an Act of the Virginia General Assembly stated: "That public ferries be constantly kept at the following places...to wit, from the land of Thomas Swearingen in the county of Frederick [Virginia], over Potowmack [sic] river, to the land opposite thereto in the province of Maryland, the price of one man, three pence and three farthings and for a horse, the same."⁹ Col. George Washington confirmed the existence of Swearingen's Ferry in a December 1756 letter to Robert Dinwiddie, then Governor of Virginia, referring to members of the Virginia regiment who were "sent ever since the middle of October to Conogochig [sic], Swearinghams [sic] ferry, &c. to encourage that body of Inhabitants to stay at their places, who otherwise were determined to forsake them."¹⁰ Washington's letter further indicates the extent to which the region had been settled and the potential impact on settlement the French and Indian War presented.

A deposition by William Shepherd (son or brother of Thomas) given ca.1780 addressed the question of where Swearingen's Ferry was located during this early period. According to Shepherd, by ca.1758 Swearingen's Ferry emanated from a lot on the riverbank just below Shepherdstown, approximately where the boat landing is now located. William Shepherd's statement reads (spelled as written):

That he [William Shepherd] was present when
Shepherds Town was originally laid off that it was
laid off in sixteen lotts upon Thos Shepherds
original Tract of 222 acres that Thos Swearingen
dec'd was a subscriber for two lots that they were

⁸ FCLR, Liber F, folio 504. *Shepherd's Purchase* was likely the William Shepherd farm (1736 map), later the 114 acres of *Antietam Bottom* owned by Thomas Shepherd (not the Thomas Shepherd of Shepherdstown) on the 1783 tax assessment, who was listed as John Blackford's neighbor on the census of 1800. If this is accurate, then *Spirgen Lott* (or *Spurgeon's Lott*) was what would eventually be resurveyed as Benoni Swearingen's *Ferry Landing* (which makes sense when you read William Shepherd's 1780 deposition, see below). In 1750, Thomas Swearingen also received a grant from Lord Fairfax for 478 acres in then Frederick County, Virginia, now Jefferson Co., West Virginia (Northern Neck Grants, Book G, p.444 as cited by Cecil O'Dell, *Pioneers of Old Frederick County, Virginia*, (Marceline, MO: Walsworth Publishing Co., 1995), p.38).

⁹ Mabel and Ann Henshaw Gardiner, *Chronicles of Old Berkeley*, 1938, p.57.

¹⁰ Letter Book, GW Papers, <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/gwhtml/gwhome.html>. Everson and others believe that Swearingen probably ran his ferry from his Bellvue property north of Shepherdstown (478-acre grant?), although the riverbank in this area is cliffs.

to be drawn for by Lottery which was done accordingly That some time after sd [said] Town was laid off Thos Swearingen purchased of a Molly Spurgion a plantation in Maryland on Patomack river opisite the sd Town, who had kept a ferry there & landed on the Virginia shore at a place or spot of ground of Thos Shepherds within two or three rods of the mouth of sd Shepherds mill branch. Just above the same that after said Swearingen had made sd purchase he moved his boat down to said purchase, and place, and kept a ferry there...that after sd Swearingen with his son Thos came to sd Thos Shepherd...and told him they were going to survey a Lott as he calld it, tho at that time, there was not nor is there now, any part of the sd Town that reaches to the sd lot...and the deonant further saith that the said Swearingen used the sd landing as a ferry as long as he lived, but he never heard sd Swearingen lay any claim to the same from that time he began to use it as a landing to the day of his death [1760] a period of about Eighteen months...¹¹

It was in 1760 that Thomas (of the Ferry) Swearingen died. The division of his property provided the nucleus for the later Ferry Hill Plantation. Thomas devised to his son Benoni the "Maryland Plantation and the Ferry," although all the "profits" of these two properties went to Thomas Swearingen's widow Sarah. His son Van was given "all my right and property in Shepherds Town," but whether this included the ferry landing on the Virginia side (not officially within the town) was not indicated. Son (Maj.) Thomas Swearingen was appointed executor of the will.¹²

Shepherd vs. Swearingen

In 1762, approximately four years after he platted the first sixteen lots, Thomas Shepherd had Mecklenburg (Shepherds Town, later Shepherdstown) incorporated. Shepherd also attempted to preempt Swearingen's Ferry in 1762 by petitioning and receiving from the Virginia Assembly permission to operate a ferry. Apparently the Act was repealed the next year when they found that Swearingen's ferry

¹¹ From original undated document, Shepherd Collection, Historic Shepherdstown archives, Shepherdstown, WV. The ca.1758 beginning date for the ferry at this spot (and the original platting of Shepherdstown as well) is derived from subtracting the 18 months of use, as stated by William Shepherd, prior to Swearingen's death in 1760.

¹² Frederick Co., VA Will Book 2, p. 402; O'Dell, p.38. Other children mentioned included son Andrew, son Zachariah, son Joseph (who married a Shepherd), and daughters Drusilah [sic] Morgan, Sarah, and Eleanor.

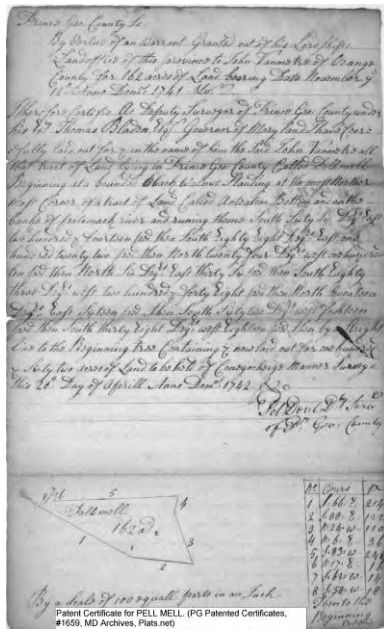


Fig. 2-004: Patent Certificate for PELL MELL. (PG Patented Certificates, 1659, MD Archives, Plat.net)

was already in operation.¹³ David Shepherd, son of Thomas Shepherd and inheritor of the Maryland tract *Pell Mell*, also tried to acquire the ferry franchise in 1765.¹⁴ *Pell Mell* was patented by John VanMetre in 1743.¹⁵ (Fig. 2-004) VanMetre's daughter Elizabeth married Thomas Shepherd and their son David inherited the land (162 acres).¹⁶

A 1768 Fairfax grant to Thomas Shepherd on the Potomac River bank, "just downstream of a ravine through which Princess Street leads from the town to the river," was the basis for a final Shepherd attempt at preempting the Swearingen Ferry.¹⁷ Abraham Shepherd inherited this land from his father Thomas in 1776 and it was based on this that he acquired permission for the ferry in 1778 for the year 1779. In 1780, the General Assembly again withdrew the license: "(They) have got my act repealed by asserting to the assembly they had paid for the lot [and] have had...possession for a number of years..."¹⁸ It was this dispute between Abraham Shepherd and Thomas Swearingen over whether or not the Swearingen half-acre lot was within the 1768 Fairfax to Shepherd grant that precipitated William Shepherd's deposition (see above). Maj. Thomas Swearingen (son of Thomas of the Ferry) mentioned in his will, written in 1780, that he was at the time engaged in "a suit against Abraham Shepherd to recover" the half-acre lot "at the ferry."¹⁹ The Swearingens won this fight for ownership of their Virginia side landing (although they lost other land on Terrapin Neck to Shepherd in an unrelated lawsuit) and in 1784, Abraham Shepherd conveyed the half-acre ferry landing lot to Benoni Swearingen. Since the

¹³ Everson, p.25, citing Henings Statutes vol. 8, p.164.

¹⁴ Everson, p.26, citing Fred. Co., Va. Order Book 10, p.460, and Gardiner, pp.57-58; Gardiner, p.58. In 1764, David Shepherd, son of Thomas and Elizabeth (VanMetre) Shepherd, entered a lawsuit in Maryland to establish the boundaries of his tract *Pell Mell*, inherited from his mother (Everson, p.26, citing Smyth 1909; could not be found in the documentary record). *Pell Mell* adjoined the tract called *Antietam Bottom* on the Maryland bank of the Potomac River. It began at the northern-most point of *Antietam Bottom*, on the Potomac River, and then ran along the 19th line of *Antietam Bottom*, taking it up the hill beyond the floodplain (see attached annotated plat of *Moreland* to see the location of these tracts).

¹⁵ Sheet 380, pg 1659, Arthur Tracey Papers, Carroll Co. Historical Society, microfilm copy at Washington Co. Free Library, Hagerstown, MD. The attached modern map drawn by Galtjo Geertsuma for Cecil O'Dell's *Pioneers of Old Frederick County, Virginia*, shows the location of the ford relative to Sharpsburg and Shepherdstown (both of which came much later).

¹⁶ Eventually John Blackford, who built the Ferry Hill mansion ca.1820, acquired most of the *Pell Mell* tract and it became part of the Ferry Hill Plantation.

¹⁷ As cited by Everson, p.26.

¹⁸ Everson, p.33, citing a Feb. 13, 1780 letter from Abraham to David Shepherd, David Shepherd Papers, vol. 1.

¹⁹ Berkeley Co. Will Book 1, page 414. Swearingen devised the lot to his brother Benoni Swearingen, which he expected to recover in the suit. Of course, Benoni was already technically given the lot by their father Thomas in his 1760 will.

Swearingens technically already owned the ferry landing lot, as the court apparently found, the 1784 deed was perhaps required by the court to get it on record. The sum paid by Swearingen for the conveyance of the lot was £10, a nominal fee. The deed was not recorded until 1790 however the conveyance was official.²⁰

Benoni Swearingen

Major Thomas Swearingen died in 1786. His will, written in 1780, devised to his brother Benoni "all my right to a lott of half acre ground at the ferry landing which I have a suit against Abraham Shepherd to recover."²¹ Benoni Swearingen lived on the Maryland side, at or near the ferry landing, on the land he inherited from his father Thomas in 1760. He was listed on the 1783 assessment for Washington County with 125 acres of *Antietam Bottom*, 65 acres wooded and 60 acres arable, 4 "black cattle," and £60 value of improvements.²² The 1790 U.S. Population Census listed "Benona Swearingen" living in the Sharpsburg District with three females, two males under 16 years of age and one over 16 years. Swearingen applied for an official tobacco inspection warehouse in 1786 at his "Ferry on the River Potowmack..." Also competing for the privilege were Gen. Otho Holland Williams in Williamsport and Joseph Chapline in Sharpsburg. Williams won the honor.²³ Two years later, in 1788, Abraham Shepherd won the right to operate a tobacco inspection warehouse on the Virginia riverbank below Shepherdstown adjoining the Swearingen Ferry landing.²⁴

The ferry was growing in importance with a movement in Maryland to improve roads. In 1790, the Maryland General Assembly passed "An Act to open a road from Swearingen's ferry on Patowmack [sic] river, in Washington county, to the iron-works and mills at the mouth of Anti-eatem, and from thence into the main road leading to Frederick-town, in Frederick county." William Good, Thomas Cramphin, and Benoni Swearingen were appointed commissioners to "lay off and open as aforesaid, at the expense of the subscribers of the said petition, a waggon road, not exceeding thirty-three feet wide..."²⁵ In 1791, the Maryland General Assembly passed an act for

²⁰ Abraham Shepherd to Benoni Swearingen, 1784, Berkeley Co. Land Record, Liber 6, folio 342.

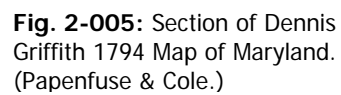
²¹ Berkeley Co., WV Will Book 3, p.282. The will was written in 1780, before the conveyance by Shepherd, which actually went directly to Benoni rather than to Thomas Swearingen (see footnote 20).

²² 1783 Assessment, Washington County, Lower Antietam and Sharpsburg Hundred, MSA S1161-11-1, Maryland Archives, Annapolis, MD. The 1783 assessment was done for the new federal government to levy taxes on each state in order to pay for the late war for independence.

²³ Scharf Collection, Box 115, Folders 51-60, MD Archives.

²⁴ Gardiner, p.59, citing Virginia General Assembly Act of November 29, 1788.

²⁵ Archives of Maryland Online, Vol. 204, p.477; roughly this road follows the modern Canal Road to Harpers Ferry Road (at Antietam Iron Works) to Mills



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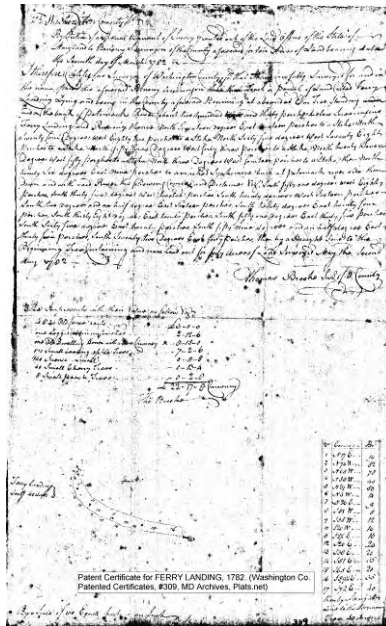


Fig. 2-006: Patent Certificate for FERRY LANDING, 1782.
(Washington Co. Patented Certificates, #309, MD Archives, Plats.net)

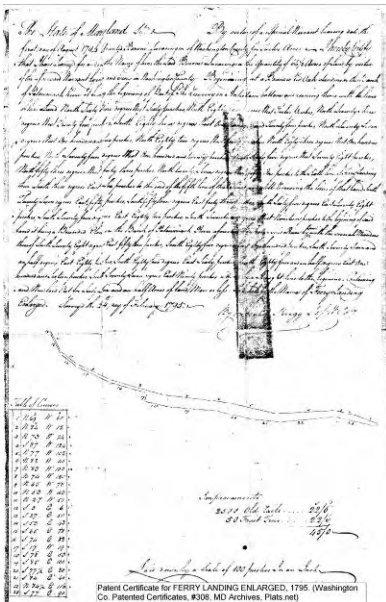


Fig. 2-007: Patent Certificate for FERRY LANDING ENLARGED, 1795.
(Washington Co. Patented Certificates, #308, MD Archives, Plats.net)

the construction of "a road in Washington county, leading from Foxe's Gap, in the South Mountain, to the town of Sharpesburgh [sic], and from thence to Swearingen's ferry, on Patowmack river..."²⁶ This road was illustrated on the 1794 Dennis Griffith map (Fig. 2-005) running from Fox's Gap to Hess' Mill (later Keedysville) to Sharpsburg to "Shepards T[own]" across "Swearingans F[erry]." Interestingly, Griffith did not indicate a tavern at the ferry in 1794. Note that Boonsboro was not established until 1792 and showed as "Margaretsville" on the 1794 Griffith map.

On May 2, 1782, Benoni Swearingen had 40 acres of land in Washington County surveyed called *Ferry Landing*, the survey began approximately 3,800 feet below "Swearingen's Ferry Landing" and probably included the landing itself (hence the name of the tract).²⁷ (Fig. 2-006) For tax purposes the surveyor Thomas Brooke noted the improvements already located on the tract including "old fence rails," an unfinished "Logged Cabbin," an "Old Dwelling House with a Stone Chimney," and a large number of fruit trees. Swearingen added to his Maryland property in 1795 with a survey of 66 ½ acres called *Ferry Landing Enlarged*. The survey widened the original slightly and lengthened the tract along the Potomac River following "the several Meanders thereof," the eastern tip (the beginning and ending point) touching on a tract called *Resurvey on Antietam Bottom*.²⁸ (Fig. 2-007)

In 1797, Sarah Swearingen, daughter of Benoni Swearingen, married John Blackford in Berkeley County, Virginia.²⁹ Beginning as early as 1795 Blackford operated a "dry goods" store in Shepherdstown for which he advertised in the newspaper *Potomac Guardian*.³⁰ On October 10, 1798, John Blackford and William Taylor announced their "Partnership Dissolved. – The Partnership at John Blackford & Co. hath this day been dissolved by mutual consent..."³¹ The 1798 House and Slave Tax of Berkeley County, Virginia listed John

²⁶ *Archives of Maryland* Online, Vol. 204, p.623.

²⁷ Washington Co. Patented Certificate 309, Plats.net on www.mdarchives.state.md.us. According to the certificate envelope, the survey certificate was not received by the land office until Aug. 1, 1794. And in May 1795 it was "Caveated by Sarah Chapline," and by Jeremiah Chapline in March 1797, meaning there was some dispute about the boundaries of the survey. It was not until 1800 that the tract called *Ferry Landing* was actually patented, by then to Benoni Swearingen's heirs, Sarah Swearingen Blackford and Henry Thomas (Van) Swearingen.

²⁸ Washington Co. Patented Certificate 308, Plats.net. The boundary seems to overrun *Pell Mills* boundary along the river bank. This tract was patented in 1796 and recorded in Patent Record IC M, page 8.

²⁹ *Keesecker's Marriage Records of Berkeley County 1784-1854*, microfilm, Berkeley County Historical Society (BCHS), Martinsburg, WV.

³⁰ 18 July 1795, cited in Natalie Hahn manuscript, vertical file, Historic Shepherdstown archives, Shepherdstown, WV.

³¹ *Potomac Guardian*, 17 October 1798, cited in Hahn manuscript.

Blackford living in Shepherdstown; apparently he did not own slaves at that time.³²

The Blackford Genealogy

John Blackford was born July 18, 1771 of Benjamin and Abigail Blackford in Berkeley (later Jefferson) County, Virginia.³³ Benjamin, the son of Joseph Blackford, lived on his father's farm near what is now Bardane, West Virginia (near Charles Town). In 1779, Benjamin Blackford purchased a one-acre lot on the northwest side of Warm Springs Road from Peter Burr on which to locate a Blacksmith Shop. He reportedly served in the 8th Continental Line from 1775-1783 during the American Revolution and in 1784, Benjamin Blackford died without a will. His widow, Abigail Blackford later married David Moore.³⁴

The 1787 Virginia Personal Property Tax recorded no Blackfords living in Berkeley County. David More (Moore), however, was listed with one male, aged 16 to 21, by the name of "Abenazer." Apparently Abigail Blackford was already remarried in 1787. If her son John Blackford (born 1771) had not yet turned sixteen at the time that the tax list was compiled, he would not appear on the list. John Blackford, therefore, was probably not the oldest son of Benjamin and Abigail Blackford. Berkeley County marriage records show the marriage of Ebenezer Blackford to Sarah Sewell in 1791; this is likely the "Abenazer" listed with David Moore in 1787.³⁵ Ebenezer Blackford died in 1795 without a will and the Berkeley County Court ordered David Moore, David Sewell, and James Cowan to appraise his property.³⁶

³² Transcribed and published by the Berkeley Co. Historical Society, 2003.

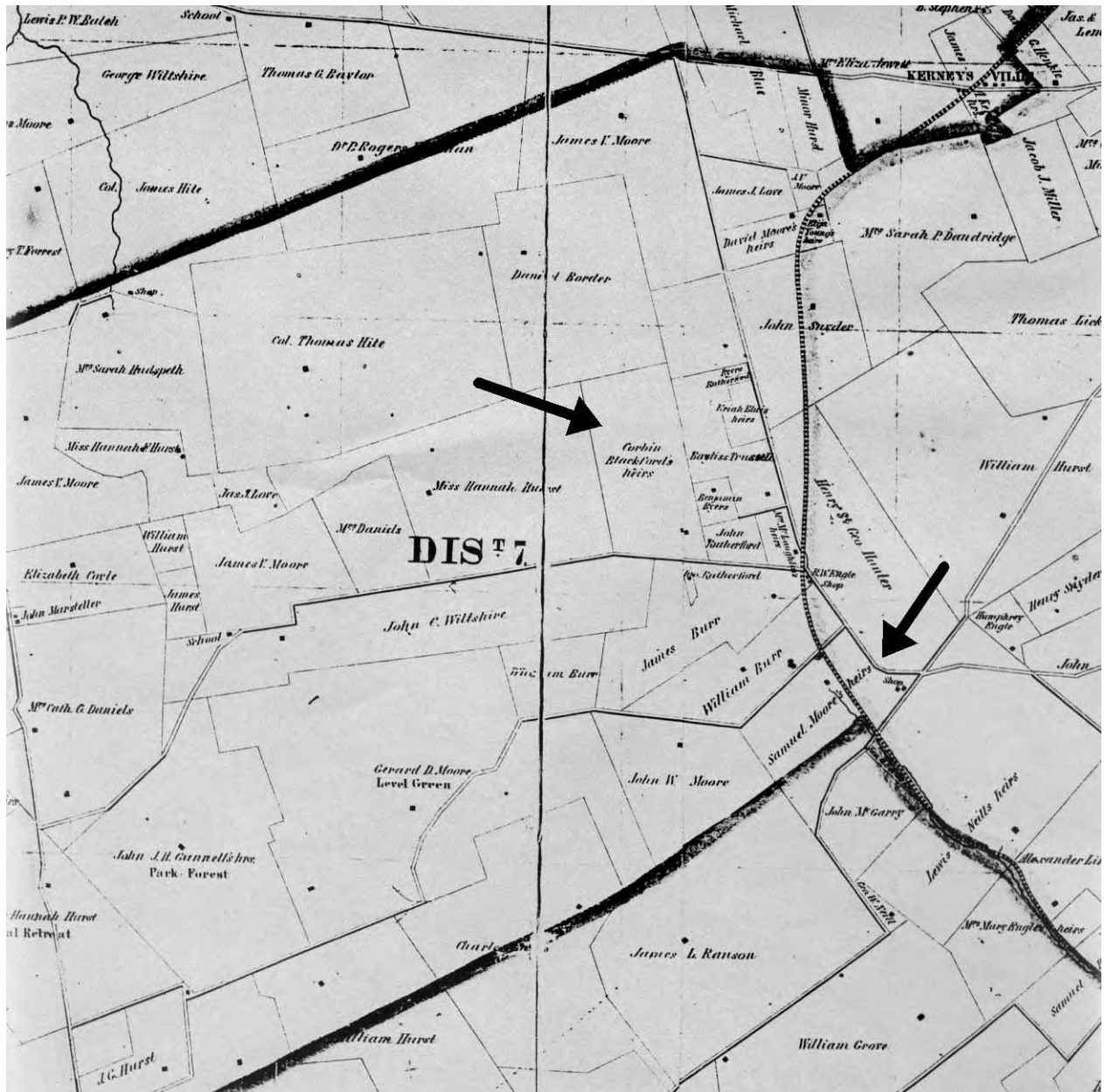
³³ Blackford family Bible, MdHS, MS 2637; Benjamin Blackford estate records, 1784, Book 1, pp.365-366.

³⁴ From Historic Shepherdstown, vertical files, Blackford genealogy: Berkeley Co. Land Records, Liber 5, folio 376; BC Estate Records, Estate Appraisal and Account of Sale, Book 1, p.365 and p.366. In 1773 he received a "license to keep an ordinary at his house for one year" from the Berkeley County Court (November 1773, Minute Book 2).

³⁵ Keesecker, microfilm, BCHS, Martinsburg, WV.

³⁶ Berkeley Co. Will Book 2, page 351. It is quite possible, but unconfirmed and with lingering questions, that Ebenezer and Sarah (Sewell) Blackford were the parents of Corban Blackford, born 1792. Corban Blackford, listed in 1840 between 40-50 years, is thought by some to be a first (or even illegitimate) son of John Blackford, although no one has provided documentation of an early first marriage for John Blackford, who would have been only 21 in 1792. Corban was a frequent visitor to Ferry Hill, loaned his "man" Barney (slave) for work on the ferry, and even left his children, Abigail and Jackson, at Ferry Hill overnight occasionally. Why, then, is he not in John Blackford's will (and Franklin is specifically noted as "my eldest beloved son") but his widow is in David Moore's will? On the other hand, why did Corban, in his 1840 will, appoint "my brother Franklin in Maryland" as one of his executors?

Fig. 2-008: S. Howell Brown, Map of Jefferson County, VA, 1852. (Jefferson Co. Courthouse)



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Ferry Hill Beginnings

In 1798, the same year that John Blackford married Sarah Swearingen, her father Benoni Swearingen died. In his will, Swearingen divided everything between his wife, Hester, and his two children, Sarah (Swearingen) Blackford and her younger brother Henry Thomas (Van) Swearingen. Benoni directed that his wife, Hester, should get "one third part of my personal Estate forever...one third part of the Annual profits of my Estate in Virginia and Maryland including the ferry..." and that she should

... peaceably enjoy during her natural life the House I now live in with the Improvements thereunto belonging [probably in Sharpsburg] together with a Certain portion of Land to be Laid off by my Executors in the manner following to wit. Beginning at the east Corner of the Garden where William Chapline now lives and running with the Course of the upper pailings and fence until it strikes the river then up the river to a high point of rocks Known by the name of the ravens nest thence to the nearest part of the road leading from the ferry to Sharpsburg, then with the road to the Beginning...³⁸

The real estate was divided equally between Sarah Blackford and Henry T. V. Swearingen, but they had to share their halves with the widow Hester (Esther or Hetty) who was specifically devised her one-third dower right "forever," apparently regardless of her future marital status. Hester soon married nearby neighbor John Good who lived on part of *Resurvey on Piles Delight*.³⁹

Having dissolved his merchandising partnership in Shepherdstown the year before, John Blackford took over operation of the Swearingen Ferry and possibly began the tavern business in 1799.⁴⁰ The following year, Sarah (Swearingen) Blackford and Henry Thomas (Van) Swearingen were granted the patent for their father's survey of 40 acres called *Ferry Landing* (see above). The 66 ½ -acre *Ferry Landing Enlarged* was already officially patented and was devised to Sarah and Henry as part of the "undevise" land (that which was not specifically devised to Hester) in the will.⁴¹ Thus, by 1800, through

³⁸ Washington Co. Will Book A, page 396. This tract of land sounds remarkably like the 22 ½ acres that John Blackford bought in 1816 [for our purposes, the "Raven's Nest" parcel], including the apparent reservation of possibly the ferry lot (where William Chapline lives?).

³⁹ 1800 census; *Hagerstown Gazette*, March 5, 1811, microfilm collection, Washington Co. Free Library, Hagerstown, MD.)

⁴⁰ *Berkeley and Jefferson Intelligencer*, May 9, 1806 announcement by Blackford that he was leaving the business he had been running "for the last six years..."

⁴¹ Washington Co. Patented Certificate 309, Plats.net.

his marriage to Sarah Swearingen, John Blackford had one-half interest in the Swearingen Ferry, the ferry house, and approximately 104 ½ acres of the "Maryland Plantation."

The 1800 U.S. Population Census listed John Blackford, who was 29 years old, in the Sharpsburg District with one older man over the age of 45 (unknown), one 16-25 (Henry T.V. Swearingen?), and one boy under 9 years old (son, Benoni Swearingen Blackford, b.1798). The two females were his wife Sarah (16-25, d.1805 age 24) and a girl under 9 years old (daughter, Eliza P., b.1800). Blackford also listed seven slaves in his household in 1800.⁴² Listed immediately before John Blackford on the 1800 census, and therefore probably a neighbor, was John Good (~40 yrs.) with one female (~40, Hester Swearingen?), one male under 9 years and two females under 9 years. John Good listed nine slaves. Listed immediately after John Blackford was Thomas Shepherd (over age 45) with nine family members and three slaves.

In an 1801 Memorandum of Agreement, John and Esther (Hester Swearingen) Good declared their intention to sell their right to the acreage devised to Esther (Hester) by her deceased husband to John Blackford. The document stated that, for the sum of \$200 to be paid by Blackford on April 15, 1802, John and Esther "have agreed and hereby do agree to relinquish their exclusive right...reserving for themselves no more than their Legal one third [dower] therein as of the other parts of the estate." It continued with an interesting description of the ferry farm as it appeared in 1801:

It is further expressly agreed by the parties that the piece of new ground adjoining the field now in wheat and whereon the said John Blackford has cut the timber and made rails shall be by the executors put in cultivation as far as may be, that it may with the rest of the farm be rented or worked to mutual advantage and that no more orchard or fruit trees shall be planted or any part of said lot that is within the present fencing of the new ground mentioned above but the hill side between Mr. Blackford's garden and Mr. Good's present enclosure, may be put in grass or orchard at the discretion of the executors..."⁴³

Thus, while retaining her one-third dower right to the profits from the farm and ferry, Hester (Swearingen) Good sold her life estate

⁴² Genealogy info from the Blackford Bible (MdHS, MS 2637), Green and Hahn, Epilogue, and from Max Grivno, "Historic Resources Study, Ferry Hill Plantation," 2000 p.18; U.S. Population Census from HeritageQuest Online, scans of original records.

⁴³ Washington Co. Land Record (WCLR) Liber N, folio 383.

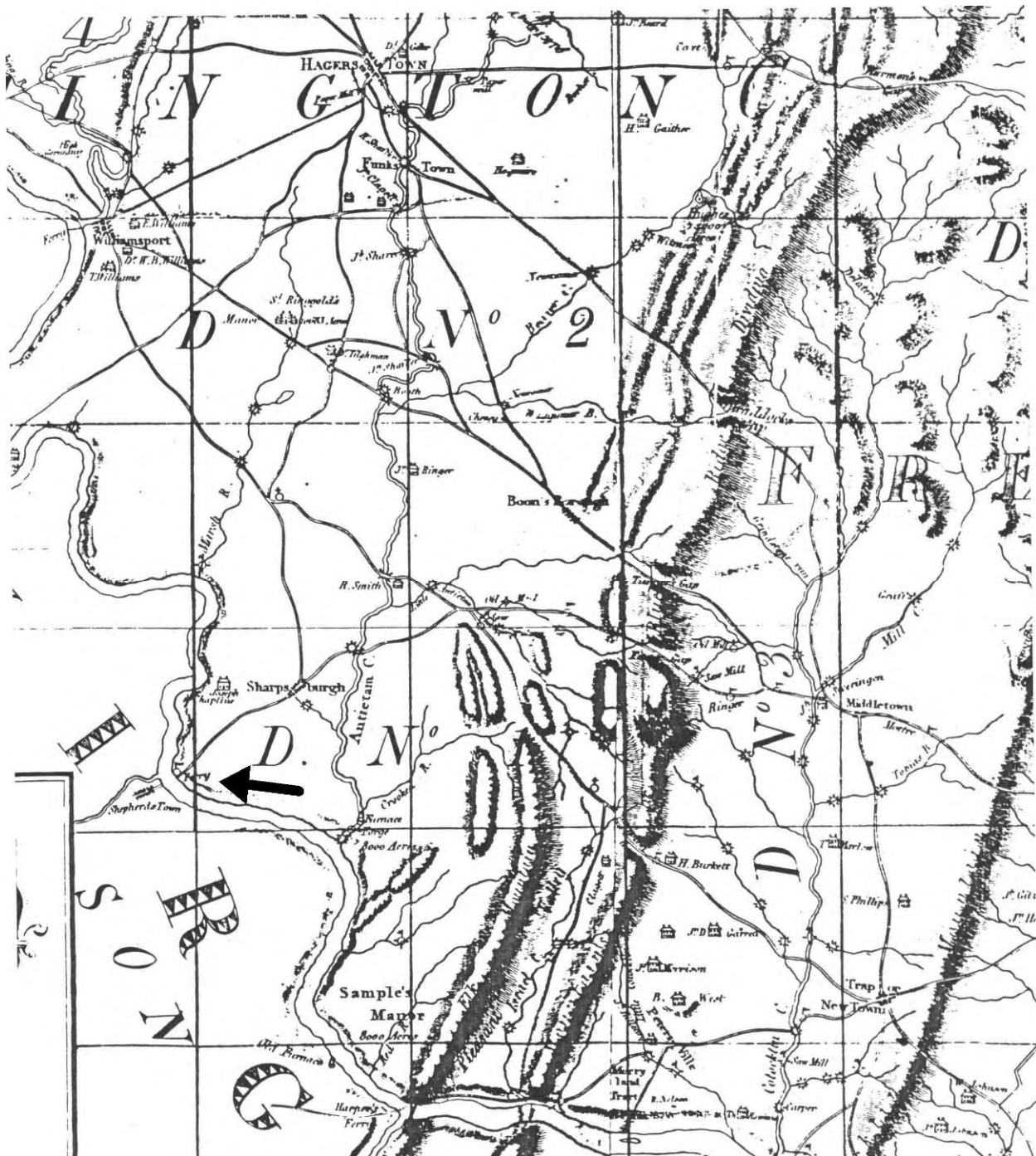


Fig. 2-009: Section of Charles Varle's, Map of Frederick & Washington Counties, 1808. Collection of Eddie Wallace.

right to the "Raven's Nest" parcel. It was on this parcel that Blackford would eventually build his mansion house called Ferry Hill.

Blackford's dreams for the future were dashed in 1805 by the death of his young wife Sarah (Swearingen) Blackford. She died leaving John Blackford with two children under the age of nine. Sarah's estate fell to her children, only one of which, Benoni Swearingen Blackford survived into his teenage years. Eliza Pinkney Blackford died in 1806 at the age of six.⁴⁴ In 1806, Blackford gave notice in the Berkeley and Jefferson Intelligencer that he had "withdrawn himself from the Ferry and Tavern opposite Shepherd's-Town..." and that Presly [sic] Marmaduke would be taking over. Blackford apparently did not give up all rights to the ferry property, tenuously held through his son Benoni S. Blackford, a minor. The arrangement with Presley Marmaduke to run the ferry and tavern was a partnership that was dissolved in 1810 according to an announcement in the Hagerstown Gazette.⁴⁵

Road Improvements

Despite his loss, Blackford continued the effort to improve the road from the ferry to Sharpsburg, recording three bonds in 1805, 1807, and 1808 with the State of Maryland, to serve as a commissioner overseeing the construction of the road.⁴⁶ The 1808 Charles Varlé map of Frederick and Washington Counties showed the Ferry as well as a symbol for the tavern (Fig. 2-009), clearly an important and active crossing of the Potomac River. In 1809, the Maryland General Assembly passed an act "to survey and lay off a road, not exceeding thirty feet wide, from Boonsborough to intersect the Sharpsburgh road at the most direct and convenient point near to the town of Sharpsburgh, and thence in a direct course from the town of Sharpsburgh to captain Blackford's ferry, on the Patowmack river..."⁴⁷ The section between Boonsboro and Sharpsburg was completely new (see Varlé map) and would directly connect the ferry with the National Road and Pike system under construction.

The "turnpike fever" which began in 1796 with proposals for the National Road from Baltimore to Wheeling, hit its pitch between 1810 and 1830, a period when numerous toll roads were chartered and constructed in Washington County. The National Road/Pike, which passed through Boonsboro to Hagerstown and beyond, was completed in 1825. A turnpike leading from Boonsboro through

⁴⁴ Blackford Family Bible, Blackford-Grove-Mayer Collection, MdHS, MS 2637.

⁴⁵ Berkeley and Jefferson Intelligencer, May 9, 1806, microfilm collection, Martinsburg Public Library, Martinsburg, WV; Hagerstown Gazette, as cited in Grivno, p.20, footnote 22.

⁴⁶ WCLR, Liber R, folio 272; Liber S, folio 884; Liber T, folio 154, as cited in Robert Chidester, "Final Report on Historical Research, Ferry Hill Plantation," 2004, p.5.

⁴⁷ Archives of Maryland Online, Vol. 570, page 13.

Sharpsburg to the Potomac River ferry was chartered in 1815 and completed by 1833.⁴⁸

Whether Blackford ever actually vacated the ferry house after the death of his wife Sarah (Swearingen) is not known, however, by 1810 he was again listed on the U.S. Population Census in the Sharpsburg District. Also listed in the Blackford household was one boy between the ages of 10-15 (Benoni S., b.1798) and one young man between the ages of 16-25 (unknown, Henry T.V. Swearingen?). There were no women in the household, however there were eight free blacks and five slaves. Listed immediately before Blackford was his old neighbor Thomas Shepherd who lived on the farm east of the ferry along the Potomac River (later called the Lower Farm).

Development of the Ferry Hill Plantation

In 1812, John Blackford married Elizabeth Knode.⁴⁹ Up to this point Blackford had been occupying the Swearingen's ferry property and operating the ferry based on his marriage to Sarah Swearingen, who died in 1805. With his marriage to Elizabeth Knode, it appears that the Swearingen family – Henry Thomas Swearingen in particular – no longer would allow him to do this without some pretty hefty purchases.

Blackford began acquiring the lands that would eventually make up the Ferry Hill Plantation in 1813. Beginning in February of that year, Henry Thomas Van Swearingen (Blackford's deceased wife Sarah's brother) sold his half interest in the ferry land that he got through his father's (Benoni Swearingen) will to John Blackford. The conveyance was for land only, not the ferry operation or the tavern. The other half interest belonged to Benoni S. Blackford, son of John and Sarah (Swearingen) Blackford, who was still a minor. The lands involved in this sale were:

- *Springers Lott* – purchased by Thomas (of the Ferry) Swearingen from William Springer in 1758 – 50 acres [this must be *Spurgions Lott* from William Spurgeon, and here the date jives with William Shepherd's memory]
- *Easy Got*, part of *Resurvey on Antietam Bottom* – purchased by Benoni Swearingen from Levi Mills in 1773 – 75 acres
- *Pell Mell* – “an undivided fourth part” (not quite sure how he claims his ¼ interest in the ownership of this tract) – 162 acres
- *Ferry Landing Enlarged* – 66 ½ acres
- *Ferry Landing* – 40 acres

Specifically reserved from this sale was Henry T.V. Swearingen's interest in the parts of *Ferry Landing Enlarged* and *Ferry Landing*,

⁴⁸ Williams, *History of Washington County*, pp. 151-155.

⁴⁹ Blackford Family Bible, Blackford-Grove-Mayer Collection, MdHS, MS 2637.

...contained and included by a set of lines and courses running with the great road leading from the ferry landing to Sharpsburgh to a point on the river Cliffs called and known by the name of the "Ravens Nest" the same lines and courses being intended to include all the buildings and improvements on the left hand side of the main road leading from the Ferry to Sharpsburgh but especially the house called the Granary standing on the right hand edge of the said road.⁵⁰

Within the reserved parcel Henry retained ownership of the Ferry House and a Granary located at the landing. Swearingen also reserved his interest in the parcel laid out by his father Benoni and devised to his mother Hester "during her natural life," although Blackford purchased her "life estate" to the land in 1802 (MOA, 1801). The total acreage described in this deed was 268 acres, minus the road and buildings, at a cost of \$35/acre or approximately \$9,000, however it is not clear exactly how much acreage Blackford actually acquired with this deed.

There must have been a disagreement over the February 1813 conveyance between Henry T. Swearingen and John Blackford, probably concerning what exactly would constitute the one half interest that was being conveyed. In July 1813, Henry Thomas Swearingen entered a suit in Chancery Court in Maryland (not county court), in which he requested a division of the lands devised by his father Benoni to himself and his sister Sarah Blackford. As Sarah's heir, Benoni S. Blackford was the defendant in the suit, represented by his guardian and father John Blackford. The court agreed to survey the land and divide it into two parcels. Neighbors George Smith and Jacob Mumma, who served on the commission appointed to survey the property, wrote in their completed survey record on August 18, 1815:

...by and with the consent and approbation of the said Henry Thomas Swearagen [sic] and John Blackford natural Guardian for his son Benoni S. Blackford we have surveyed and laid off four acres and twenty perches of land attached to the Ferry and Tavern Stand which appears on the annexed plat marked F which is to be held in partnership as it would not admit of being divided – The balance of said land we have divided in quantity and quality as appears by the annexed plat – and after we had divided the aforesaid land in quantity and quality and struck the division lines through the land and

⁵⁰ WCLR, Liber Y, folio 598.

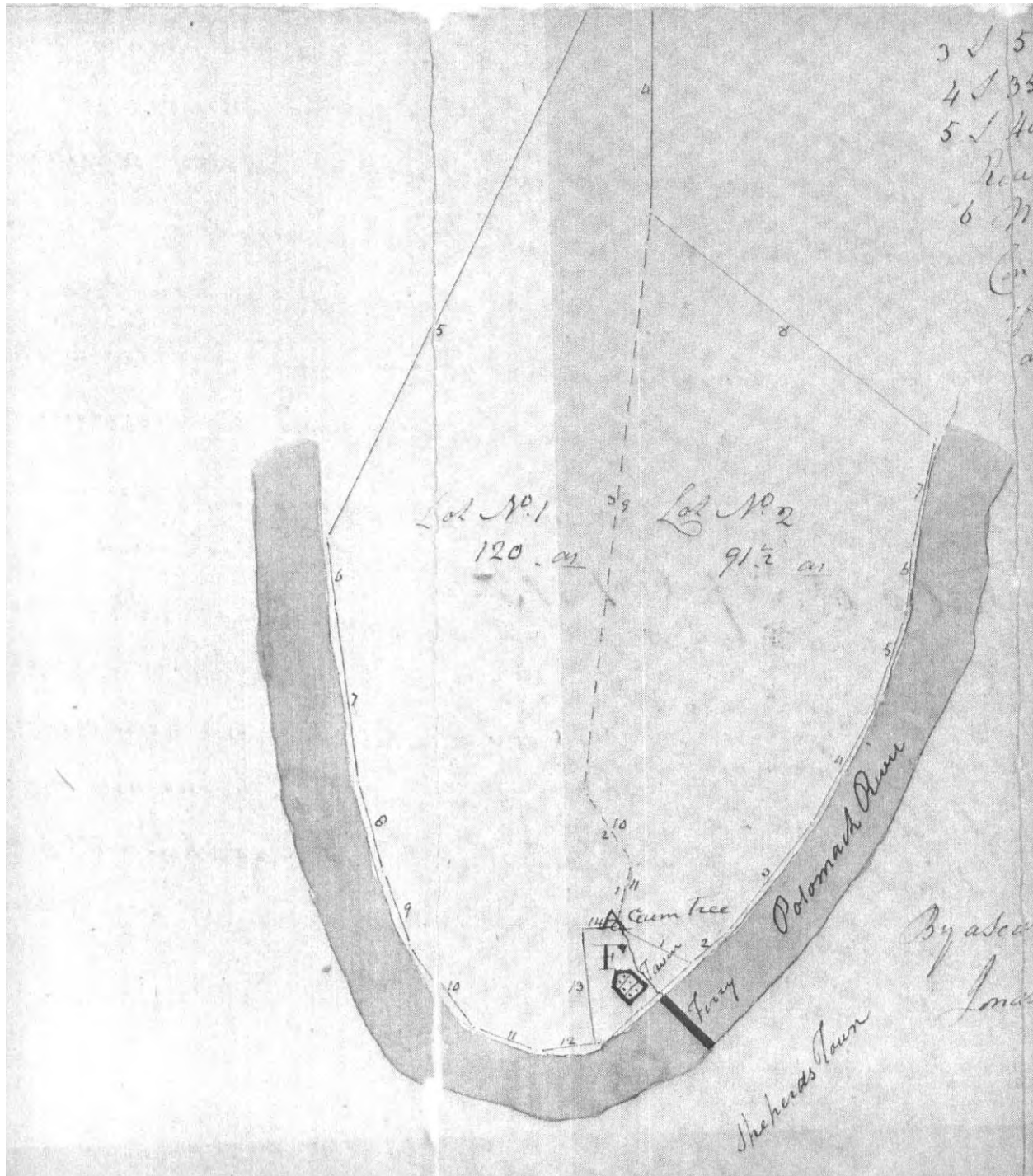


Fig. 2-010: Plat drawn in 1815 for Chancery Court suit, Henry Thomas Swearingen vs. Benoni S. Blackford. (MSA S512-6-5084, Maryland Archives.)

had Each part assurtained [sic] we find that there is in Lot No. 1 one hundred and twenty acres and in Lot No 2 ninety one and one half acres – exclusive of the aforesaid four acres and twenty one perches laid off to the Ferry & Tavern – and after the whole was completed the parties whare [sic] at a loss to know which part Each one was to have – and requested we should allot to Each one his respective part, and according to their request we have allotted to Henry Thomas Swearigen [sic] Lot No. 1 Containing one hundred and twenty acres – and to Benoni S. Blackford Lot No 2 Containing ninety one and one half acres...⁵¹

The survey plat (Fig. 2-010) shows the extent of the property, 215 acres according to the survey totals. Swearigen claimed in the February 1813 Chancery suit that the property included *Ferry Landing*, *Ferry Landing Enlarged*, part of *Antietam Bottom*, and part of *Pell Mell*. What he based his claim on for part of *Pell Mell* is unknown, although Swearigen may have already entered into an agreement with Abraham Shepherd for a coming conveyance.

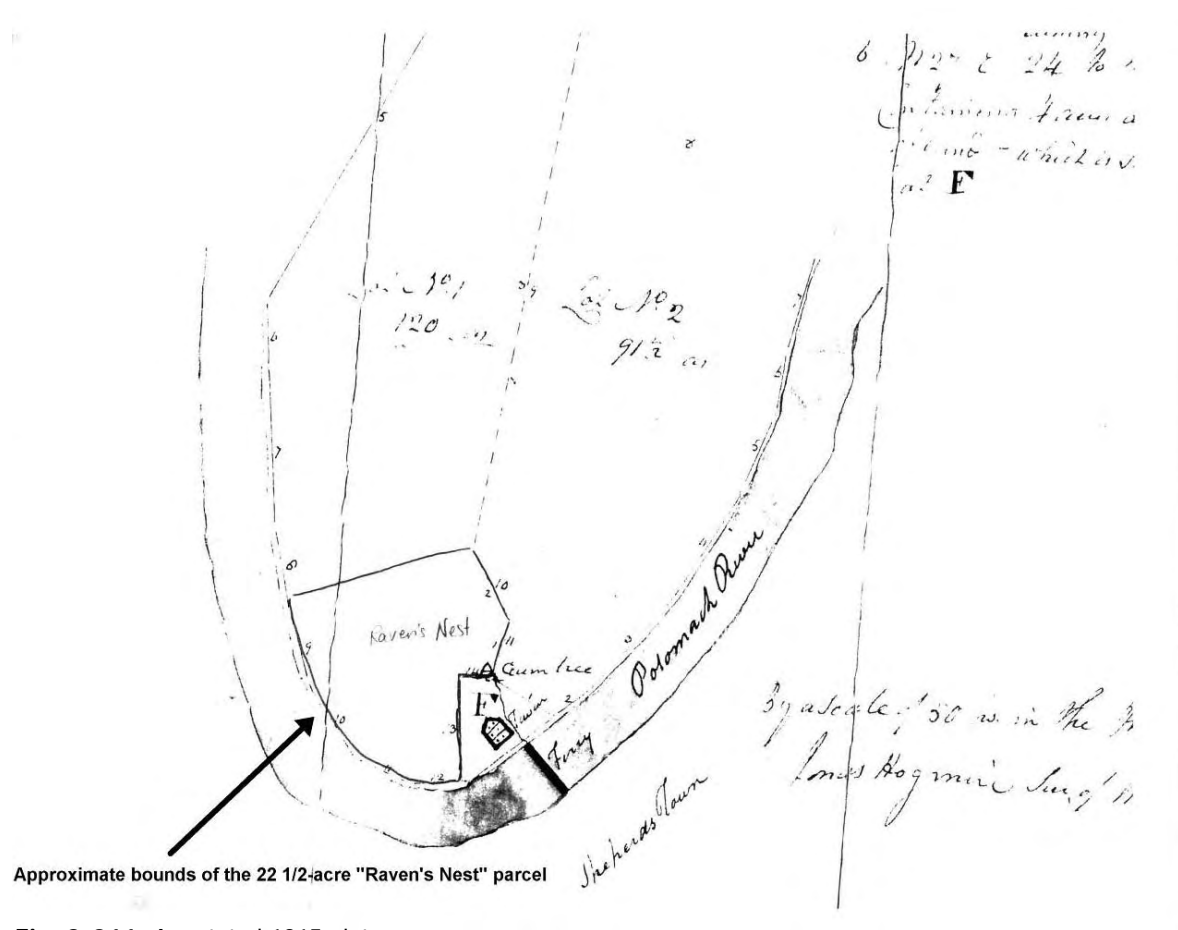
On November 27, 1813 Abraham Shepherd sold 70 $\frac{3}{4}$ acres of *Pell Mell* to John Blackford, while another 70 $\frac{3}{4}$ acres was sold by Shepherd to Henry T. V. Swearigen and Benoni S. Blackford. Neighbor Adam Myers purchased the remaining 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ acres. John Blackford paid the hefty price of \$2,122.50, the same price paid by Swearigen and young Benoni Blackford.⁵² Both of the 70-acre parcels had Potomac River frontage; Swearigen's was down-river of John Blackford's half.

In August of 1815, apparently immediately following the settlement of his Chancery suit, Henry [Thomas] Van Swearigen sold to Thomas Van Swearigen (probably a cousin) his half interest in the Ferry operation for \$10,000. The conveyance included the half-acre landing lot on the Virginia side as well as "about four or five acres of land...attach'd to said Ferry on the Maryland side...which four or five acres includes the Ferry House now occupied by John Blackford and all buildings & improvements..."⁵³ Then, three days later, on September 2, 1815, Henry T. V. Swearigen sold to John Blackford his half interest in "parts of...*Antietam Bottom*, the *Resurvey on Antietam Bottom*, *Ferry Landing*, *Ferry Landing Enlarged*, & *Pell Mell*" for a total of 189 acres. It is not clear how they arrived at the 189-

⁵¹ Chancery Court Papers, 1813-1814, MSA S512-6-5048, #4897 Henry Thomas Swearigen vs. Benoni S. Blackford, Maryland Archives, Annapolis, MD.

⁵² WCLR, Liber Z, folios 282-288.

⁵³ WCLR, Liber BB, folio 35. It was in this deed that Henry Thomas Swearigen first added the Van to his name. The deed says: "Henry Van Swearigen sometimes called Henry T. Swearigen."



Approximate bounds of the 22 1/2-acre "Raven's Nest" parcel

Fig. 2-011: Annotated 1815 plat showing approximate bounds of the 22.5 acre "Raven's Nest" parcel. (MSA S512-6-5084, Maryland Archives.)

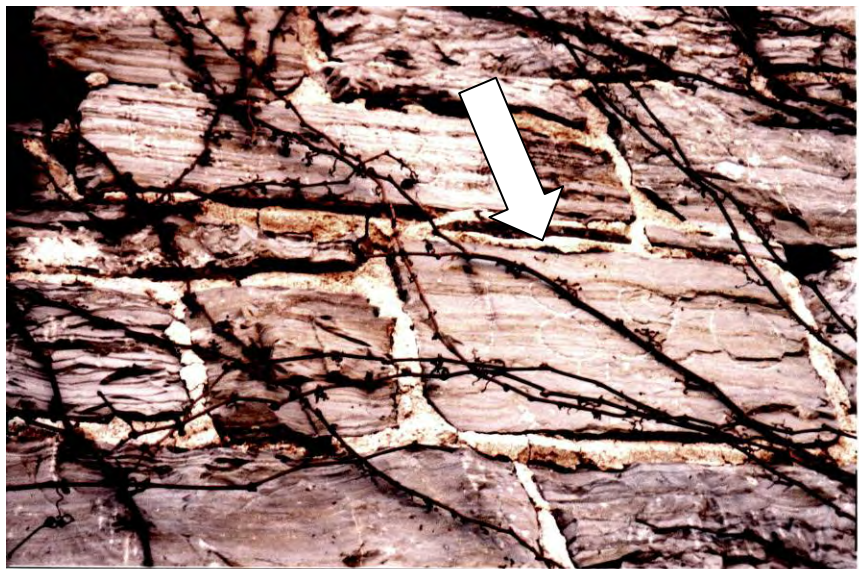


Fig. 2-012: Barn date stone. The arrow points to the "8" in 1820. PRA photo, 2005.

acre total, considering Swearingen had just a few days earlier received his Chancery settlement showing his half totaling 120 acres (Lot No. 1). This deed apparently included Swearingen's 70 $\frac{3}{4}$ acres of *Pell Mell* plus approximately 118 acres of land, but still excluding the ferry landing and the "Ravens Nest" parcel (22 $\frac{1}{2}$ acres). The beginning point of the deed was described as "a small distance above the improvements of the Ferry being the improvements now occupied by John Blackford and on the north side of the great road leading from the Ferry to Sharpsburgh..."⁵⁴ Finally, in October John and Hester (Swearingen) Good, living in Ohio County, Virginia, sold her one-third dower right in the ferry operation, its buildings and land for \$3,000 to John Blackford.⁵⁵ This meant that Blackford had a controlling interest in the ferry (one-half interest through his son Benoni S. Blackford, still a minor, plus the one-third dower interest from Hester Good). Thomas Van Swearingen, of Shepherdstown, owned the other one-half interest.

In May of 1816, Blackford made a final important purchase from Henry T. V. Swearingen for \$900. It was the remaining interest in the 22 $\frac{1}{2}$ -acre lot devised to the widow Hester by her husband Benoni Swearingen. The parcel was made up of bits of *Antietam Bottom*, *Ferry Landing*, and *Ferry Landing Enlarged*, "beginning for the outlines to include the three parcels into one entire tract at a stone [set] up and planted near a Gum tree standing on the north side of the Waggon road leading from Swearagens [sic] Ferry to Sharpsburgh a small distance above the Ferry House and [running] and bounding from thence with the Deed heretofore conveyed by Henry Thomas Van Swearingen to John Blackford," south and east with the road, then north and east with the road then northwest to the river and down the river to "The Ferry Lot" and around that lot to the beginning (Fig. 2-011).⁵⁶ This was part of the acreage originally reserved from the first conveyance in 1813 by Henry Swearingen (but not all of it because "The Ferry Lot" remained separate), and was likely primarily the parcel referred to as "Raven's Nest" in the earlier (1813) deed.

With what appeared to be his final purchase of Swearingen land, Blackford turned his thoughts to construction of buildings to house his growing, new family and to operate his developing plantation. But Henry Thomas Van Swearingen found one more obstacle for his former brother-in-law. In September 1816, Benoni S. Blackford, the only surviving child of John and Sarah (Swearingen) Blackford, died at the age of 18, still a minor. His maternal uncle, Henry T. V. Swearingen claimed young Benoni's inheritance of Sarah Blackford's one-half interest in the ferry "by descent...subject to the life estate of his said Father John Blackford." Based on this claim, Henry T. V.

⁵⁴ WCLR, Liber AA, folio 519.

⁵⁵ WCLR, Liber BB, folio 255.

⁵⁶ WCLR, Liber BB, folio 252.

Swearingen sold Benoni Blackford's one-half interest in the ferry to John Blackford for \$5,000.⁵⁷ Thomas Van Swearingen still held the other one-half interest in the ferry operation (see above).

In 1818, Blackford's long-time neighbor Thomas Shepherd (Sheppard) died, apparently in debt. His will instructed the executors (John Blackford and Adam Myers) to sell his home plantation (the Lower Farm on *Antietam Bottom*) and *Grounds Dwelling* to cover any unpaid debts.⁵⁸ Five years earlier, in 1814, Blackford recorded a mortgage for Shepherd for his several properties purchased from the estate of Philip Ground for *Grounds Dwelling*.⁵⁹ Shepherd used the Ground property and his home plantation on part of *Antietam Bottom* and part of *Antietam Hills* as security. Blackford released his claim on both properties after Shepherd's death so they could be sold. The *Grounds Dwelling* parcel sales (see footnote 55) were apparently enough to pay the debt. The Shepherd 114-acre home plantation, or Lower Farm, remained in the Shepherd family for another ten years, occupied by Joseph Shepherd. The Shepherd home plantation is what Blackford later called the Lower Farm in his journal, where first Henry Piper and later Joseph Knode lived as Blackford's tenant, and was later devised to his son William M. Blackford.⁶⁰

By 1819, John Blackford had purchased the bulk of the acreage that made up the Ferry Hill Plantation. At this time, Blackford apparently embarked on a building campaign completed by 1821, during which the two main buildings on the farm were erected, the brick mansion house and stone barn. In 1818, Blackford wrote a letter to his friend (and relative through the Swearingen marriage) Thomas Worthington in Ohio asking for his barn plans. Worthington noted on the back of the letter that the plans were sent in 1819, and in 1820, the stone barn was constructed, the date inscribed on one of the foundation stones (Fig. 2-012).⁶¹ In a "Memorandum," which appears to be dated 1821, Blackford noted the "22 a. [acre] lot reserved on which I Built my House..." and the "Expense Building

⁵⁷ WCLR, Liber BB, folio 949.

⁵⁸ WCLR, Liber DD, folio 249. Thomas Shepherd was listed on the 1783 assessment for Washington County, living on 114 acres of *Antietam Bottom*, with 1 horse and 8 cattle (Maryland Archives).

⁵⁹ WCLR, Liber AA, folio 61. These were part of a large tract called *Piles Delight* and *Addition to Piles Delight* located northeast of Ferry Hill. The 122-acre farm called *Grounds Dwelling* was sold to John Youtsey (Yountsey) who appeared on the next year's 1820 census as a nearby neighbor of John Blackford. (WCLR, Liber DD, folio 693); another 35 acres of *Grounds Dwelling* was sold to John Beard. (WCLR, Liber EE, folio 142).

⁶⁰ Henry Piper later (1848) purchased a farm on Antietam Creek that was part of the Antietam Battlefield in September 1862. There were several other tenants on the Lower Farm described in the Franklin Blackford diaries including Huse (Hughes) and Needy.

⁶¹ Chidester, Appendix A, from Blackford Family Genealogical Folder, Washington Co. Historical Society, Hagerstown, MD.

Dwelling House & Barn" was noted as \$8365.62 ½.⁶² In the text of the Memorandum, Blackford described the lands as those purchased "previous to 1825." It is not clear whether the Memorandum was written therefore in 1821 or 1825.

Blackford's household by 1820, however, was certainly large enough to require a mansion house. The U.S. Population Census for that year listed John Blackford, then over the age of 45 (49), with three males and one female under age 9 (Franklin, John? or Otho?, Henry V. S., and Janette), one male and one female age 16-25 (unknown), two females 25-44 (wife Elizabeth and her sister Catherine?), and one female over 45 years (unknown). He also listed twelve slaves in his household, four of them young children. Four of his household members were "engaged in Agriculture."

1820 was the peak census year for slave ownership in Maryland. Blackford's twelve enslaved laborers were not unusual, even in Washington County. Among his 43 neighbors listed on the same census page, seventeen were slave owners, including Joseph Chaplin (Chapline) who listed fifteen slaves, Jacob Muma (Mumma) with one, Samuel D. Price listed seven slaves, Isaac Willson (Wilson) had six, Archibald Richey listed sixteen, while Samuel Showers listed thirty-eight slaves (twenty-four of them in manufacturing).

In 1824, the Maryland General Assembly passed legislation to help finance construction of the Chesapeake & Ohio (C&O) Canal, planned to run along the north (Maryland side) bank of the Potomac River from Georgetown to Cumberland and eventually to the Ohio River. The canal was a replacement for the never quite successful Potomac Navigation Company. Plans for the Baltimore & Ohio (B&O) Railroad were also being formulated, and in 1828, the first shovel of dirt for the canal was turned at the same time that the first rails were laid for the railroad. An 1831 editorial in the Hagerstown newspaper Torchlight and Public Advertiser stated in monetary terms the advantages of such modes of transportation:

Our farmers are now paying from \$1 to \$1,50
[\$1.50] per barrel, for carriage to Baltimore. The
Canal or Rail Road, will, it is believed, produce a
saving of 70 cents per barrel in the price of
transportation to market, which will be about
\$90,000 upon the whole crop, making that addition
to the income of the county. But flour is but one
item—the same result will take place in regard to
our corn, beef, rye, pork, whiskey, lumber, lime,
iron, fruit, vegetables, &c.⁶³

⁶² Beckenbaugh Collection, Boonsborough Museum of History, Boonsboro, MD.

⁶³ Torchlight and Public Advertiser, March 10, 1831, microfilm collection, Washington Co. Free Library, Hagerstown, MD.

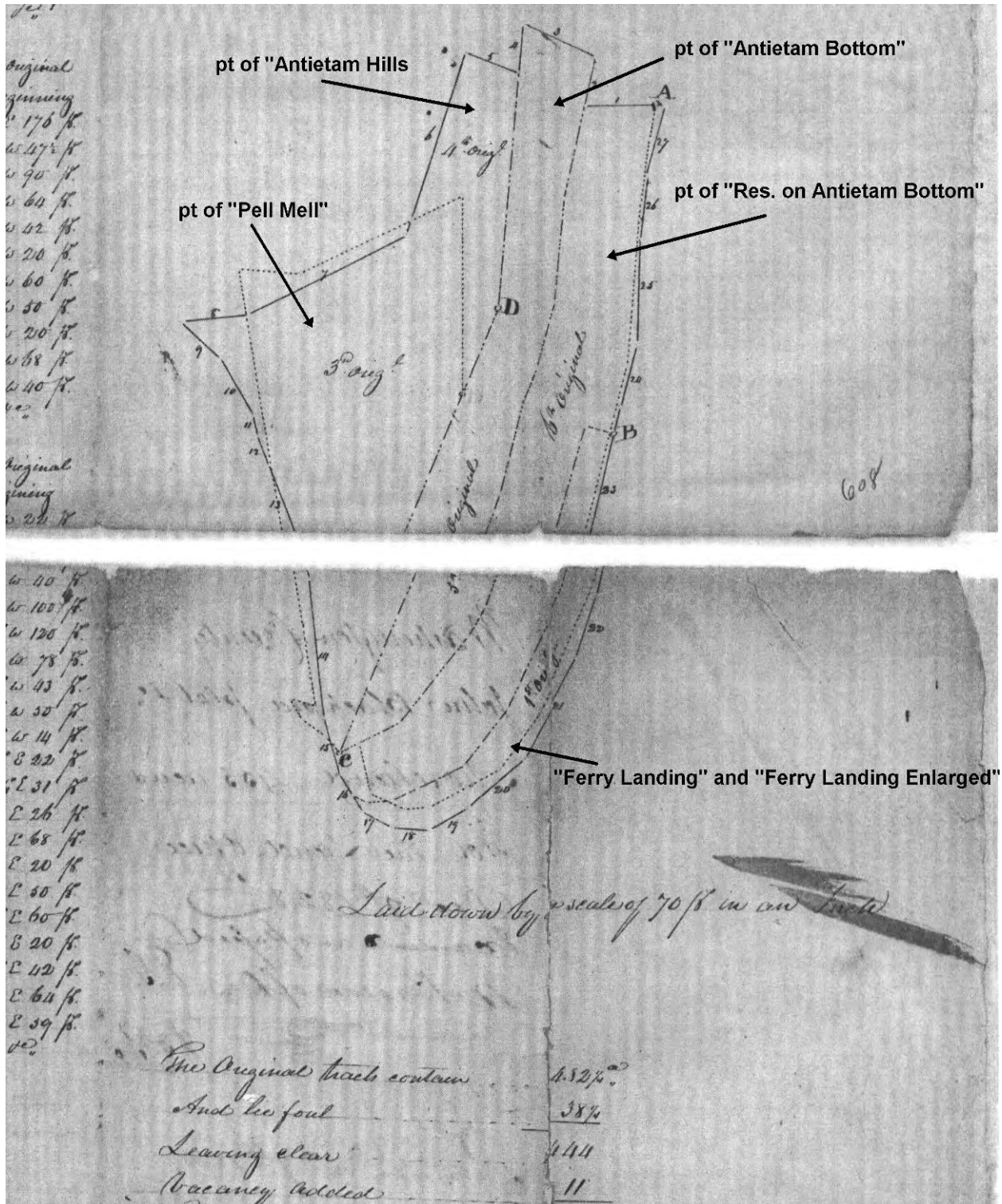


Fig. 2-013: Certificate of Survey for "Moreland" Patent #608 (MSA S1208-9, Maryland Archives.)

The competition between the two forms of transportation, both highly anticipated by the isolated farmers beyond South Mountain, would change life along the river through the 19th and into the 20th century.

Ferry Hill Peak Years

After a ten-year hiatus, Blackford began purchasing land again in 1827, primarily along the Potomac River southeast of the Ferry hill. From William Price, executor for the estate of John J. Hays, he purchased 36 ½ acres of *Antietam Hills* for \$730. The parcel adjoined *Pell Mell*, *Antietam Bottom*, and *Resurvey on the Addition to Piles Delight*.⁶⁴ Then, on May 9, 1828, John Blackford and Adam Myers, still acting as the executors of Thomas Shepherd's will (1818), sold the old Shepherd home plantation (Lower Farm) to David Moore, John Blackford's stepfather. Moore then reconveyed the farm to Blackford. The tract was 113 1/8 acres, part of *Antietam Bottom* and *Resurvey on Antietam Bottom*, costing \$4,751.25.⁶⁵ The price implies that there were some improvements on the property. Blackford applied for a "special warrant to resurvey" all the various parts of his land into one tract in June 1827. In 1828 the warrant was extended to include the land purchased from Shepherd's heirs and the resurvey was completed (Fig. 2-013). Blackford's resurvey, called *Moreland*, totaled 455 acres and was recorded in 1830.⁶⁶

By this time, John Blackford was a well-established "Gentleman Farmer" on his Ferry Hill Plantation estate. Commissioned a Captain in the Maryland Militia in 1807, he served during the War of 1812 as a Major in the 10th Regiment in the Battle of Bladensburg, and was promoted to Colonel.⁶⁷ Col. John Blackford was active in local matters, serving as Justice of the Peace. He was also a remarkably generous man, relatively quick to loan money and to hand out food, shelter, and work to the less-fortunate, both white and black. Anne Royall, an American travel journalist, visited Ferry Hill during her travels and, writing in 1828, described her impression as she crossed the Potomac on Blackford's ferry, although apparently could not remember Blackford's name:

Seeing a beautiful mansion perched on the summit of a lofty eminence, on the opposite shore, I was told it was ----, and wishing to take a near view of the site, I left my baggage to come with the stage, and crossed the river. After a pretty fatiguing walk up a moderate mount, I found myself on a level

⁶⁴ WCLR, Liber II, folio 173.

⁶⁵ WCLR, Liber DD, folio 249.

⁶⁶ Land Office (Certificates, Patented, WA), MSA S1208-9, Moreland Certificate #608, Maryland Archives, Annapolis, MD.

⁶⁷ Grivno (2000), p.21; the 10th Regiment was nicknamed "The Bladensburg Racers" after the battle due to their hasty retreat from the fight.

plain, where sits the mansion, or palace, rather of -
---. It is built in the form of an L, and is the most
splendid building of any country house in the state,
and the view from it is equally grand. But the
house appears to more advantage when viewed
from the Virginia shore. It, however, lacks nothing
to render it a paradise; it is well built, of brick, and
magnificently finished; the terraces, network,
gardens, and shrubbery all correspond. ---- was
sitting in his cool portico, which overlooks the
whole country, and was watching me, he said,
from the time I left Shepherdstown. He is a middle
aged man, married to a beautiful young wife, if I
remember, his second wife⁶⁸

John Blackford's Diary from 1829-1830 provides a glimpse not only of the daily plantation operation, but also how individual buildings on the farm and rooms within the mansion house were being used by the Blackford family, slaves, and hired hands. The diary also described some of the decorative plantings around the house:

February 5—"Thursday the last night has been
extremely coald have put up the new stove in the
bedroom it does not appear to do well..."
February 8—"Sunday...rose in bad health...Mr
Talbert and lady came over he remained with me
in my sick room..."
February 12—"Bowers and Eversole working at and
commenced framing the wagon shed."
March 3—"...old Negro Sam still in the hospital laid
up with his foot..." [on 2/28/29 Blackford noted
that Sam ("Old Sambo") moved to the quarter]
March 4—"Bowers and Eversole working on the
shed frame..."
March 6—"Bowers making foundation for the
shed..."
March 11—"...Bowers finished the bee house..."
March 12—"...George Bowers came at 12 and we
collected 8 or 10 hands and raised the wagon shed
in the course of the afternoon..."
March 14—"...G Bowers & M Cookus to assist him
put up the gable ends of the shed..."
March 27—"...G Bowers & Alsip comensed to
prepair for nailing on shingles on wagon house..."
March 31—"G Bowers making bee hives...Bowers
has finished the wagon house and some other

⁶⁸ Anne Royall, Black Book, or, a Continuation of Travels in the United States, vol. 1 (Washington, D.C.: Printed by the Author, 1828), pp. 294-295, as cited in Grivno (2000), pp. 23-24.

small jobs has worked in all sice [sic] he
commensed which was December 29th 1828 33
days—he went home after supper.”
April 1—“...have not been out of the house have
been ingaged poasting my books...”
April 3—“...John Frantern [Frantesn?] [hired man]
...planted a snow ball tree, an Athenian poplar and
a locust...”
April 17—“...planted some gourd seed in front of
the house...”
April 20—“Mr. Hort [piano instructor] arrived with
one waggon load of furniture...”
May 12—“...JK [Joseph Knode]and myself nailed on
the lath on one side of ice house...”
May 14—“...JK [Joseph Knode] and myself nailed
on lath for thatching...”
May 15—“Jacob Gouss finished tying on the
[straw] faggots on ice house...”
May 16—“...C Pickley [hired woman] whitewashing
the kitchen...”
June 2—“...Franklin planted some potatoes
adjoining the privy...”
June 7—“...M Varble brought the carpet from GM
Conradts Frederick Town with the bill of \$33.25...”
June 20—“...Henry M. cutting some grass about
the house...”
July 9—“strewing elder leaves through the wheat
to prevent weavle [sic]”
July 17—“...Julious fixing up the cistern that has
given way...”
October 26—“...brought up from the office 3 bushel
salt...”
October 27—“...Benjm Engle brought a wire
window screen and my umbrella new covered from
Balto—pd 2-75 for the repairs of the umbrella...”
November 4—“...Limen has been preparing to
shingle the quarter...”
November 7—“...Pd. M Lemen \$5 on acct of work
he finished shingling the quarter last night says he
nailed on 870 shingles a. 15 cents...”
November 10—“...Mrs. B bought a gross screws at
ST pd 37 ½ which is intended to fasten the brass
steeple to hold the stair rods...” [The “brass
steeple” (staples) held stair carpet rods in place.
They were screwed into the joint of the stair treads
and risers.]
November 11—“...moved the piano into the little
parlor...”
November 17—“...I remained in the house writing
all day...”

November 18—"...have trimmed the grape vines in the garden..."

November 19—"...Mrs B sat out 3 pear trees which with 3 others planted a few days since all from George Knode's nursery..."

November 26—"...Capt. Highbarger came from home this morning has brought 6 lights glass from Robinsons...Highbarger engaged glazing windows and altering pantry..."

November 28—"...Highbarger working at windows & old table...gave my notes [in Sharpsburg] for articles bt at Myerses sale amt \$86.35 ½..."

December 7—"...set poison for the rats in the cellar..."

January 1, 1830 - "...a peach tree in bloom near the well."

March 12 - "I sat [set] out a Mulberry tree on the west side of the house. - ...had my chimneys swept."

April 6 - "Sam Bell whitewashing...paid for Cromak [Chrome] yealow [sic], 12 ½ for the walls of the Room." [no specific room mentioned]

April 7 - "...the girls cleaning House all the furnature out of Plase [sic] for the last two days."

April 8 - "Negroe Sam Bell whitewashing up stairs..."

April 9 - "Negroe Sam Bell finished white & yealow washing..."

April 22 - "...paid Negroe Sam Bell \$1.68 ¾ for white washing House."

May 21 - "Stifler [a mason] at the wall in front of the barn..."

May 22 - "Murphy digging out the old lime kiln..."

June 3 - "Julious digging the Cisterns larger..."

June 9 - "Stifler & Jefferson [his black journeyman mason] commensed the walling the Cistren [sic]." [William Mose had been quarrying stone for the Cistern wall]

June 14 - "Stifler...set to plastering the inside of the Cistren [sic] with Cement mortar [sic]..."

June 15 - "Stifler finished the Brick pipe to the Cistren [sic]."

Oct. 7 - "...obtained some straw burry [sic] plants from Joseph J. Merrick Esq. and Genl. Otho H. Williams."

Oct. 11 - "Dutch John working in the Garden fixing strawberry beds [6' x 6' x 6']..."

Nov. 9 – "...manure for the Asparagus bed..."⁶⁹

Blackford's August 20, 1829 entry included a reference to his resurvey of all of his land into one parcel, noting, "...Met A. Hogmire who gave me a plot of resurvey on Moreland..." His resurvey (see attached plat), patented in 1830 under the name *Moreland*, was apparently a play on David Moore's name as well as the fact that Blackford was gathering a large amount of land for his plantation.⁷⁰ The resurvey of his land may in fact have been in preparation for the coming C&O Canal, which planned to run along the entire river frontage of John Blackford's property. Few Maryland landowners were satisfied with the compensation offered by the canal company for their right-of-way purchases, and many went to court as a result.⁷¹ The advance of canal construction, finished through Washington County in 1834, sparked a frenzy of work on the turnpike road leading from the ferry – and what would be Lock 38 on the canal – as well. Blackford's 1829 diary included multiple notations for September about working on the turnpike road from Mumma's (the mill on Antietam Creek east of Sharpsburg) to the river.

On April 1, 1830, the Hagerstown Torch Light and Public Advertiser carried an advertisement placed by John Blackford for the sale of Ferry Hill:

FARM & FERRY
FOR SALE

That beautiful Estate called FERRY HILL...on the Potomac river opposite Shepherdstown, commanding an extensive view of that Town, River, and of the rich and picturesque country in a circle of many miles; it contains 500 Acres, one half of which is in a high state of cultivation, with extensive Orchards, the residue covered with a great variety of large and valuable timber. The MANSION HOUSE is of Brick, built in the most substantial manner, forming a L, one front fifty and the other seventy feet, two stories high, all of the very best materials and in the modern style; cost \$10,000 to construct; the lawn consisting of about five acres, is adorned with a variety of fruit and

⁶⁹ John Blackford Diary, 1829-1831, MS 1087, Special Collections, MdHS, Baltimore, MD. Blackford refers to "JK" for Joseph Knode, his wife's brother [?] and a tenant on the plantation, and to "Mrs. B" for his wife Elizabeth (Knode) Blackford.

⁷⁰ Washington Co. Patented Certificate 608, Patent Record GGB 1, page 190, Plats.net.

⁷¹ John Blackford's court proceedings are recorded in Washington Co. Judgment Records, Liber 20, folio 23, Washington Co. Courthouse, Hagerstown, MD. .

ornamental trees; attached is a large and fertile Garden well enclosed and stocked with fruits; a Carriage and Ice House, with every other necessary building. Near the house is a Well of excellent Water and two spacious Cisterns; the Barn is of Stone, 90 by 40 feet, with Stabling underneath the whole. The Tenant's House is situated at a suitable distance, is large and convenient, attached to which is a large Barn, two well enclosed Gardens and all necessary out buildings, with abundance and variety of fruit; a large Stone Spring House with a large never-failing Spring which affords a splendid situation for a Distillery.

The FERRY is one of the best and most productive on the Potomac; attached thereto is an extensive TAVERN HOUSE, two stories, rough-cast, has 12 rooms, 6 on each floor, with Stableage, Granary and a Stone Smith Shop. The most important advantage in the location of this Estate, is its having the Turnpike Road leading from Winchester in Virginia to Baltimore, passing through it, and is directly on the line of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal and the Baltimore and Ohio Rail Road, and must necessarily become a place of deposite. This property binds on the Potomac more than two miles, the curve in which River includes nearly all the Estate, which gives it a singular advantage, as the whole of the land can be enclosed by a short line of fence. It has likewise the advantage of being in the vicinity of Iron Works, and several large and extensive Flour Mills. For further particulars, apply to MARMADUKE W. BOYD, Esq. Hagers-town, and for Terms to the proprietor, on the premises.

JOHN BLACKFORD.⁷²

In fact, Ferry Hill Plantation was not sold in 1830 and there was no indication in Blackford's diary from that year that he ever actually intended to sell, although he noted on October 8, 1830, "pd. Wm. D. Bill [Bell] \$12 for advertising my land."⁷³ It is possible the advertisement was an attempt to obtain a current value for his property to aid in negotiations for the best price for the C&O Canal rights-of-way.

⁷² April 1, 1830, page 3; as transcribed by Robert Chidester.

⁷³ John Blackford Diary, 1829-1831, MS 1087, Special Collections, MdHS, Baltimore, MD.

Blackford's sale advertisement provided a relatively detailed description of the Ferry Hill Plantation in 1830. There were three areas described: the Mansion House Area, the Tenant House Area, and the Ferry Area.

The Mansion House Area:

- Brick Mansion House, L, 50 by 70 feet, 2 stories
- Stone Barn, 90 by 40 feet, stabling below
- Carriage House
- Ice House
- Well
- Cisterns (2)
- Other necessary buildings [typically this includes smokehouse, out-kitchen, privy, slave quarters, other sheds]
- Five-acre lawn with ornamental trees and fruit trees
- Fenced garden, fruit

The Tenant House Area:

- Tenant House, large
- Barn, large
- Stone Springhouse, large
- All necessary outbuildings
- Fenced gardens (2), fruit

The Ferry Area:

- Tavern House, rough-cast (stuccoed) [over timber frame], 2 stories, 12 rooms, 6 each floor
- Stable
- Granary [on the right (southeast) side of the road?]
- Stone Smith Shop [none of the stone buildings now standing in this area appear to have been this smith shop, the stone cottage and stone store/house had not yet been built]

The 1830 U.S. Population Census listed Blackford, now about 59 years old, with ten white adults and children in his household including his wife (30-40), two boys and two girls under the age of 10, two boys between 10 and 15, two young men and one young woman between the ages of 20 and 30. Blackford also listed five male slaves and three female slaves, four of whom were young children. The following year (1831), Blackford recorded a Certificate of Slaves in the Washington County Courthouse, in which he certified the importation from Virginia of four slaves, William (22), Hannah (20), and her children John (3) and David (1).⁷⁴

John Blackford, slave-owner, was a man of his time for whom enslaved black men, women, and children was an acceptable aspect

⁷⁴ WCLR, Liber M, folio 522.

of his farm and ferry operations. His relatively benign treatment of his slaves, although he did beat them occasionally, his care and even apparent fondness for Ned (Edmund), all recorded matter-of-factly in his diary, represent a statement of daily life for the slaves living on the Ferry Hill Plantation. On December 16, 1829 Blackford noted, "...Mrs Noftsinger cutting and making up clothes for the Negroes...", and on other days he remarked on the purchase of shoes or other items for his slaves. But on February 9, 1830 Blackford wrote: "Gave negroe Daphney a pretty severe flogging for her impudence..." In fact, Blackford had repeated problems with Daphney and in March 1838 she apparently committed an act of defiance by depriving him of her offspring. Noted Blackford after her miscarriage of twin girls at four months, "It is thought she took medicine to produce their distruction."⁷⁵ Despite this, Daphney was cared for in the plantation "hospital" for eleven days. Throughout January 1830, Blackford remarked on the illnesses of Ned and Julious, providing an indication that the "small room above the kitchen" was perhaps, in fact, the hospital:

January 3—"...moved Ned [who had been very sick] into the small room above the kitchen..."
January 4—"...Ned mending, Old Judy here..."
January 7—"...Julious laid up in the hospital with strained knee behaved very bad last night..."
January 8—"Julious and Ned both in the hospital..."
January 10—"Ned in hospital tho recovering Julious hobbling out a little. Dumb Elsey called..."
January 11—"Ned still in the hospital..."
January 21 – "moved Ned into the quarter from upstairs"⁷⁶

Ned (Edmund) and Julious (Jupe), both slaves for life, served primarily in the operation of the ferry. Other slaves on the farm worked in the fields plowing, planting, weeding, and harvesting. They delivered threshed wheat to the mills, cut and delivered cordwood, and assisted in construction and repair projects. Through the month of March 1830, Blackford's slave named Murphy worked for Shepherdstown merchant George Entler, taking five trips down the Potomac River on Entler's flat boats. Ned and Julious often lodged on the ferryboat, although there were slave quarters on the farm. In October 1830, Blackford employed John Stifler, a mason, and his "man" Jefferson, at

⁷⁵ Green & Hahn (1975), *Ferry Hill Plantation Journal*, 1838-1839, pp. 25-26.

⁷⁶ John Blackford Diary, 1829-1831, MS 1087, Special Collections, MdHS, Baltimore, MD. We do not know if the "small room above the kitchen" actually refers to the room above the kitchen in the mansion house, however, the reference to moving Ned "to the quarter from upstairs" seems to indicate so, and that this was probably the "hospital." Old Judy appears to be Ned's (Edmund) mother who lived on David Moore's (stepfather) farm. Thus, John Blackford had probably known Ned since Ned was born.

"plastering the upstairs of the quarter" which Will (William) later white washed. On January 6, 1831 he recorded "preparing timber for a shed at the end of the quarter."⁷⁷ In 1841, Franklin Blackford wrote in his diary that he purchased a log "house" (probably a slave quarter) from his brother Henry on the Ferry Hill mansion farm, which he then rebuilt as a "quarter" on the Lower Farm where he was living at that time.⁷⁸

Throughout the Blackford years at Ferry Hill slave labor served as the core of the farm labor force. Despite the relatively relaxed atmosphere established by John Blackford as a slave master, several of his slaves either attempted escape or failed to return from trips as scheduled. After the C&O Canal reached the Ferry Hill property, Blackford and his son Franklin recorded several incidents of other people's runaway slaves using the canal towpath for their passage to freedom. Wrote Franklin in June 1839:

We went down the canal a short distance and we discovered five – one woman and a child, two girls, and one man. We arrested them and brought them up to the house. Joe Knode came up we hitched Joes mare and mine to the wagon to take them to town to have them committed to jail. We did so, the woman being pregnant and complained very much.⁷⁹

Several days later, Franklin was informed "that the owner of those runaways we took up the other day has left \$200 for us in Hagerstown."⁸⁰

The C&O Canal reached the Sharpsburg District by 1834 and continued nearly to Williamsport. The railroad, however, crossed to the Virginia side of the Potomac River at Point of Rocks, before reaching Washington County, because of the narrow right-of-way passage at that point, which was already owned by the canal company. The railroad would likely have made a greater impact on Washington County farm production than the advent of canal transportation appears to have. It is likely that the Ferry Hill Plantation's stone cottage and store were constructed in anticipation of the canal. Lock 38 on the canal was located directly adjoining Blackford's Ferry.

⁷⁷ John Blackford Diary, 1829-1831, MS 1087, Special Collections, MdHS, Baltimore, MD.

⁷⁸ Franklin Blackford Diary, Nov/Dec. 1841, copy from C&O Canal National Historical Park.

⁷⁹ Franklin Blackford Diary, June 1, 1839, copy from C&O Canal NHP; see also Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Application Form, "Ferry Hill Plantation," January 2002.

⁸⁰ Ibid, June 14, 1839.

John Blackford was in negotiations with the canal company as early as 1832 for the purchase of canal right-of-way through his property. It is likely that his *Moreland* patent and advertisement for sale of the property, both in 1830, were to establish the highest value of his land prior to negotiations. In August 1832, the Washington County Court instructed the Sheriff and a "Jury of eighteen inhabitants of said county" to take an Inquisition of Blackford's property. The inquisition was returned to the court in November 1832 and was immediately challenged by Blackford. The following month, "good cause having been shown by the said John Blackford against the said Inquisition," another one was ordered, the Sheriff and a new Jury to meet on Blackford's land January 3, 1833. Forty-one acres, three rods, and one perch were measured out of *Moreland*, for which Blackford was awarded \$1,500. John Blackford was apparently satisfied with this payment and the court proceedings were documented: "Ordered by the Court this 28th day of March 1833, that the aforegoing be and the same whereby affirmed, no good cause having been shown against the same and the same be recorded as the law directs."⁸¹

In December 1833, Blackford suffered another setback in his negotiations with the C&O Canal Company. They condemned a one-acre parcel, part of "the ferry lot," in order to construct a lift lock for boats to leave the canal and cross the river to the Virginia side to pick up cargo. In the court proceeding one year earlier (November 1832), Blackford and the Swearingen heirs expressed their fears that such a lift lock would adversely affect their ferry business. The Canal Company assured them that a lift lock was not in their immediate plans. With no foreseeable damage to the business, the compensation offered to the ferry owners in 1832, including John Blackford and the heirs of Thomas Van Swearingen (John and Mary Quigley, Hannah Van Swearingen, Virginia Van Swearingen, and Julia Van Swearingen) was "one cent." With the 1833 condemnation of the ferry lot, the owners took the company to court to get "just compensation," not just for the land but also for the potential loss of ferrying business. They argued that people would not have to ferry their produce across the river to load it onto the canal boats. But the court found in favor of the canal company and the one-cent compensation remained in place.⁸² In his 1835 diary, Blackford recorded the impact the lift lock had on his ferry business: "...have been ascertaining [sic] the Receipts at the ferry for the last five years to ascertain [sic] the depression in consequence of the Canal

⁸¹ Washington Co. Judgment Record Book 20, page 23.

⁸² December 3, 1833 letter from John Blackford & others attorneys to the President and Directors of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Company, National Archives, Record Group 79.

which I find the last year to have depreciated 50 per cent from the preceeding [sic] year."⁸³

Despite the loss of income from the ferry, Blackford's plantation and investments continued to generate enough income to sustain a comfortable life. In 1835 and 1836, Blackford purchased additional land, although his acreage totals never appear to reach the 750 acres cited in previous histories of Ferry Hill. In 1835 he purchased 5 $\frac{3}{4}$ acres of *Antietam Hills* from Joseph and Mary Hayes, apparently the result of a dispute recorded in Blackford's 1835 diary in which Hayes claimed that Blackford had already fenced the acreage and should therefore buy it.⁸⁴ Blackford bought 50 acres of the Jacob Bedinger property, part of *Antietam Bottom* and *Resurvey on Antietam Bottom*, adjoining the eastern boundary of *Moreland* in 1836.⁸⁵ This brought Blackford's total acreage to approximately 556 acres, including the 500 listed in the 1830 ad, plus 5 $\frac{3}{4}$ from the Hayes' and 50 acres from Bedinger. Subtract from this total the 42 acres lost to the canal, and his property was approximately 514 acres. The 1836 tax assessment recorded in Blackford's diary listed only 466 acres, apparently taken prior to his purchase of the Bedinger land.⁸⁶ In fact, the 1836 tax assessment valued Blackford's property at \$20,059 and valued the ferry separately at \$7,000. Blackford ranked among his wealthiest neighbors, including Philip Grove (Mt. Airy), whose property was valued at \$34,003; Joseph C. Hays (Hayes), valued at \$17,625; and Col. John Miller, valued at \$18,651.⁸⁷

Blackford's diaries reveal important details about the land and monetary transactions that he was engaged in throughout the 1830s, the peak years of the plantation. They also record detailed accounts of the farm operations, plowing, planting, harvesting, threshing, and milling as well as various wood products. Hidden among these details though are references to construction, repairs, and other activities relating to the gardens, individual buildings, and to rooms within the mansion house used every day by its occupants. However, Blackford did not provide directions as to where each room was located within the house or on the grounds, perhaps because he and his family already knew these details:

⁸³ John Blackford Diary, 1835-1836, transcribed by Margaret Young, manuscript in Western Maryland Room, Washington Co. Free Library; original in F. Pauline Blackford Collection, Special Collections, MdHS.

⁸⁴ WCLR, Liber RR, folio 334. John Blackford Diary, 1835-1836, Sept. 22, 1835, "Doct. Hays again applied to me for pay for the lot of land I included within my fence."

⁸⁵ WCLR, Liber TT, folio 165.

⁸⁶ John Blackford Diary, 1835-1836, March 6, 1836.

⁸⁷ 1835-1836, Washington Co. Board of Co. Commissioners (Tax Book), MSA C1980, Maryland Archives.

Dec. 2, 1835 – "the hands put up a stove in the Dining room."

Dec. 10 – "Will and Murphy ingaged [sic] making a Hovel for the Hoggs near the Canal Pit."

Dec. 15 – estimates 230 bushels of corn in the "Corn House."

Dec. 24 – "Franklin came down stares [sic] and is so much recovered..."

Jan. 18, 1836 – "C.K. [Catherine Knode, Mrs. Blackford's sister] Jennett & Helena quilting in the upper parlor" [unknown which room this indicates]

Feb. 2 – "Mr. Cease [Siess] the mason called wants to rent the stone cottage; wants a garden to it."

Feb. 18 – "I put a lock on the Kitchen doore [sic]."

March 18 – "Salley Shepherd lodged with the girls"

March 23 – "fixed a latch on the dining Room doore."

April 2 – "G. [George] Reynolds and Quigley agreed to take [rent] the ferry House for George Unseld to keep as a tavern, to Board the hands and Repair stable, pump and all the necessary repairs the materials...to be furnished."

April 7 – "two of the tax asesors [sic] ...took an account of my Property. 466 acres of land, 17 negroes, 11 head Horses, 15 Cattle, 36 head Sheep, 15 lambs, carriage & gig furniture and plate copper Kettle."

April 15 – John T. Cookus, wife, and two girls, "lodged with us not meeting with accommodations at the ferry House."

April 16 – purchased from O.H.W. Stull in Hagerstown, 3 silver leaf poplars, and 6 peach trees, "some Shrubbery and trees"

April 20 – "Enoch all day taking up and seting [sic] out young mulberrys [sic] and poplars on the Clifts [sic] and about the little spring in the Clifts."

May 9 – "William Bowen called to enquire about painting and papering; sent Dick for lime to Jacob Millers Brought half Bushel to white wash with"

May 11 – "Negroe Sam Bell white washing two Rooms"

May 19 – Bowens Boys painting the Dineing [sic] and bed Rooms"

May 25 – "young Hersey came after Breckfast [sic] and commenced painting the out side of the House."

May 26 – "Bowens two Boys painting and pensyling [sic] the wall of the House."

May 27 – "Bowens Boys painting...William Bowen called says he will stain and paint the house by the day."

May 30 – “Bowens apprentice painting a Doore.”
[probably inside, raining that day]
June 3 – “Franklin and Will making an arbor on the
Clift above the spring”
June 5 – “M. Shellman [a white hired hand]
returned to lodge and did lodge above the office.”
June 14 – “William Bowens Boys came over in the
afternoon and made a small beginning to stain the
House outside.”
June 15 – Bowens boys staining the house.
June 17 – “Bowens two boys came and are
staining and varnishing the stair Railing and the
Thermometer frame.”
July 2 – “Pd S. Bill [Bell] \$2.25 for white washing 9
Rooms.”
July 5 – Bowens Boys have been pensiling [sic] the
House again this day.”
July 6 – “Mr. Bowen called with a pattant [sic]
pulley for a passage lamp.”
July 7 – “Bowens Boys are here and about to
finish”
July 16 – “the two Boys Duke & Neal [Blakeney]
came over in the evening supped and lodged in the
office”
July 21 – “Mr. Shindler called to see the spouting
of the House”
July 22 – “Conrad Shindlers Col’d man came over
and repaired the spouting which was done in a few
minutes.”
July 26 – “Mr. Powell [carpenter] and his man went
down to Unselds to supper, my family not being
satisfyed [sic] to Board them.”
Aug. 2 – “Mr. Powell and his 3 hands framing the
straw house”
Aug 4 – “Powell and man was 4 days Boarding at
G. Unseld....Capt. D. Highbarger, Abm. Smith, J.
Knode and two lads that work with him...assisted
with my own hands to raise the straw
house...Powells hands commenced to pull off the
old Barn roof and nail on new shingles”
Aug. 5 – “sent Ned up to C. Shindlers for 30 sheets
of Tin for the Barn Roof”
Aug. 12 – removed shingles from the ferry house
stable and replaced them – 1,932 shingles⁸⁸

⁸⁸ John Blackford Diary, 1835-1836, transcribed by Margaret Young, manuscript in Western Maryland Room, Washington Co. Free Library; original in F. Pauline Blackford Collection, Special Collections, MdHS. The reference to “CK” is Blackford’s sister-in-law, Catherine Knode.

From Ferry Hill Plantation Journal 1838-Jan. 1839:

March 17 – “Murf and Will brought up 10 bu. Clover seed, deposited in office upstairs.” [This could mean that the “office” is in another building separate from the main house.]⁸⁹
June 20 – reference to 200 bricks to repair oven.
August 2 – reference to making paling fence for the garden “in rear of my office.” [Could mean that the office was in a separate building east of the house. See footnote below.]
August 14 – Blackford wrote to G. Conradt of Frederick about making carpeting.
August 14 – Reference to working on cistern
September 3-4 – reference to the “breakfast room.” J. Moore [Blackford’s step-brother?] commenced pulling down fireplace in the breakfast room” preparatory to making alteration.
September 5 – measured for cupboard by the fireplace, presumably in breakfast room
September 16 – money missing from Blackford’s desk in his office. Sash of “gable end window removed by which house was entered.” [There is no gable end window in the room designated as the office in the main dwelling. See footnote below.]
September 17 – reference to finding the empty cash drawer from Blackford’s desk “upstairs hid under some wool.”
October 4 – note that 50 bushels of apples were placed in the cellar.
October 15 – bought 1 lb of wrought nails for cistern shutters.
November 1 – took 280cwt carpet yarn to Conradt to have woven.
November 13 – sent a sample pattern of striped carpet (from Mrs. Parren’s carpet) to Conradt, as an example of what Blackford wanted.
December 6 – Samuel Barnett came to fix the windows and put in new cord and pulleys. He also

⁸⁹ Room 105 was identified in the 1978 Harlan Unrau Historic Structure Report for Ferry Hill as the “Office,” based on Unrau’s interpretation of John Blackford’s 1838-1839 journal, the only journal available at that time. Since then, several additional years of the Blackford diaries have been made available and were thoroughly researched for this report. We believe that Blackford’s references to an “office” refers to a stand-alone outbuilding, possibly the frame building then still standing to the east of the mansion house on the 1939 maps drawn for the bridge and Route 34 realignment (Fig 2-024).

set up CK's [Catherine Knode] stove in the breakfast room.⁹⁰

On October 7, 1838, after a long illness, Elizabeth (Knode) Blackford died.⁹¹ John Blackford was not left alone however. Two of his children were married, Janette (Janet) to Dr. Otho Smith in Boonsboro, and Franklin to Elizabeth Miller of Sharpsburg who were living at the Ferry House. But Blackford still had Helena (Helen) and his youngest son William living at home, as well as his deceased wife's sister Catherine Knode (CK) and still quite numerous visitors. Henry Blackford was attending Mercersburg College, but came home for visits. With his large farm/plantation and ferry still to attend to, what turned out to be John Blackford's last year of life was full of activity.

In January 1839, Blackford transferred a mortgage he held on Abraham Barnes and Melchim B. Mason for personal property (including slaves) to Dr. John Hanson Thomas. The mortgage was security for a loan of \$10,000 Blackford made to Barnes and Mason previously. Although the document said only \$1 was exchanged there were also "valuable considerations," meaning that perhaps Blackford owed Thomas money or payment was made to Blackford previously or in some other form.⁹² In January 1836, Blackford first noted the request for the loan by Abraham Barnes. He several times refused to make the loan, but was later convinced by his lawyer to do so, an unfortunate choice it appears.⁹³

The following entries are from John Blackford's final diary, January 16, 1839 – October 19, 1839:

Jan. 18 – "...ingaged this morning [minding?] the catch of the room door..."
Jan. 21- "...I have remained in my office all day..."
Jan. 28—"...sent Enoch off at sunrise with the cart for Boonsb. He took...a letter to Mr. S Bentz ordering the parlor stove and some small articles beside"
Jan. 29—"...I put up the parlor stove..."
Feb. 5—"...had the stove in the cellar removed to the quarter and the cooking stove put in its place..."

⁹⁰ Fletcher M. Green and Thomas F. and Nathalie W. Hahn, eds, Ferry Hill Plantation Journal, ...4 January 1838 – 15 January 1839, (Thomas F. Hahn: Shepherdstown, WV, 1975, 2nd edition).

⁹¹ Green and Hahn, p. 96.

⁹² WCLR, Liber TT, folio 774. This document notes that the original loan was made in 1835, however Blackford's diary records the original loan in January 1836.

⁹³ John Blackford Diary, 1835-1836, transcribed by Margaret Young, manuscript in Western Maryland Room, Washington Co. Free Library; original in F. Pauline Blackford Collection, Special Collections, MdHS.

Feb.12—"...in the evening CK came home sick and went to bed. Had a bed fixed for Martin [Shellman] upstairs in my office..."

Feb. 13—"...M. Shellman lodged in the office & Betsy Mahafey in the house..."

Feb. 14—"...Franklin brought up a ten plate stove for which I gave him a cooking stove [the one in the cellar?] and the apparatus which cost me 36 Dollars..."

Feb. 24—"...wrote a letter to Docr John Quigley in answer to one from him of the 20th on the subject of repairing the wall inclosing the graveyard and respecting the ferry. Which I offered to buy or sell at \$5,000. or pay 300\$ annually; I asked for an answer to my proposition..."

March 2—"...lease to Reynolds of the ferry lot [Virginia side] to commence Feb. 16, 1836 to continue eleven years to Feb.16, 1847.

March 7—"...Martin about the kitchen, quite intoxicated..."

March 9—"...sent Jupe with dog [walice?] to old Mr. Folks and brought a pine table from Samuel Barnetts painted by Bowen..."

March 10—"...I passed the day pretty much in my office. Martin says Henry Selby and some more such characters was drinking, quarreling and making much noise down at Franklins..."

March 11—"...Wm Bowens boy came over and varnished the pine table which Barnett had made and which Bowen painted.

March 17—"...caught Isaiah examining my small drawers in the bookcase for which I gave him a correction..."

March 20—"...Martin making faggots in the barn to patch the ice house roof..."

April 7—"...Franklin came to whom I gave a lecture for his conduct..."

April 17—"...Negroe Sharlott's age I find from examining a bill of sale that she is 54 years of age I bought her in 1798 28th April from William Thornbury..."

April 24—"...Sharlott sat out for home..."

May 16—"...sent Enoch over with the sophia to Conner to have it stuffed over again..."

May 30—"...David Conner called with an account for repairing a sofa amt \$10.75 which I conceived exorbitant. I offered to pay him \$6.75 which he refused to take and went off..."

June 3—"S. Barnett called to measure for the timber for the Balconey [south porch?] he then rode my mare to the iron works to see about the iron and spikes for the

[boat? – Blackford was having a new ferry boat constructed]..."

July 18—"...the 68th anniversary of my birth..."

Aug 26—"...N. Carusi called. Paid him \$250 for a piano..."

Aug 31—Blackford sleeping in the "large chair" [he had been ill for the last month or more with difficulty breathing, chest pain, head ache and upset stomach—congestive heart failure?]

Sept. 3—"He [Brantner] has commenced the balcony this morning..."

Sept 5—"...Dr. Dorsey came ½ after one o'clock, sent for Parran who did not come until 4...." Dorsey remained all night. [Blackford was not responding to Dr. Parran's treatments and so Dr. Dorsey was called in.]

Sept 6—new ferry boat done and painted.

Sept 8—"...Franklin called and did not speak to JK [Joseph Knode, who was also there visiting Blackford] his wife called on her return from S Town..."

Sept 10—"...2 of Barnharts young men at work repairing the Belcona [balcony]..." Doctors Perry, Dorsey and Smith all met to discuss Blackford's condition and stayed for dinner. They all concluded that he was much better.

Sept 12 – "...I rode round by JK [Joseph Knode] and up the canal Corban and Franklin with me on horseback. I am very weak. I said to Corban that I should expect him to pay me two thousand dollars on or before May next, he sat out for home. Sent the lounges and 8 brass rods over to H. Kimer..." [Blackford extended two other deadlines for Corban to pay money owed, May 1839 and July 1839. The amount owed increased substantially each time]

Sept 15—"...Elizabeth Franklins wife delivered last night a fine perfect girl child..."

Sept 17—"...S Barnharts hands finished the balcony. Conrad Shindler called. Engaged him to adjust the tin spouting..."

Sept 27—"...Barnhart putting up mantle[?] and the cupboard. Ferrel painting balcony floor..."

Sept 29—"...Ferrel came at one o'clock and resumed the painting..."

Oct 3—"...Doct. Quigley ...signed the agreement with Julia Swearingen and Hannah Van her daughter..." [for Blackford to purchase their rights to the ferry]

In September of 1839 Blackford entered into an agreement with Thomas Van Swearingen, his wife Ella E. and Hannah Van Swearingen of Fayette County, Kentucky, and John Quigley, his wife Mary and Julia Van Swearingen of Jefferson County, Virginia to purchase their half interest in the ferry, including the half-acre lot on the Virginia side and the 4-5 acres on the Maryland side with "the

ferry house and all buildings and Improvements..."⁹⁴ The agreement was not officially finalized until 1840, probably due to Blackford's illness which ultimately led to his death in November 1839.⁹⁵

On November 1, 1839, John Blackford wrote his Last Will and Testament and died on November 5th at the age of 68. He divided the Ferry Hill Plantation into three farms, much like the three areas described in the 1830 sale advertisement:

- To Franklin he devised the ferry property, "including the undivided moiety or half part which I have lately purchased from the widow and heirs of Thomas Van Swearingen, the purchase money of which is to be hereafter paid of my estate at large [\$5,000]," to which he added 10 acres of orchard and specifically excluded the "stone cottage;"
- To Henry V. S. he devised "the home or farm whereon I now reside [Ferry Hill farm]," to which he attached the stone cottage;
- To William M. (Moore) he devised "my lower farm whereon Joseph Knode now lives with the three parcels of land at different times acquired and purchased from the heirs of Thomas Shepherd, Dr. Hays, and the trustees appointed to sell the real estate of Jacob Bedinger." William was still a minor and Joseph Knode was given a 2-year lease to continue on the property;
- To his daughter Janet (Janette) Smith, wife of Otho J. Smith, one of the executors, he gave money and personal property;
- To his unmarried daughter Helen he gave money;
- And to his sister-in-law, Catherine Knode, he devised a \$200 annual payment.

After months of remarking on his father's illness, Franklin Blackford recorded in his diary on November 5th, 1839: "Father left us this morning 10 minutes after 9 o'clock he was perfectly rashanal [sic] until the last. He has gone I hope happy to meet his redeemer in Heaven his disease was a dropsieal affection [sic]. This is a debt that we all owe and it must be paid..." Three days later Franklin noted that the will was read, "he divided his property equally among his 5 children to their satisfaction."⁹⁶ John Blackford was buried in the Swearingen family cemetery (Fig. 2-014) at Bellevue near Shepherdstown.⁹⁷

⁹⁴ WCLR, Liber WW, folio 605. The Quigley's and Van Swearingen's were the heirs of Thomas Van Swearingen who purchased the ferry interest from Henry Van Swearingen in 1815.

⁹⁵ WCLR, Liber WW, folios 605 and 609; Franklin Blackford paid \$5,000 plus another \$50 to the Swearingen heirs for the ferry interest.

⁹⁶ Franklin Blackford Diary, Nov. 5, 1839 and Nov. 8, 1839. On Nov. 14th Franklin went to visit Grandfather Moore and Corban Blackford and noted: "Corban made some threats concerning the will," however no explanation was given.

⁹⁷ Robin D. Ziek, "Archeology Survey, C&O Canal, Ferry Hill," 1979, Plate 1a, photo of John Blackford's gravestone.

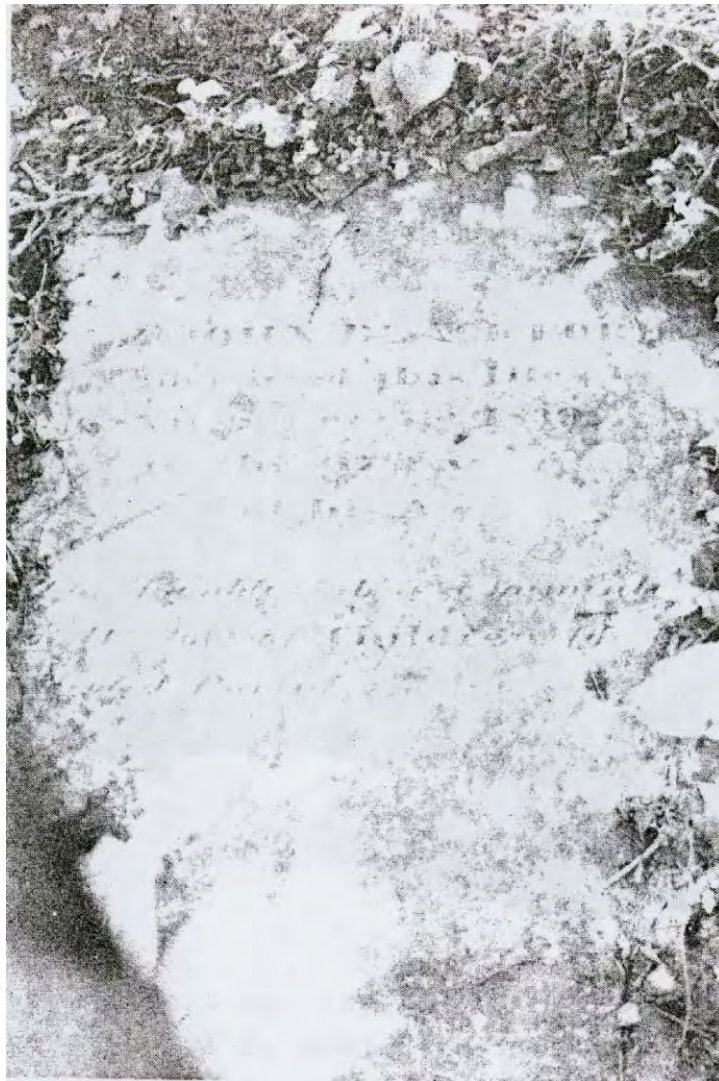


Fig. 2-014: Tombstone of John Blackford, family graveyard located in Shepherdstown, WV on Shepherd property. (Ziek Archeology Report, June 1979.)

A public sale of John Blackford's personal property was held in December 1839, as instructed by his will, to provide the cash payments to Janet, Helen, and Catherine. For this an inventory was recorded, the details of which provide, in effect, a furnishing plan for the mansion house. The inventory also listed all of Blackford's livestock and his slaves. The slaves, according to the will, were not to be "sold out of state." Among the 16 slaves inventoried (Edmund and Julious went to Franklin with the ferry) were Daphney valued at \$300, who was later sold by Franklin to a man in Florida, and the four slaves imported into Maryland by John Blackford in 1831: Bill (William) valued at \$550, Hannah (and a new child Mary) valued at

\$475, and her two boys John (\$300) and David (\$275).⁹⁸ Franklin recorded his purchase of Murphy and a slave named Aaron at the estate sale, but his diary indicates that Bill, Hannah, and John also remained on the farm.⁹⁹

Ferry Hill under Franklin Blackford

Franklin Blackford began keeping a diary, much like that of his father, in December 1838. It was clear from his writings, however, that Franklin lacked the social refinement of John Blackford as well as his business acumen. With Henry Blackford still away at school (or possibly working in York, PA), Franklin and his family moved into the Ferry Hill mansion house. Joseph Knode (JK in John Blackford's diaries but called "Joe" by Franklin) stayed on the Lower Farm while William Blackford was apparently at school in Georgetown and a man named Elgin operated the ferry and tavern business. In addition to working the farm and making numerous trades and purchases of horses, Franklin made some changes to the buildings:

Oct. 2, 1840 – "...Colbert blasted some of the rock away..." for a "cave" or root cellar, which was later built of stones laid with lime and sand mortar, covered with earth and sod, and fitted with steps and a painted door (through Nov. 30th) [unknown exactly where on the grounds this was located]

Nov. 14 – "Joe off to Sharpsburg for bricks to build an oven."

March 10, 1841 – "Capt. Shryock came he and I went to the woods to cut some timber for pumpstocks..."

March 15 – "Colbert came over to go in the well but he found two [sic] much water Capt. Shryock found his stock was too short he cut another piece..."

March 16 – "Capt. S. finished the pump I paid him \$15,41¢ - I sent Joe over for some plank for a trough Linch made a frame for the well Wright made a trough for my stable room."

March 25 – A man named Corban Reed began working in Franklin's smith shop and continued to work on and off for several years.

June 26 – "I rode with Dr. Smith and Lawyer Lee to Gr. Father Moor's [sic] to take his deposition consarning [sic] a suit between Corban [Blackford] and our Estate..."

August 12 – "Linch came up to put some posts under the porch he went with Joe to the woods for a [?] they

⁹⁸ WCRW, Inventories, Liber L, folio 23, transcribed by Chidester, p.50; Chidester, p.57.

⁹⁹ Franklin Blackford Diary, Dec. 13, 1839.

cut the posts and we fixed the porch..." [unknown which porch this refers to]

August 13 – "I drove some of my stock down to the [Lower] farm I intend moving on Wednesday...I saw Joe and we closed the bargain [sic] I am to give him \$2,800 for all he has now on the place and the furniture in the house..."

William M. Blackford, the youngest son of John Blackford who had inherited the Lower Farm was apparently going to school in Georgetown at this time.

Significantly, on April 5, 1841 Franklin wrote: "Joe Knode hauling Hellens things over to town [Shepherdstown?] Helen left." Several months later, on November 16, 1841, Helen married Rev. Robert Douglas.¹⁰⁰ Douglas was mentioned frequently in John Blackford's 1835-36 and 1838-39 diaries, preaching in Shepherdstown where Helen (Helena) attended his services on many occasions. Helen was Douglas' second wife, his first wife, Mary (Robertson) Douglas, having died several years before. He brought his 4 year-old son Henry Kyd Douglas to the marriage.¹⁰¹

After Franklin's move to the Lower Farm, Henry V. S. Blackford, with his wife Eliza (Mayer), moved into the Ferry Hill mansion that he inherited from his father. Franklin mentioned Henry and his family, sometimes socially and sometimes in shared work on the farms, but the brothers appear to have had a relatively distant relationship.

In February 1844, Franklin Blackford noted in his diary that Mr. and Mrs. Ganon, who were living in the Ferry House since August 1842, were preparing to move to Hagerstown. In a post-script Franklin wrote: "they moved some time in March I then moved up to the fery hous [sic]." Nothing was entered into Franklin Blackford's diary for the next five months, but in August 1844 he returned to writing in his journal saying: "for the last two months I have been very unhappy [sic] on account of what I have heard & seen but I hope it will wear away, we must expect to have some cloudy days in the world. Let this suffice [sic] as I shall not disclose this secret while I remain here below."¹⁰² For the next two years, Franklin remained at the Ferry House, his diary entries filled with fox hunting, horse-trading, and the occupation of his farm laborers at planting, harvesting, and threshing.

¹⁰⁰ Blackford family Bible, Blackford-Grove-Mayer Collection, MdHS, MS 2637.

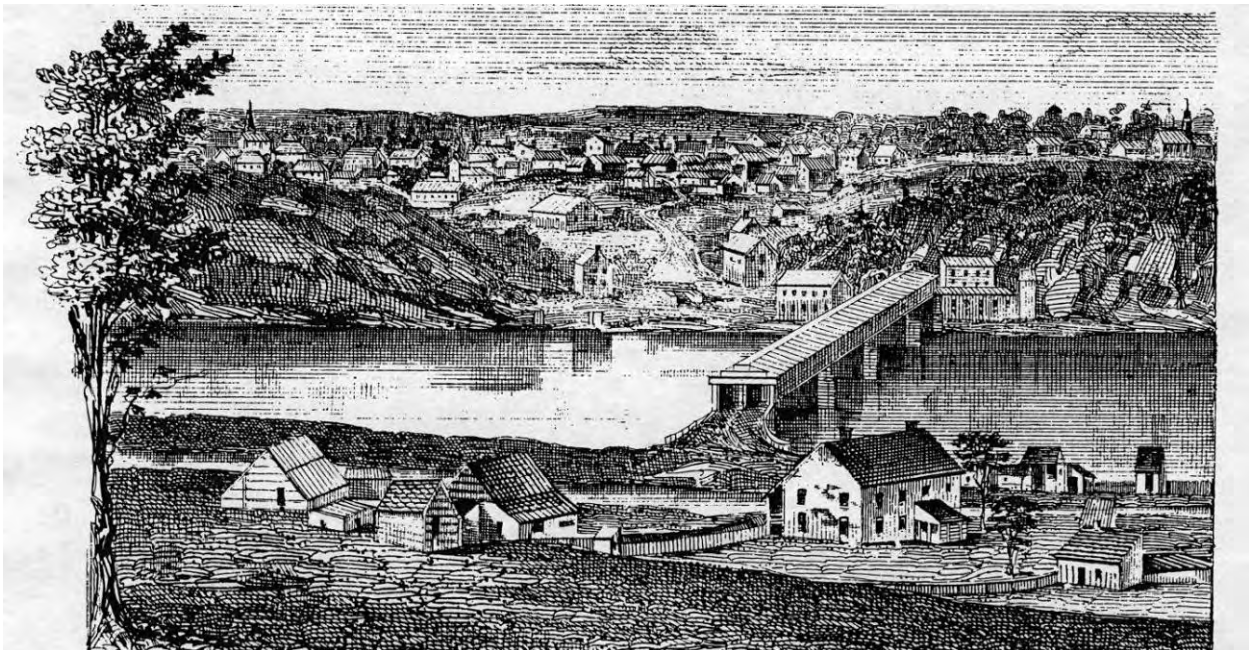
¹⁰¹ Henry Kyd Douglas was likely named after Henry Kyd, Robert Douglas' minister in Ireland (Doug Bast, lecture, Feb. 7, 1983, Washington Co. Free Library). Bast believes the pronunciation of the name is "Kide," said to be the Irish pronunciation of Kyd. However, locals traditionally pronounce the name "Kid," which follows the English pronunciation as in the English writer Thomas Kyd.

¹⁰² Franklin Blackford Diary, August 1, 1844.

Although not mentioned in his daily record, he may have also been operating the inn at the Ferry House. In an 1845 account at the Shepherd distillery in Shepherdstown, Blackford purchased "36 gallons of Apple Brandy at \$13.45."¹⁰³ One month before he ended his journal, in January 1846, Franklin Blackford received news that Miss (Mary) Hughes, who was "in a family way," "wished to swer [sic] a rape on me, I was perfectly astonished." Franklin's last entry was on February 19, 1846 with no indication of the outcome of the lawsuit.¹⁰⁴

On June 16, 1846 Henry V. S. Blackford and his wife Eliza M. (Mayer) sold the Ferry Hill mansion farm, approximately 300 acres, to Henry's brother Franklin Blackford for \$17,180. The conveyance did not include the stone cottage that was included as part of Henry's inheritance.¹⁰⁵ Two days later, on the 18th of June Franklin Blackford and his wife Elizabeth R. (Miller) sold the Ferry operation, Ferry House, and orchard 10 acres to Henry V. S. Blackford for \$13,000.¹⁰⁶ No explanation was given for this transaction except that, on the same day (June 18) Franklin mortgaged the Ferry Hill mansion farm for \$10,000. The mortgage holder was John Mayer of Pennsylvania, an uncle of Henry Blackford's wife Eliza (Mayer).¹⁰⁷

Fig. 2-015: ca 1850 wood engraving from Ferry Hill looking towards Shepherdstown, WV. (C&O National Historical Park Image.)



¹⁰³ Henry Shepherd Day Books, Thornton Perry Collection, microfilm, Ruth Scarborough Library, Shepherd University, Shepherdstown, WV.

¹⁰⁴ Franklin Blackford Diary.

¹⁰⁵ WCLR, Liber IN 1, folio 886.

¹⁰⁶ WCLR, Liber IN 1, folio 738.

¹⁰⁷ WCLR, Liber IN 1, folio 741; Blackford-Grove-Mayer Collection, MdHS, MS 2637.

It does not seem likely that Henry and Eliza Blackford would have occupied the Ferry House after this sale. Indeed, the purchase for Henry may have been viewed as an investment – in 1849, Henry V. S. and Eliza M. Blackford sold the ferry property to The Virginia & Maryland Bridge Company for \$15,000. The conveyance included the ferry operation, boats, etc. as well as the ten acre lot and the stone cottage.¹⁰⁸

Efforts to build a bridge across the Potomac River between Sharpsburg and Shepherdstown began as early as 1818. In that year the Maryland General Assembly reviewed “An Act incorporating a Company to erect a Toll Bridge across the Potomac River, opposite Shepherd’s Town.” In order to raise the estimated \$100,000 to build the bridge, “books” were opened in Sharpsburg “under the direction of John Blackford, George Smith, Jacob Miller, Joseph Heddrick, and John Miller,” and in Shepherdstown “under the direction of John Baker, Thomas Van Swearingen, James S. Lane, Henry Boteler, and Thomas Toole.” Additional subscription books were located in Middletown, Frederick, Hagerstown, Boonsboro, Baltimore, Winchester, and Martinsburg. Section 17 of the Act stated: “That the proprietor or proprietors of the ferry, and ferry landing, at Shepherd’s town, shall be permitted to subscribe on the day the books are first opened, the whole amount of the sum they may be entitled to receive as a compensation for their property taken by the company aforesaid...”¹⁰⁹ The bridge was never built, apparently the necessary amount never collected. In 1827, the Virginia legislature sent the Maryland General Assembly a copy of a similar law with a request that Maryland pass legislation “providing for the erection of a toll bridge across the Potomac river, at or near Shepherdstown.” Maryland’s Internal Improvement committee answered, “that the object contemplated by the aforesaid law of Virginia, is fully provided for by an act of the General Assembly of Maryland, passed at December session, 1821,” perhaps referring to the final passage of the 1818 Act.¹¹⁰ Again, this bridge was never constructed and John Blackford and Thomas Van Swearingen continued as co-owners of the ferry. The 1849 Virginia & Maryland Bridge Company was more successful in bringing to reality the long-sought bridge across the Potomac. The frame covered bridge structure was constructed circa 1850 (Fig. 2-015).

Meanwhile, Franklin and Elizabeth Blackford sold the Ferry Hill mansion farm (~300 acres) to Rev. Robert Douglas, husband of Helen (Blackford) in 1848. The Douglasses were apparently living in Frederick County, Maryland at the time of their purchase of Ferry Hill

¹⁰⁸ WCLR, Liber IN 5, folio 50. The conveyance was subject to a mortgage of \$3,333.33 owed to the John Blackford executors John Miller and Otho Smith, presumably by Franklin Blackford.

¹⁰⁹ [Archives of Maryland](#) Online, Vol. 192, page 2257.

¹¹⁰ [Archives of Maryland](#) Online, Vol. 474, page 291.



Fig. 2-016: Thomas Taggart, Map of Washington County, 1859.
(Washington County Courthouse)

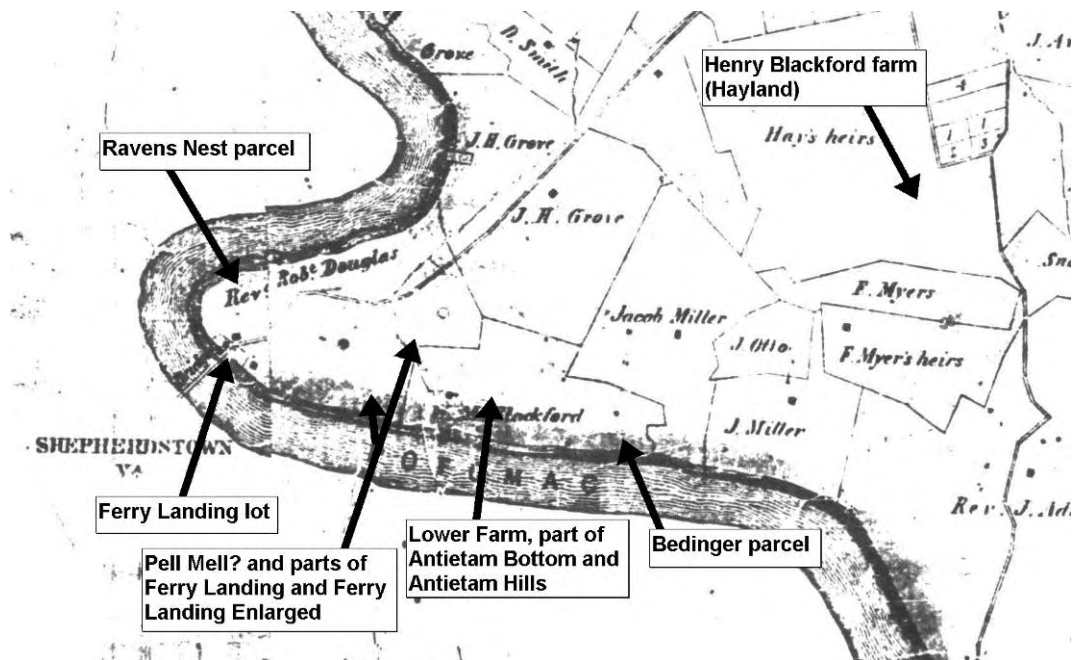


Fig. 2-017: Detail of Thomas Taggart map (above).

for which they paid \$16,000.¹¹¹ This represents a \$1,000 loss for the Blackfords. It is not clear where Franklin and Elizabeth lived after the sale of Ferry Hill. However, it appears they may have stayed on the Lower Farm owned by William M. Blackford who was apparently still in Georgetown. In a March 1852 letter written by Jacob Miller, Elizabeth R. (Miller) Blackford's father, he wrote (spelled as written): "Franklin, Elizabeth, and famly are stil living at Williams, all in good Helth Frank is gon out into Western Virginia again to look for a Situation...offers as he Says first rate land at one dollar per acre if any one or Set of men will take five thousand acres or more. he sais that land is covered with the finest timber he ever Seen of the best variety..."¹¹² Franklin Blackford was killed in a hunting accident in Nicholas County (West Virginia) in October 1852.¹¹³

The Douglas Family, Ferry Hill, and the Civil War

Robert and Helen (Blackford) Douglas had three children together, all born prior to their purchase of Ferry Hill: John Blackford Douglas, born 1842; Nancy Cowan Douglas, born 1844; and Robert Douglas, born 1846.¹¹⁴ Henry Kyd Douglas, from Rev. Douglas' first marriage to Mary (Robertson), was 12 years old when he arrived at Ferry Hill with his father and stepmother. He began a diary of his life at Ferry Hill in 1853, describing work and play on the farm and around the canal, but included little reference to the buildings of the farm and their maintenance.¹¹⁵ In 1856, Henry Kyd Douglas left Ferry Hill to attend Franklin & Marshall College in Lancaster, Pennsylvania.¹¹⁶

Thomas Taggart's Map of Washington County, published in 1859, showed the detailed outlines of the "Rev. Robt Douglas" and "Wm Blackford" farms. The combined boundaries of the Douglas (Ferry Hill Farm) and Blackford (Lower Farm) farms essentially represent the former Ferry Hill Plantation. The relatively new bridge and the outline of the Ferry Lot were also shown (Fig. 2-016 and 2-107). The 1860 U.S. Population Census listed Rev. Robert Douglas, a German Reformed Minister born in Ireland, aged 51, and his wife Helen, aged 37 [40? born 1820]. The farm they occupied was valued at \$26,000. Also listed in the household were Henry, a Lawyer aged 21, John, a Student aged 17, Nannie aged 16, and Robert aged 14. Douglas also listed ten slaves on the separately enumerated 1860 Slave Census. Nearby was listed William Blackford, a Farmer aged 36 [32? born 1828], his real estate (the

¹¹¹ WCLR, Liber IN 3, folio 816.

¹¹² From the Jacob Miller letters, transcribed by Paul Chiles and Jan Wetterer, Antietam National Battlefield, 1992.

¹¹³ Green and Hahn (1975), Epilogue.

¹¹⁴ Blackford family bible, Blackford-Grove-Mayer Collection, MdHS, MS 2637.

¹¹⁵ See Grivno (2000), p. 56, from Doug Bast 1983.

¹¹⁶ H. K. Douglas also wrote a diary while at Franklin & Marshall College (1856-1858), which was published by the college in 1973 under the title The Douglas Diary.

Lower Farm) valued at \$13,000. Henry and Eliza Blackford were listed nearby, probably on Miller's Sawmill Road on the former Joseph C. Hays farm called Hayland. William Blackford listed six slaves and Henry listed five on the separately compiled slave census.

Although Henry Kyd Douglas was listed in the Rev. Robert Douglas' household in 1860, it appears that H. K. Douglas never returned to Ferry Hill for any extended stay. After graduating from Franklin & Marshall in 1859, he took a position teaching at the Hagerstown Academy and served as its Principal. Throughout this period he studied law and in 1860 moved to Lexington, Virginia to complete his studies. Douglas began his private practice in St. Louis, Missouri.¹¹⁷

When the American Civil War broke out in April 1861 there was almost immediate impact on the daily lives of the Douglas family at Ferry Hill and their neighbors. Washington County was a border county in the border state of Maryland. Nearly equally divided between Northern and Southern sympathizers, literally brother faced brother in numerous battles throughout the war. The Douglas-Blackford family, with roots and continuing ties in Virginia, was known to sympathize with the Confederate cause. Henry Kyd Douglas joined the 2nd Virginia Infantry and eventually served on the staff of Confederate General Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson.

The Ferry Hill neighborhood, located directly on the North-South border (the Potomac River), was most directly affected throughout the war by troop encampments. The Union presence was nearly ubiquitous in order to protect the C&O Canal and the B&O Railroad lines just across the river in Virginia. Jacob Miller, neighbor and father of Elizabeth R. Blackford (Franklin's widow), noted in a letter dated August 20th, 1861 (spelled as written): "...there has been a Massachusetts Regiment encampment on Capt'n D. Smith's farm in the woods above Grove's Spring for the last two weeks a part of which were encamped...on Billy Blackford's land....The Southern troops burned the Harpersferry & Shepherdstown bridges before they left for Martinsburg & Winchester."¹¹⁸ In fact, Henry Kyd Douglas was among the Southern troops whose duty it was to destroy the bridges:

I was with the regiment that marched to Shepherdstown to destroy the bridge over the Potomac at that point. I was with the company that set fire to it, and when, in the glare of the burning timbers, I saw the glowing windows in my home on the hill beyond the river and knew my father was a stockholder in the property I was

¹¹⁷ Grivno (2000), pp.57-58.

¹¹⁸ From the Jacob Miller letters, transcribed by Paul Chiles and Jan Wetterer, Antietam National Battlefield, 1992.

helping to destroy, I realized that war had begun.¹¹⁹

In September 1862, Confederate General Robert E. Lee led the Army of Northern Virginia across the river into Maryland. The Maryland Campaign, as it was called, culminated on September 17th with the Battle of Antietam or Sharpsburg, fought on the farms adjoining the town of Sharpsburg and the Antietam Creek. The Confederate retreat crossed the Potomac River at the Pack Horse Ford on the 18th and 19th, the bridge having been burned the year before.

Although the Antietam Battle was fought several miles east of Ferry Hill, the farm and its buildings did not escape the battle unscathed. In his later memoir, Douglas described his beloved home farm, as it appeared following the Antietam/Sharpsburg battle, including the barn, which was probably burned in 1861:

...the barn was a black mass of ruins, and its bare stone walls, still standing, told the story of its early destruction. Now in a night, as it were, a beautiful farm was laid waste, its fences disappeared up to the doors of the mansion house, artillery parks fill the wheat fields; corn and fodder and hay soon became contraband of war. In front of the house, which from its high eminence looked into Virginia, were rifle pits; and several rifled cannon, with their angry muzzles pointing across the Potomac decorated the lawn.¹²⁰

¹¹⁹ Henry Kyd Douglas, I Rode With Stonewall, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1940), p. 6.

¹²⁰ Douglas, pp. 180-181..

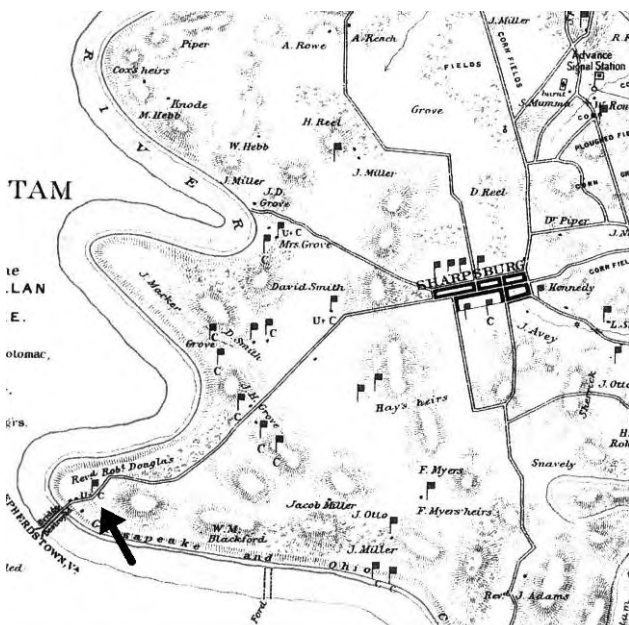
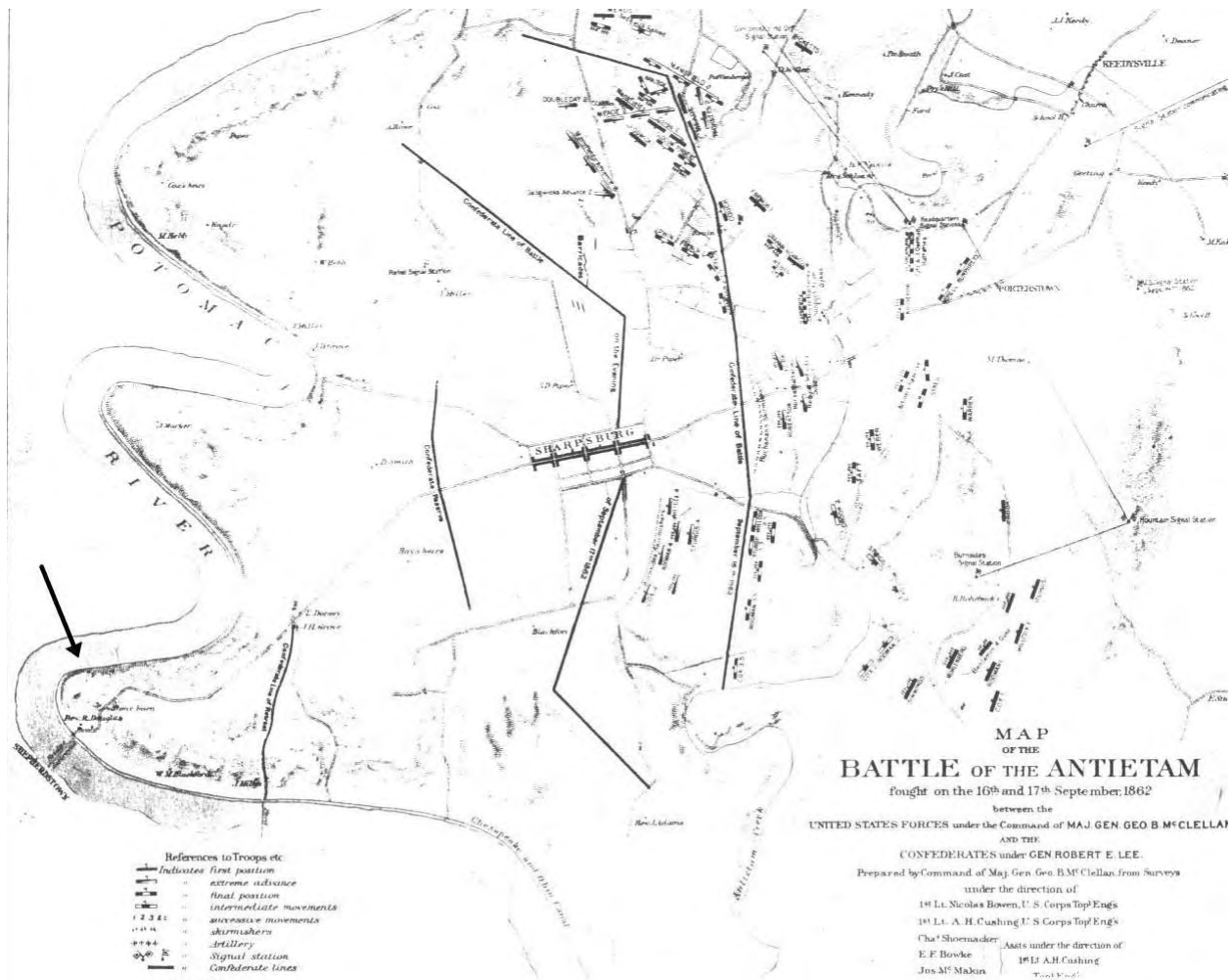


Fig. 2-018: Map of the Battle of Antietam (above); Official Antietam Battle map showing the location on Union (U) and Confederate hospitals (left). (Official Atlas Plate 28, #2) Black arrow points to the site of the Ferry Hill Plantation House.

A "Map of the Battle of the Antietam," drawn October 1862, (Fig. 2-018) described specifically the location of the "Stone barn" on Rev. Robert Douglas' farm. And as H. K. Douglas passed through the farm again in 1863, on his way to the battle at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, he noted that, "the blackened walls of the burnt barn stood up against the sky as a monument of useless and barbarous destruction."¹²¹

Another map from the Antietam Battle (2-018), drawn to accompany the official report of Union Surgeon J. Letterman, indicated the use of Ferry Hill as a Confederate and Union hospital.¹²² Dr. Elisha Harris, who visited the hospitals following the Antietam battle reported the mansion's use as a Confederate hospital but noted the presence of four Union soldiers as well. Historian John Nelson notes that these were probably the result of the September 19th Battle of Shepherdstown, the Union attempt to follow Confederate forces as they retreated across the Potomac River into Virginia.¹²³

Adding insult to injury, following the Battle of Antietam, Rev. Robert Douglas was arrested on suspicion of signaling to the enemy. The story is told that a windstorm blew the mansion house shutters open as Helen Douglas passed by the window with a lamp. As reported by Frederick diarist Jacob Engelbrecht, "The Reverend Robert Douglass [sic] was arrested at his home near Sharpsburg Maryland on the 28 instant for signaling to the Rebels. He was taken to Harpers Ferry to General McClellan. Mr. Douglass has always been a notorious Rebel or secessionist."¹²⁴ After several nights sleeping on the ground while held by General Burnside at Berlin (Brunswick) Maryland, Douglas was taken to Fort McHenry and housed in a "horse stable" until his release after six weeks by the Provost Marshall. When Rev. Douglas died in 1867, his illness was thought to be the direct result of his 1862 confinement.¹²⁵

The location of Ferry Hill, near the old Pack Horse Ford and overlooking the C&O Canal and the boundary of Virginia (in 1863, West Virginia), ensured that a Union presence would be felt throughout the war, and that Confederate forces would pass through with each campaign into Northern territory. In June of 1863, Confederate General Edward Johnson's Division, with Henry Kyd Douglas on his staff, encamped at Ferry Hill while en route to Gettysburg.¹²⁶ Again, in July 1864, Confederate General Jubal Early,

¹²¹ Henry Kyd Douglas, I Rode With Stonewall, p. 243..

¹²² Plate 28, Official Atlas of the Civil War, (Barnes & Noble edition, 2003), p.97.

¹²³ John H. Nelson, "As Grain Falls Before the Reaper," The Federal Hospital Sites and Identified Federal Casualties at Antietam, CD-ROM version, 2004, p.13.

¹²⁴ Jacob Engelbrecht Diary, CD-ROM version, The Historical Society of Frederick County (2001), p.957.

¹²⁵ John Marshall, American Bastille, 1870, pp.156-164. See also Douglas, pp. 181-182.

¹²⁶ Grivno (2000), p.67.

accompanied by Douglas, crossed into Maryland at Ferry Hill on his way to Washington, D.C. He was held up at Frederick by the Battle of Monocacy on July 9, 1864 and Washington was saved from destruction.

In April 1865, the American Civil War ended at Appomattox, Virginia. Henry Kyd Douglas remained in Virginia, occupied as a lawyer in Winchester. Douglas, an eloquent writer, wrote often to the local newspapers, first in Winchester and later in Hagerstown, offering opinions and memoirs of the Civil War. In an undated editorial clipping from the Winchester Times Douglas wrote on "Our New Citizens":

Second only in importance to the Revolution which aimed at the independence of the Confederate States, is the social and political revolution now at its height, which is converting property into persons, and making citizens and voters of our former slaves. In witnessing this sudden transformation, we are at first bewildered and fail to grasp, at once, the new situation and our consequent duties...

But it is time for us to recover from our natural bewilderment, to look clearly and calmly upon the situation, and to meet the difficulties which beset us, with a determination to overcome them or palliate their evils...Argument cannot restore the institution of slavery, and they are not many who would wish to see it restored in Virginia...

...the colored man should be encouraged to go to work, should be kindly treated, well and promptly paid, that he may be enabled to clothe and feed and house himself and his family comfortably and honestly. Between the capital of one class and the labor of the other there will be a community of interest and sympathy; and this feeling it is our duty and policy to promote.¹²⁷

Douglas championed "moral improvement and religious training" for the freedmen, but emphasized that "the Negro must be educated." He became a much-sought-after speaker on the battles and the issues of the Civil War, both in the North and the South.

As the wounds across the land began to heal following the Civil War, Rev. Robert Douglas weakened and died in 1867 "in his 60th year."¹²⁸ The next year, his daughter Nannie C. (Nancy Cowan) Douglas

¹²⁷ Winchester Times, n.d., from Henry Kyd Douglas scrapbook, Beckenbaugh Collection, Boonsborough Museum of History, Boonsboro, MD.

¹²⁸ Blackford Family Bible, Blackford-Grove-Mayer Collection, MdHS, MS 2637.

married John M. Beckenbaugh D.M. (doctor of medicine) of Baltimore City.¹²⁹ The 1870 U.S. Population Census listed only the widow Helen (Ellen) Douglas (age 46 [50?]) and her youngest son Robert (age 24) living at Ferry Hill. An Irish domestic servant named Jane McClellan, also listed in the Douglas household, assisted in the care of the large mansion house. The Ferry Hill property was valued at \$14,000, a significant decrease from ten years earlier. It was probably young Robert Douglas who constructed the new frame barn on the ruins of the old stone Blackford barn at Ferry Hill. A datestone inscribed "R.D. 187[?]" was located just above the original 1820 datestone on the west foundation wall. Presumably the stone walls of the old barn were removed down to the foundation and replaced with the standard timber framed Pennsylvania bank barn still standing today (2005).

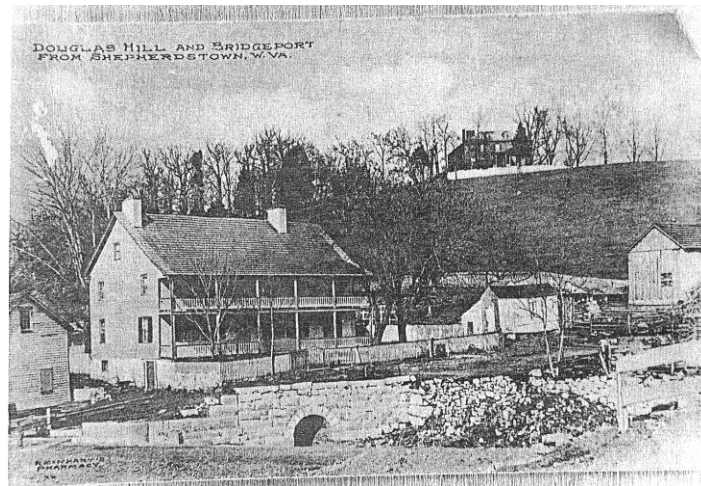


Fig. 2-019: Douglas Hill and Bridgeport from Shepherdstown, WV. (Collection of C&O Canal National Historical Park, L38-19.)

Henry Kyd Douglas, a Lawyer, aged 30, was listed on the 1870 census living in the Washington House Hotel in Hagerstown. Although he never married, Douglas was apparently engaged twice. His first engagement, early in the 1870s, was to Annie Dorsey Washington, the daughter of a Maryland Unionist who reportedly did not approve of the planned marriage. He sent his daughter on a European tour in 1875 from which she never returned, having died of an illness in Italy. Just days after her death, Henry Kyd Douglas received a letter from her, enclosed was a Lily of the Valley. Douglas wrote of his beloved in a poem "Thy Love Beyond the Grave,"

But here I stand within the rayless gloom
Waiting, My Annie, by the opening tomb
Weeping and hoping that God in his good will
May grant the immortal boon I crave
Thy love beyond the Grave.¹³⁰

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Henry Kyd Douglas scrapbook, Beckenbaugh Collection, Boonsborough Museum of History.

Many years later, in the 1890s, rumors circulated that Henry Kyd Douglas was engaged to marry Mrs. Nellie Grant Sartoris, the widowed daughter of Union General Ulysses S. Grant. The marriage never occurred, however, because Mrs. Sartoris would have lost her substantial endowment from her late husband had she remarried.¹³¹

The Beckenbaugh Period

Dr. John and Nannie Beckenbaugh, ages 30 and 26, lived in Sharpsburg by 1870, in the household of Catherine Knode (aged 79), Nannie's great-aunt. However, by 1873 the Beckenbaughs had apparently moved to Ferry Hill. John Beckenbaugh "departed this life at Ferry Hill" on July 21, 1873.¹³² Dr. Beckenbaugh was only 33 at the time of his death. Nannie C. (Douglas) Beckenbaugh was left with two young children, Helen and John Kyd.

In 1880, the Shenandoah Valley Railroad Company purchased a right-of-way through the Ferry Hill Farm from Helen B. Douglas, Henry Kyd Douglas, and Nannie C. Beckenbaugh. The sale implies that the widow Helen and her two surviving children each had a one-third interest in the farm in 1880.¹³³ The youngest son, Robert Douglas, predeceased his mother in 1872, a victim of pneumonia.¹³⁴ In 1882 Helen (Helena Blackford) Douglas died and Henry Kyd Douglas was given two-thirds interest in the Ferry Hill Farm while Nannie C. (Douglas) Beckenbaugh retained her one-third interest. John B. Douglas was given half of the personal property value.¹³⁵

The 1900 U.S. Census listed Henry Kyd Douglas on his North Potomac Street property in Hagerstown with his sister Nancy (Nannie) C. Beckenbaugh and nephew John [Kyd] Beckenbaugh, a Shipping Clerk. Nancy was described as a "Land Lady," presumably because she was tenanting out the Ferry Hill Farm. In March of 1897, a mention in the "Little Locals" column of The Shepherdstown Register noted, "Mr. Philip G. Needy has rented the Ferry Hill farm of Col. Henry Kyd Douglas, opposite Shepherdstown, which will be vacated by Mr. John Entler."¹³⁶ The 1900 census for the Sharpsburg District No. 1 where Ferry Hill is located listed Philip Needy, still renting the farm, with his wife Mamie, their three children, and a servant named Josh Turner.

¹³¹ Various newspaper clippings, Henry Kyd Douglas scrapbook, Beckenbaugh Collection.

¹³² Grove Family Bible, Blackford-Grove-Mayer Collection, MdHS, MS 2637; Washington Co. Will Book F, page 539.

¹³³ Washington Co. Plat Book, Liber GBO 79, folio 100, Plats.net.

¹³⁴ Shepherdstown Register, Dec. 21, 1872, clipping in Henry Kyd Douglas scrapbook, Beckenbaugh Collection, Boonsborough Museum of History, Boonsboro, MD.

¹³⁵ Unrau, HSR Report, 1977, p.32, citing Washington Co. estate records.

¹³⁶ The Shepherdstown Register, March 4, 1897, microfilm collection, Ruth Scarborough Library, Shepherd University, Shepherdstown, WV.

Henry Kyd Douglas died in 1903, his death noted with long eulogies in the newspapers of the region, particularly Hagerstown and Shepherdstown. He was buried in the Elmwood Cemetery in Shepherdstown, among his Confederate comrades. Nannie (Nancy) Beckenbaugh, Douglas' sister, was given his two-thirds interest in Ferry Hill on the condition that she pay \$2,000 to the wife of their brother John B. Douglas, living in Missouri. To make it official, after making the \$2,000 payment to Cornelia Douglas (John B.'s wife) she recorded in the Washington County Courthouse a Release of the "lien" on Ferry Hill Farm.¹³⁷ Nannie Beckenbaugh was then the sole owner of Ferry Hill. Nannie and her son John Kyd probably continued to live in the house on North Potomac Street in Hagerstown, also given to her in Douglas' will.¹³⁸

John Kyd Beckenbaugh married Harriet Louise Howard, a Hagerstown debutant who lived on South Prospect Street. They had one son, John Howard Beckenbaugh in 1903. The 1910 U.S. Census listed John K. Beckenbaugh in Hagerstown, his occupation in a "Glove Factory." Also listed in his household were his wife and son, and his mother Nancy C. Beckenbaugh, aged 66. Beckenbaugh moved his family, including his mother, to the Ferry Hill mansion house after the death of his sister Helen (Beckenbaugh) Cotton in 1911.¹³⁹ Capt. John Kyd Beckenbaugh, of Company B of the Maryland National Guard, was called to the Mexican border shortly after this move and was probably gone through the WWI period.¹⁴⁰ The 1920 U.S. Census listed John K. with Harriet, his wife, son John H. [Howard], and mother Nannie C. (age 75) in the Sharpsburg District.

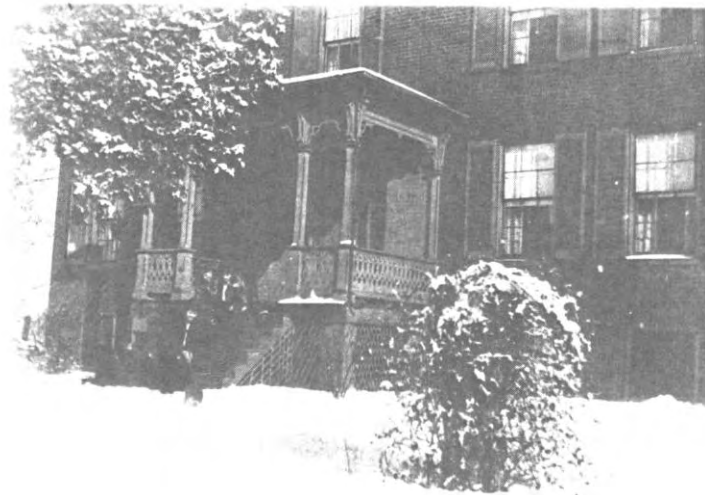


Fig. 2-020: ca. 1912 Porch.
(Collection of J. Howard Beckenbaugh,
copy with C&O National Historical
Park.)

¹³⁷ Washington Co. Will Book J, page 270, written 1895, probated 1903; WCLR, Liber GBO 120, folio 368.

¹³⁸ Unrau, p.33.

¹³⁹ Unrau, p.34, citing WCLR Liber 136, folio 481, Douglas and Dudley Cotton (sons) to John Kyd Beckenbaugh, purchase of Helen's interest in farm.

¹⁴⁰ 1978 (Ziek) interview with John Howard Beckenbaugh.

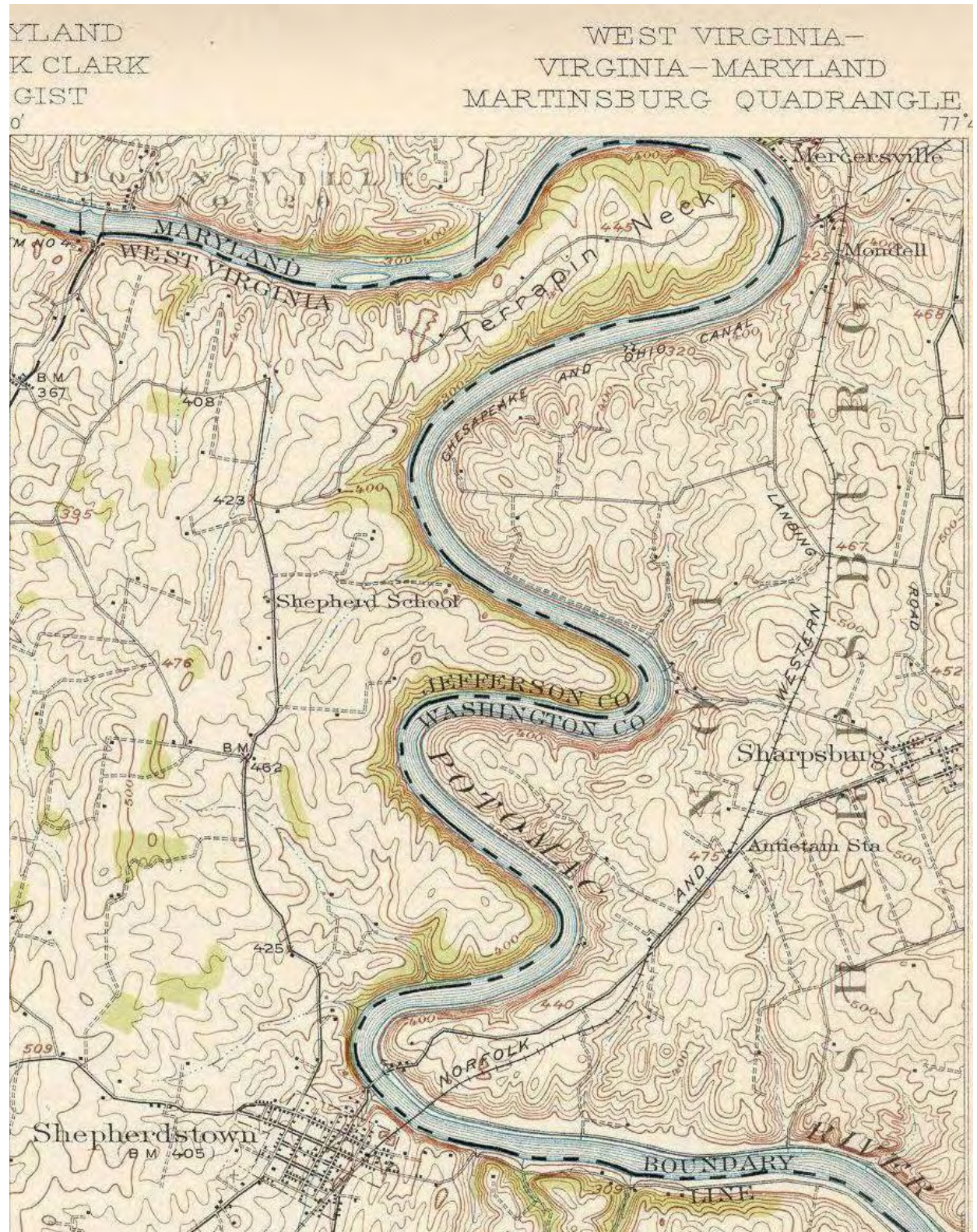


Fig. 2-021: USGS Martinsburg Quadrangle, 1916. (www.maptech.com, historic USGS maps.)

Nannie C. (Douglas) Beckenbaugh was still listed in the John Kyd Beckenbaugh household on the 1930 census. However, she died in September 1930. In her will she devised "my farm, known as 'Ferry Hill Farm,' of about two hundred acres of land and improvements" to her son John K. and daughter Helen Cotton (by then deceased), "share and share alike."¹⁴¹ Among the personal items devised in her will, Nannie left to John Kyd a "large writing desk which formerly belonged to my brother, Henry Kyd Douglas," and to her daughter Helen Cotton she left the family portraits – there were two in the inventory – a silver tea set, a mahogany Davenport, and a marble statue called "Psyche." The appraisal of Nannie Beckenbaugh's furniture after her death revealed that she lived relatively modestly, the total value being only \$806, and the most valuable piece being the Davenport. Among the furniture appraised was a "Mahogany Square Piano," valued at \$5.00, perhaps the piano purchased by John Blackford in Georgetown almost 70 years earlier.¹⁴²



Fig. 2-022: Panoramic View of Ferry Hill ca. 1920. (Photo courtesy Earl Roulette.)

John Howard Beckenbaugh, son of John Kyd and Harriet Beckenbaugh, recalled in a 1978 interview with archeologist Robin Ziek, the operation of the Ferry Hill Farm. Drawing on the information from that interview, Ziek concluded:

The Beckenbaughs ran Ferry Hill as an active farm from 1914-1928. There was an orchard along the Potomac River bluff, but sixty breed sows were kept as the main cash crop. Each sow had to have at least 10 piglets twice yearly, or they were slaughtered. There were small A-frame shelters scattered through the fields and orchards, and

¹⁴¹ Washington Co. Will Book 16, page 482.

¹⁴² Washington Co. Inventory and Appraisements, book 41, page 449.



Fig. 2-023: Photo of Ferry Hill and Iron Bridge, ca. 1920. (Photo courtesy Earl Roulette.)

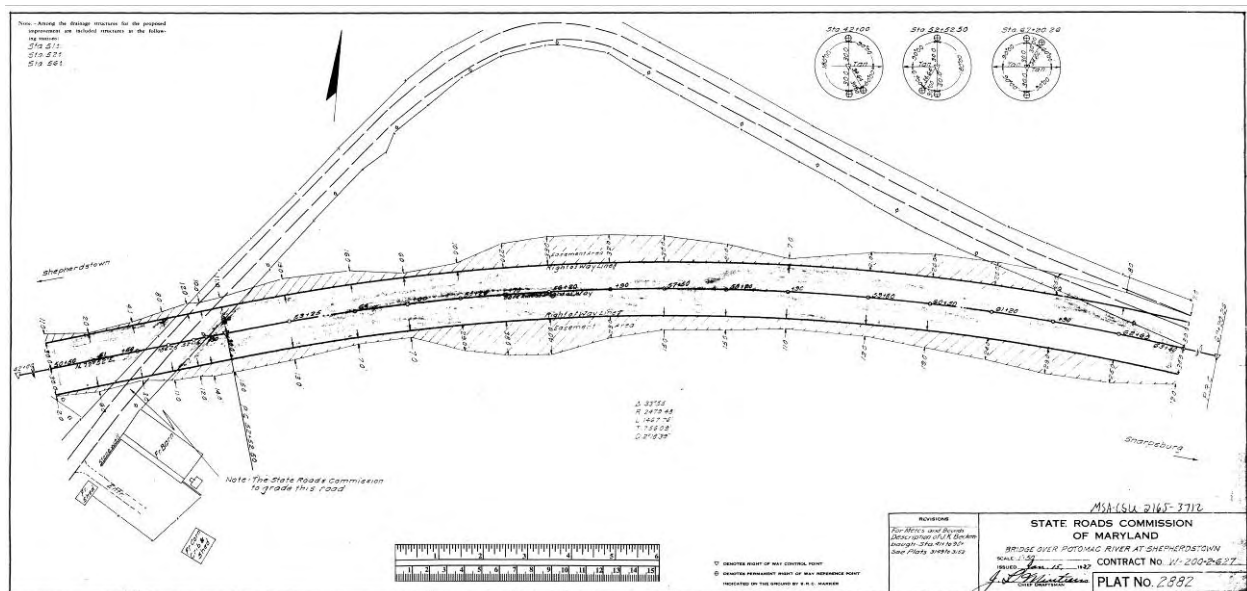
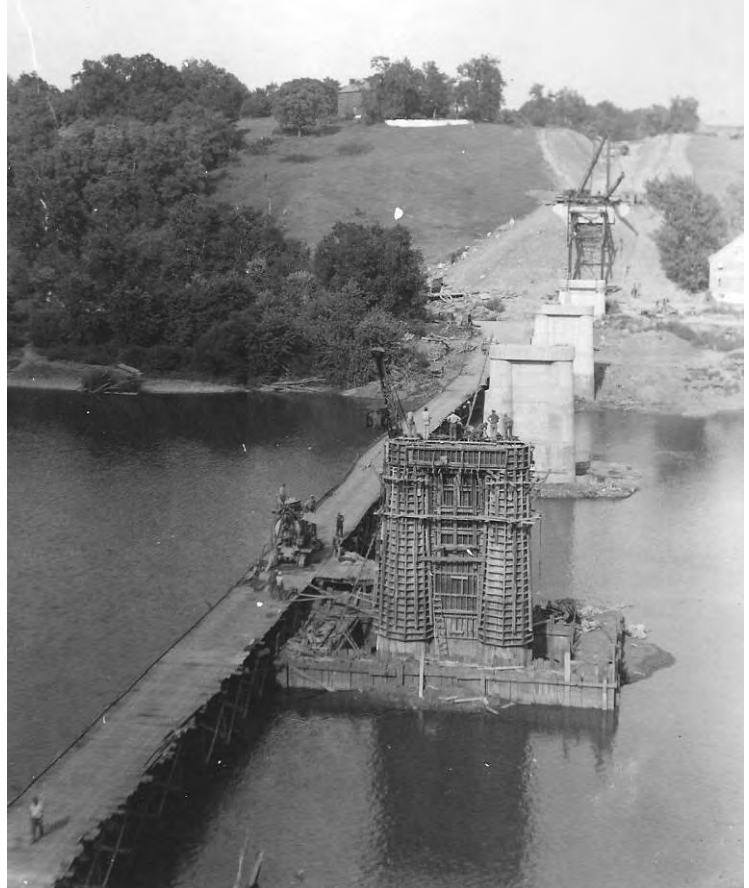


Fig. 2-024: State Road Commission of Maryland map of Rt. 34 realignment. (MD Dept. of Transportation.)



Figs. 2-025 and 2-026: 1939 Bridge Construction (right and below).
(Photos courtesy Earl Roulette.)



Howard had to make sure that there was always water at each hut.

In 1924, a cholera epidemic wiped out over 700 hogs, although most of the breed sows had been inoculated and did not die. The Beckenbaughs decided to stop actively farming in 1928, in spite of the fact that Howard had gone to Agriculture School at the University of Maryland and wanted to run the farm. He left home at this time, but his parents continued to live at Ferry Hill.¹⁴³

In fact, John Kyd Beckenbaugh, on the 1930 census, listed himself as a "Flower Gardener" at the age of 67.

The Beckenbaughs may have considered discontinuing farming in 1922, according to the diary of F. Pauline Blackford, a granddaughter of Henry V.S. Blackford, living in Sharpsburg at the time. In her entry for January 6, 1922 she noted: "Beckenbaughs have decided to leave farm – Sad news indeed."¹⁴⁴ It appears that the family changed their mind about leaving, however, the cholera, and floods – a massive Potomac River flood in 1924 permanently closed the C&O Canal – and economic decline in the late 1920s brought an end to the Beckenbaugh's Ferry Hill farm operation. After 1933 John K. Beckenbaugh was appointed superintendent of the Antietam National Battlefield Park and Antietam National Cemetery.

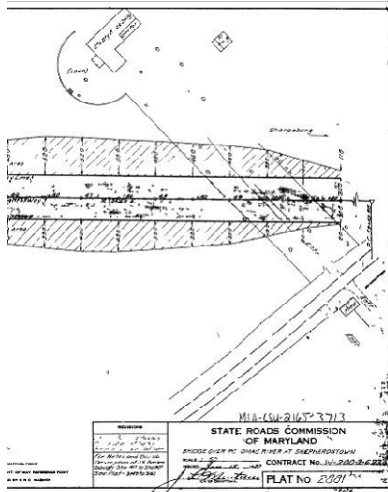


Fig. 2-027: State Road Commission of Maryland map of Rt. 34 realignment, 1939. (MD Dept. of Transportation.)

The 1924 flood also took out the iron truss bridge (Fig. 2-023) built in 1890 to replace an earlier bridge destroyed by flood, a frame structure constructed in 1868 to replace the one burned in the Civil War.¹⁴⁵ For more than ten years the old ferry crossing was revived. In 1937, plans were drawn for the construction of a new bridge over the Potomac River to Shepherdstown. It required a realignment of the old turnpike road, now known as Maryland Route 34, which cut directly across the front hillside of Ferry Hill (Fig. 2-024).¹⁴⁶ The small frame dwelling shown east of the Ferry Hill mansion house (Fig. 2-027) was probably John Blackford's office building, from which \$170 were stolen from Blackford and where Martin Shellman, one of Blackford's laborers, lodged when he was sober. The new bridge was constructed in 1939 (Figs. 2-025 and 2-026).

When John K. Beckenbaugh died in 1941, John Howard Beckenbaugh took over the Ferry Hill Farm. According to (John) Howard Beckenbaugh, he and his first wife (Josephine?) converted

¹⁴³ Robin D. Ziek, "Archeology Survey, C&O Canal, Ferry Hill," 1979, p.22.

¹⁴⁴ F. Pauline Blackford Diary, F. Pauline Blackford Collection, MS 2637, MdHS, Baltimore, MD.

¹⁴⁵ Archives of Maryland Online, Vol. 396, page 549 (1890) and Vol. 142, page 2576 (1868).

¹⁴⁶ Washington Co. Plat No.2881, Plats.net.



Fig. 2-028: Ferry Hill Plantation House, c1945. (Collection of J. Howard Beckenbaugh.)



Fig. 2-029. Ferry Hill photo, c1938. (Henry Kyd Douglas, *I Rode with Stonewall*, pg. 26.)

part of the mansion house to a restaurant, "rather than reactivate the farm," but continued to live in the second story of the house. A frame kitchen was added to the rear of the house to accommodate the restaurant "run by his wife and mother."¹⁴⁷ Howard and his first wife divorced some time in the mid-1940s and in March 1948, he married a second time, to Helen N. Poole a school teacher.¹⁴⁸ In June 1948, Beckenbaugh and his new wife Helen conveyed to Harriet L. Beckenbaugh (widow) and Josephine M. Beckenbaugh (unmarried [ex-wife?]) one-sixth interest to each in Ferry Hill Farm. The property was by this time divided into two parcels by the new road alignment, the larger parcel of 38 acres roughly encompassing the "Ravens Nest" lot and including the house and its remaining outbuildings. The second parcel of 3 ½ acres was on the south side of the new road.¹⁴⁹ Harriet and Josephine then took out a mortgage on their interest in the farm for \$10,500.¹⁵⁰

In 1950 by Charles F. Wagaman, trustee (for Howard and Helen?) sold the property to Josephine Beckenbaugh and Frederick W. Morrison as partners "trading as Ferry Hill."¹⁵¹ The Ferry Hill Inn, as it was known, continued as an active restaurant. The following year, Josephine sold her interest in Ferry Hill to Morrison.¹⁵² Morrison continued the restaurant business adding the concrete block wing to serve as the barroom and removing many of the associated outbuildings from the mansion house property.

Frederick and Dorothy Morrison sold the remaining remnant of Ferry Hill Farm, minus a reserved lot containing the mansion house, to the National Park Service in 1974. "This reservation to include the main house, the garage, the existing restaurant and bar, the existing parking lot and sufficient of the herein described lands to provide for full use thereof as presently used and conducted including ingress and egress for residential and public commercial use" (Fig. 2-030).¹⁵³ The reserve, "not to exceed five (5) acres," was agreed to last five years from the sale of the property. However the Morrison's

¹⁴⁷ Ziek, Archeology Report, 1979, pp.23-24.

¹⁴⁸ Washington Co. Marriage Record #94624, Washington Co. Courthouse, Hagerstown, MD.

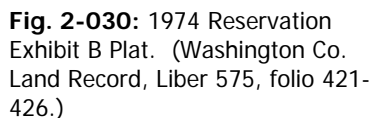
¹⁴⁹ WCLR, Liber JGW 247, folio 646. According to Doug Bast, Helen Norton was John Howard Beckenbaugh's second wife; that he and his first wife had given the Blackford diaries etc. to the University of North Carolina library and that Helen had the collection recalled and donated to the Washington Co. Historical Society. She later withdrew them from the WCHS and gave them to the Maryland Historical Society in Baltimore and to Bast's Boonsborough Museum of History. Each of the repositories that held the collection supposedly kept a few pieces so that the collection is now scattered. Helen N. Beckenbaugh wrote a history of Ferry Hill for a college class in which she cited an 1825-1826 Blackford diary, its location is now unknown.

¹⁵⁰ WCLR, Liber JGW 247, folio 647.

¹⁵¹ WCLR, Liber JGW 259, folio 363.

¹⁵² WCLR, Liber 264, folio 204.

¹⁵³ WCLR, Liber 575, folio 421, Exhibit A and B.



The reservation term period ended in 1979 and the Morrisons turned over the Ferry Hill mansion house to the National Park Service. Used as the administrative headquarters for the C&O Canal National Historical Park, the rear "ell" of the house, formerly used for the restaurant, was converted to office space using moveable partitions. In the front section of the house, individual rooms were used as offices although little of the original fabric was altered. The remaining two ancillary buildings, the garage and the "C&O Canal House" were converted to maintenance and archives use, respectively.

Today (2005) the Ferry Hill mansion stands vacant, still overlooking the Potomac River crossing established by 1755. A new bridge, fifth in the succession of bridges at this location, is currently under construction below the Ferry Hill summit. Despite changes to the building and the landscape around it, the Ferry Hill mansion remains as a dominating physical presence, a testament to the men and women, both white and black, who cultivated the crossing, the plantation, and the canal with their vision and their labor.

¹⁵⁴ WCLR, Liber 649, folio 428.

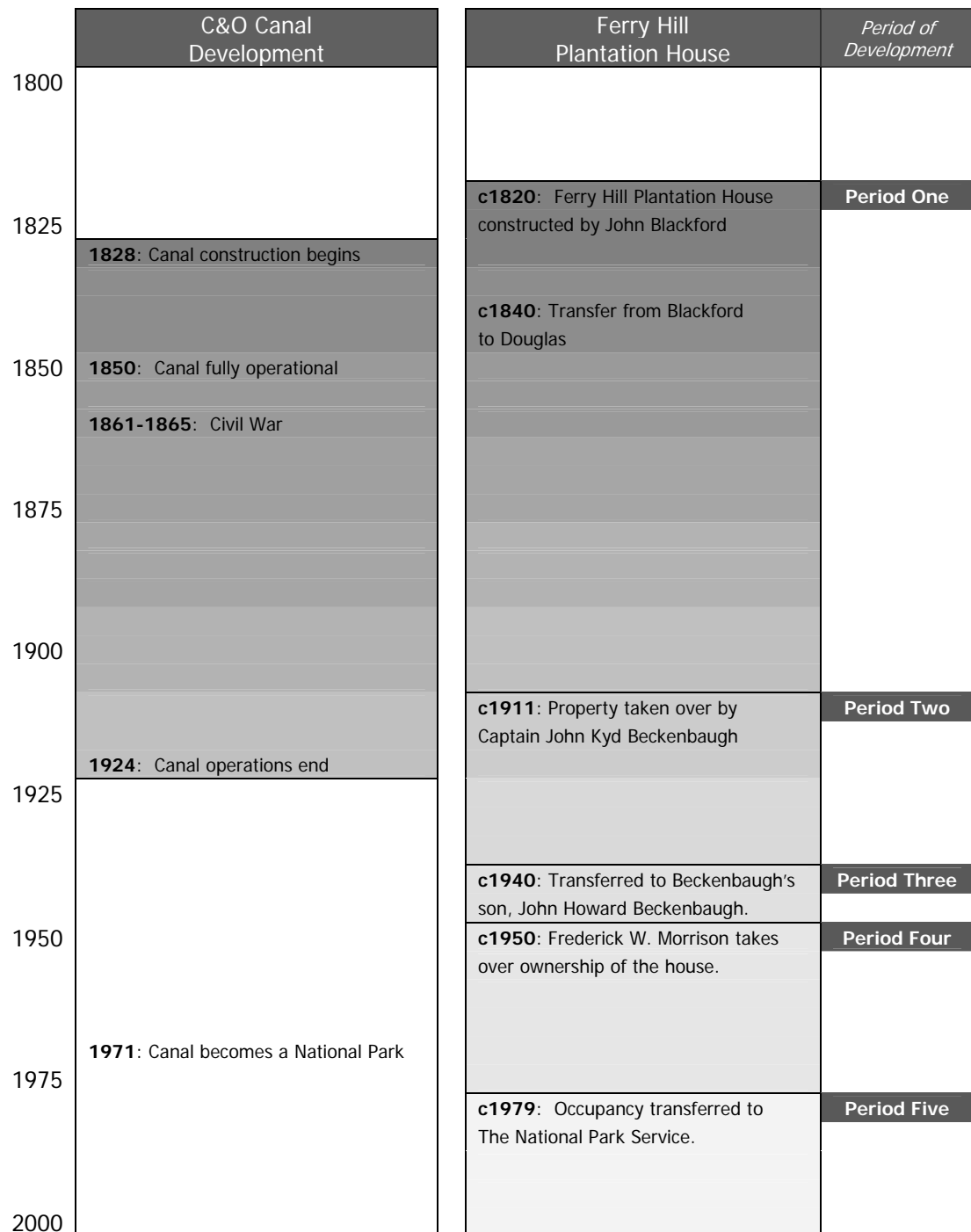
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Chronology of Development and Use

Graphic Timeline

Fig. 3-001: Graphic timeline of development.

This graphic timeline (Fig. 3-001) juxtaposes the development of the C&O Canal and the Ferry Hill Plantation House. Periods of Development for the plantation, as designated for this report, are indicated to the right.



Overview of Development

The development and use of the Ferry Hill Plantation House can be separated into five distinct periods. These periods are discussed below, sequentially. Period One includes the time from the house's construction, through the occupancy of the Blackford and Douglas families, from c1820 to c1911. Period Two includes the time the house was owned by Captain John Kyd Beckenbaugh, from c1911 to c1940. Period Three includes the time the house was owned by the Captain's son, John Howard Beckenbaugh, from c1940 to c1950. Period Four includes the time the house was owned by Frederick W. Morrison, from c1950 to 1979. Period Five includes the time the house was fully controlled by the National Park Service, from 1979 to the present. Creating these periods helps to organize and categorize changes in the physical arrangement to the house, changes in occupancy, and changes in spatial use.

Floor plans for each period are included, with "plan" north always toward the top of the page. The National Park Service documentation team established this convention during their 1978 field research and included it within their drawing set (number 412/26019, see Appendix A). This convention is continued here, both in the textual descriptions and in the drawings. The actual orientation for the north elevation is west-northwest.

As originally constructed c1820, the house had an L-plan arrangement (Fig. 3-002). Typically, in an L-plan, the longer leg of the "L" is called the "main block" and the shorter leg is called the "ell." The term "ell" typically refers to a building component that is significantly smaller, a later addition, or an after-thought. However, at Ferry Hill, both segments of the L-plan had considerable—almost equal—massing significance, and both were built simultaneously. To avoid confusion in the terminology of the pieces of the L-plan, the formal western portion of the house will be termed the "west block" and remainder of the house the "north leg."

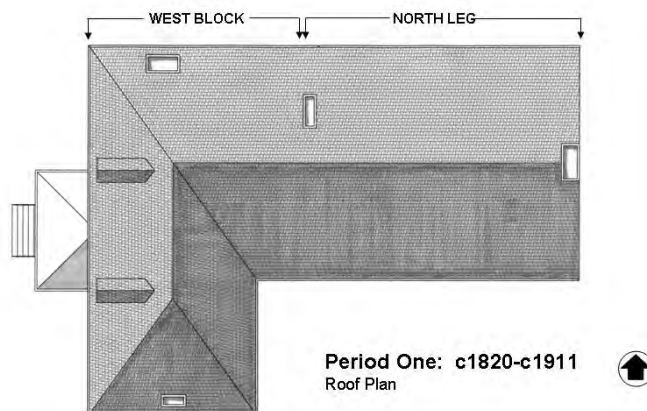


Fig. 3-002: Roof plan showing the massing of the original Period One layout of the Ferry Hill Plantation House. (GWWO, 2005.)



Fig. 3-003: The Ferry Hill Plantation House and grounds, Bridgeport, and the C&O Canal, as seen from across the Potomac River in Shepherdstown, c1890. (C&O National Historical Park).



Fig. 3-004: Period One roof shingles sandwiched below the side framing member for the dormer. West roof, north dormer, north side, viewed from the attic. (GWWO photo, 2004.)

Period One: c1820 – c1911

Exterior:

Massing and overall arrangement:

John Blackford oversaw construction of the Ferry Hill Plantation House, which was probably completed by 1820. The building's masonry mass formed an L-shaped plan, with the overall outside dimensions of the west block measuring 55'-7" by 31'-11" and the outside dimensions of the north leg measuring 41'-9" by 22'-4". The west block was built with a structurally hipped roof at each of its ends. The north leg continued the roof slopes of the west block in a gable form, and had a gable end at the east. The original roofing material consisted of 22"-24" wood shingles laid with a 6" exposure (Fig. 3-004). Shingles were treated with a "Spanish Brown" stain. Remnants of this material can be seen under the dormer framing on the west side of the attic. The placement of this framing above the shingles indicates that the dormers were cut into the roof after the shingles were in place. Certainly the dormers appeared early in the property's history, and before the installation of the slate roof (see *Later Period One Exterior Alteration* below). The original dormers exist today, with arched-headed double hung wood windows with narrow muntins. The four original chimneys still exist, with one at each end of the west block, one central to the overall massing, and one at the east end of the north leg.

Windows and Door Openings:

For the most part, the original arrangement and location of window and door openings (Fig. 3-009) has not been altered and remains today. Alterations are noted in the discussions that follow for each development Period.

The original windows were six-over-six double-hung wood units, with narrow wood muntins (Fig. 3-005). All of the windows have been partially renovated more than once, making it difficult to establish, without additional investigation, the extent to which original window



Fig. 3-005: Typical Period One window opening, west block, west elevation. (GWWO photo, 2004.)



Fig. 3-006: Remnant of penciled masonry dating to Period One; west block, south elevation. (GWWO photo, 2004.)



Fig. 3-007: South porch, 2004. The western enclosures on the first and second floors date to Period Two; the second story wood columns date to Period Five. (GWWO photo, 2004.)

fabric remains. Wood shutters flanked the windows. The design of the shutters is not certain; with the first documented photographs of the early 20th century (dating to late Period One or early Period Two) showing louvered wood shutters. The western formal front door, with its fan-light, side lights, and wood trim detailing, was original construction and survives intact. The other exterior doors appear to be original. However, some of the surrounding casings and trims have been renovated, as described in later Periods.

Foundation:

The west block of the building was constructed over a basement area; the north leg was over crawl space. The exposed foundation material at the majority of the west block was brick masonry, the lower portions of the wall are stone. On the north leg and the portions of the west block (the northern two-thirds of the east elevation) rough-laid local limestone was used above grade.

Four three-over-three double hung wood basement windows on the west elevation had shutters and probably no window wells (with wells the shutters could not have opened into a flat position.) Two three-paned hopper basement windows were on the east, and one on the north side, toward the east side of the basement. Because the land sloped to the west, the western windows could be taller. The foundation window opening on the north was altered later (see Period Three).

Brick Masonry:

The brick masonry of the house included a molded cornice that survives today. Window openings were headed with jack arches that survive. The western façade was laid in Flemish bond, and the remainder in common bond with headers every fifth or sixth course. The brick surface may have been left natural before 1835. At that time, Blackford improved both exterior and interior finishes. The exterior masonry was coated with a reddish-brown stain and then joints were lined ("penciled") with a white paint. Two small remnants of this penciling survive on the south elevations, in areas above the door to the basement (Fig. 3-006). Other areas of penciling may survive on portions of the east elevation of the north leg, behind the Period Three kitchen addition.

Porches:

The south, two-story porch was original to the house, and opened to the south fully on both levels (Fig. 3-009). The first story columns were constructed of curved bricks, with the masonry exposed. This masonry survives under a parging that dates to Period Three (Fig. 3-023). Second floor columns were solid round wood, of unknown construction. The easternmost column that currently exists may be original to the porch construction, although it is heavily weathered and has been scraped and repainted, making it difficult to discern the method of construction. The other columns are known to be replacements during Period Five (see below). The ground level floor



Fig. 3-008a: The federal-style front of the Sherrick House, Antietam Battlefield. The porch design may be similar to the original west porch at Ferry Hill. (Seibert Photo, July 2005.)

of the south porch was brick masonry and does not survive. The wood wall on the east side second floor was original and survives. The double-hung, two-over-two wood louvered shutter in the opening within this wall may be original to Period One. The casing surrounding this louvered opening matches that found in the upper hall (currently room 208).

The original one-story west porch was wood, with a low-pitched roof. Two separate sets of anchoring holes for the porch roof's ledger board exist in the masonry. The remnants of the holes are located between the second and fourth brick courses over the masonry arch of the fan light of the western door. The porch was approximately 8' wide by 16' long with a western set of steps that included seven risers to reach grade. The design and detailing of this original porch are not known. The general character of this original porch may be reflected on the extant Sherrick House, Antietam Battlefield (Fig. 3-008a).

Later Period One Exterior Alterations:

It is known that the roofing material was changed from wood shingle to a blue-gray slate shingle sometime during Period One, perhaps c1866-c1870 when the property was repaired from damages incurred during the Civil War (see Section 2: Developmental History). Several pieces of the slate are currently stored in the attic. A snowboard was used on the slate roof. The north and south gutters of the north leg sloped to the east and fed sloping downspouts mounted on the east elevation of the north leg. These tied together into one downspout at the edge of the south porch (Fig. 3-011).

Also during Period One, the west porch detailing was adjusted. It is unknown if the whole porch was rebuilt or if only the detailing was modified. The carved fascia boards, bracketed column capitals,

Fig. 3-008b-d: Below, clockwise from left: The west front of the west block, c1912, showing the Period One porch. (Photo, Ziek Archeological Survey, June 1979.) Two examples of neighboring porches of similar design, seen on houses at 207 and 133 West Main Street, Sharpsburg, MD. GWWO photos, 2004.



"gingerbread" railings, and lattice skirts documented in a photograph (taken toward the end of Period One or early in Period Two) show a Victorian period, c1870-1890 design (Fig. 3-008b). Porches with some similar details still exist on several houses located in downtown Sharpsburg (Fig. 3-008c and d).

At some time during late Period One, the columns of the south porch may have been painted an ivory color. Remnants of this paint were uncovered below the parging (applied Period Two, see below) during column repairs undertaken in 2004 (Fig. 3-023). However, the bricks that were painted may have been miscellaneous base repair bricks set in before the parging. They are set in mortar that is distinctly different in color from their neighbors.

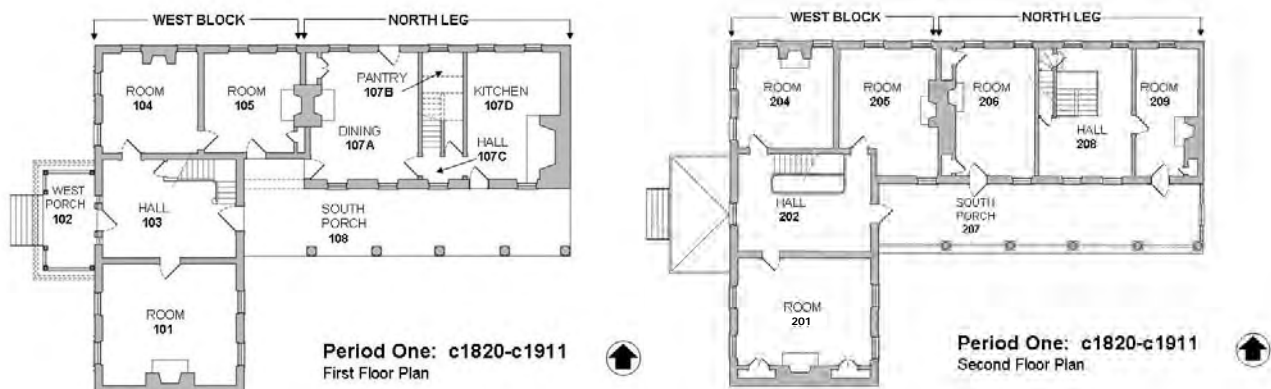


Fig. 3-009: Period One Floor Plans.
(GWWO, 2005.)

Interior:

General layout, arrangements, and uses:

Although built simultaneously, the two wings of the house had separate internal circulation. An occupant could not go between the west block and the north leg without going outdoors. Each leg had its own stairway. The attic, which spans both sections, was only accessible from the stair in the north leg. Access to the basement was limited to the stairway in the west block.

West Block:

The rooms on the first floor of the west block served formal, social, and perhaps some business (office) functions. One large room to the south (room 101), was undoubtedly used as a formal parlor and sitting room. Room (104) may have been used for music, holding a piano that the Blackford family is known to have owned. Both these rooms were accessed directly from the central, formal hall (103). This hall also had direct access to the open south porch (108). The other northern room (105) did not communicate directly with the hall but was accessed through room 104 or from the south porch (108). Much of the detailing of the woodwork, windows and doors throughout these first floor spaces of the west block remains, and

dates to this original Period One (see Physical Description section for specifics). The formal, open stair to the second floor is original to Period One.

The second floor of the west block had a room arrangement that mirrored the first floor, however circulation was slightly different, in that all three rooms (201, 204 and 205) were accessed from the central hall (202). There was no passage between the two northern rooms (204 and 205), as existed on the first floor. Probably all three rooms served as bedrooms. From the second floor central hall (202), one could directly access the open south porch (207). Much of detailing of the woodwork, windows and doors throughout these spaces remains, and dates to this original Period One (see Physical Description section for specifics).

North Leg:

The first floor spaces of the north leg included the dining room (107A), a back stair, pantry (107B), hall (107C) and kitchen (107D). Documentation concerning the original arrangement of the back stair, hall and pantry (spaces which no longer exist) is included in Appendix C-1. An exterior door from the dining room to the south porch was located at the alcove outside room 105. The original alcove opening configuration is unknown (see Period Two below, for the addition of the arched opening that exists today). An exterior door from the kitchen opened directly onto the south porch. Portions of the window and door casing details in this area date to Period One (see Physical Description section for specifics).

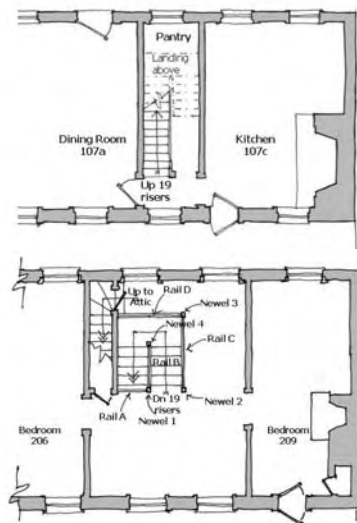


Fig. 3-010: First floor plan, east end of current Room 107, showing the original arrangement of the back hall, stairs, and pantry (above); Second floor plan, east end, current Room 207, showing the original arrangement of the back stairs, opening, and access to the attic (below). (GWWO, 2005.)

The second floor of the north leg included three interior spaces (206, 208, 209) and the south porch (207). The two eastern rooms (208, 209) were distinctly separate from the rest of the house, with simpler detailing and limited access. Early diary records indicate that the spaces may have been used by the house slave(s)/ servant(s), or as the slave hospital. (See Blackford's diary entry for Jan. 3, 1830.) Some of the existing casework at the windows and doors are from Period One (see Physical Description section for specifics).

The upper hall (208) contained the open stair that led down to the kitchen (Fig. 3-010). The upper hall also had a door to the attic stairs. The first step of the attic stairs extended out into the room in front of the door. The southern portion of the upper hall was large enough to be used, perhaps, as additional sleeping or work space. Views from the two southern windows in this area provided a clear view of anyone coming or going from the southern side of the property. Neither the main hall (202) nor this back hall (208) had a fireplace. The back hall did not communicate directly with the south porch (207) but did access the narrow east bedroom (209), which had an exterior door to the south porch (207). Please see Appendix C for photographs, evidence and a more detailed description of this configuration.

The westernmost room (206) of the north leg was used either as a bedroom or an office. The detail in this room was of a high level, more closely resembling that found in the west block. This room was difficult to reach. From the west block, one came up the formal stairs into the front hall (202), exited to the south porch (207), and then entered room (206). From the north leg, one came up the back stairs into hall (208), crossed through room (209) to access the south porch and finally entered room (206).



Fig. 3-011: Exterior of Ferry Hill Plantation House during Period Two (c1938), showing the east side of the west block and the east and south sides of the north leg, prior to the construction of the east addition. Note, east side downspouts, west block snowboard at roof, and lattice on columns. (Henry Kyd Douglas, / *Rode with Stonewall*, pg. 26.)

Period Two: c1911 – c1940

Captain John Kyd Beckenbaugh took ownership of the mansion in 1911, but may not have actually occupied the property until sometime after c1917. The majority of changes that occurred during his tenure probably were undertaken during the period c1917-c1920, to make the house more usable for him and his family. Changes to the exterior during his ownership were not extensive. The major exterior alterations occurred at the area of the south porch.

Exterior:

Porches:

On the first level of the south porch, a glazed-in entry vestibule was added to the west end, enclosing the westernmost two bays. The glazing units were double hung, six-over-six wood windows set above a parged base. The arched opening at the alcove outside the dining room door was created, and the masonry walls of the glazed entry parged and painted. At this same time, the exposed brick surfaces of the south porch columns were parged. With the creation

of this side vestibule, an interior enclosed path was provided at the first floor from the rooms of the west block to those in the north leg.

On the second floor of the south porch, the westernmost six feet were enclosed to create an inside bathroom (Figs. 3-011 and 3-012). This is the first appearance of an indoor bathroom in the house. The exterior of this frame addition was clad with painted horizontal wood siding. With this addition, the formal circulation path to the second floor room 206 was interrupted. This mandated additional interior alterations.

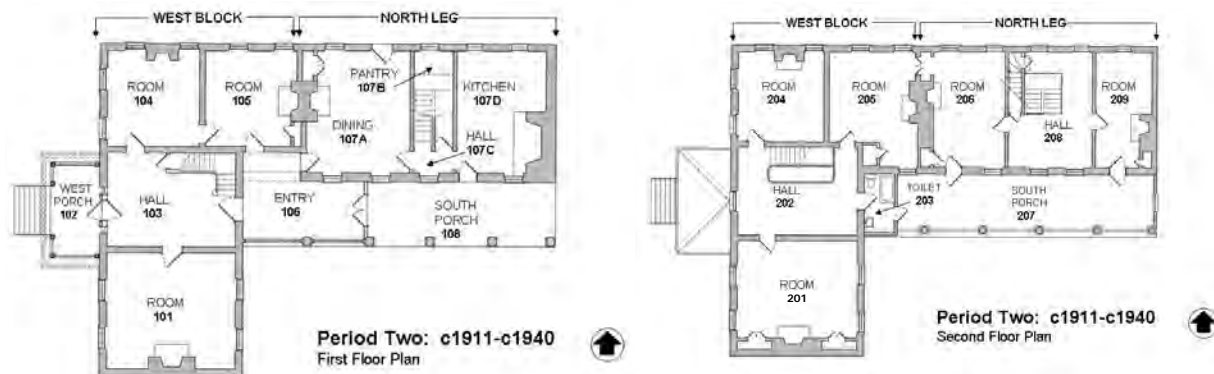


Fig. 3-012: Period Two Floor Plans. (GWWO, 2005.)

Interior:

West Block:

Because the bathroom (toilet 203) was added to the second floor south porch, an alternative circulation path was necessary to reach the north leg. The wall north of the fireplace in room 205 was opened to create a passageway to bedroom 206. Other alterations that occurred during this period included the addition of a closet on the south wall of bedroom 205. For detailed descriptions of the evidence of these alterations, see room 205 and 206 descriptions in Section 4.

North Leg:

A second access to bedroom 206 was created on the east side of the room by adding a door to the upper hall (208), which allowed access to the bedroom, via the kitchen stairs, without going through any other bedroom. For detailed descriptions of the evidence of these alterations, see room 206 descriptions in Section 4. On the first floor, the fireplace in the kitchen was remodeled with side cabinets and a new brick surround. The overall size of the hearth maintained its large, walk-in arrangement.

Mechanical, Electrical:

During this Period, Beckenbaugh probably introduced central heating into the house, with a coal fired steam furnace and system of radiators fed by a single pipe steam system. The use of coal is an assumption because coal was the fuel of choice for this area during this period. The trademark of a single pipe steam system is large diameter pipe allowing for the steam to flow up and then condensate

down. This is evident with a large circular floor patch adjacent to some of the 1950's vintage hot water radiators. The extent of the single pipe steam system or layout can not be determined. With the installation of Toilet 203, it is assumed plumbing was also extended to Kitchen 107D. The house probably received its first electrical systems during this Period for electric light and to drive a water well pump. A water well pump is assumed due to lack of evidence of a cistern located in the attic space to feed plumbing fixtures.

Fig. 3-013: Exterior of Ferry Hill Plantation House during Period Three (c1945), showing the south and west side of the west block. Note: storm windows, slate roof, snowboard at roof, loss of shutters, and masonry cracks between the windows of the first and second floors. (Collection J. Howard Beckenbaugh.)



Fig. 3-014: Exterior of Ferry Hill Plantation House during Period Three (pre-1950), showing the west elevation of the west block. Note arrangement of front porch, slate roof, and loss of shutters. (C&O National Historical Park.)



Period Three: c1940 – c1950

At the death of Captain John Kyd Beckenbaugh in 1941, the ownership of the property transferred to his son, John Howard Beckenbaugh. At this time, the use of the property changed as well, from that of a plantation to that of a restaurant. John made several substantial changes to the house to help facilitate this change in use.

Exterior:

East Kitchen Addition:

A one-story wood framed kitchen addition (Room 114) was added to the east side of the north leg. The addition had a gable roof clad with wood shingles, and had painted, horizontal wood siding on the walls. The addition was built over a shallow crawl space. The south



Fig. 3-015: Window 4A, where the change in brick shows evidence of an originally larger window. (GWWO photo, 2004.)

and east elevations of the addition survive, appearing as they did when they were originally built, but with some replacement siding installed during Period Five (see below). The north elevation does not currently survive, since it was modified and enclosed in a later addition (see Period Four, below). Based upon the addition's roof slope, and upon surviving interior partitions, the location (position in plan) of the north elevation can be established. The arrangement of windows (Fig. 3-016) to mirror the south elevation is conjecture; additional destructive investigation at this wall may reveal actual window placements. The placement of a northwest exit door is also conjecture; the corner may have had only a window, or no opening at all. Additional destructive demolition, as well as archeology, undertaken in this area, may shed light on the original layout of this northwest corner of the addition.

Window and Door Openings:

Wood steps outside of the dining room (107A) north door were added at this time. The north side basement window (window 4A) was made smaller (Fig. 3-015).

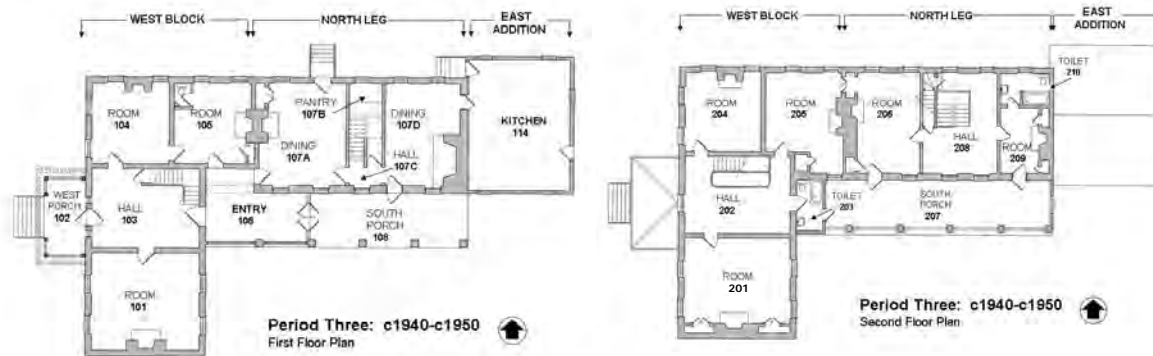


Fig. 3-016. Period Three Floor Plans. (GWWO, 2005.)

Interior:

West Block:

A small downstairs powder room was added inside room 105, in the northwest corner (Fig 3-016). This choice of location may have been due to the access available in the basement below this area to run piping. It is unclear if the formal rooms of the west block were used as sitting rooms and bar areas, actual dining areas, or kept partially private for family use.

North Leg and East Addition:

A second bathroom (210) for the second floor was added at the north end of the eastern bedroom (209). The interior of the new east addition served as the kitchen for the restaurant. The precise layout of the kitchen has not been determined. Also unknown is whether it had additional bathrooms. For sure, the existence of the addition allowed the old kitchen (107D) to be renovated and used as one of the dining areas for the restaurant. To accommodate this more social function, the kitchen equipment that had been located here was removed. A new board subfloor in this area was probably

installed at this time. This Period Three subfloor exists and stops at the west wall of room 107D. Farther west of this, the older, Period One subfloor exists. The front of the kitchen fireplace was renovated for a second time. The flanking side cabinets were removed, the large hearth re-exposed and now the face of the masonry was clad in stone. A new door opening on the east wall of the old kitchen (107D) provided access to the new kitchen addition (114).

Mechanical, Electrical:

During this Period, Beckenbaugh probably upgraded the systems. The original electric service and plumbing systems were probably inadequate for the needs to run a restaurant. The single pipe steam heating system is assumed to have been extended into the kitchen addition, due to no evidence of a new fireplace. A new water well and septic systems were most likely installed and an upgraded electrical service was probably provided, but all are assumptions.

Fig. 3-017: Exterior of Ferry Hill Plantation House during Period Four (c1972), showing the east and south sides of the north leg, following the construction of the east and the northeast addition. Note east side downspout, wood shingle roof on the east addition, and white paint color of the northeast addition. (C&O National Historical Park.)



Period Four: c1950 – 1979

Frederick W. Morrison worked with John Howard Beckenbaugh at the restaurant during the 1940s, and took over ownership by mid-1951. A considerable number of alterations were made during his ownership (Fig. 3-021); some in an attempt to improve his restaurant business, and some to keep the house in repair.

Exterior:

Northeast Addition

A one-story, concrete masonry unit (cmu) northeast addition was added to the north side of the earlier kitchen addition, with the intention of using this space as a bar area (Fig. 3-018). A fireplace was constructed on the east side of the addition, and “picture” windows and doors were located on the north side, overlooking the woods and river. The exterior of this addition was originally painted white, and later a reddish brown.



Fig. 3-018: Northeast CMU addition to Ferry Hill, used as a bar area. (GWWO photo, 2004.)

Fig. 3-019: Exterior of Ferry Hill Plantation House during Period Four (c1972), showing the west elevation of the west block. (C&O National Historical Park.)



Porches:

The second significant exterior change undertaken by Morrison was to demolish the one-story western porch, and to replace it with the two-story, four-columned porch that exists today (Fig 3-019). This porch covered a new brick terrace that was approximately three times wider than the area of the earlier wood porch floor. In constructing this new porch, the two basement windows that flanked the old porch were blocked off. The porch was probably used during pleasant weather by guests as a seating area, overlooking the Potomac River.

Brick Masonry:

The third significant exterior change involved sandblasting and repointing the masonry. On two areas on the south elevation of the west block, above the basement door, electrical panel boxes were mounted on the brick. These boxes prevented the sandblasting from reaching the brick surfaces. These boxes are now gone (removed either later in Period Four, or during Period Five), revealing the remnants of the Period One staining and penciling.

Roofing:

The fourth significant exterior change undertaken during Period Four was the change in roofing material on the main house from slate to painted (originally dark gray) standing seam metal. The wood shingle roof on the kitchen addition remained. The north gutter of the north leg was changed to discharge through a downspout located midway on the north elevation, and the sloping downspout on the east elevation of the north leg was removed.

Other Exterior Alterations:

A number of ancillary exterior alterations were also completed during Morrison's occupancy. Window wells were constructed around the basement windows of the west block. The backfill against the south face of the west block was excavated down to the basement floor

level and a new wythe of brick laid up as high as the line of a new water table. This brickwork integrated with a new brick areaway and concrete steps leading down to the south basement door (door 1). The exterior brick paving at the south porch was replaced with concrete. The exterior wood steps from the north side of the dining room were replaced with concrete. At the south entry porch, the double-hung wood windows were replaced with larger fixed multi-paned sash. The exterior trim at the south door into the original kitchen (door 16) was replaced with wide side casings supporting a broken pediment architrave. Some fencing and several of the deteriorating support buildings close to the house were demolished (see Cultural Landscape Report).

Fig. 3-020: Exterior of Ferry Hill Plantation House during Period Four (c1972), showing the north side and portions of the west side. Note, the northeast addition and two story porch exist. Shutters are missing from the north elevation. (C&O National Historical Park.)



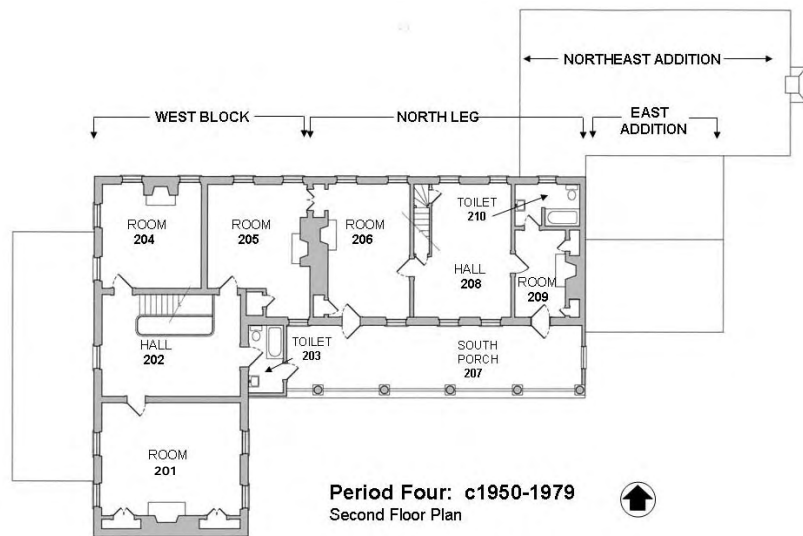
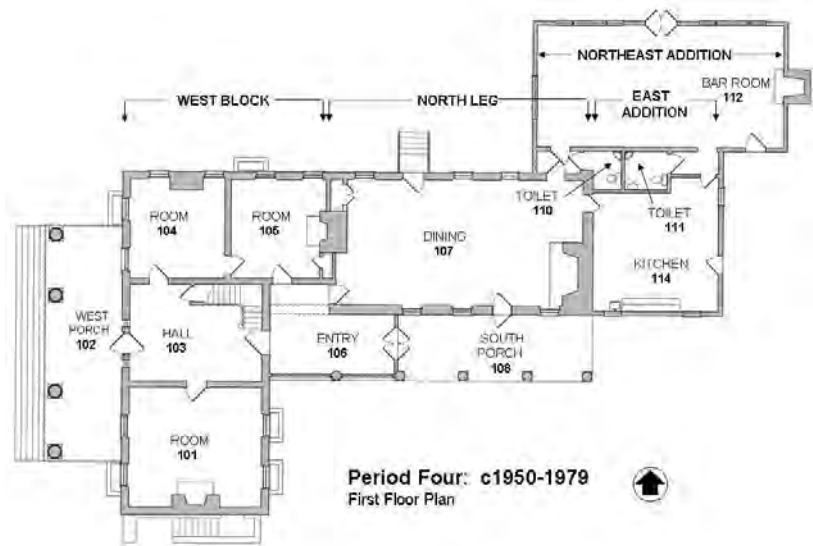


Fig. 3-021: Period Four Floor Plans. (GWWO, 2005.)

Fig. 3-022: Interior of Hall (room 103) looking east toward glazed entry, c1972. Note, the wallpaper above the wainscot, no longer extant; missing balustrade in handrail; and what appears to be wood flooring in glazed entry area. (C&O National Historical Park.)



Interior:

West Block:

With new toilet rooms provided on the first floor off the new bar area, the Period Three lavatory located in room 105 was removed, returning this room to its Period One and Two plan configuration. In the adjacent room 104, the fireplace opening was closed off with masonry to accommodate the furnace flue, but the mantle was left in place.

North Leg:

The most significant change that Morrison completed on the interior of the house involved the demolition of the pantry (107B) and back hall (107C) that had separated the original dining room (107A) from the original kitchen (107D). The entire space became one large dining room. Steel I-beams were set below the second floor at the locations of the demolished walls, bearing on the exterior north and south walls, and trimmed out in wood. On the south elevation of the dining room, the western-most window that had opened into the entry (106) was removed and the opening bricked in. The front of the original kitchen fireplace was altered for a third time, with the stone facing removed and with painted wood paneling introduced to surround the renovated masonry hearth opening.

At the northeast corner of the dining room, on the north elevation, a window was converted to a door opening, in order to access the new bar area from the dining room, without going through the kitchen addition. The fireplace that had been in the original dining room (107A) was closed up, the mantle removed and the masonry covered with plaster. The wood chair rail and base trim throughout the new dining room (107) was patched where changes had occurred, and repainted (see Physical Description for specifics). New hardwood strip flooring was laid throughout the expanded dining room, over the original floor of the dining room and pantry area, and over the

Period Three sub-floor of the old kitchen area. The room was wallpapered.

On the second floor, in the north leg, the hall (208) was adjusted due to the demolition of the back stair. New framing and sub-floor spanned between the steel beams, filling the location of the demolished stairs. A new hardwood finish floor was laid over the entire room. The single step that projected out into the room at the base of the attic stairs was also removed, and a new 4-step winder (replacing an original 3-step winder) was constructed at the base of the attic stairs.

Mechanical, Electrical:

During this Period, Morrison probably upgraded some systems again due to mechanical fatigue. The new second floor bathroom (210) and Toilets (110 and 111) were plumbed. Other changes included the replacement of the single pipe coal fired steam heating system with an oil-fired hot water heating system similar to the one installed today. This is evident by the 1950's vintage hot water radiators present in the house.

Period Five: 1979 – Present

The National Park Service (NPS) took title to the Ferry Hill Plantation House and adjacent land in 1974, but the purchase agreement allowed Morrison to remain in the property, and use four acres of land in order to continue the restaurant business, for not more than four years. The agreements mandated that Morrison maintain the property in its 1974 condition, at his responsibility and cost. Morrison exceeded his occupancy time limits by almost a year, and ultimately vacated the house in January 1979. The NPS planned to move administrative functions into the property. During 1979-1980, the building was converted to office/administrative use, with some limited visitor use as a Park contact station. This use existed until 2001, when the Park relocated these administrative functions to Hagerstown, in order to prepare the site and the building for more expanded interpretation. For room layouts during this Period, see the floor plans in Appendix A.

The condition of the property had deteriorated considerably during the final years of Morrison's tenure. The NPS found many areas in need of preservation. In some cases, materials had so deteriorated that new fabric had to be introduced. The NPS contemplated bringing a lawsuit against Morrison, the specifics of which are contained in a Memorandum to File written by Attorney-Advisor Barbara I. Berschler dated 12/17/79 (files currently held at Williamsport, MD maintenance facilities). Over the next several years, the NPS completed substantial work on the property, which is summarized below.

Exterior:

Roofing:

The roof over the northeast addition was patched and repaired to stop leaks. The metal roof over the main house was patched and repainted. The shingle roof over the east (kitchen) addition was demolished and replaced with a 29-gauge, galvanized, double rib metal roof, painted green. All gutters and downspouts were replaced with a painted galvanized material.

Woodwork:

All exterior woodwork was in a state of disrepair and was scraped, sanded and repainted. All but one (the eastern-most) of the columns on the second floor south porch were replaced with new wood columns. Sixteen pairs of exterior shutters were missing from the building (location not specified but from c1972 photographs it appears to be the north elevation) and were replaced. Shutter hold-back hardware was replaced on some units, replicated to match the existing style, and embossed with the modern date of installation. On the kitchen addition, the wood horizontal lapped siding had deteriorated beyond repair and was replaced with new material to match the original profile, and painted.

Brick Masonry:

One of the most recent exterior repairs involved work at the base of the masonry columns at the south-side first floor porch. Parging was removed from the bases of the two columns that flank the walkway, new plywood forms created, and a new concrete base poured. During the repair, the painted masonry finish on the brick base prior to the initial parging (Period Two) was exposed and documented (Fig. 3-023.)

Fig. 3-023: South porch column bases, repair work undertaken in June 2004. Note paint remnants on several base bricks. This may indicate the columns were painted prior to the application of parging (Period Two). However these bricks are set in a grey mortar that does not match the adjacent mortar. (C&O National Historical Park.)



Interior:

Walls:

New frame partitions for office uses were constructed in the bar area and the kitchen addition. Most of the interior rooms throughout the original parts of the house had been wall papered at least by Period Three or Four, and perhaps considerably earlier. However, the wall

paper was in such poor condition (peeling, cracking and faded) that it (together with all earlier layers) was removed from all the rooms except for the Dining Room (107) and one upstairs room (205). Plaster walls were repaired throughout the house, and all plaster walls and trim were repainted.

Adjustments and additions to walls in rooms 208 and 210 occurred to create chase spaces for the air conditioning system, and to accommodate storage in the bathtub area.

Window and Door Openings:

The wood windows in the west block and north leg received preservation treatment. All sash were removed, reglazed as necessary (122 pieces of broken glass were replaced), the wood components were restored and repainted, and the sash reinstalled. Window screens required "extensive repair."

Stairs:

Several balusters in the main hall staircase were missing and were replaced. The railing itself was reinforced with a tubular metal rail, painted black, installed to the inboard side of the wood railing.

Floors:

The floor and framing at the east (kitchen) addition was rotted and termite infested. The entire floor was demolished, gravel was laid in the crawl space, and a new reinforced concrete slab on grade provided in this area. The floor in the bar area was damaged from leaks in the roof, and was repaired. New carpeting was laid throughout the additions, as well as in the glazed entry (106), in the north rooms 104 and 105, in the upstairs main hall (202), and in several of the north rooms (203, 205, 206, 208, and 209).

Mechanical, Electrical:

During this Period, the NPS upgraded and adjusted some systems. The oil-fired boiler was replaced in 1979 and a fifth heating zone, 7 radiators and 7 convectors were added. Since then, the boiler was replaced in 1996 and 2004. A 40-gallon electric water heater was installed for domestic water heating. This time period introduced air conditioning to Ferry Hill. In 1992 the NPS installed four Unico High Velocity air conditioning systems.

In 1981 the current transformer serving Ferry Hill was installed and the electric service was again upgraded in November of 1991 to handle the new air conditioning load. In 1979 the current septic system and drainage fields were installed and in 1985 the well water system was upgraded to its current configuration. All of the above was referenced in the "CHOH Park Maintenance Records, Williamsport."

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