The Magazine of the Catoctin Center for Regional Studies
Fall/Winter 2006
Issue #8
$4.95

Catoctin HISTORY

The Life and Legend of John Brown
A Church Becomes a Home
The Middle Ford Ferry Tavern

Plus
Keeping the Yuletide in Civil War Camps
This issue of Catoctin History is supported in part by the following sponsors:

**National Endowment for the Humanities**, through the Catoctin Center’s project, “Crossroads of War: Civil War and the Homefront in the Mid-Atlantic Border Region.”

**Maryland Heritage Areas Authority** and the **Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area**. “This publication has been financed in part with State Funds from the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority, an instrumentality of the State of Maryland. However, the contents and opinions do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority.”

**The Hagerstown and Washington County Convention and Visitors Bureau.**

Catoctin History would also like to thank all those who have renewed their subscriptions and donated to the magazine. We strive to keep the magazine’s focus on the region’s history without advertising, and as a non-profit, educational project, we depend on subscriptions and donations. Thank you again for your support.

---

**Subscription Information**

*Catoctin History* is available through subscription. Annual subscriptions are $10 (two issues). To order, please call 301-846-2464; e-mail dmortimer@frederick.edu; or send mailing information and payment to Catoctin History, FCC, 7932 Opossumtown Pike, Frederick, MD 21702.
Table of Contents

The Magazine of the Catoctin Center for Regional Studies

Fall/Winter 2006 • Issue #8

About the Cover
John Steuart Curry and The Tragic Prelude
Jenna Gianni

Historic Places
A Church Becomes a Home: St Paul’s Reformed Church, Union Bridge, Maryland (1885–1936)
Wm. H. Zinkham, M.D.

Catoctin History Tour #8
Chambersburg to Charles Town: The John Brown Trail
Anna Pitt

Traditions
Christmas in Blue and Gray: Keeping the Yuletide in Civil War Camps
Kenneth Pitts

Catoctin Center Bulletin Board

10
The Middle Ford Ferry Tavern at Monocacy National Battlefield
Joy Beasley

26
The Life and Legend of John Brown
Rusty Monhollon

Cover Image: Detail from The Tragic Prelude mural, by John Steuart Curry. (Courtesy of Kansas State Historical Society)

Top of Page Image: John Steuart Curry working on a portion of The Tragic Prelude. (Courtesy of Kansas State Historical Society)
Kansas-born artist John Steuart Curry (1897–1946) was accustomed to controversy regarding his paintings long before one began over his state house murals. While New Yorkers gave him prestigious awards and praised him as a praire Homer, some people in his native state criticized his images of violent storms, tornadoes, and fundamentalist rituals, saying these depicted Kansas in an unfavorable light: “[W]hy paint outstanding frieish [sic] subjects and call them the ‘spirit’ of Kansas?” complained one perturbed Kansan.\(^1\) Still, it was to Curry that Kansas turned in 1937 to paint a series of murals in the rotunda and corridors of the statehouse in Topeka.

Curry’s statehouse murals were to depict important events in the development of the state, including the settlement of Kansas and the life of the homesteader. Early on there was criticism, some of which amounted to nitpicking—Curry’s pigs did not curl their tails while they ate, the knee-length skirt of a Kansas farmer’s wife was considered too short.\(^2\) The most vitriolic barrage, however, was aimed at what would become Curry’s most frequently reproduced painting, *The Tragic Prelude*.

At the center of the 31’ x 11’ mural stands a maniacal John Brown, surrounded by pro- and anti-slavery forces, and two dead soldiers at his feet representing the impending Union and Confederate dead. Curry explained:

> In this group is expressed the fratricidal fury that first flamed on the plains of Kansas, the tragic prelude to the last bloody feud of the English speaking people. Back of this group are the pioneers and their wagons on the endless trek to the West, and back of all the tornado and the raging prairie fire, fitting symbols of the destruction of the coming Civil War.\(^3\)

In *The Tragic Prelude*, Curry produced an image of extraordinary visual impact, giving epic dimension to John Brown who, for Curry, was not just a crusader against slavery but a symbol of the need to fight oppression everywhere. Author Theodore Wolff, who spent time with Curry discussing *The Tragic Prelude*, reported “being struck by the quiet fervor with which the artist spoke of social injustice, the insanity of war, political corruption, and the difficulties endured by the poor and the racially disenfranchised.”\(^4\)

*The Tragic Prelude* evoked strong reactions in Kansas. The violence and fanaticism in the scene did not sit well with all Kansans. To the Kansas Council of Women, “The murals do not portray the true Kansas. Rather than revealing a law-abiding progressive state, the artist has emphasized the freaks in its history [including] John Brown, who did not follow legal procedure.”\(^5\) Bowing to this sentiment, the Kansas legislature in 1941 barred Curry from finishing his commission. In response Curry refused to sign the murals.

To be rejected by people in his native state was absolutely shattering to Curry, according to his wife, and he left Kansas to become the artist in residence at the University of Wisconsin until his death in 1946.\(^6\) His widow blamed the capitol mural controversy and its resultant stress for his premature death.

Curry felt his statehouse murals to be among his best, and over the years they have been recognized as important examples of regionalist art. *The Tragic Prelude* in particular has been praised as a powerful allegory of our nation’s deepest crisis. In 1992, the Kansas legislature issued an official apology for its treatment of Curry, and this native son is once again celebrated in Kansas.

---


\(^3\) Curry in Junker, 231.


\(^5\) Kansas Council of Women quoted in Kendall, 131.

\(^6\) Kathleen Curry in Tsutsui and Swann, 285.
The Tragic Prelude mural in the state capitol building in Topeka, Kansas, by John Steuart Curry.
A Church Becomes a Home:
St. Paul’s Reformed Church,
Union Bridge, Maryland
(1885–1936)

Wm. H. Zinkham, M.D.

As young boys growing up in Union Bridge, Maryland, in the 1930s, a friend and I played in an abandoned brick church just across the street from our homes. The pews had been sold, and the altar was gone. An old organ was the last remnant of a house of worship. Pushing the pedals and touching the keys produced a wheezing sound that I can still hear. Today, the building is no longer recognizable as a church. The structure has become a duplex residence with a deep front porch instead of a fifty-foot steeple. The chief clue to its former life is the original cornerstone that commemorates the founding of St. Paul’s Reformed Church with the inscription “AD 1885.” Another clue is the unusual shape of the three-sided rear portion of the building. Details from two Sanborn fire insurance maps, dated 1910 and 1938, document the transformation from church to home.

My friend and I often wondered what had happened to this church. What caused the congregation to disband and the building to be converted into a family dwelling? Seventy years later I was ready to start the search for answers. My explorations took me to diverse archives, libraries, and records offices and also introduced me to many interesting people. The full causes for the church’s dissolution remain to be determined. But the numerous traces of St. Paul’s history that I discovered in land records, maps, newspapers, pastoral papers, photographs, and other sources provide a useful example of the rich layers of public information that anyone interested in researching a local community can discover.

As typically happens with research projects, my journey began with published history books. Daniel Wolfe’s 1890s narrative about Union Bridge mentions that John Hesson, Sr., dug the first shovel of dirt for St. Paul’s...
foundation on October 19, 1885, while Rev. Rupp, DD, of Manchester, MD, preached the dedicatory sermon. Church construction in Union Bridge flourished in the late 1800s: the Methodist Episcopal Church was built in 1868; the Methodist Protestant Church in 1877; the Dunker Church in 1877; the Lutheran Church in 1882; and St. Paul’s Reformed Church in 1885. With a population of approximately 600, Union Bridge had one church for every 120 townspeople. By including worshippers in the surrounding rural area, the ratio reached approximately one church for every 200 people. To learn more about St. Paul’s religious and administrative context, I also consulted two general histories of the Reformed Church, which today is part of the United Church of Christ.

The detailed report that documents the Union Bridge Historic District for the National Register of Historic Places covers St. Paul’s Church in only a few sentences. But the extensive footnotes in this report opened a world of additional resources to investigate, including numerous land records and other legal documents. Such government records often provide key dates in an institution’s history as well as the names of early leaders.

The original deeds and charters at the Carroll County Courthouse reveal the official framework for St. Paul’s activities. The earliest handwritten document is the church’s constitution, recorded March 31, 1888. It outlines the responsibilities of the minister, the governance of the church, and the responsibilities and rights of the congregation. A handwritten deed, dated April 3, 1888, describes the sale of land by John M. Furney and Eliza Furney, his wife, and William H. Morningstar and Ellie (Furney) Morningstar, his wife, to the stewards of St. Paul’s Reformed Church for $275 in order to build a church. The Furneys and Morningstars were church members who ran a business together and lived on the street where the new church was to be built. The third handwritten document, recorded April 14, 1888, formally incorporated the church. The final legal document relates the closing of St. Paul’s Reformed Church in 1936. The typewritten text states that on April 8, 1936, the Trustees of the Maryland Classis of the Reformed Church in the United States sold the property to Raymond K. Wright and Louise Dern Wright, his wife, for $475. Repairs and remodeling followed, including removal of the steeple.

Today the remains of the church exist as a duplex residence at 12 and 14 West Broadway, still one of the main thoroughfares in Union Bridge. A conversation with the current residents of the duplex pointed me unexpectedly towards the local pizza parlor to find pictures of the original church. The restaurant owner has collected and displayed a large number of local history artifacts. His preservation of a shallow aluminum tray contributed significantly to the visual documentation of not only St. Paul’s Church but of the entire “Union Bridge Charge.” The bottom of the tray, measuring 3 by 6 inches, is a composite picture of the three churches and their minister, Rev. Frederick A. Cooke, whose pastorate lasted from July 1904 to March 1906. St. Paul’s Church appears in the middle photograph about the time of its twentieth anniversary. The lower left corner of the tray shows Baust Church, built in 1815, shortly before it was rebuilt in 1906. The upper left corner shows the “Chapel at Ladiesburg” at an unknown date.

These pictures of prosperous churches and the information in the published books expanded my research path beyond St. Paul’s alone. The congregations in a church share the same pastor, and the fate of the two other groups (Ladiesburg and Baust) might have affected St. Paul’s. The building of a new church in Union Bridge in the 1880s recognized the town’s role as the largest population center in the immediate area and as a growing railroad and business community. The pastor would live in Union Bridge, even though the other two congregations were much older and located five or six miles outside of the town in opposite directions.

The Ladiesburg Reformed congregation dated back to the 1790s and initially shared a church and cemetery, called Haugh’s, with a Lutheran congregation. In 1853, the Lutherans built their own church, Mt. Zion, across the road and later sold their interest in the old building for $75. The Reformed congregation continued to worship in the old church until 1886, when they moved to a new chapel built in or near Ladiesburg. The congregation seemed to be growing at the same time as St. Paul’s. The old Haugh’s Church also became a residence, although in a very different manner from St. Paul’s. An article by Upton R. Walz in the Frederick Daily News reported that a Chas. H. Smith of Ladiesburg purchased the old Lutheran/Reformed Church and tore it down to make a residence. A long flat stone in the cemetery, reportedly the entrance step, is all...
that survives to mark the physical location of Haugh's Church.

The large size of the Ladiesburg Chapel suggests that this congregation was doing well. But like St. Paul's, the Ladiesburg membership dwindled, and the church disbanded in 1907. When the Union Bridge Charge disbanded, Baust had grown large enough to need a pastor fulltime. It became the “Emmanuel Charge” in 1931 and remains a thriving community. Like the Ladiesburg Church, Emmanuel (Baust) Reformed Church shared a church building with a Lutheran congregation for many years. Ironically, in this partnership it was the Lutheran Church that closed recently after existing for more than two hundred years. As reported in one of the local newspapers, the final service was held on Sunday, September 25, 2005. Only ten members were in attendance, and they left an endowment of approximately $85,000.

Many hours spent reading old newspapers, such as the Union Bridge Pilot and the Frederick News Post, yielded little information about either the St. Paul’s or the Ladiesburg congregations. The richest descriptions came from four-page newsletters written by Paul Yoder, who was pastor of the Union Bridge charge from 1915-1920. His Quarterly Visitor (1916) followed by the monthly Friendly Visitor (1917-1920) offered the congregants information about church activities, attendance statistics, and financial support, along with commentary on world events such as World War I. While it is important to remember that Rev. Yoder's circulars represent only his side of the story, the following quotations suggest that a rift between the St. Paul's members and Rev. Yoder contributed to the closing of the church.

In the first Quarterly Visitor, Rev. Yoder wrote a few upbeat descriptions of activities at St. Paul's. The church in Union Bridge “has shown great possibilities for work during the past months.” Among the accomplishments were renovation of the Sunday School room and other improvements. The closing paragraph, however, cautions the congregation: “Some churches succeed because all the conditions are favorable, others, in spite of adverse conditions. Let us not be discouraged, and remembering we are doing this work for Christ and not to please ourselves or somebody else.”

Was an unfavorable climate developing?

On the other hand, Rev. Yoder described his first year at Baust Church as “most pleasant.” “The spirit prevailing in the congregation is most commendable.” Especially noteworthy were the “Young People’s Societies” and their activities at Baust Church. Rev. Yoder later implores his Union Bridge and Ladiesburg congregations to have similar societies.

September 1921. Unlike St. Paul's, where this chapel stood remains a mystery. After interviewing several local residents in the small Ladiesburg community and finding no one who recalled this church, I turned to maps. While maps are very helpful for understanding geographic relationships, they are also useful for identifying landmarks. Church locations are often marked with a cross. A Frederick County map from 1858 confirmed the position of both the original Haugh's and German Reformed churches with their cemetery. The oldest topographical survey map for this area, published in 1911, provided the only clue to the location of the later Ladiesburg Chapel. Two crosses appear just off the main road through Ladiesburg, and presumably one of these is the Reformed Church (Chapel).

Emmanuel (Baust) Church is the oldest, largest, and only surviving congregation from the Union Bridge Charge. Dating back to 1765, Baust Church was built about midway along the main road between Westminster and Taneytown. While the St. Paul's Church membership declined steadily in the early 1900s, Baust's activities expanded. This congregation built a new parsonage when the pastor's residence in Union Bridge became outdated, and was also able to begin construction for a new brick church in 1907. When the Union Bridge Charge disbanded, Baust had grown large enough to need a pastor fulltime. It became the “Emmanuel Charge” in 1931 and remains a thriving community. Like the Ladiesburg Church, Emmanuel (Baust) Reformed Church shared a church building with a Lutheran congregation for many years. Ironically, in this partnership it was the Lutheran Church that closed recently after existing for more than two hundred years. As reported in one of the local newspapers, the final service was held on Sunday, September 25, 2005. Only ten members were in attendance, and they left an endowment of approximately $85,000.

Many hours spent reading old newspapers, such as the Union Bridge Pilot and the Frederick News Post, yielded little information about either the St. Paul’s or the Ladiesburg congregations. The richest descriptions came from four-page newsletters written by Paul Yoder, who was pastor of the Union Bridge charge from 1915-1920. His "Quarterly Visitor" (1916) followed by the monthly "Friendly Visitor" (1917-1920) offered the congregants information about church activities, attendance statistics, and financial support, along with commentary on world events such as World War I. While it is important to remember that Rev. Yoder’s circulars represent only his side of the story, the following quotations suggest that a rift between the St. Paul’s members and Rev. Yoder contributed to the closing of the church.

In the first "Quarterly Visitor," Rev. Yoder wrote a few upbeat descriptions of activities at St. Paul’s. The church in Union Bridge “has shown great possibilities for work during the past months.” Among the accomplishments were renovation of the Sunday School room and other improvements. The closing paragraph, however, cautions the congregation: “Some churches succeed because all the conditions are favorable, others, in spite of adverse conditions. Let us not be discouraged, and remembering we are doing this work for Christ and not to please ourselves or somebody else.”

Was an unfavorable climate developing?

On the other hand, Rev. Yoder described his first year at Baust Church as “most pleasant.” “The spirit prevailing in the congregation is most commendable.” Especially noteworthy were the “Young People’s Societies” and their activities at Baust Church. Rev. Yoder later implores his Union Bridge and Ladiesburg congregations to have similar societies.
In the second Quarterly Visitor, Rev. Yoder reported that "Jim," a faithful work horse, had transported him over 2,300 miles of Carroll and Frederick county roads. Now it was time to obtain a car. "Whether a 'tinlizzie' will be any improvement on 'Jim' remains to be proven." Also reported is the fact that "attendance at the church services at Union Bridge has not been flattering. The morning services are very poorly attended. Why is it?" Later he stated: "I have tried my best to throw all my ability into the work. I have done more physical, mental, and spiritual work here than at either one of the other churches. So has Mrs. Yoder." And, finally, another commentary on the life of St. Paul's Church: "We have had a few 'freezing' services at Union Bridge lately, both in point of attendance and in point of heat. We will not get far at Union Bridge until everybody gets to think enough of the church to attend regularly."

In contrast, Ladiesburg, a smaller congregation, was "doing remarkably well. One couldn't find a nicer people anywhere." Although only twenty-five people, "they can do as much for the church as if the membership numbered hundreds." The number of financially supportive members at St. Paul's and Baust was roughly equivalent as reflected by the percentage return of benevolent envelopes: Union Bridge, 39 out of 70 (55%); Ladiesburg, 19 out of 25 (76%); Baust, 122 out of 235 (51%). "Almost half of the envelopes I sent out were thrown into the waste-basket and totally ignored. This is certainly not a good showing," lamented Rev. Yoder.

Under the heading "Jottings," Rev. Yoder stated in the third issue: "The speedometer on our 'tin-lizzie' shows the number '1298 miles' since April 15th. That's going some! Beats Jim." Another observation relating to the Union Bridge church noted that attendance was growing slowly, but there were no teachers for the Sunday School classes. "It makes my heart ache to see three and four classes every Sunday without a teacher. No wonder there is no great interest manifested and we are losing scholars all along."

While the St. Paul's congregation struggled, Rev. Yoder reached out to Reformed Church members in several smaller communities. He supervised and contributed to the religious activities of three congregations outside of the Union Bridge Charge. One, Old Stone Church, was located near Detour, MD; the second, near New Midway; and the third, in Frizzleburg, MD, each one approximately 10 miles distant from the Union Bridge parsonage. The newsletters most frequently mention the group near Detour. "We began to hold monthly services at the Stone Church in May for the benefit of our friends about Detour. The messages are appreciated and the attendance is fine." The attendance numbers were: "... Union Bridge, 36; Ladiesburg, 57; and Stone Church, 44." A notice of services in 1918 stated: "There are almost too many irons in the fire these days. With all the war work added to our regular church work it leaves little time to devote to other places. However, we will visit Stone Church and Frizzleburg just as often as we can." On some Sundays, Rev. Yoder delivered sermons at multiple churches, for example, Baust at 11:00 in the morning and Stone Chapel at 3:00 in the afternoon. Imagine the haste with which he traveled from one church to the other.

One of his last comments relating to the Stone Church recognized the importance of influential congregants: "Through the death of Mr. Fox, of Detour, we have lost a good and faithful friend. Through his efforts it was my pleasure to conduct services at the old Stone Church the past two summers. I wonder whether the folks of Detour will let the old church sink back again into the wilderness of neglect and out of which Mr. Fox dug it. I hope not. It may be used to great advantage to the community. Who will be a leader there?" Rev. Yoder's missionary zeal and extraordinary energy in
his service for rural churches, even those that were not regular members of his charge, served as a foundation for his later appointment as instructor in Rural Sociology, 1930–36, at the Theological Seminary of the Evangelical and Reformed Church in Lancaster, PA.

The difficulties experienced by the Union Bridge Charge were not unique. But why did the phenomenon affect the Ladiesburg and Union Bridge churches to the point of closure, while the Baust Reformed Congregation continued? Whatever the reasons, a key event was the sale of the parsonage in Union Bridge in 1917 for $2,500. As reported by Rev. Yoder: “Thanks to David Carbaugh, Ira Rodkey, Raymond Rodkey, and Howard Maus [members of Baust congregation] for moving our books and few other ‘duds’ from Union Bridge to Baust.”

Dissatisfaction by the members of the Union Bridge church with the events affecting their church and possibly the ministry found expression. In late 1917, Rev. Yoder wrote: “The work at Union Bridge has been rather difficult ever since the present pastorate began, and every resignation adds to the difficulty,” probably referring to the fact that the superintendent of the Sunday School had resigned. Several paragraphs later in the same issue, Rev. Yoder reported: “Rumor has it that the Reformed Church in Union Bridge will be sold to the Catholics. I hope the pastor will at least be consulted before the sale is made. One of the most contemptible nuisances in this world is the wretch that delights in spreading false reports.”

Almost a year later, Rev. Yoder expressed disappointment that “Mr. Danner, our faithful man of all work, is about to leave Union Bridge. By his leaving another one of the pastor’s substantial and faithful supporters is taken away. It leaves the congregation without an elder.” Later on he added: “To be very plain about Union Bridge we need fewer critics and more workers.” The schism between the pastor and his congregation appears to have widened.

In 1920, Rev. Yoder was assigned to the Jefferson Charge, Brodhecks, York County, PA. Seating capacity of the main church was 1,200 congregants. Rev. Yoder’s legacy includes a large collection of archival material at the Evangelical and Reformed Historical Society Archives in Lancaster, PA. One of the items is a Bible in which several hundred of his sermons are recorded. As originally published the Bible presented printed verses on one page with an adjacent blank lined page on which he wrote his sermons. Also in the archives is a large ledger in which Rev. Yoder recorded all of the baptisms performed during his ministry. Recorded in the ledger are the baptisms of infants whose parents attended Baust Church in 1917 and 1918. Some of these infants are now senior citizens who still regularly attend Baust Church.

Following Rev. Yoder, Rev. Murray E. Ness became the minister for the Union Bridge Charge. During his pastorate the Ladiesburg Chapel closed on September 22, 1921. The collapse of the St. Paul’s congregation continued, and on October 28, 1930, the Baust Church congregation under the pastorate of Rev. Miles F. Reinsmider asked to disband St. Paul’s because of the decline of the church, both in its attendance and its financial responsibilities. The Maryland Classis, the governing body of the Reformed Church, granted permission for closure, which officially occurred on February 23, 1931, ending the congregation’s 46-year life span.

The frequency of church closings has prompted theologians to write about this problem for many years. How does the closing of St. Paul’s Reformed Church contribute to our understanding of the phenomenon? Helpful in this regard are the writings of Rev. Yoder. Obviously, he was saddened by what was happening in the church at Union Bridge: poor attendance, lack of teachers in the Sunday School, insufficient number of members to appoint elders. A rift developed between the minister and the congregation. Who is responsible for this phenomenon? Most likely the failure of cooperation began prior to and continued after Rev. Yoder was the minister. Perhaps the blame lies both within the pulpit and the pews. For some reason, a friendly cooperative spirit had not developed between the two. To help answer this question one would like to interview former St. Paul’s congregants, but none have been identified.
If Rev. Yoder was unable to create churchly enthusiasm in the St. Paul's church, why were he and other ministers able to do so in the Baust community? St. Paul's Reformed Church had filled a religious need in the Union Bridge Community starting in 1885, but its role had reached an end in the early 1920s. Unless the minister with the help of his congregation can recruit younger congregants to replace those who are no longer active, the membership will decline to a number that is no longer able to sustain a viable religious community. A church official once remarked: "Closing churches is never fun and is not something any of us like to see or experience. However, it is, at some times and under certain circumstances, appropriate."

Acknowledgments

Many people helped me develop information about the history of these congregations. I am most appreciative of George Horvath's assistance. He not only provided critical maps but also taught me how to use the county land office records. The collections, volunteers, and employees of many libraries were also very supportive: the Carroll and Frederick County historical societies; the Maryland Historical Society; the Maryland State Archives; the Maryland Geological Society; Johns Hopkins University's Eisbenhower Library; and, especially, the Evangelical Reformed Church Archives. I would also like to recognize Rev. Gerald Fuss, current pastor of the Emmanuel (Baust) United Church of Christ, who stimulated this research by giving me some copies of the Visitor.

William H. Zinkham is Distinguished Service Professor, Emeritus, Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. He is a former resident of Union Bridge, MD.

3. In 1934 the Reformed Church in the U.S. (350,000 members and 3,000 churches) united with the Evangelical Synod of North America to become the Evangelical and Reformed Church. In 1957, a merger with the Congregational Christian churches created the United Church of Christ. The governance includes a Consistory or Session for the local congregation; Classis for the regional Synod for several classes, General Synod or Assembly for several synods. The minister (also called pastor) is a member of the church; an elder helps the minister maintain discipline and true doctrine; a deacon oversees financial operations.
7. Carroll County Courthouse, File Box 13, Articles of incorporation for St. Paul's Church, recorded April 14, 1888.
9. Anglo's Pizza Parlor, 2 S. Main St., Union Bridge, MD.
10. Frederick County, Deeds, Land Record ES 8, dated May 6, 1866.
13. Isaac Bond, Map of Frederick County, Md. ([Baltimore?]). Lithographed by E. Sachse & Co., 1858.
15. Bloom, History of Emmanuel (Baust). This detailed historical accounting of the church was prepared for the church's two hundred and tenth anniversary.
18. Ibid.
21. Quarterly Visitor 1, no. 3 (July 1, 1916), 2-3.
22. Quarterly Visitor 1, no. 3 (July 1, 1916), 2.
23. Quarterly Visitor 1, no. 4 (August 1, 1916), 2.
24. Quarterly Visitor 1, no. 5 (May 1, 1917), 2.
27. Quarterly Visitor 2, no. 8 (Aug. 1, 1918), 2.
28. News from the Evangelical & Reformed Historical Society 32–33 (Winter/Summer 2005): 13. This comment introduces a summary of recent acquisitions after another church closing. Although church closings remain difficult, the archivist confirms the value of sending their records to historical repositories for preservation.
In 2003, archeologists from the National Park Service began a multi-year archeological study of the Thomas Farm, located at Monocacy National Battlefield. The farm, named for its Civil War owner, C. K. Thomas, figured prominently in the Battle of Monocacy, fought on July 9, 1864. One of the most important results of the Thomas Farm study, however, relates to the farm’s pre-Civil War history – the discovery of the Middle Ford ferry and tavern, both of which were in operation by the middle part of the eighteenth century.

In spite of the relatively few direct references to the tavern itself, primary historic records reveal much about this important colonial site. Information in the historic record is augmented by an examination of the social and legal context of colonial taverns in Maryland, shedding light on the early settlement of Frederick County and the growth of transportation and trade along the Mid-Atlantic corridor.

**Early Land Tract Development**

Most of the modern-day Thomas Farm comprises a portion of a 1,400-acre land grant known as Wett Work, which was located along the east side of the Monocacy River. Wett Work was surveyed and patented in 1729 by John Abington and George Noble, who likely purchased the tract with the goal of subdividing it for leasing or resale, and do not appear to have occupied it.1

Just across the Monocacy from Thomas Farm is Best Farm. Although separated by the river, the early land tracts that make up these two sites are historically linked. The chain of title for Best Farm spans back to 1724, when John Radford first surveyed a property called Henry on the west side of the Monocacy. The tract was rented by Henry Ballenger, who eventually established a mill there along Ballenger Creek. Through the decades, Ballenger patented additional holdings in the area, including Mill Lott and Ballengers Endeavour, a “narrow, fifty-acre strip of land adjoining the west bank of the Monocacy River along the southern boundary of the Henry.”2 In 1749, Ballenger purchased the Henry tract, which he had been occupying for several years, and the next year had portions of his existing patents along with a substantial amount of “vacant” or unpatented acreage resurveyed into a 1,003-acre tract called Resurvey on Mill Lott and Ballengers Endeavour.3

*Interior of an early American tavern, painted by John Lewis Krimmel in 1813-14.*
all persons..."

Tavern at Monocacy National Battlefield

by Joy Beasley

(JOHN LEWIS KRAMER. VILLAGE TAVERN, TOLEDO MUSEUM OF ART)
In 1751, Henry Ballenger sold portions of Henry, Mill Lott, and Ballengers Endeavour, along with the entire 1,003-acre Resurvey on Mill Lott and Ballengers Endeavour, to Richard Richardson. When Richardson died in 1763, an advertisement in the Pennsylvania Gazette described the property as:

Very valuable, lying about 3 miles from Frederick Town, on the main Road, and joining Monquesey Creek, near two miles, and perhaps exceeds any Place in the Province for natural Improvements, having two convenient Places for Mills, one of which there is a double geared Mill, with a constant Stream of Water, and very convenient for a Merchant Mill, two main Roads passing thro' said Land from Frederick Town to the Landing. There are several Houses, Orchard and Meadow, &c. on it; the Whole consists of about 1385 Acres, about 350 whereof are cleared; the Soil very rich, and suitable for Hemp or any Sort of Grain.

In this advertisement, the development of the natural resources is evident and the early development of “two main Roads ... to the Landing” shows how connections were quickly being established from the western frontier south to Alexandria and Georgetown.

The Middle Ford Ferry and Tavern on the Monocacy River

George Washington passed through Frederick County in June 1791 and described the surrounding lands as “rather hilly, but...good, and well timbered...very rich & fine,” echoing the 1763 Pennsylvania Gazette advertisement. Indeed, Frederick County land tracts such as Wett Work were valuable due to the extensive timber resources they contained as well as their proximity to the river. But key to the development of these resources were the transportation arteries that passed through them. The earliest of these, “the Wagon Road that leads from Frederick Town to the Mouth of Monocacy,” is known today as the Buckeystown Pike, or MD Rt. 85.

After the establishment of Frederick Town in 1745, a second road became necessary to create a more direct route between the growing city and the warehouses and other commercial centers along the Potomac River. In the March 1748 proceedings of the Frederick County Court, reference is made to a road between “Henry Ballinger’s to Hussey’s Ford” and the new road to the middle ford [emphasis added]” on the east side of the Monocacy River.

This “new road” crossed the Monocacy River at the Middle Ford, and after the establishment of Georgetown in 1751, the new road became known as the Georgetown Road (MD Rt. 355). The Georgetown Road remained one of the most heavily-traveled north-south routes in the area, and remained the primary thoroughfare between Frederick and Washington, D.C. well into the twentieth century.

As traffic increased on the Georgetown Road, other improvements were required. The first reference to a ferry at Middle Ford appears in March 1748, when Henry Ballenger entered into a contract with the county court:

to keep a ferry over the Middle Ford on Monocacy and to provide a boat or Scow and an able hand or hands to work it until the Last day of next November Court for which the said Henry Ballinger is to be allowed in the next County Levy at the rate of Ten pounds from the time he [possesses?] the ferry and has the boat or Schow ready to Convey persons over and ordered that the said Henry do not demand or take more than four pence for carrying a Man and horse over and three shillings for Waggons...

As previously noted, Ballenger sold his property to Richard Richardson in 1751. Richardson, however, does not appear to have been personally involved in the operation of the Middle Ford ferry. In 1754, the Frederick County Court appointed “Thomas Beatty and William Griffith, Gentlemen, to agree for keeping a ferry at the Middle Ford on Monocacy.” Beatty and Griffith, in turn, appear to have contracted with Daniel Kennedy, who operated the ferry.
Artist's rendering of an 18th-century rope ferry and associated tavern complex. The platform for the post that supported the rope for the Middle Ford ferry is still visible on the Thomas Farm.
The Fairview Inn, depicted in this 1827 painting, was located near Baltimore on the Old Frederick Road and was a popular stop on the National Pike.

The first reference to a tavern at the site appears in 1754 as well, when Kennedy was awarded a license “to keep a house of Entertainment in the County of Frederick in the late Dwelling House of Richard Richardson.” The mention of the “late Dwelling House of Richard Richardson” indicates that the tavern structure may have been constructed at least as early as 1751. In 1755, Kennedy’s license was renewed for “an Ordinary or Publick House of Entertainment at the place where he now lives.” The presence of a tavern at the site of the Middle Ford ferry was customary; many colonies required ferry operators to keep taverns at their slips for the convenience of their customers, as travel in rural areas was often hazardous and fatiguing.

In part due to important improvements such as the Georgetown Road, the Buckeystown Road, and the Middle Ford ferry, Frederick County’s commercial importance continued to grow; in fact, by the middle part of the eighteenth century, Frederick had “200 Houses & 2 Churches...Provisions & Forrage in Plenty.”

The onset of the French and Indian War in 1754, however, interrupted the area’s population growth and commercial progress. As Maryland’s closest settlement to the western theater of the war, Frederick became a center for military operations against the French and their Indian allies.

British General Edward Braddock arrived in Frederick in April, 1755, where he waited to provision his troops in advance of their ill-fated assault on Fort Duquesne. In late March of that year, Braddock’s troops disembarked at Alexandria where they were divided into two sections prior to proceeding to a rendezvous point at Fort Cumberland. One column, the 44th Regiment under Sir Peter Halkett, marched through Virginia, while a second column, the 48th Regiment under Colonel Thomas Dunbar, marched through Maryland, turning northward at Bladensburg and crossing the Monocacy River at the Middle Ford ferry on April 17, 1755. Journal accounts kept by members of Dunbar’s 48th Regiment recorded the event:

April 17th: March’d to Fredericks Town; 15 miles from Dowden’s, the road very Mountainious, March’d 11 Miles, when we came to a River call’d Monkiso [Monacacy], which empties itself into the Potomack; it runs very rapid, and is, after hard Rain, 13 feet deep. We ferried over in a Float for that purpose.
of General Braddock's Soldiers and Wagons, &c. over Manassas Ferry, to be allowed by a Public Charge of this Province, was read and rejected. 21

James Marshall and the Middle Ford Ferry

Beginning in 1758, a Scottish immigrant named James Marshall began acquiring land in Frederick County. Marshall figured prominently in the early development of the Monocacy region, and although he did not reside in Frederick County until after 1770, he exerted a substantial influence on the area. Indeed, by the time of his death in 1803, Marshall owned nearly all of the properties that today comprise Monocacy National Battlefield. 22 Although seldom involved in the daily functioning and management of the Middle Ford ferry and tavern, Marshall owned the land upon which the tavern and ferry were situated throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth century.

Born in 1729 in Glasgow, Scotland, Marshall immigrated to Prince George's County in 1747. He worked as an agent or "factor" for the Glasgow merchant firm John Glassford & Company, which specialized in the export of Maryland tobacco to Great Britain in exchange for imported consumer goods, which were then sold at Glassford's stores along the Potomac River. Throughout the 1750s and 1760s, Marshall advanced his commercial interests, becoming manager of Glassford & Company's Piscataway store while engaging in other independent transactions such as land and timber speculation. His business dealings required frequent travel in Maryland, Virginia, and abroad; historic documents indicate that he made at least two trips to Great Britain in 1765. 23

Although still residing in Prince George's County at the time, Marshall began acquiring property in Frederick County in 1758 with his purchase of part of the Wett Work tract, located on the east side of the Monocacy River. In 1765, Marshall purchased approximately 885 acres on the opposite side of the river, and in 1768 he had this new acreage resurveyed into a tract that he called Aracia. 24 By so doing, Marshall effectively controlled land on both sides of the Monocacy River, establishing him as a key player in transportation and commerce in the region during a period of intense commercial and population growth.

In spite of his extensive landholdings in the
area, James Marshall did not identify himself as a resident of Frederick County until 1770. While it is not clear precisely where in the county he initially resided, Marshall is believed to have constructed the large brick manor house known today as the Thomas House around 1780. This house is presumed to have been his principal residence in Frederick County until 1799, when he is recorded as living in Fredericktown.

Starting in 1772, a series of individuals were appointed by the Frederick County Court “to keep the Ferry over Monocacy at Mr. Marshall’s,” reflecting Marshall’s increasing involvement with his Frederick County property. While appointed by the county court, ferry licensees entered into a rental agreement with James Marshall for the ferry along with the “plantation adjoining.” The tavern appears to have been operated in conjunction with the ferry, although it is not often specifically referenced in the surviving ferry leases.

Examples of Marshall’s ferry leases appear sporadically in the historic record, usually when the licensee defaulted on his or her contract and was forced to appear in court. By 1787, after a series of defaulted contracts, Marshall rented the ferry to a man named Robert Hammett. Like previous ferry operators, Hammett operated a tavern on site, as indicated by the Griffith map of Maryland (1794), which records a tavern labeled “Hammetts” on the east side of the Georgetown Road near the ferry crossing. Hammett died in 1791 or 1792, but his widow and her new husband continued to operate the ferry and tavern until at least 1797, although they frequently appeared in court for defaulting on their rental agreement.

Marshall’s various legal entanglements with his ferry operators are some of the only historic references to the ferry and tavern. One surviving document provides a description of the ferry boat itself: a builder named James Fitzgerald was hired to construct it, and was paid for his transportation and “Accommodations in diet & lodging 19 days.” The boat measured 45 feet in length and was constructed of “Timber, Plank, Iron, nails, & Oakum.” It was secured by 330 feet of 4 1/2-inch rope manufactured in Baltimore and transported to the ferry site at the tenant’s expense.

In addition to the tavern, ferry, and plantation, James Marshall continued to speculate in land and timber and engaged in a variety of other business transactions in Frederick County. He made his will in 1799, noting that his son William P. Marshall was living in his “house at the ferry,” probably the present-day Thomas House. The 1800 census records James Marshall as residing in Frederick Town District No. 2 with 16 slaves and three adult women, while William is recorded as living alone with three slaves in the Buckeystown District (which included both the tavern site and the manor house). It is not apparent who was leasing the ferry and tavern at this time; it is possible that some of Marshall’s enslaved laborers may have been tasked with their operation. Indeed, in 1805, an enslaved individual named Lanham ran away from Marshall’s daughter Eleanor and her husband John L. Harding (Lanham originally belonged to James Marshall). Harding’s 1806 advertisement for Lanham’s return describes him as being “well acquainted with the ferrying business.”

James Marshall died on August 13, 1803, leaving behind a substantial amount of real estate and other personal property. He appointed his three oldest children William, Chloe, and Eleanor as executors of his estate,
but does not mention his wife, who was apparently deceased by this time. Noting that "...my said Executors are but little acquainted with business," Marshall specified that the majority of his property was to be sold at public sale, but reserved a portion of his estate for his five children: Mary, Mary Ann, Chloe, William, and Eleanor. The youngest girls, Mary and Mary Ann, each received £50 and "a good bed and all furniture for said bed." Mary Ann also received "a mulatto girl named Maria daughter of Mulatto Jane." Maria, who is identified as seven years of age, was to serve Mary Ann until she reached the age of 25, when she was "to be liberated & become a free Woman for the rest of the life of her." One-half of the remainder of Marshall’s estate was to be equally divided between William and Chloe, "excepting certain Articles" that Marshall reserved for Eleanor. William and Chloe received Marshall’s Wett Way property, including the manor house and the Middle Ford ferry and tavern. On February 18, 1804, executors William and Eleanor Marshall placed the following advertisement in the Frederick Town Herald:

**SALE.** On the 15th of March next, Will be exposed to Public Sale, by the Subscribers, on the farm of the late James Marshall, deceased, near the Middle Ferry on Monocacy; the following property, consisting of Negroes, Carriages, Wagons, Horses and Geers, Cattle, Hogs, Farming Utensils, and sundry other articles too tedious to mention. Nine months credit will be given for all sums exceeding twenty shillings, on the purchaser’s giving bond and approved security.—Sale to commence at 9 o'clock in the forenoon of the same day.

William Marshall’s landholdings increased in 1807, when his sister Chloe died and left him her share of their father’s estate. Although the Georgetown Road was chartered as a turnpike by the State of Maryland in 1805, William Marshall apparently continued to be responsible for operation of the ferry and tavern.

**The Middle Ford Ferry’s Demise**

In March 1812, William Marshall began advertising his property for sale in the Frederick Town Herald:

The subscriber will expose to public sale, the farm whereon he now lives, part of a tract of land called "Wet Work," containing, four hundred and ten acres, lying about three or four miles from Frederick-Town. The main road leading from Frederick to Georgetown runs through it, dividing it completely for two farms, leaving on one side about 250 acres with a handsome brick building, as neatly finished as any in the country – on the other side, about 150 acres, with as good a mill seat and constant stream of water, as any to be found, agreeably to the size of the stream. On this lot there is about 40 or 50 acres of wheat and rye seeded in good order and time. On the lot 250 acres, about one hundred is seeded down in wheat and rye, in very good order. 32

In August 1812, Colonel John McPherson purchased 415 acres from William Marshall, including the parcel with the brick manor house and ferry. 33 McPherson was a substantial property owner and entrepreneur who purchased several parcels of land in the Monocacy area during the first two decades of the nineteenth century, apparently with the objective of undertaking major industrial and transportation development there. 34 McPherson’s son, John McPherson, Jr., also purchased several land tracts during this time, including 119 acres from John L. Harding, husband of Eleanor [Marshall] Harding.

The McPherson family’s purchases of property in the Monocacy area occurred around the same time as a number of other important changes and developments. As previously noted, in 1805, the Georgetown Pike was chartered by the State of Maryland, and around 1828, a covered wooden bridge carrying the Georgetown Pike over the Monocacy River was constructed. The bridge was constructed just upriver from the Middle Ford ferry crossing and necessitated realignment of the Georgetown Pike slightly east. 35 John Martineau’s 1829 map of the proposed Monocacy Canal shows the location of the bridge as well as the new road alignment.

With the road realignment and construction of the bridge, the Middle Ford ferry and its associated tavern likely ceased operation; however, the 1829 Martineau map depicts an unnamed structure—probably the tavern—east of the old Georgetown Road, indicating that a structure still stood in that location after construction of the bridge. The time frame of the realignment of the road, construction of the bridge, and abandonment of the tavern is also reflected in an 1837 deed referencing “the said old road now shut up,” suggesting that the road leading north from the ferry landing had been closed for some time. 36

---

Maria, who is identified as seven years of age, was to serve Mary Ann until she reached the age of 25, when she was "to be liberated & become a free Woman for the rest of the life of her."
Archeology at the
Middle Ford Ferry Tavern

Over the decades, traces of both the road and the tavern vanished into the landscape. Although there are scant direct references to the Middle Ford ferry tavern in the historic record, archaeological research and excavation have contributed greatly to understanding and interpreting this important resource. In addition to determining the tavern’s precise spatial location, excavations have refined understanding of its period of use and eligibility for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

Archeological excavations undertaken in 2004 resulted in the discovery of the remnants of the primary tavern structure, including its stone hearth and chimney fall. The site is situated on the east side of the original trace of the Georgetown Road, just downstream from the original ferry crossing. During the 2006 field season, additional excavations resulted in the discovery of a 2 foot by 3 foot midden feature just east of the main structure containing a dense deposit of domestic refuse, architectural debris and food remains dating to the late eighteenth century. Excavations during the 2006 field season also uncovered evidence that the tavern was burned and reconstructed on at least two separate occasions.

In addition to evidence of at least two episodes of fire damage and reconstruction, the recent excavations at the tavern site have revealed much about its construction. The tavern structure appears to have measured approximately 15 by 20 feet and was likely constructed of log. Situated on a relatively steep slope, the building was probably supported by a brick foundation, and featured an asymmetrical stone chimney. Some form of interior finishing was present, as evidenced by whitewashed plaster fragments recovered at the site, and excavations indicate the presence of a partial cellar or crawl space. The structure was likely part of a complex which may have included a stable or a paddock.

The size and construction of the Middle Ford ferry tavern is in keeping with structures of the same period elsewhere in the region. This is suggested by an inventory of tenant houses on Lord Baltimore’s Conococheague Manor (in present-day Frederick County), which reveals that approximately 77% (130 out of 171) of the buildings erected on the Manor were constructed of round logs, with an average house footprint of 23 by 17 feet.\textsuperscript{37} Chimney construction is infrequently noted in the Conococheague inventory; however, five stone base chimneys are noted. Nearby Monocacy Manor (in present-day Frederick County) included 26 dwellings with a stone base chimney.\textsuperscript{38}

Over 10,000 artifacts have been recovered from the tavern site thus far, and while in-depth artifact analyses are still being conducted, a basic categorization of the recovered materials has been completed. Architectural materials such as brick fragments, mortar, and hand-wrought nails constitute over 40% of the assemblage; fragments of glassware and ceramics account for nearly 30%; just under 20% were food remains such as bone and oyster shell; and a wide variety of personal items including buttons, coins, lice combs, thimbles, and shoe buckles make up the balance. Datable artifacts—particularly ceramics—indicate the site was occupied from at least the 1740s until about 1830 or so, confirming information contained in the primary historic record.

The Middle Ford Ferry Tavern in Context

As the above discussion illustrates, there are but a few specific references to the Middle Ford ferry tavern: Daniel Kennedy’s tavern license application and renewal in 1754 and 1755, combined with Daniel Griffith’s 1794 map, comprise the sum total.\textsuperscript{39} A great deal more information will be revealed as the archeological data are analyzed and interpreted; however, an examination of the social and legal underpinnings of rural taverns in Colonial America provides contextual information which helps illustrate what life may have been like at Middle Ford ferry tavern.

The presence of a tavern at the Middle Ford ferry site was more necessity than luxury; long-distance travel in eighteenth-century America was hazardous and fatiguing, and colonial roads were often badly marked and poorly maintained. As late as 1798, a coach passenger traveling through Washington, D. C. on the Georgetown Road remarked that the road was “recently cut out of the wilderness” and he “felt only the jolting blows of the carriage hitting continually against the holes and tree stumps in the road.”\textsuperscript{40} Inclement weather was often a factor as well; a 1773 account of “a most tedious Journey” between New York and Philadelphia notes that the trip was “occasion’d by heavy Rains & high Winds which prevented
my crossing the Ferries.”41 As a result of these potential hazards, many colonies passed laws that “required ferry operators to keep taverns at their slips for the convenience of their customers.”42

In Maryland, the need for taverns was recognized as early as 1662, when the General Assembly acknowledged that “there is a necessity of allowing and Keeping Victualling howses for the Entertainnt of all persons...And for want of such Victualling howses divers[e] persons are either exposed to greate hazards of their healths or much burthensome to particular adjacent Neighbours.”43 Maryland tavern keepers were expected to provide “Sufficient accomodacon” for both man and beast, including “three spare beds, with covering, and sufficient stabling and provender for six horses at least, under the penalty of eight hundred pounds of tobacco.”44

In most colonies, including Maryland, tavern proprietors were required to acquire and maintain a license. An individual usually presented an application by petitioning the county court,
which generally involved posting a bond and paying a relatively nominal fee; in 1780, the annual fee for a tavern license in Maryland was £6.\(^{45}\) The county court considered a number of factors before granting a license, including the financial status of the would-be tavern keeper, the suitability of the proposed location, the number of taverns already in operation in the area, and the tavern keeper’s perceived ability to successfully discharge his duties.\(^{46}\) Most colonies permitted women to operate taverns; as a result, tavern-keeping emerged as one of the only legal occupations available to women during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.\(^{47}\) In Maryland, a woman was permitted to operate a tavern only if she was the “head of house in which such ordinary shall be kept.”\(^{48}\)

The penalty for operating a tavern without a license was substantial; in November 1678, the Maryland General Assembly stipulated that “any other person that shall presume to keepe ordinary without Licence…shall for every moneth he or they shall keepe Ordinary as aforesaid forfeit and pay to the Lord Proprietary ten thousand pounds of Tobacco.”\(^{49}\) By 1780, the penalty had been reduced but was still substantial: 600 pounds of tobacco for every offense.\(^{50}\)

In addition to the licensing requirement, the Maryland General Assembly attempted to regulate the prices charged for food, drink, and lodging. As the number of taverns proliferated, however, the responsibility for setting and enforcing price limits was shifted to the county courts. In order to ensure full statutory compliance, a 1780 law mandated that approved rates and prices be “transcribed and set up, in some public place in their respective county courthouse, that every person may peruse the same, a copy of which rates, every ordinary-keeper…is hereby obliged to keep and set up, in the most public and convenient place of his house, for the perusal of all persons whatsoever.”\(^{51}\) If a tavern keeper failed to post the county court’s rates, he or she could be fined 600 pounds of tobacco, and overcharging carried a penalty of 300 pounds of tobacco per infraction.

As taverns proliferated, legislators became aware of the social ills their presence encouraged, such as drunkenness, brawling, prostitution, and gambling. Taverns, it was said, were “little better than Nurseries of Vice and Debauchery, and tend very much to encrease the Number of Poor.”\(^{52}\) As a result, colonial legislatures passed laws criminalizing certain behaviors. For example, in many colonies, including Maryland, it was illegal to drink on the Sabbath and holidays, and it was also generally illegal to serve slaves, free blacks, apprentices, Indians, servants, and seamen without the permission of their masters or ships’ captains.\(^{53}\) In 1780, the Maryland General Assembly forbade ordinary keepers from harboring, entertaining, or selling liquor to:

Any indentured apprentice, or apprentice bound out by any county court of this state, or any bought, indentured or convicted servant, or any slave…without leave or license in writing first had and obtained from the respective master, mistress, or owner, of such apprentice, servant or slave...

Interestingly, the same piece of legislation repealed a law enacted in 1712 “restraining victuallers, and keepers of public houses from entertaining of sailors,” as the restriction was found to be “to the prejudice of trade and commerce.”\(^{54}\)

Laws regarding the entertainment of enslaved individuals, free African Americans, servants, and apprentices were particularly stringent, as encouraging such individuals to congregate and consume alcoholic beverages was widely regarded as counterproductive. Such behavior was also thought to be a threat to public safety which increased the possibility of insurrection. Local authorities were “eager to uphold the laws that helped control the city’s servile classes,” and when infractions were committed, both the consumer and the provider were viewed as guilty of violating the law.\(^{55}\)

The burden of maintaining order in taverns was placed squarely on the licensee; in Maryland, a tavern license could be revoked if a tavern keeper was guilty of “keeping evil Rule and order in his house and suffering Extraordinary drinking fighting and Quarelling.”\(^{56}\) However, in spite of numerous laws and statutes that attempted to outlaw drinking or tavern-related crimes, very few infractions were actually prosecuted. Indeed, drunkenness was generally only a legal matter when it was combined with some other public nuisance, such as spousal abuse, debt, or illicit sex. When individuals were found to be engaging in public drunkenness, drinking on the Sabbath, or other prohibited activities, oftentimes “officials targeted the tavern keepers and held them responsible” rather than the perpetrator.\(^{57}\) Heavy fines and stringent licensing procedures did not prevent the proliferation of unlicensed taverns, known as “tippling houses.” Such establish-
ments often served those persons barred from licensed premises, including slaves, Indians, and servants, and were widely regarded as scenes of “profane language, horrid oaths, and imprecations.”

The quality of services provided at colonial taverns varied widely, particularly in rural areas. Southern’s tavern, for example, located at Southern Ferry on the south side of the Rappahannock River in Virginia, was described by one disgruntled patron as “no more than a mere Hut, full of rude mean people...every one...inflamed with liquor and exceeding turbulent and noisy.” William Logan’s account of a trip between Pennsylvania and Georgia recalls a tavern where he “lodged...in a very nasty room.” In North Carolina, he stopped at a tavern that was “by far the worse we have met with; there being a stinking ordinary Bed [and] an earthen floor.” Dirty rooms and drunken guests were not the only problems in rural taverns; a lodger at a tavern in Deerfield, New Hampshire in 1773 was rendered sleepless by the “myriads of fleas” in his room. He eventually retired to the barn where he “slept unmolessted in a bin of clean straw.” Rural taverns could also be quite pleasant: while traveling through Maryland and New Jersey in 1797 and 1798, a Polish diplomat named Julian Niemcewicz stopped for dinner in Tan[e]ly Town, a so-called town” but nonetheless found the inn to be “very good and the dinner tasty.”

The variable quality of services at rural taverns was primarily a result of location, but it may also have been a function of the nature of tavern-keeping in general. Outside of urban areas, most tavern proprietors engaged in other work, such as farming or shopkeeping, and operated a tavern to supplement other income. Such circumstances often impacted the quality of services provided; a visitor to a North Carolina tavern, for example, remarked that the proprietor was “doing too much agriculture and [his wife] is doing too much spinning, dyeing etc.—things which hinder them very much in their real job.” As previously noted, a few of the leasing agreements for the Middle Ford ferry and tavern survive, and indicate that the lessee was responsible for operation of the “plantation thereto adjoining” as well as the ferry itself, suggesting that operation of the tavern was somewhat of a secondary function.

The appeal of tavern-keeping as an expedient source of supplemental income was likely increased by the rather minimal effort required to do so; in the words of Julian Niemcewicz, “the trade of innkeeper is profitable without a great deal of work.” Indeed, tavern proprietors “often converted their own houses into ordinaries merely by posting a sign, serving liquor, and setting up additional beds for guests.” As a result, the variety of food and drink served in rural taverns was often simple; “whatever the tavern keeper had on hand for his/her own family and was willing to share.” Particularly in rural settings, seasonality played a significant role in the availability of fruits and vegetables, and preserved meats were not uncommon. In coastal areas, shellfish were commonly served. Nearly three-quarters of the faunal materials recovered from the Middle Ford ferry tavern site were oyster shells, perhaps reflecting what a French traveler described as the American “passion for oysters.”

As taverns were often set up in private homes with undifferentiated interior spaces, it was not uncommon in the American colonies for unacquainted travelers to share beds. The practice was apparently widespread, and was particularly abhorrent to Europeans. French traveler Mederic Louis Elie Moreau de St. Méry, for example, was horrified to discover that perfect strangers were frequently “admitted to the same room...Even while one traveler is asleep, another often enters to share his bed...I cannot help but rebel at the nonsensical belief that such customs are a proof of liberty.” Given the rather small footprint of the Middle Ford ferry tavern structure, it is possible that such a practice occurred there with relative frequency.

In addition to providing food and lodging, rural taverns served a number of other important functions. Given its location on a major stagecoach route, the Middle Ford ferry tavern may have functioned as an ad hoc post office where patrons could exchange letters, newspapers, and gossip. The importance of this role is reflected in Julian Niemcewicz’s account of a 1798 journey to Frederick on the George-town Road. He reports that the stage “stopped
A variety of mid- and late 18th-century artifacts were excavated from the site of the Middle Ford ferry tavern, including (far right) a two-tined fork, key, and nut comb; (above right) convex stamped one-piece buttons (18th-century); (far right bottom) a 1723 George I half-farthing, a 1772 Spanish real, and a 1787 New Jersey penny; (this page) slip-decorated redware (1733-1850); and (near right) white salt-glazed stoneware (1720-1805), and hand-painted pearlware (1795-1820).
on the road to pass out papers and letters. Once we stopped at a very poor hut and a
spare and small figure emerged asking for the newspapers. The printer from George Town
had forgotten to send them...[he] accepted this disappointment with the indifference of a
true stoic, but all in all, I am certain this was a severe blow for him. After tea these people like
nothing better than their newspapers.72

Apart from newspapers and gossip, many rural taverns attempted to provide other forms
of entertainment. While most did not have the multiple rooms necessary to accommodate
a billiard table, musical instruments, or similar amenities, many provided diversions
in the form of games of chance, gambling, or dice, and were sometimes the site of popular
spectator sports such as horse races, cockfights, bear- and bull-baiting, fist fights, and wrestling
matches.73 However, in spite of the popularity of gaming in colonial America, it was generally
strictly prohibited by law and was looked upon as “an amusement wholly unworthy of rational beings,
having neither the pretense of exercising the body, of exerting ingenuity, or of giving natural pleasure.”74 While no direct
evidence of gaming at the Middle Ford ferry tavern has emerged, a number of small un-
identified ceramic and stone objects have been recovered, which may have been utilized in
table games.

Whatever the various activities that may have occurred at the Middle Ford ferry tavern,
drinking was certainly the most popular form of recreation. As early as 1666, Marylanders
had access to “french wyne,” “french brandy,” “Madera,” “Canary and Malligoe,” “Porto port
and other Portugall wine,” “Strong Cider,” “Clarrett,” “strong beere or Ale either made
within this Province or brought from foreign Parts,” “Rumm,” “English Spiritts,” “Anniseed
Rosa Solis,” and “Perry and Quince drink.”75 Other popular beverages of the period included
punch and eggnog, along with concoctions bearing such picturesque names as “flip,”
“sling,” “bounce,” “toddy,” and “sangaree.” The varieties of drink offered at an individual tavern
varied based on its location as well as the economic status and aspirations of its keeper;
however, given its proximity to the Georgetown Road, it is likely that a wide variety of
beverages were available at the Middle Ford ferry tavern. Moreover, records indicate that
by the 1790s over 400 stills were in operation in Frederick County, suggesting that locally-
produced beer, cider, and distilled spirits were readily available.76

The Middle Ford ferry tavern was likely similar in nature to these other rural taverns,
away station where food, drink, and lodging may not have been of the highest quality,
but which provided a welcome respite for the weary traveler who passed on the Georgetown
Road. Indeed, both ferry and tavern were key elements of the growing network of trade
and transportation routes which pushed development along the frontier. As such, the tavern
and ferry continued to serve travelers on the Georgetown Road for nearly 80 years until
progress, in the form of a new covered bridge, led to its demise in the 1830s.

Conclusion

The Thomas Farm archeological study is nearly complete, and the results of both
archeological and historic research at the site provide insight into the earliest settlement
and occupation of Frederick County and the surrounding region, chronicling over 80 years
of expansion and transformation. The study of the Middle Ford ferry and tavern also sheds
light on frontier life in Frederick County during the eighteenth century, and the study of rural
tavern-keeping in general.

Above all, the story of the Middle Ford ferry and tavern helps to illustrate Monocacy
National Battlefield’s long and varied history. Such stories are illustrative of the vital trade
and transportation routes which transformed Frederick County into a gateway to the west,
facilitating the growth of population and industry, and spurring the development of roads,
bridges, and thoroughfares that remain in use even today. Although the tavern and ferry dis-
appeared long before the Battle of Monocacy was fought in 1864, they provide the National
Park Service with a unique opportunity to interpret the Battle of Monocacy within a
broader context: the development of Colonial transportation and trade routes which made
the Monocacy region of strategic importance to both North and South during the Civil War.

Joy Beasley is the Cultural Resources Program Manager at Monocacy National Battlefield. She received her undergraduate degree in Anthropology from the University of Georgia in 1983, and completed her graduate work in Applied Anthropology with a focus in Historical Archeology at the University of Maryland in 2001. She was the 2005 recipient of the John Cotter Award for Excellence in National Park Service Archeology.
"AN ETERNAL TRUTH?"

THE LIFE AND LEGEND OF JOHN BROWN

Rusty Monhollon

"WAS JOHN BROWN SIMPLY AN EPISODE, OR WAS HE AN ETERNAL TRUTH? AND IF A TRUTH, HOW SPEAKS THAT TRUTH TO-DAY?"

—W.E.B. Du Bois

In the east corridor on the second floor of the Kansas Statehouse in Topeka native Kansan John Steuart Curry painted his epic mural The Tragic Prelude. The mural symbolized "Bleeding Kansas," the antebellum crisis over the spread of slavery which soon plunged the nation into Civil War and gave the Sunflower State much of its identity. The focal point of Curry's allegorical mural, which he began in 1937 as one of a series of paintings symbolizing the state's past, is John Brown. It was in Kansas that Brown became a national figure—revered by abolitionists and reviled by slaveholders—for his militant and sometimes bloody opposition to slavery. Curry depicted Brown larger-than-life, wild-eyed, mouth open, arms outstretched in a Christ-like repose, one bloodied hand clutching the Bible and the other a rifle, dead Union and Confederate soldiers beneath his feet while a tornado and a prairie fire raged in the background, the harbinger of the irrepressible conflict of the Civil War. While some Kansans praised the painting, others were outraged. Brown stirred the emotions of Kansans like no other; a martyr and a hero to some, to others, a madman and a pathological killer. In 1941,
The Harpers Ferry raid, as depicted in Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper, November 5, 1859.
the Kansas Legislature—which had funded the mural—dismissed Curry before the full project was completed.²

Few historical figures are as controversial or as polarizing as John Brown in Kansas, or anywhere in the United States, for that matter. Since his death in 1859, popular and scholarly assessments of Brown, which have run the gamut from hagiographic veneration to scornful contempt, reveal a great deal not only about changing historical interpretations but also about the impact of contemporary events in shaping our understanding of those events. In the hands of his supporters and fellow abolitionists, John Brown became a martyr to their cause and his legend was born. Between the end of the Civil War and 1900, as the North and South sought to bind up the nation’s wounds, Brown was portrayed as a troublemaker and madman, and his luster dulled. In the early twentieth century, as blacks vigorously challenged Jim Crow and racial violence, Brown’s star rose again. From the 1930s to the 1960s, most scholars—writing in the context of two World Wars and the Cold War—viewed the Civil War as a needless conflict, and Brown nothing more than a deranged killer. The civil rights movement inspired yet another revision of Brown, who now was seen as a man of principle who sacrificed his life in the cause of racial equality.

Similarly, over the past two decades events such as the bombing at the 1996 Atlanta Olympics, the sniper-like murder of a New York physician by an opponent of abortion, and the events of September 11 have renewed both scholarly and general interest in John Brown, the man and the myth. Like Brown, the perpetrators of these violent acts were religious zealots who claimed their actions were directed toward “sinners” and justified by their God as part of a holy crusade. In light of these events, Brown’s life and legacy has taken on new significance and scrutiny. The historian David Blight sees Brown as “one of the avengers of history who does the work the rest of us won’t, can’t, or shouldn’t.” For Blight, Brown’s life and legacy thus raises important questions about many issues that have relevance for the contemporary world: the use of revolutionary violence; the politics of race; the meaning of martyrdom; and our ambivalence toward individuals who espouse “high ideals” but commit “ruthless deeds.”³

Within both academic and public audiences, Brown is an enigma. Many justify—and some
even admire—Brown’s zealous abolitionism (although not necessarily his means) because slavery was an abhorrent and violent institution. Others reject both his fanaticism and his means, which suggest that Brown was psychologically imbalanced, perhaps even mentally ill. Many scholars agree that violence was in fact necessary—the Civil War is the proof—to bring an end to the “peculiar institution,” although not all give much credence to the logic and efficacy of Brown’s “Holy War” against slavery. What seems clear, however, is that slavery was the context in which John Brown’s life and legacy were given meaning.

Indeed, the issue of slavery was never far from John Brown at any stage of his life. His father, a strict Calvinist, imparted to his son that slavery was a sin against God. When he was twelve Brown allegedly witnessed the beating of a young slave with an iron shovel, an apocryphal event he claimed haunted him the rest of his life. When his business ventures in New England failed, Brown relocated to Ohio, where he became immersed in the region’s abolitionist network. The murder of Elijah Lovejoy, the abolitionist publisher killed in 1837 by a proslavery mob in Alton, Illinois, radicalized Brown and prompted his decision to dedicate his life to abolishing slavery. Soon thereafter, he began formulating plans for leading a slave insurrection.

In the 1840s, Brown, again near financial destitution, returned to New England, which put him in the heart of the national anti-slavery movement. There he forged relationships with many influential abolitionists, including Frederick Douglass, with whom he shared his nascent plans for inciting an insurrection in the South. Backed by wealthy abolitionists, Brown relocated to North Elba, New York, a harmonious, interracial community. Between 1849 and 1851, Brown’s plans for a slave insurrection began to focus on Harpers Ferry, Virginia.

The political turmoil of the 1850s brought John Brown closer to his destiny. In 1854, the controversial Kansas-Nebraska Act allowed the residents of a territory to decide the issue of slavery in new territory. Kansas Territory soon became a testing ground for what became known as popular sovereignty. While slaveholders from Missouri were crossing the border to settle in Kansas, the New England Emigrant Aid Company was raising money to settle Kansas with antislavery men and women. Brown himself arrived in Kansas in October, 1855, amidst the depths of “Bleeding Kansas,” a state of near anarchy with two separate territorial legislatures—one pro-slavery, one anti-slavery—each claiming to be the legitimate governing authority.

Bleeding Kansas is crucial to both Brown’s life and legend, more so perhaps than the events of Harpers Ferry. In 1856, the free-state stronghold of Lawrence was sacked by proslavery men, who killed dozens and burned much of the town to the ground. The attack convinced Brown that the region now was at war and that abolitionists must strike preemptively to defend themselves. On May 26, Brown and six others murdered five proslavery settlers with broadswords at Pottawatomi Creek. News of the massacre alarmed southerners, who saw Brown as typical of all northern abolitionists. Later that summer Brown and his badly outnumbered men defeated proslavery forces at Osawatomie, Kansas, which enhanced Brown’s reputation as a military leader. Brown was commonly called “Osawatomie Brown” or Captain Brown thereafter.

A month later, Brown left Kansas for Boston, where he met with the so-called “Secret Six,” the wealthy abolitionists who funded Brown’s antislavery crusade. Brown also began recruiting both blacks and whites for his planned attack on the federal arsenal in Harpers Ferry. In June 1858, Brown returned briefly to Kansas before raiding two farms in Missouri and leading slaves on an eighty-two day, 1,500 mile trek to freedom in Canada.

In the spring of 1859 Brown traveled widely seeking money and support. In July, Brown arrived in Maryland, scouting the arsenal at Harpers Ferry from a nearby farmhouse rented from Dr. Booth Kennedy. In August Brown met with Frederick Douglass in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, where Brown unsuccessfully tried to convince Douglass to join him in the attack on Harpers Ferry.

On October 16, Brown and twenty-one men launched the ill-fated attack on the armory at Harpers Ferry. They met little resistance and quickly captured their objective, taking hostages from nearby farms, including George B. Shope of Frederick. The news of the raid reached Washington early on October 17, and a detachment of Marines, led by Lt. Col. Robert E. Lee, embarked for Harpers Ferry. President James Buchanan authorized three militia companies from Frederick to Harpers Ferry, and they arrived before Lee’s troops. Meanwhile, local residents pinned Brown down and cut off his escape route. The raiders retreated to the firehouse, a small brick building in the armory, which became immortalized later as “John Brown’s Fort.” Soon after their arrival on October 18, Lee and his men surrounded the engine house and, when Brown refused to surrender, stormed the building. They killed ten, including two of Brown’s sons, and took the severely wounded Brown and five others into custody.

The raid was an abysmal failure militarily, mostly due to Brown’s incompetent planning and execution. Many scholars, Bertram Wyatt-Brown among them, have suggested that Brown’s real objective was not to incite the slaves but merely to strike at the South and stir up sectional discord. Brown biographer Stephen Oates agrees, noting that Brown’s critics overlook his “alternative objective at Harpers Ferry,” which was to foment sectional tensions. Oates argues that although critics often dismiss Brown as a “demented dreamer,” the abolitionist understood clearly the extent of southern apprehension about slavery. As a northern abolitionist, Brown intuitively knew that all he had to do was “to step into Dixie with a gun, announce that he was here to free the blacks, and the effect on the South would be cataclysmic. He was right.”
The State of Virginia charged Brown with murder, conspiracy, and treason. His trial began on October 27 in Charles Town, just south of Harpers Ferry. It is here that the writing of the John Brown legend began, and it was much the work of the man himself. Brown shrewdly and cleverly defended himself, articulating his convictions with grace and aplomb. During his month in jail, he wrote and received many letters, some of which were published by northern newspapers. Brown’s correspondence exhibited deep convictions, which began to win him support in the North while alarming much of the South. Perhaps the most radical of Brown’s convictions—especially in the context of the era in which he lived—was his empathy for blacks. Brown’s belief in the social and political equality of blacks and whites shaped how he conducted his life, and drove his fierce opposition to slavery.11

It was also during his month in jail that Brown may have come to see his value to the anti-slavery crusade as a martyr. When asked during his trial, “Do you consider yourself an instrument in the hands of Providence?” Brown unflinchingly avowed, “I do.”12 Brown later declared that “if it is deemed necessary that I should forfeit my life for the furtherance of the ends of justice, and mingle my blood further with the blood of my children and with the blood of millions of this Slave-country, whose rights are disregarded by wicked, cruel, and unjust enactments, I say let it be done.” Others also saw the value of Brown the Martyr. Thomas Wentworth Higginson, one of the “Secret Six,” wrote to his mother, “Of course, I think enough about Brown, though I don’t feel sure that his acquittal or rescue would do half as much good as his being executed.”13

On November 2, the jury declared Brown guilty on all three counts and the court sentenced him to be hanged. On December 2, Brown rode to the gallows on his own coffin. As he left his cell, Brown handed his jailer a note that read: “I John Brown am now quite certain that the crimes of this guilty land will never be purged away, but with Blood. I had vainly flattered myself that without very much bloodshed it might be done.” Just after 11:00 a.m., and in front of 2,000 spectators, Brown was executed. His widow transported his body back to North Elba for interment. One year later, South Carolina seceded from the Union.

Although Brown’s raid and execution eventually electrified much of the North and outraged most of the white South, initially he was generally dismissed in both regions as a madman. Brown’s assertion that he was God’s instrument no doubt contributed to this response, as did his professed belief in racial equality, a view few—including many abolitionists—shared. But many simply could not fathom the audacity of his plan; only a madman would lead a small band in what seemed a futile and desperate attack. Fearful that Brown’s extremism would damage them at the polls Northern Republicans especially took care to distance themselves generally from Brown, and specifically the raid itself and the use of violence. The Examiner, a Republican-leaning paper published in Frederick, decried Brown’s violence but not his hatred of slavery. It, like
Howells, and Edna Dean Proctor, among others, composed poems to his memory. By this time, many abolitionists had abandoned their commitments to peaceful means, and some seemed to embrace a confrontation which appeared more and more unavoidable. Longfellow wrote in his journal on December 2, 1859, that “This will be a great day in our history; the date of a new Revolution,—quite as much needed as the old one. Even now as I write, they are leading Old John Brown to execution in Virginia for attempting to rescue slaves! This is sowing the wind to reap the whirlwind, which will come soon.”17 The Quaker John Greenleaf Whittier respected Brown’s courage and conviction, but could not praise him fully: “Perish with him the folly that seeks through evil good!”18

The historian Eyal Naveh argues that after his death Brown’s supporters—Emerson, Thoreau, Phillips, and Garrison foremost among them—“portrayed” him “as someone who had not really died, but had joined God in battle against the sin of slavery.”19 Emerson remarked that Brown “will make the gallows glorious, like the Cross,” and Thoreau’s “A Plea for Captain John Brown” struck a similar tone. Thoreau defended Brown as a “transcendentalist above all, a man of ideas and principles,” who risked his life to liberate the slaves. Thoreau proclaimed later that Brown “is more alive than ever he was. He is no longer working in secret. He works in public and in the clearest light that shines on this land.”20 The journalist George William Curtis made a similar declaration, writing that “John Brown was not buried but planted. He will spring up hundredfold.”21 The Reverend Henry Ward Beecher declared, “Let no man pray that Brown be spared. Let Virginia make him a martyr. Now, he only blundered. His soul was noble; his work miserable. But a cord and gibbet would redeem all that and round up Brown’s failure with a heroic success.” Wendell Phillips eulogized Brown during the funeral at North Elba. “We see him walking with radiant, serene face to the scaffold, and think what an iron heart, what devoted faith! Thank God for such a master,” exhorted the abolitionist. “Could we have asked for a nobler representative of the Christian North putting her foot on the accursed system of slavery?... How can we stand here without a fresh and utter consecration.”22

As Scott John Hammond describes him, Brown was “a practitioner of the Christian
Ethic framed by the imperative of universal love and compassion for others, especially those who suffer under the yoke of oppression and injustice.” Brown frequently commented on the necessity of sacrifice—the spilling of the blood of innocents—for the remission of sin. “Brown judged society,” Hammond notes, “according to the laws of God.” The point is reinforced by Paul Finkelman, who argues that “[b]y transforming Brown into a martyr, the antislavery movement helped prepare the North for a future that would create hundreds of thousands of martyrs.”

African Americans declared December 2, the date of Brown’s execution, “Martyr Day.” In New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Cleveland and Detroit, black-owned businesses closed for the day, and African-American men walked down the streets of these cities wearing black armbands. Throughout the urban North, African American families and community leaders held vigils of prayer and fasting in their churches. Others convened in meeting halls and sent financial donations to the widow and family of John Brown. Charles H. Langston, a black abolitionist, issued a statement denying that he had a hand in the Harpers Ferry raid. But he went on to express his solidarity with the attempt at slave liberation: “But what shall I deny? I cannot deny that I feel the very deepest sympathy with the immortal John Brown in his heroic and daring effort to free the slaves.” Most African Americans, argues the historian Benjamin Quarles, shared Langston’s sentiment.

For W.E.B. Du Bois, whose 1909 biography of Brown set Brown’s legend squarely in the heart of the struggle of African Americans, Brown’s life and actions proved that the “cost of liberty is less than the price of oppression.” Slavery was wrong, immoral, evil; the only way to abolish it was to “kill it.” Speaking in Harpers Ferry in 1932, Du Bois identified Brown as the necessary catalyst to the Civil War and articulated the abolitionist’s disconcerting legacy:

Some people have the idea that crucifixion consists in the punishment of an innocent man. The essence of crucifixion is that men are killing a criminal, that men have got to kill him … and yet that the act of crucifying him is the salvation of the world. John Brown broke the law; he killed human beings… Those people who defended slavery had to execute John Brown although they knew that in killing him they were committing the greater crime. It is out of that human paradox that there comes crucifixion.

The response in the South was quite different. At first, Southerners were terrified, then relieved, that Brown had not inspired slaves to revolt. As expanding Northern support and approval of Brown’s deed filtered into the South, the southern temperament changed, fearing that Brown had been but one cog in the great Northern conspiracy against slavery. Ironically, Southerners played an important role in the creation of the Brown mythology and Brown’s martyrdom, notes Paul Finkelman, and the quick verdict and harsh punishment were crucial. Virginia Governor Henry A. Wise, who had hastened to Harpers Ferry upon hearing the news of the raid, interviewed Brown before he was taken to Charles Town for trial. Wise later in Richmond addressed the citizens of the commonwealth, congratulating those who had thwarted Brown’s raid while also exhorting Virginians to organize and arm for such attacks in the future. Wise warned the commonwealth not to dismiss Brown as a lunatic. “They are mistaken who take him to be a madman,” the governor declared. “He is a bundle of the best nerves I ever saw—cut and thrust and bleeding in bonds. He is a man of clear head, of courage, of simple ingenuousness. He is cool, collected, and indomitable.”

Brown’s death did little to assuage southern suspicions of the North nor did it ease the region’s fear of a slave insurrection. In fact, the raid seemed to inure southern convictions that abolitionists would stop at nothing to incite an insurrection. “We rejoice that old BROWN has been hung,” read an editorial in the Cincinnati Enquirer. “He was not only a murderer of innocent persons, but he attempted one of the greatest crimes against society—the stirring up of a servile and civil war. He has paid the penalty for his crimes, and we hope his fate may be a warning to all who might have felt inclined to imitate his aggressive conduct.”

The Charleston [South Carolina] Mercury called the raid “a portentous omen of the future,” and concluded that there was little left for Southerners to do but arm themselves. The North Carolina Whig struck a similar tone, issuing a call for volunteers “to defend our homes and firesides from the incendiary and murderous attacks of Northern Abolitionists.”

The Baltimore Sun opined just before Brown’s execution that the South could not live “under a government, the majority of whose subjects or citizens regard John Brown as a martyr and a Christian hero, rather than a murderer and a robber.”

The southern response to Harpers Ferry, according to the writer Russell Banks, catalyzed Brown from a “very minor figure” to the “emblematic”—if not the “defining figure”—of the abolitionist struggle against slavery. Southerners regarded the raid as evidence of a Northern conspiracy. The plot included men from Maine to Kansas, which, argued the Richmond Enquirer, proved the extent of the conspiracy to incite “servile insurrection in Virginia.” Moreover, the Enquirer asked, “Who funded Brown’s attack?” The answer, it suggested, “would reveal the extent of the conspiracy.” For the Union to be preserved, Southerners asserted, Northerners had to vigorously repudiate Brown and his beliefs. Only this would illustrate to the South that the North had “no sympathy with these Abolition incendiaries and will in no manner tolerate either their diabolical teachings or their diabolical conspiracies.”

John Brown achieved more in death than he did in his fifty-nine years of life. Union soldiers marched into battle singing “John Brown’s Body,” a tune to which Julia Ward Howe, the wife of Samuel Gridley Howe, one of the Secret Six, wrote the words to The Battle Hymn of the Republic. The historian David Reynolds asserts that the imagery in
Howe’s lyrics—“As He died to make men holy, let us die to make men free,” “His truth is marching on,” a just God “trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored,” “the fateful lightnings of His terrible swift sword”—captured the “essence” of the messianic Brown, the self-professed “instrument of God.” Without Howe’s anthem, Reynolds concludes, Brown may not have become infused into the American mythological imagination.

By the end of the war, even among some southerners Brown’s public image had changed, and many regarded him as both a “great man” and a “hero.” “From the time of his capture,” writes William Keeney, “John Brown’s body became public property. No longer an actor in society, Brown had become a text to be written, a writing that even he recognized was all that was left to him and his cause, a writing that he began participating in from the first moment of his capture.”

What has always been clear is African Americans’ near-unanimous admiration of John Brown. As Paul Finkelman argues, at a time when most whites “doubted the equality of blacks or their innate abilities, Brown was willing to stake his life on the abilities of his black recruits to take orders, execute commands, and fight bravely.” George Washington Williams, one of the first great African-American historians, contends that Brown “ranks among the world’s greatest heroes.” Speaking to students at Storer College in Harpers Ferry in 1881, Frederick Douglass opined, “Did John Brown fail? ... John Brown began the war that ended American slavery and made this a free Republic.... His zeal in the cause of my race was far greater than mine—it was as the burning sun to my taper light—mine was bounded by time, his stretched away to the boundless shores of eternity. I could live for the slave, but he could die for him.” W.E.B. Du Bois, also speaking in Harpers Ferry at the second meeting of the Niagara Movement, avowed that blacks “do not believe in violence, neither the despised violence of the raid nor the lauded violence of the soldier, nor the barbarous violence of the mob, but we do believe in John Brown, in that incarnate spirit of justice.... And here on the scene of John Brown’s martyrdom we reconsecrate ourselves, our honor, our posterity to the final emancipation of the race which John Brown died to make free.”

Perhaps the depths of black adulation for Brown is best represented in the tale of Brown kissing the slave baby on his way to the gallows, a scene that never took place but has nonetheless been immortalized in the Brown mythology. John Greenleaf Whittier first put the image on paper, published in the New York Independent a few weeks after the execution:

John Brown of Ossawatomie spake on his dying day:
“I will not have to shrive my soul a priest in Slavery’s pay.
But let some poor slave mother whom I have striven to free,
With her children, from the gallows stair put up a prayer for me!”

John Brown of Ossawatomie, they led him out to die;
And lo! a poor slave mother with her little child pressed nigh.
Then the bold, blue eye grew tender, and the old harsh face grew mild,
As he stooped between the jeering ranks and kissed the negro’s child.

Later, several artists created visual images of the legend. Louis Ransom completed a seven by ten foot painting entitled John Brown on His Way to Execution, which was first displayed in 1860. The painting, which Ransom based on newspaper accounts of the execution, is rife with symbolism, including a banner with Virginia’s state motto, Sic Semper Tyrannis, forming a halo above Brown’s head. In 1865, Currier and Ives published a lithograph based on the Ransom painting, simply entitled John Brown. In 1870, Currier and Ives released another version, titled John Brown, The Martyr. In 1867, Thomas S. Noble painted his version, John Brown’s Blessing. Thomas Havenden, a European-trained artist, painted The Last Moments of John Brown. The legend is powerful, suggesting Brown’s commitment to racial equality. These images are the “personification” of Brown’s significance to African Americans, argues the historian Margaret Washington. Brown was willing to die, not for himself but for the slave. The depth of this devotion can be seen in other ways, too. Oberlin College, which purchased the Ransom painting, later erected a monument to the memory of three Oberlin men who died at Harpers Ferry. Western University in Quindaro, Kansas (near Kansas City) erected a statue of Brown in 1911. The inscription reads “from a grateful people.”

Despite his iconization during the Civil War, Brown’s memory once the conflict ended did not go uncontested. Indeed, argues the historian Merrill Peterson, between the end of the Civil War and the turn of the twentieth century Brown’s reputation measurably suffered, in large measure the consequence of efforts to reconcile the North and South. Whereas many had once depicted the war as an irrepressible struggle between good and evil, that view was soon amended by a sense that perhaps the war—and the attendant suffering and tragedy—had not been necessary. Thus, Brown’s image as an “American archetype” had to be altered to fit the new historical paradigm.

One of the first biographies of Brown was The Public Life of Capt. John Brown, written by James Redpath, a Brown family friend. Described as “an eyewitness account,” Redpath’s account was hagiography at its best. Subsequent scholarship, however, began depicting Brown as blood-thirsty and deranged, the antithesis of the heroic martyr. “Brown’s detractors viewed him as a false martyr because he had promoted fragmentation and disintegration instead of social cohesion and unification in American society.” Lincoln, not Brown, was “the great martyr who had atoned for the nation’s sin in life and death.”
"BATTLE HYMN"

a new play about
JOHN BROWN of
HARPERS FERRY
by
MICHAEL BLANKFORT
and MICHAEL GOLDF

at the
EXPERIMENTAL
THEATRE: W. 63rd ST.
east of Broadway

WPA FEDERAL THEATRE

evenings only 8:40
admission
25¢ to 55¢

This was especially true for southern interpretations of Brown, whose commitment to racial equality represented the deepest fears of the South: miscegenation and the threat to white womanhood. The northern response to Brown's death, observed North Carolina Senator Thomas L. Clingman, made "a strong impression on the minds of Southern people" and resulted in fear and revulsion. The symbolic power of John Brown's body, notes Peter Wallenstein, was not limited to the North. "Southern perceptions of Northern responses" to Brown's execution "had great political significance in the South as well."46 A.R.H. Ranson, a former Confederate officer who lived most of his life near Harpers Ferry, asserted in 1913 that Brown falsely believed slaves wanted freedom. Brown did not understand the true nature of slaves and slavery. Had he, Ranson wrote, Brown would have realized that blacks were "comfortable and happy, [and] there was such a thing as love between master and slave." Consequently, Ranson noted, no slaves came to Brown's side during the raid on Harpers Ferry.47

It is nearly impossible to separate the legend of John Brown from Kansas's own legends and mythology. Yet, Brown's character also suffered in Kansas, impugned by those seeking to rewrite the past and claim their own stake to the state's founding. As the abolitionists who organized and led the emigrant aid companies to Kansas wrote their memoirs, according to Peterson, they vilified Brown. Charles Robinson, the first governor of Kansas, once likened Brown to Jesus Christ. Speaking at the dedication of a monument to Brown at Osawatomie in 1877, Robinson declared "The soul of John Brown was the inspiration of the Union armies in the emancipation war, and it will be the inspiration of all men in the present and distant future who may revolt against tyranny and oppression..." To the superficial observer John Brown was a failure. So was Jesus of Nazareth. Both suffered ignominious death as traitors to the government, yet one is now hailed as the Savior of the world from sin, and the other of a race from bondage.48 By the 1890s, however, Robinson tried to elevate his own role in Kansas's history by diminishing Brown's, calling him "a liar, a coward, a thief, and a murderer." Rather than being a positive force for change, Robinson now argued Brown was in fact the cause of Kansas's troubles, making a bad situation worse.49 Franklin Sanborn, another member of the Secret Six, defended Brown's reputation vigorously in The Life and Letters of John Brown, published in 1885. Even a moderate like Kansas's own William Allen White, the influential publisher of the Emporia Gazette, opined that Brown's "life settled no controversy; his deeds accomplished no great results; but nevertheless, he was needed, and without him the abolition of human slavery might have been postponed for many years. Every great movement needs an agitator. Every leader of spiritual ideals needs a John the Baptist."50

The historical profession's assessment of Brown was at times sympathetic, at others derisive, although most historians acknowledged—if sometimes grudgingly—that Brown was a significant (although not a necessary) factor in the coming of the Civil War. The question of Brown's sanity was a central preoccupation, as it would be for later generations of historians. Professional historians focused typically on Brown's involvement at Harpers Ferry rather than his deeds in Kansas, viewing the latter as only a minor factor in starting the war. Some, mostly northerners with clear pro-Union sympathies, suggested that it was Brown's Virginian captors and executioners, rather than the abolitionist himself, who were responsible for elevating the significance of Brown's raid. Others, especially those from the South, agreed with Woodrow Wilson, who characterized Brown's actions at Harpers Ferry as "sinister."51

Brown was not without his defenders, however. Several works of historical fiction, with Brown as a central character, appeared in the late nineteenth and early in the twentieth centuries. Perhaps the two most important works on Brown were biographies. In 1909, the same year he helped to found the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), W.E.B. Du Bois published John Brown: A Biography. Du Bois's book placed Brown's life and legend squarely within the struggles of African Americans for freedom and equality. A year later, another NAACP founder, Oswald Garrison Villard (the grandson of William Lloyd Garrison) published what one historian calls the greatest American historical biography written up to that time. John Brown, 1850–1859: A Biography of Fifty Years After. Villard's opus became a touchstone for both scholarly and popular critiques of the Brown legend. Both Du Bois's and Villard's work reflected the symbolic importance of Brown for the civil rights movement and the NAACP, and to African Americans more generally.52

This symbolism was perhaps most evident in works of art and literature. Brown was a frequent subject in the poems and paintings of artists during the Harlem Renaissance, often portrayed Christ-like, crucified to take away the nation's sin of enslaving human beings. Jacob Lawrence, for example, produced in his distinctive style a twenty-two-piece series entitled The Legend of John Brown; the first painting in the series depicted Brown crucified on the Cross. Lesser known are works by Horace Pippin and William H. Johnson, both American primitive or folk painters. One of Pippin's best-known paintings is of Brown sitting on his own coffin on the way to his hanging. Brown is a central figure in two of Johnson's paintings, both group portraits. In Three Great Freedom Fighters, Brown and Frederick Douglass stand on either side of Harriet Tubman, their hands in hers. In Three Great Abolitionists: A. Lincoln, F. Douglass, J. Brown, Johnson depicted Brown alongside Douglass and Abraham Lincoln.53

Writers of the Harlem Renaissance found Brown a worthy subject, none more so than Langston Hughes. Hughes, who grew up in Lawrence, Kansas, and was the grandson of Charles Langston, an alleged accomplice of Brown's, composed "October 16th: The Raid."
Perhaps
You will remember
John Brown.
John Brown
Who took his gun,
Took twenty-one companions
White and black,
Went to shoot your way to freedom
Where two rivers meet
And the hills of the
North
And the hills of the
South
Look slow at one another—
And died
For your sake.
Now that you are
Many years free,
And the echo of the Civil War
Has passed away,
And Brown himself
Has long been tried at law,
Hanged by the neck,
And buried in the ground—
Since Harpers Ferry
Is alive with ghosts today,
Immortal raiders
Come again to town—
Perhaps
You will recall
John Brown.\textsuperscript{54}

Lawrence’s paintings and Hughes’s prose illustrate vividly the high regard African Americans had for Brown, at a time when whites generally dismissed or denigrated the abolitionist. There were exceptions, of course. In 1928, the poet Stephen Vincent Benét published \textit{John Brown’s Body}, the bestselling, Pulitzer Prize-winning, 377-page epic poem. While Brown is the central character, the piece was as much about the moral burden of war as it was Brown himself. Benét insightfully identified the difficulty of finding Brown’s place in the nation’s historical consciousness:

You can weigh John Brown’s body well enough,
But how and in what balance weigh John Brown? ...
He had no gift for life, no gift to bring
Life but his body and a cutting edge,
But he knew how to die.\textsuperscript{55}

Despite the critical acclaim and popular success of Benét’s \textit{John Brown’s Body}, generally Brown’s reputation between 1920 and 1970 changed very little. Typically among scholars he was regarded as a deranged or mad fanatic. In large measure this view resulted from revisionist interpretations of the Civil War, which posited that extremists—both northern abolitionists like Brown and Southern nationalists—fanned the winds of war, into which inept and blundering politicians plunged the nation. Perhaps the harshest appraisal of Brown appeared in 1942, written by James C. Malin, a historian at the University of Kansas. \textit{John Brown and the Legend of Fifty-Six} was a scathing indictment of Brown that shifted the historical lens from Harpers Ferry to Bleeding Kansas. Malin denigrated Brown as a ruthless murderer and decryed his “devious career of falsehood and bloodshed lacking any redeeming purpose.” Like many scholars today, Malin could not reconcile Brown’s participation in the 1856 massacre at Pottawatomie Creek with his strident crusade to abolish slavery. For Malin, Brown was a troublemaker, an agitator who sought not peace and reconciliation but personal fame. Rather than a martyred hero, Malin’s Brown is an anti-hero, a mere “parenthesis in the history of Kansas” and the United States.\textsuperscript{54}

Popular culture portrayed Brown similarly. He was a central character in two Hollywood films, \textit{Santa Fe Trail} (1940) and \textit{Seven Angry Men} (1955). \textit{Santa Fe Trail}, which took many liberties with the historical record, starred Errol Flynn as J.E.B. Stuart, Ronald Reagan as George Armstrong Custer, Olivia de Havilland as Kit Carson Holliday, and Raymond Massey as John Brown. Assigned to Kansas Territory during the depths of Bleeding Kansas, Stuart and Custer are the film’s principal characters, with Brown as the protagonist that drives the personal competition between Stuart and Custer, and their romantic interest in Holliday. Through most of the film, Brown is depicted as a villain and a terrorist, although by the final scene he is redeemed as a martyr to a just cause. Fifteen years later, Massey, who also toured for two years in a stage production of \textit{John Brown’s Body}, again portrayed Brown in \textit{Seven Angry Men}. Brown is depicted as a devout Christian who turns to violence only out of his frustration with the continued existence of slavery. While Brown is a more sympathetic character than in \textit{Santa Fe Trail}, he remains, as the historian Peggy A. Russo notes, an incomplete historical figure. In both films, Russo concludes “some aspect of the ‘real’ Brown comes through,” yet he remains an elusive historical character. Both films are products of their time and Russo posits that at least part of the reason for the change in how Brown is portrayed resulted from the impact of the civil rights movement on American culture. The producers of \textit{Seven Angry Men}, released a year after the Supreme Court’s decision in \textit{Brown v. Board of Education}, could portray John Brown more favorably because popular attitudes about African Americans, Russo suggests, had changed.\textsuperscript{56}

This subtle change in the depiction of Brown in popular culture perhaps anticipated broader changes in American society, although this altered view was not held universally. As centennial observances of the Harpers Ferry raid were held in 1959 Brown was still characterized by writers and scholars as a bloodthirsty fanatic. The struggle for racial
“John Brown was found ‘Guilty of treason and murder in the 1st degree’ and was hanged in Charles Town, Virginia on December 2, 1859,” No. 22 in Jacob Lawrence’s *John Brown Series*, 1941.
equality, as Russo noted above, perhaps did more to rehabilitate Brown’s popular image and recast his legacy. Brown had always been a significant figure to African Americans, a stature that only grew during the 1960s. This was especially true among the more strident voices, such as black nationalists and advocates of Black Power. Many regarded Brown as “the blackest white man,” and the abolitionist reemerged as a symbol during the era. Malcolm X frequently evoked Brown’s memory, and used Brown’s actions as a yardstick by which to measure whites. If whites wanted to help blacks, Malcolm said, ask them what they think of John Brown. “Do you know what John Brown did? He went to war. He was a white man who went to war against white people to help free slaves.”

The New Abolitionist Society (NAS) is an example of how Brown’s legend carries on. The NAS, which publishes the journal Race Traitor, has held several “John Brown Days” with events held in North Elba, New York, Osawatomie, Kansas, and Altadena, California. The 1999 event, for example, was proclaimed as a day of ritual, reflection, remembrance, and renewal. For the NAS, Brown “made war against slavery, working closely with black people. Those who think it saner to collaborate with evil than to resist it have labeled him a madman, but it was not for his madness that he was hanged; no, it was for obeying the biblical injunction to remember them that are in bonds as bound with them. For those who suffer directly from white supremacy, John Brown is a high point in a centuries-long history of resistance; for so-called whites he is the hope that they can step outside of their color and take part in building a new human community.” Among the members of NAS are Russell Banks, Derrick Bell, John Bracey, Robin D.G. Kelley, Toni Morrison, David Roediger, Pete Seeger, Cornel West, Howard Zinn, and the editors of Race Traitor.

What then do we make of John Brown’s life and legacy? Since 1970, Brown has been the subject (by one scholar’s count) of at least forty-three biographies, numerous scholarly studies, many works of fiction, including Russell Banks’ best-selling novel Cloudsplitter, and eighteen children’s books. Clearly, interest in Brown has not waned. Given the increase of political violence worldwide over the past thirty years it is likely that John Brown will remain a figure of historical interest for some time.

The question remains, perhaps asked best by Stephen Vincent Benét: “How and in what balance weigh John Brown?” Of what significance is he for our modern world? The political scientist Scott John Hammond concludes that Brown is “more relevant” today than Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, or Martin Luther King because “in his perpetually frustrated zeal for freedom and justice, he embodies the core of the American story; we see in the growth of the nation writ large the same constant buffeting between the ideas of freedom and the reality of interminable frustration that created a similar tension in the turbulent psyche of the Osawatomie Prophet.” Similarly, the novelist Russell Banks contends that Brown’s “life raises very basic and ongoing questions about political violence, violence in the service of an ideal, of a principled cause... And that, to me, makes him so tragically revealing and emblematic of our history and of our culture and our nature today.”

Many Americans—in both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries—have dismissed Brown because of his religious zealotry, while ignoring, as Stephen Oates points out, “the fact that Abraham Lincoln and Robert E. Lee—to name only two other figures of this extremely religious time—also came to regard themselves as instruments of God.” It is difficult, too, to embrace Brown fully because of the violence he used to achieve his goals. Bertram Wyatt-Brown notes that while “the historian can perceive Brown’s raid at Harpers Ferry as the political and moral equivalent to contemporary guerilla and terrorist campaigns[,]... such zealotry and indifference to the life of innocents strikes us as inhuman, not to mention personally threatening.” Brown is enigmatic for the contemporary world. Yet, Wyatt-Brown concludes, we are the “beneficiaries” of Brown’s war against slavery. “Americans of every race must honor Brown for his immense contribution to the eventual outcome.”

Perhaps Stephen Oates best expresses the contemporary significance of John Brown’s life and legacy. “In our own uncertain time, we can learn a great deal from Brown’s life,” Oates posits, “if we avoid glorifying or denigrating him and try to understand the man in the context of his own era.” Brown turned to violence, Oates argues, because the world in which he lived had “institutionalized a monstrous moral contradiction; the existence of slavery in a Republic that claimed to be both Christian and
free, a Republic founded on the enlightened ideal that everybody is entitled to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” Why, Oates asks, did Brown turn to violence? Oates posits that “out of the whirlpool of his own agonies and aspirations, Brown became a revolutionary who rejected peaceful alternatives in favor of violent means to remove injustice. And we can learn something about the society that produced him, too. For the United States of his day had been unable (or unwilling) to resolve such a contradiction, the country invited a messianic rebel like Brown to appear with his sword.” By seeking to understand the world that created John Brown—and not simply dismissing him as deranged extremist—we might discover how our own world has produced men, women and children who see violence as the only answer.

Rusty Monhollen is Assistant Professor of History and the Director for the Masters of Arts in Humanities program at Hood College, where he teaches courses in United States, African-American, and women's history. His book “This is America”: The Sixties in Lawrence, Kansas (Palgrave, 2002), received the Edward H. Tichen Publication Award from the Kansas State Historical Association.
“Slavery,” wrote John Brown, “throughout its entire existence in the United States, is none other than a most barbarous, unprovoked, and unjustifiable war of one portion of its citizens upon another portion.”

Unlike many abolitionists at the time, Brown was convinced that peaceful measures were not sufficient to abolish slavery. In 1856, he and other abolitionists attacked a group of pro-slavery settlers near Pottawatomie Creek in Kansas. Three years later, Brown led another uprising, this time in Harpers Ferry, Virginia. The local story of the October, 1859 raid begins in the summer of that year, in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania.

Start the tour in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania. At 225 East King Street in Chambersburg stands a house with white siding and dark shutters, currently occupied by the American Heart Association. In the 1850s this building was a boarding house owned by Mrs. Mary Ritner. It became known as the John Brown House after the famous abolitionist lived here during the summer prior to his raid on Harpers Ferry. There are exhibits on John Brown on the second floor of the building. To arrange a tour, contact the Franklin County Historical Society: (717) 375–2345, history@pa.net.

On June 27, 1859, a tall, bearded, white-haired man arrived in Chambersburg and rented the second floor of this boarding house. The stranger introduced himself as Dr. Isaac Smith, a prospector planning to develop iron mines in Maryland and Virginia. The landlady was the daughter-in-law of Joseph Ritner, a former governor of Pennsylvania and an outspoken abolitionist. Perhaps it was no coincidence that Dr. Smith chose to stay in this particular house. He was actually John Brown, already famous for his fanatic commitment to abolishing slavery and wanted for the murders of five anti-abolitionists in Kansas.

Isaac Smith rarely conversed with the townspeople, occasionally received visitors at his boarding house, and frequently waited at the post office to watch for the arrival of the train. Alexander McClure, a Chambersburg attorney, never doubted that Smith was “a quiet business man who decided to develop the mineral wealth of Western Virginia.” This Dr. Smith also opened a sawmill, supplied charcoal to furnaces in the area, led Sunday School classes at Emmanuel Chapel, and once preached at Falling Spring Presbyterian Church.

None of Chambersburg’s residents suspected that Brown was also aiding fugitives on the Underground Railroad and developing a plan for his assault on Harpers Ferry. Several of Brown’s accomplices, including three of his sons, were living in Chambersburg at the same time. Box after box of
“mining equipment” was delivered by train to “Smith and Sons.” These cartons actually contained arms, ammunition, and other equipment necessary for the raid. The shipments were stored in the nearby Oakes and Caufman Warehouse and secretly conveyed by wagon fifty miles south.

Go west on East King Street about 0.1 mile, then turn left onto Philadelphia Ave. (N. Main St./US-11 S). After 0.3 miles, turn right onto West Washington.

recognized Douglass and urged him to give a speech. He did so, then went to a barbershop owned by Henry Watson, who led him and his companion to the quarry. Brown was waiting for them there, disguised as a fisherman, with John Henry Kagi. The four men spent two days talking and arguing. Again and again Brown urged Douglass to join him in the assault on Harpers Ferry. Douglass refused, and attempted to talk Brown.

Take I-81 South 23.7 miles. Merge onto I-70 East. After about 4 miles, take the MD-65 S exit (Exit 29A) toward Sharpsburg. Turn right onto MD-65 South. After about 10 miles, MD-65 will become N. Church St., then Burnside Bridge Rd. Turn right onto Mills Rd for 1.7 miles, then left onto Harpers Ferry Rd for 2.3 miles, and left on Mt. Lock Hill Rd for 0.9 miles. Make a right on Chestnut Grove Rd. End at 2406 Chestnut Grove Rd., the property known as Kennedy Farm.

John Brown’s Fort,” Harpers Ferry, circa 1889-1892. The Jefferson County Courthouse in Charles Town, WV, where John Brown was tried and convicted in 1859.

Street. You will see Southgate Mall on the left. In 1859 none of these stores, cars, or busy shoppers existed. There was only a quiet old stone quarry. A historical marker behind the shopping center on West Washington Street marks the site of a meeting between John Brown and Frederick Douglass.

Frederick Douglass, a former slave and ardent abolitionist, arrived in Chambersburg on August 19, 1859, accompanied by a fugitive slave named Shields Green. The meeting with Brown was supposed to be a secret, but the townspeople immediately out of the plan. Certain that the raid would end in failure, he warned Brown that “Virginia would blow him and his hostages sky-high.” He also feared that the raid would not only fail to free any slaves but would actually “rivet the fetters more firmly than ever on the limbs of the enslaved.”

Finally the four men parted. Brown and Kagi were still determined to carry out the raid. Shields Green joined them, announcing, “I believe I’ll go with the old man.” Douglass, still convinced that the plan would be disastrous, returned to Rochester.

in the mid-nineteenth-century, which John Brown used as his headquarters from July to October in 1859. Contact the farm’s current owners at captain@johnbrown.org to arrange a tour.

This farm was named after Dr. Robert F. Kennedy, who purchased the 194 acres of land from Antietam Iron Works in 1852. Kennedy died seven years later, in the spring of 1859. The farm remained empty for several months. In the middle of July, John Brown, alias Isaac Smith, rented the property for nine months and began living there with his two sons Owen.
and Oliver and another accomplice, Jeremiah Anderson. Throughout the following weeks, more of Brown’s companions gradually arrived until there were more than twenty men living at the farm. Brown’s sixteen-year-old daughter Annie and young daughter-in-law Martha came to do the cooking and cleaning and to keep a sharp lookout for suspicious neighbors.

The men stayed in the farmhouse all day, keeping busy by reading, writing letters, playing checkers, and polishing their rifles. At night they went outside for fresh air and exercise and to drill with Lieutenant Jeremiah Anderson in preparation for the raid. If any stranger came near the house, one of the girls would detain the visitor while the men went up to the attic to hide. In late September the two girls were sent home and Brown’s “Provisional Army of the United States” prepared to set off for its next destination: Harpers Ferry.

Leaving Kennedy Farm, go southwest on Chestnut Grove Rd, and make a slight left onto Harpers Ferry Rd. After 5.5 miles, turn left onto Keep Tryst Rd, then make a left on US-340 West. After 2.7 miles, turn right onto Shenandoah Street in Harpers Ferry.

On Shenandoah Street stands the only surviving building of the town’s original armory. It is a small, roughly square, one-story brick building with wide arched doorways, a slate roof, and a white open belfry. This structure was the armory’s “engine and guard-house,” built in 1848. At the time of John Brown’s raid it was located about 150 feet west of its current location, near the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad depot. The building escaped destruction during the Civil War, was dismantled and moved several times, and was finally acquired by the National Park Service in 1968 and moved to a place as close to its original site as possible. It is known as “John Brown’s Fort.”

Brown and his followers barricaded themselves and nine hostages in this building early in the morning on Monday, October 17, 1859. The night before, they had crossed the Potomac and entered Harpers Ferry at about 11 P.M., slashed telegraph wires to keep news of the raid from spreading, and captured the local armory, arsenal, and rifle factory. They had also taken about 40 townspeople as hostages and placed guards throughout the town.

But they had made the mistake of allowing a train passing through Harpers Ferry to continue on to Baltimore and raise the alarm. Troops from Charleston, Shepherdstown, and Martinsburg arrived and joined the local militia in surrounding the armory. They were followed by companies from Frederick, Baltimore, and Washington. A detachment of marines under Lieutenant Colonel Robert E. Lee arrived on the evening of October 17.

Fearing for the safety of Brown’s hostages, the troops did not storm the engine house right away but waited until daylight on October 18. Under Lee’s orders, Lieutenant J. E. B. Stewart approached the engine house with a white flag and delivered a written summons to the insurgents, ordering them to “immediately deliver up their arms and release their prisoners.” As Lee expected, Brown refused to accept the surrender terms. A “stoming
party" of twelve men under Lieutenant Green attempted to break down the doors of the engine house with sledge-hammers, but Brown's men had fastened the doors with ropes and blocked them with fire engines. Lee's troops found a heavy ladder to use as a battering ram and "dashed in a part of the door." They entered the engine house with swords and bayonets, and "the whole was over in a few minutes."16

From Harpers Ferry, take US-340 South to Charles Town. At 100 East Washington Street stands the Jefferson County Courthouse, built in 1836. It was damaged by shells during the Civil War, but was later restored and is still in use today. The courthouse is open to the public on weekdays.

John Brown was tried in this building beginning on October 25, 1859. Brown had been brought from Charles Town from Harpers Ferry five days before. He was weak and ill from a sword wound and had to lie on a cot in the courtroom during his trial. He was found guilty of treason and sentenced to death by Judge Richard Parker.17

From the courthouse take US-340 BR Northeast; turn right on S. Samuel Street. At 515 S. Samuel St. is the Gibson-Todd House, a brick Victorian home built by Colonel John Thomas Gibson in 1892. A historical marker in the yard notes the spot where a gallows once stood, just to the north of where the house now stands.

On December 2, 1859, John Brown was brought here in a furniture wagon to be hanged. More than a thousand troops were assembled in Charles Town, for Virginia's governor feared opposition from abolitionists, and there had been rumors of plans to rescue Brown.18 His raid and arrest had already provoked widespread controversy. Some saw him as a "miserable old traitor and murderer,"19 others as an "angel of light."20

To the end, John Brown remained convinced that he was in the right. George Mauzy, a Harpers Ferry resident who was in Charles Town on the day of the execution, wrote that the "old fanatic made no confession whatsoever, nor concession that he was wrong, but contended that he was right in everything he had done, that he had done great service to God."21

Brown was executed shortly before noon. He left behind him the ominous words: "I, John Brown, am now quite certain that the crimes of this guilty land will never be purged away but with blood."22

Other regional sites related to John Brown:

Emmanuel Chapel in Mont Alto, PA.

While he was living in Chambersburg during the summer of 1859, Brown attended church services here and taught a Sunday School class for African American children. The Chapel is now owned by Penn State University. For information, call (717) 749-6000

Washington County Free Library in Hagerstown, MD.

From Chambersburg, Brown made several trips south with a wagon, moving boxes of "mining equipment" (actually weapons). On June 30, 1859, probably on one of these trips, Brown stayed at a hotel known as the Washington House in Hagerstown, MD. The building burned down in 1877, but the Western Maryland Room in the Washington County Free Library owns the hotel register signed by "J. Smith" (John Brown), his sons, and the names of several of Brown's accomplices who also stayed there. The Western Maryland Room is open on Mondays 2-6 p.m. and 7-9 p.m., and Thursdays and Fridays 9 a.m.-12 noon and 1-5 p.m. For information, call (301) 739-3250

The Jefferson County Museum, at 200 East Washington Street in Charles Town, WV.

The museum owns John Brown's copy of his Provisional Constitution, the wagon that conveyed him from prison to the gallows, and one of the pikes he planned to distribute to freed slaves. Open Tuesday through Saturday, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., April through November. For information, call (304) 725-8628

Anna Pritt is an intern at the Catoctin Center for Regional Studies.

1 John Brown, "Provisional Constitution and Ordinances for the People of the United States" (1856), http://www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/trials/johnbrown/brownconstitution.html
2 A time line of John Brown's movements from June to December, 1859 can be found at http://www.johnbrown.org/timeline.html
3 http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/travel/underground/pb2.htm
4 http://www.cvcom.com/aaaAB%257%250Journey/title.html
6 http://www.cvcom.com/aaaAB%257%250Journey/title.html
7 ibid.
8 Frederick Douglass, The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass (1881, reprint, New York: Pathfinder Press, 1941), 350-354.
9 ibid.
10 ibid.
11 http://www.johnbrown.org
12 Franklin Sanborn, Life and Letters of John Brown (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1881), 527-529. 546.
14 http://www3.iath.virginia.edu/brown/kfarm.html
17 Villard, Fifty Years After, 470-499.
18 ibid, 519-522.
19 Richmond Whig newspaper editorial (Nov. 18, 1859), in Villard, Fifty Years After, 500.
21 George Mauzy, letter to his daughter and son-in-law, James and Eugenia Burtons (1859), http://www.nps.gov/archive/hafe/mauzy.htm
22 Villard, Fifty Years After, 554.
CHRISTMAS IN BLUE AND GRAY:
Keeping the Yuletide in Civil War Camps

Kenneth Pitts

In the army we have no holidays,” remarked a Union officer camped in South Carolina during the Christmas of 1862, “to us all days are alike.”

For many soldiers wearing the uniform of both North and South, this was the reality of four Christmases that passed through the conflict’s span. In the midst of winter quarters during this season—the excitement of battle waning in a chilly time of little action or distraction—the soldier must have found it nearly impossible to dissuade his mind from thoughts of family and celebrations in bygone years. However, despite a longing for home and the season’s merriment, wistfulness was no exemption from duty.

“It is Christmas morning, and I hope a happy and merry one for you all, though, it looks so stormy for our poor country, one can hardly be in a merry humor,” wrote Robert Gould Shaw to his mother while in winter encampment near Frederick, Maryland, in 1861. A Second Lieutenant in the Second Massachusetts Infantry at the time, Shaw described the ruins of his holiday by a dull stint of guard duty during the night, writing, “My Christmas Eve has been very much like other eves during the last six months. ... It began to snow about midnight, and I suppose no one ever had a better chance of seeing ‘Santa Clause,’ but, as I had my stockings on, he probably thought it not worth his while to come down to the guard tent.” Shaw was not alone in having his holiday hindered by military obligation. Most units were required to maintain their regular schedule on Christmas Eve, and to muster for inspection early Christmas morning. However, some officers acknowledged the occasion and released their troops from the usual rigors of duty, if only for the one day.

“Tommorrow is Christmas and we are not goin to drill We are goin to keep Christmas and we are goin to have a little funn [sic]...” wrote a soldier of the Fifth New Hampshire with excitement for the liberty granted to his company. Such fun often took the form of holiday sports, including running, jumping and wrestling competitions and snowball fights (weather permitting). Chasing a greased pig was also a favorite game, especially as it may have meant a fine Christmas dinner for the captor and his company. Performances of seasonal music by company bands were also a staple of the occasion and were noted to add “some rubber in [the] heels” of an audience afterward. The trimming of camp in festive decorations was yet another tactic meant to capture the spirit of the season far from home, accomplished as well as could be with what was available in the midst of a military camp. To this end, some particularly resourceful federal troops in winter quarters on the lower Potomac set...
out a tree before their tent for the holiday and dressed it—not in tinsel and sweets—but instead with hard tack and pork.6

Parting with such ornaments was no doubt difficult for some soldiers, as these standard rations were served for Christmas dinner just as they were on any other night. However, the fortunate soldier may have enjoyed a richer holiday repast, perhaps shipped from home or prepared by citizens local to an encampment. Packages sent from friends and families were anticipated year-round, but perhaps never more so than at Christmas time. Gifts would have provided some small luxury to the austere military life and reminded a soldier that, somewhere, someone was thinking of him. If the parcel managed to find its recipient unmolested by pilfering inspectors or fellow soldiers, home-cooked food from mothers, sisters and wives might have made the difference between a hopeless holiday dinner or one to make “mouths of less fortunate companies water.” Accounts from both northern and southern soldiers describe Christmas dinner being salvaged only by the generosity of those behind the battlefront, and one Confederate private camped in Virginia during the first year of the war mused on the phenomenon: “Well may we enjoy such a dinner when we pause for a moment and think how we happen to get it!” Indeed, it must have been quite a morale boost for the enlisted man estranged from the family table to have a bit of that longed-for meal come to him. Samuel Alexander of the Sixty-Second Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry recorded the delivery of a box to his mess on Christmas Eve containing a much-appreciated turkey and other provisions. However, despite the pleasant feast that ensued, Alexander wrote, “I was not as happy as I was when I ate Christmas dinner one year ago with my dear wife and I hope before another Christmas rolls around that we may be together never more to part.” As enjoyable as these home-dispatched meals were, the most important ingredient was still missing: home.

Seasonal delicacies were delivered not only by family, but also common citizen supporters. Agencies such as the Ladies’ Union Relief Association were organized across both warring territories, soliciting donations of food and other necessities to supply needy troops. In the North during the winter of 1863, these groups collected five thousand roasted turkeys and delivered them “with all the _etcetera_ to the Army of the Potomac for holiday dinner in its camps, a testament to the organizations’ efficacy.” Where this assistance was unable to extend, individuals often shared with local soldiers what they could. Randolph McKim of the Second Maryland Infantry, stationed near Staunton, Virginia, one Christmas, was taken in by a family and fed a banquet that included oyster soup, turkey, ham, beef, lobster salad, plum-pudding, pound cake and coffee. The extent of the bill of fare was not lost upon McKim, and he commented that one “must not suppose people, generally, are so fortunate.” The role of benefactor was reversed at times, with the soldier giving back to a loyal and generous public. Following the first battle at Fredericksburg in 1862, with the city in shambles and citizens displaced in the days after the firefight, soldiers under the command of General Robert E. Lee shared their rations with the townspeople so they would not go without a Christmas dinner.13

Even when a soldier managed a proper holiday dinner, it seems Christmas was nevertheless incomplete without a draught of eggnog. Troops always anticipated a nip of the seasonal libation, and foraging for ingredients at times went to desperate lengths—many a purchased or pilfered egg being combined with what was _most_ essential to the concoction: alcohol. Camped in Centreville, Virginia, during the Christmas of 1861, soldier Tally Simpson of the Third South Carolina Volunteers described the eagerly-executed preparation of his mess’s “nog” in a letter to his sister, writing, “You had better believe there was a rattling of plates and spoons and knives” as it was mixed.14 Though none of Simpson’s companions arose the next morning with what he dubbed “the ‘big head’,” the effect of eggnog—which seems to have been available even when Christmas meals were not forthcoming—proved disastrous for many other units.14 One particular bout of large-scale holiday drunkenness recalls the march of a portion of the Tennessee Brigade out of Strasburg, Virginia, on Christmas Day, 1861, to meet General Thomas “Stonewall” Jackson in Winchester. After supping on fortified eggnog the prior evening and that morning,
so many men fell out of line on the road that the brigade’s file closers were forced to tow entire wagon-loads of intoxicated soldiers as they continued the march. Merrymaking often turned violent when soldiers had their fill of the stuff, causing chaos in camp and making life rather difficult for sober guards charged with keeping order. Shaw, in the same letter written in camp near Frederick, wryly remarked that the beginning of his Christmas Eve “was principally occupied in taking care of two drunken men (one of them with a broken pate).” Similar descriptions abound in tales of holiday “spirit” consumption; it seems that, with liquor’s propensity for bringing out the devil in men, many pent up angers about the war and distance from family found ample release on what should have been a joyful occasion.

Perhaps not all days were alike for the good soldiers of the Union and Confederate armies; on Christmas at least, it seems many experienced some small sense of festivity known in years prior to the war. However, the undertone in most letters and journals documenting the day is in consensus: no meal could fill the craving for family; no eggnog could numb the pangs of a lonesome heart. No matter how convicted a supporter of his cause, many a soldier longed for home and family. Camped in Virginia just days after the Battle of Dranesville, Eighteenth Mississippi Infantry Regiment surgeon James Montgomery Holloway, in a letter to his wife, Annie, written early on Christmas Day of 1861, rather poignantly summed up what were probably the most typical of any soldiers’ thoughts during the holiday:

My Dearest Wife and Babies: A healthy Christmas to you all . . . I can’t say a happy one (tho’ I wish it) for happiness is not ours—until we all meet after the war. We may be joyous and gay for the season, but that joyousness and gaiety is mingled with concern and apprehension for the condition of our beloved country—for our absent loved ones . . .

You have no idea how lonesome I feel this day . . . it’s the first time in my life—that I am away from loved ones at home . . . I presume you are in New Orleans—and in a few hours the house will be all astir—the children crazy over their stockings. Were I there, I’d fill them up to the rim with Bon-Bons—I’d make them think for one day that plenty abounded—that no war existed—and that each was a king or queen . . .

Kenneth Pitts is a student at the University of Maryland at College Park and an intern with the Catoctin Center for Regional Studies.

Eggnog

1 egg, separated
1 tablespoon molasses
1/3 cup whole milk
1/3 cup rum or whiskey
1/3 cup cream

Beat yolk and molasses together, then stir in rum or whiskey (rum is sweeter) and milk. Whip cream to heavy peaks. Vigorously whip egg white until frothy, then add to whipped cream, mixing thoroughly. Scoop whipped mixture into liquid and gently fold together until smooth. The final mixture will separate and can be served either with the foam floating on top or remixed, chilled or at room temperature. Makes about three servings.

3 Ibid., 41–42.
4 Ibid., 42.
5 Ibid., 45.
6 Ibid.
7 Ibid., 43–45.
8 Davis, A Taste for War, 115.
9 Rawlings, We Were Marching on Christmas Day, 40.
10 Davis, A Taste for War, 115.
11 Rawlings, We Were Marching on Christmas Day, 76–77.
12 Davis, A Taste for War, 116.
14 Ibid., 101.
15 Rawlings, We Were Marching on Christmas Day, 46.
16 Ibid., 39.
17 Holloway to Annie Wilcox Warren Holloway, Mississippi Hospital, 25 December 1861, Virginia Historical Society, Papers, 1861–1905, Section 1, manuscripts, Ms1 H7288 a1–138, 16; cited with permission from E. Lee Shepard, director of manuscripts and archives.
SECOND ANNUAL
FREDERICK READS 2007
One Book.
One Community
April 11-12

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER
MANHUNT
THE 12-DAY CHASE FOR
LINCOLN'S KILLER
JAMES L. SWANSON

Frederick READS and its sponsors welcomes
James L. Swanson, author of New York Times bestseller
Manhunt: the 12-day chase for Lincoln's killer,
to Frederick for several speaking engagements:

- Frederick Community College: April 11, 2:00 PM
- Delaplaine Visual Arts Center: April 11, 7:30 PM
- Hood College: April 12, 2:00 PM

All appearances are free and open to the public.
For more details visit the Frederick County Public Library.
Frederick Reads 2007 site at: http://www.fcpl.org
Catoctin Center to Cosponsor Society of Military History Annual Meeting

April 19–22, 2007

Five hundred military historians will descend on Frederick on April 19–22, 2007 to attend the 2007 Annual Meeting of the Society of Military History. This event, co-hosted by the Catoctin Center for Regional Studies, will be held at the Holiday Inn and Conference Center in Frederick. The meeting will explore a wide range of eras and topics of interest to military historians and others. The keynote address will be delivered by James McPherson of Princeton University.

Four related tours are scheduled during this conference. Destinations include South Mountain, Monocacy Battlefield, historic sites in downtown Frederick, and Ft. Detrick.

The complete program for the SMH Annual Meeting is available on the Catoctin Center’s website (catoctincenter.frederick.edu). The SMH website (www.smh-hq.org) offers online registration. Questions may be directed to Barbara Powell at 301-624-2863 or bpowell@frederick.edu.

Beatty-Cramer 5th Annual Living History Event

June 2 – June 3
10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Beatty-Cramer House
9010 Liberty Rd, Rt. 26, near Frederick, MD

The Beatty-Cramer House in Frederick County is sponsoring its 5th Annual Living History Event, Saturday, June 2nd and Sunday, June 3rd from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. This two-day educational event encompasses 18th and 19th century demonstrations of trades and skills, including architectural tours of the Beatty-Cramer House, built ca. 1782. Visit with encampments of Native Americans, Frontiersmen, Revolutionary & Civil War Medical Tent, and a Civil War encampment. Discover the art of blacksmithing, candle making, 18th century sewing, colonial cooking, period music, and more!

Entrance fee is $1.00; children 10 years & under are free. Light fare and beverage will be available for purchase. The Beatty-Cramer House (9010 Liberty Rd) is located one mile east of Route 194 on Route 26, outside of Frederick, MD. For more information, see: http://www.FrederickCountyLandmarksFoundation.org

Pioneer America Society: Association for the Preservation of Artifacts and Landscapes 39th Annual Meeting

October 10–13
Four Points Sheraton Hotel
Hagerstown, Maryland

Call for Papers

The Pioneer America Society: Association for the Preservation of Artifacts & Landscapes (PAS:APAL) will hold its 39th annual conference at the Four Points Sheraton Hotel in Hagerstown, Maryland, on October 10–13, 2007. The co-hosts for this event will be Dr. Paula S. Reed, of Paula S. Reed & Associates, Inc., of Hagerstown, MD, and Dr. Susan W. Trail, of the Monocacy National Battlefield, Frederick, MD.

"Landscapes in Stasis-Landscapes in Change: Two Views of Western Maryland Cultural Landscapes" offers the dual conference themes of historic agricultural landscapes and their preservation, and transportation with all of the changes that evolving transportation systems have brought to the landscape.

To study these themes, two day-long tours are planned for which the hosts are partnering with C&O Canal National Historical Park and Antietam National Battlefield. The Thursday tour will examine regional transportation systems with stops at: 1) segments of the National Road and C&O Canal in Maryland, 2) the C&O Railroad Roundhouse in Martinsburg WV, and 3) Harper's Ferry, WV, where the railroad and canal meet at the confluence of the Potomac and Shenandoah Rivers. The Saturday tour will look in depth at historic cultural landscapes on Antietam National Battlefield at Sharpsburg, MD. This field trip will provide the opportunity to view several examples of 18th century through mid-19th century farmsteads that are not open to the general public. Finally, an informal caravan tour of Monocacy National Battlefield will be offered on Sunday. It will feature a visit to the Hermitage, a French Caribbean plantation established in the 1790s by refugees of the St. Domingue slave revolt.

The conference committee is now soliciting proposals for papers, special sessions, and panel discussions on the conference themes. However, presentations on all topics related to material culture that are of interest to the Society are welcome. Presenters must be members of PAS: APAL. The abstract deadline is Monday, July 2, 2007.

For further information, please contact Dr. Paula S. Reed, Paula S. Reed & Associates, Inc., 1 West Franklin Street, Hagerstown, MD 21740; tel: 301/739-2076; email: paula@paulasreed.com; or Dr. Susan W. Trail, Superintendent, Monocacy National Battlefield, 4801 Urbana Pike, Frederick, MD 21701; tel: 301/662-5515; email: susan_trail@nps.gov.
SUBSCRIBE NOW TO CATOCTIN HISTORY!

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION (TWO ISSUES) NOW ONLY $10

THREE EASY WAYS TO SUBSCRIBE:

1. For credit card orders, call 301-846-2464.
2. E-mail dmortimer@frederick.edu.
3. Send mailing information and payment to Catoctin History, FCC, 7932 Opossumtown Pike, Frederick, MD 21702.
A Partnership in Education!

History

The Catoctin Center for Regional Studies was created in 1998 by Frederick Community College and the National Park Service to promote the research and study of the history and culture of central Maryland and the adjacent areas of neighboring states. This region, in the midst of the Catoctin Mountain range, encompasses an area rich in history and cultural heritage, and one that has long been a crossroads of people and ideas. From early wagon roads and the National Road, to ironworks and glassworks, to the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal and the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, to Harpers Ferry and John Brown, to Antietam and Gettysburg, to abundant farms and traditional folkways, to Fort Detrick and Camp David, the Catoctin region has played an important part in the history of America. Through research projects, teaching, collaboration with other historical organizations, internships, publications, conferences, workshops, and preservation efforts, the Catoctin Center for Regional Studies both promotes the study of this region’s history and provides students exciting new learning opportunities.

Mission

The mission of the Catoctin Center for Regional Studies includes four broad components:

- **Research**—foster the multidisciplinary study and interpretation of the history and culture of central Maryland and the adjacent areas of neighboring states;
- **Teaching**—offer educational opportunities, in the classroom and through hands-on learning experiences, for students and the public to learn about the region’s history;
- **Communication**—disseminate historical research and information through a variety of innovative programs and activities;
- **Collaboration**—help coordinate the exchange of information and resources concerning regional history and culture between regional academic institutions, historical organizations, National Park Service units, other federal, state, and local government agencies, and the public.

Current Projects

**Historic Sites Survey**—The Catoctin Center is researching historic sites in Frederick, Washington, and Carroll Counties, in Maryland, related to transportation, industry, and agriculture, to help supplement existing historic sites surveys of the region.

**Maryland Traditions**—In collaboration with the Maryland Historical Trust and Maryland State Arts Council, the Catoctin Center is researching the folklore and traditions of central Maryland.

**Oral History Projects**—Frederick Community College students are conducting oral histories on topics such as World War II, the Civil Rights Movement, farm life, folklore, and the Vietnam War. Transcripts are being prepared for public use in both paper and online formats. (A sampling of transcripts can be read on the Center’s website at [http://catoctincenter.frederick.edu/oral_hist/collection.htm](http://catoctincenter.frederick.edu/oral_hist/collection.htm))

“Crossroads of War” Project—With support from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Catoctin Center is researching the Civil War era in the region. Project components include a website, tours, lectures, and a conference.

**Tolson’s Chapel Preservation**—The Catoctin Center for Regional Studies is partnering with the Save Historic Antietam Foundation to help preserve Tolson’s Chapel, a historic former African-American church in Sharpsburg, Maryland. Tolson’s Chapel dates to 1866, and briefly housed a Freedman’s Bureau school in the late 1860s.

**Conferences**—The Catoctin Center hosts a regional history conference every two years, featuring speakers, workshops, music, tours, craft demonstrations, a bookshop, information tables for historical organizations, and a reception.

**Workshops**—The Catoctin Center organizes and hosts occasional workshops, such as “Slavery and the Civil War,” and “The Underground Railroad in Mid-Maryland.”

**National Park Service Projects**—Through cooperative agreements with local National Park Service units, researchers for the Catoctin Center have cataloged archeological artifacts, prepared National Register nominations, and written park administrative histories.

For more information please see the Catoctin Center’s website at [http://catoctincenter.frederick.edu](http://catoctincenter.frederick.edu), or contact either Dr. Barbara Powell, FCC Coordinator, or Dr. Dean Herrin, NPS Coordinator, Catoctin Center for Regional Studies, Frederick Community College, 7932 Opossumtown Pike, Frederick, MD 21702. The Catoctin Center’s telephone number is 301-624-2773. You may also e-mail us at catoctincenter@frederick.edu.
In the mania accompanying the Civil War’s centennial in the early 1960s, the Topps card company released for sale *Civil War News*, a collection of eighty-eight trading cards and seventeen reproductions of Confederate currency. The cards depict scenes from infamous events during the conflict, often with violent and bloody realism, and bear a newsprint-style synopsis of each on the reverse side. The cards were painted by famous pulp artist Norman Saunders (also the primary artist for the popular *Batman* and *Mars Attacks* card series of the same decade) and are valued at up to five hundred dollars for a complete set today.