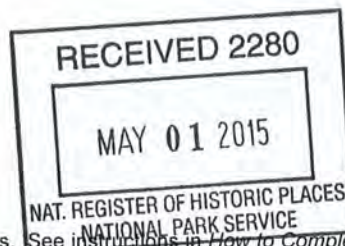


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



349

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a).

1. Name of Property

historic name Packhorse Ford
other names Pack Horse Ford; WA-II-034; Boteler's Ford; Blackford's Ford

2. Location

street & number Potomac River at Canal Road not for publication
city or town Sharpsburg vicinity
state Maryland code MD county Washington code 043 zip code 21782

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments).
Elizabeth Hughes 4-24-15
Signature of certifying official/Title Date
Elizabeth Hughes, Acting Director/SHPO, Maryland Historical Trust
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments).
Signature of certifying official/Title Date
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:
 entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
 determined eligible for the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
 Determined not eligible for the National Register.
 removed from the National Register.
 other (explain): _____

Colson H. Beall 8-15-15
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
0	0	buildings
1	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Transportation/pedestrian-related

Transportation/road-related

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Other/recreational

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

N/A

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation N/A

Walls

Roof

Other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad pattern of our history.
- B** Property associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets)

Previous documentation on files (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey

- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

Area of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Transportation

Period of Significance

Ca. 1730-1864

Significant Dates

September 17-20, 1862

June 1863

July 5, 1864

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

N/A

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Packhorse Ford (WA-II-034)
Name of Property

Washington County, Maryland
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property Less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	1	8	2	6	0	7	4	0	4	3	6	8	1	4	0
	Zone			Easting				Northing							
2															

3															
	Zone			Easting				Northing							
4															

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Paula S. Reed, Ph.D., Architectural Historian; Edie Wallace, M.A., Historian
Organization Paula S. Reed & Associates, Inc. date May 22, 2014
street & number 1 W. Franklin St., Suite 201 telephone 301-739-2070
city or town Hagerstown State Maryland zip code 21740

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO)

name State of Maryland, Dept. of Natural Resources
street & number _____ telephone _____
city or town _____ State _____ zip code _____

Paperwork Reduction Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et. seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

WA-II-034
Packhorse Ford
Name of Property

Section 7 Page 1

Washington County, Maryland
County and State

Description Summary:

Packhorse Ford crosses the bed of the Potomac River on a roughly north-south axis, between Canal Road in Washington County, Maryland and Trough Road in Jefferson County, West Virginia. It is entirely located within the Potomac River, and thus belongs to the State of Maryland. A footpath leads from Canal Road across the abandoned C&O Canal prism to the ford. The ford is a relatively flat ledge of rocks extending from the Maryland bank of the river to the West Virginia shore. Packhorse Ford is located approximately one and a half miles downriver (southeast) of the MD Rt. 34 Rumsey Bridge between Sharpsburg, Maryland and Shepherdstown, West Virginia. During periods of low water, typically during the summer months, the ford can be identified as a ripple on the surface of the water where the river flows over the rock ledge. On the West Virginia side no evidence of the ford access appears on the embankment between the river and Trough Road, the paved Jefferson County road that follows the route of the early 18th century wagon road. Trough Road, historically called Jost Hite's road, runs through a gap formed by a seasonal creek through the bounding hills of the river valley. The old route intersected today's Flowing Springs Road and continued southwest to join the Valley Road (today's US Rt. 11).¹ Near the ford access on the West Virginia riverbank are the ruins of Potomac Mills (National Register listed 2013), a grain and cement milling complex built in 1828 and active through the end of the 19th century. The rock foundation of the old mill dam produces a second, more distinct set of ripples in the river approximately 400 feet upriver from the ford.² Steep cliffs formed by limestone quarries rise several hundred feet above the Potomac Mills complex. **(Figure 1: Modern aerial view of Packhorse Ford)**

The ford was the Potomac River crossing first used by American Indians and later adapted by emigrants as an early route to the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia, part of what was known as "The Great Waggon Road to Philadelphia." No definitive documentation has been located confirming the route of the early "Great Waggon Road." However, a review of historic maps, along with previous research of Indian paths and of early (1730s) land patent descriptions, provides a likely route: beginning along the Minquas Path, a Conestoga (Susquehannock) trading route out of Philadelphia, to the western branch of the Monocacy Road, connecting with the Monocacy to Antietam Road through Crampton's Gap over South Mountain and through the *Felfoot* patent near today's Keedysville, then crossing the Antietam Creek in the *Smith's Hills* patent approximately where the Middle Bridge on MD Rt. 34 crosses today, to the Big Spring on

¹ Cecil O'Dell, *Pioneers of Old Frederick County, Virginia* (Marceline, MO: Walsworth Publishing Co., 1995), p. 488.

² Paula S. Reed & Assoc., "Potomac Mills," National Register of Historic Places documentation, listed 2013.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

WA-II-034
Packhorse Ford

Name of Property

Washington County, Maryland

County and State

Section 7 Page 2

the *Hickory Tavern* patent (today's Sharpsburg) and continued by an undetermined route to the Packhorse Ford.³

The historic "Great Waggon Road" crossing at Packhorse Ford fell out of regular use after 1750 as a northern branch of the "Great Road" (today's US Route 11) followed an easier route through the mountains, crossing the river via Watkins' (later Williams') Ferry near today's Williamsport, Maryland. Likewise, by 1755 Swearingen's Ferry (later Blackford's Ferry), located about a mile and a half upriver of the rocky ford, eased the local river crossing. In 1834, the all but abandoned wagon road approach to the Packhorse Ford on the Maryland side was severed by the construction of the Chesapeake & Ohio (C&O) Canal.

During the American Civil War the ford briefly saw a resurgence of use by invading armies, the Potomac River being the border between North and South. The Packhorse Ford played a significant role in the September 17, 1862 Battle of Antietam, as Confederate General A.P. Hill's troops arrived via the ford in time to prevent a decisive Union victory. Three days later the ford crossing, quarry cliffs, and Potomac Mills complex figured prominently in the September 20 Battle of Shepherdstown (also known as the Battle of the Cement Mill).

General Description:

The Packhorse Ford is located in the Potomac River, approximately one and a half miles southeast of the MD Rt. 34 Rumsey Bridge. The ford runs essentially perpendicular from the Maryland riverbank, at Mile 71.4 of the C&O Canal.⁴ A wayside exhibit sign is posted along the canal towpath marking the location of the river ford. Access to the location today is from Canal Road, a paved county road which parallels the C&O Canal beginning at the Antietam Aqueduct and ending at the Rt. 34 Rumsey Bridge. A footpath leads from Canal Road across the now-wooded C&O Canal prism and towpath to the bank of the Potomac River.

The sandy riverbank, here relatively wide and low, does not show any obvious sign of the old road leading to the Packhorse Ford. The ford itself is often difficult to discern, particularly when

³ Paul A. W. Wallace, *Indian Paths of Pennsylvania* (Harrisburg: The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1965), p. 64; Grace L. Tracey & John Philip Dern, *Pioneers of Old Monocacy: The Early Settlement of Frederick County, Maryland, 1721-1743* (Frederick, MD: Clearfield Company, 1998), p. 55; Dr. Arthur Tracey, "Tracey Map," map of early patent lands in Washington County, Western Maryland Room, Washington County Free Library, Hagerstown, MD.

⁴ Mike High, *The C&O Canal Companion* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997) p. 97-99, 176. The mileage is measured from the canal's point of origin at the Tidewater Lock in Georgetown, Washington, D.C.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

WA-II-034
Packhorse Ford

Name of Property

Washington County, Maryland

County and State

Section 7 Page 3

the water level of the river is elevated. When the river is low, a line of ripples running across the river to the West Virginia shore indicates the location of the rock ledge crossing.

On the Maryland side, the landscape is a mixture of cultivated fields along the flat floodplain bounded by wooded hills gently rising from the river valley. On the north side of Canal Road, approximately four hundred feet east of the footpath leading to the Packhorse Ford, a hunter's lane passes through the field and continues up the hill through scrub pines and deciduous woods toward Sharpsburg. Continuing approximately 3,000 feet east on Canal Road is the intersection of Canal Road and Millers Sawmill Road. Historically known as "Miller's Depot," this was the location of Jacob Miller's sawmill, powered by water from a nearby un-named creek and the C&O Canal. A small stone building, now a private residence, was the office of Morgan and Rench Miller's canal boat business and nearby is the remnant of the canal boat loading dock.

Maj. Gen. Ambrose P. Hill's Confederate troops, arriving at the Packhorse Ford on the afternoon of September 17, 1862, followed Canal Road southeast to Millers Sawmill Road, to join the fight at Harpers Ferry Road on the south end of the Antietam Battlefield. Although Jacob Miller's sawmill, reportedly used as a Confederate hospital after the battle, is no longer standing, the miller's cottage and the Miller's stone canal business office still stand at the intersection. The log ca. 1930 Conococheague Sportsmen's Club lodge and a number of early to mid-20th century houses also now line Canal Road as the Miller family attempted to convert the area to a summer resort after the C&O Canal closed in 1924.

Moving northwest approximately twenty-five feet from the Canal Road intersection with the ford path is a seasonal drainage or ravine that marks the route followed by Confederates during their retreat on September 18, 1862 from the Antietam battlefield (**Figure 7, Official Atlas Map**). Another six hundred feet northwest is a lane near another seasonal drainage. This lane leads through the William Blackford property. During the 1880s, William Blackford, son of ferry and plantation owner John Blackford, established the Antietam or Potomac Cement Mill (Blackford Cement Factory, MIHP #WA-II-368) at this location. All that remains today of the complex is the stone limekiln structure. Continuing approximately one mile along Canal Road is a series of cultivated fields bounded on the north by wooded hills ending at Lock 38 of the C&O Canal and the surviving buildings of Bridgeport. This cultural grouping is located at the former ferry/bridge crossing, recalling the period of intense activity in the area from the late 18th century through the 19th century as part of John Blackford's Ferry Hill Plantation, the ferry and later bridge crossing, and as a busy C&O Canal depot.⁵

⁵ High, p. 177-180.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

WA-II-034
Packhorse Ford
Name of Property

Section 7 Page 4

Washington County, Maryland
County and State

Within the Potomac River itself, moving northwesterly upriver, a series of both defunct and active crossings remain in evidence. Beginning with the Packhorse Ford, the Potomac River is marked by: the Potomac Mills dam remnant (MIHP #WA-II-1198); the active iron trestle of the Norfolk & Western Railroad; the remnant stone piers of the earlier Shenandoah Valley Railroad bridge; the C&O Canal Shepherdstown River Lock (in the Maryland riverbank); the stone piers of the Potomac Bridge (burned 1861, flooded 1936); the former Swearingen/Blackford ferry crossing; the remnant bridge abutments of the 1939 James Rumsey Bridge; and the current concrete and steel James Rumsey Bridge.

1 Contributing Site

Evaluation of Integrity

The Packhorse Ford is a natural rock ledge feature of the Potomac River and appears to remain unchanged from its period of use.

The original route to the ford on the Maryland side of the river is currently undetermined. However this route was altered in 1834 by the interruption of the C&O Canal prism and towpath. The route from the west end of Sharpsburg followed by retreating Confederates in September 1862, as indicated on contemporary maps, is no longer visible on the ground, today indicated only by the ravine that it followed. The existing roads leading to the ford area are paved with asphalt.

Thus, only the Packhorse Ford itself retains integrity of Location, Setting, Design, Materials, Feeling, and Association, and would likely be recognizable (during low water) to anyone who might have used the ford historically.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

WA-II-034
Packhorse Ford
Name of Property

Section 8 Page 1

Washington County, Maryland
County and State

Summary Statement of Significance:

The Packhorse Ford of the Potomac River is significant under Criterion A in the area of transportation for its role as the first Potomac River crossing of the “Waggon Road to Philadelphia.”⁶ Also known as the Great Waggon Road, or Great Road, it carried much of the first westward migration of colonial settlers from the north and east across the river and into the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. German-immigrant farmers, moving through Pennsylvania, brought with them the grain-based agriculture that would soon dominate the region. Through the second half of the 18th century the western settler-farmers’ need for economical carriage of grain products to eastern markets brought about transportation improvements, including improved roads, ferry and bridge crossings, and by the 1790s, improved Potomac River navigation. Early 19th century technological advancements in transportation culminated with the construction of the C&O Canal and the Baltimore & Ohio (B&O) Railroad, both started in 1828. Each improvement served to marginalize the more-difficult Packhorse Ford crossing, particularly the canal which severed the approach to the ford on the Maryland side of the river. However, it seems the ford continued in use, at least to some degree, into the 19th century. The “Ford” was identified on the Charles Varlé Jefferson County Map of 1809 and the Herman Boye Map of Virginia in 1828. The Packhorse Ford derives additional significance under Criterion A for its role in the American Civil War: then known as Boteler’s or Blackford’s Ford, it became an important crossing on the boundary between the Union and the Confederacy, after nearby bridges were burned in 1861 to prevent unauthorized crossings. In 1862, the ford played a significant role in the September 17 Battle of Antietam or Sharpsburg, as the crossing point for Confederate Maj. Gen. Ambrose P. Hill’s troops arriving from Harpers Ferry to reinforce General Robert E. Lee. Hill’s perfectly timed arrival arguably prevented the complete defeat of the Confederate forces at Antietam. Still, the following day General Lee’s Confederates made a quiet retreat across the Packhorse Ford back into Virginia. On the night of September 19, Union troops crossed the ford in a surprise raid that culminated in the September 20 Battle of Shepherdstown, also known as the Battle of the Cement Mill, and a stinging Union defeat. The battle, however, proved to be the pivotal final engagement of General Lee’s Maryland Campaign, as it caused him to abandon his plan to return to the North and instead turned his army toward the interior of Virginia. The ford was used again in 1863 and in 1864 by invading Confederate troops, though it never saw battle again. Following the Civil War, the Packhorse Ford faded into near-obscurity, used mainly – even to this day – by fishermen and Civil War re-enactors.

⁶ The 1736 Benjamin Winslow map labeled the road as the “Waggon Road to Philadelphia” (see Figure 3). At that time, Philadelphia was the primary market for cash crop production, wheat in particular in the case of the Germanic farmers, and thus the road leading “to Philadelphia” was emphasized on the map.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

WA-II-034
Packhorse Ford
Name of Property

Section 8 Page 2

Washington County, Maryland
County and State

The period of significance for the Packhorse Ford is ca. 1730 through 1864, covering the colonial settlement role of the Packhorse Ford through its pivotal role during the American Civil War.

Historic Context and Resource History:

Prior to European settlement on the North American continent, pathways laced the forests and open grasslands of the mountain and valley region known as the Great Valley through what would later be Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia. Blazed by the first Americans, American Indian hunting trails, warrior's or ambassador's paths, and migration routes were narrow foot paths, "good for the uses to which they were put and for which they were intended: the moving about of moccasined men and women."⁷ Typically such pathways followed the drier ridges and river terraces above the floodplain. But occasionally creeks and rivers had to be crossed where naturally-occurring shallow fords were utilized.

The Packhorse Ford was among the earliest crossing points of the Potomac River within the Great Valley.⁸ By the time of European contact in this region, beginning in 1608 with John Smith's explorations, the "Great Warrior's Path" through the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia (later the Valley Road, today's US Rt. 11), was already well-worn.⁹ The Warrior's Path linked to northern pathways via the ford across the Potomac River. The Minquas Path, a Conestoga (Susquehannock or Minquas) trade route between Philadelphia and Conestoga (town) on the Susquehanna, led south via a branch of the Monocacy Path. (**Figure 2: Minquas and Monocacy Paths**) The Monocacy Path turned westward across Catoctin Mountain to a gap in the Sherandore (South) Mountain later called Crampton's Gap. From there the path made its way across the Antietam Creek, passing by the Big Spring (later Sharpsburg), and wound its way, by a currently undetermined route, down to the Potomac River crossing at the ford.¹⁰

A natural ford across the Potomac River just north of the mouth of Antietam Creek, this shallow stretch of rocky riverbed was likely utilized by Conestoga (Susquehannock) and Delaware Indians from the north as well as Catawba Indians from the south. Among the "Kings and rulers of the Five nations" who presented Israel Friend with a deed for land along the Potomac River

⁷ Wallace, p. 2.

⁸ The Great Valley includes the Cumberland Valley of Pennsylvania, the Hagerstown Valley (an extension of the Cumberland Valley), and the Shenandoah Valley of West Virginia and Virginia.

⁹ Michael N. McConnell, "Before the Great Road," in Warren R. Hofstra and Karl Raitz, eds., *The Great Valley Road of Virginia*, (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2010), pp. 68-69.

¹⁰ Wallace, p. 11; Tracey and Dern, p. 64; Dr. Arthur Tracey, "Tracey Map," early land patents of Washington County as plotted by Dr. Tracey, Western Maryland Room, Washington County Free Library, Hagerstown, MD.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

WA-II-034
Packhorse Ford

Name of Property

Washington County, Maryland

County and State

Section 8 Page 3

and Antietam Creek in 1727, was Captain Sivility (Civility) a chief of the Conestoga.¹¹ The Conestoga or Susquehannock, also known as the Minquas by their Dutch trading partners, claimed the valuable Beaver hunting grounds of the Great Valley.¹² Local tradition notes the area around the mouth of Antietam Creek as the site of a significant battle between the Delaware (by then aligned with the Susquehannock) and Catawba in 1736.¹³

After the turn of the 18th century, American Indian foot traffic was soon replaced by fur traders' packhorses. Travel by packhorse was the only means of transportation for early frontier traders like Israel Friend, who also served as an ambassador between the colonial Maryland government and the local tribes. In addition to Friend, other early fur traders in Maryland included Edmund Cartledge, Abraham Pennington and Thomas Cresap. John Van Metre was the first to acquire title to land in present day Frederick County in 1724.¹⁴ Van Metre, a Dutch immigrant to New York, moved with his wife and seven children from New York to Maryland. In 1730, John and Isaac Van Metre were granted 40,000 acres of Virginia land. In an effort to stimulate settlement in Virginia's back country, the large grant required the grantees to bring settlers from New York to improve the land. The Van Metres assigned the Virginia land grant, and its stipulations, to Jost (Joist) Hite, an emigrant from Strasburg, Germany, who had settled along the Hudson River in New York.¹⁵

Virginia began its attractive settlement policy in the 1720s, offering cheap land to settlers who would improve the land for agricultural production and firmly establish colonial claims on former American Indian lands. The Virginia land policy was also an attempt by colonial governor William Gooch to reduce the Lord Fairfax claim of five million acres known as the Northern Neck of Virginia. As a result, a steady stream of emigrants began the journey southward. However, the movement of settlers into the frontier required wagons, laden with the equipment necessary to improve the land. The trader's packhorse trails had to be widened to accommodate wagon traffic. Writing in 1899, St. George Leakin Sioussat cited an elderly resident of Shearman Valley, Pennsylvanian, speaking on the frontier transition from packhorse to wagon. The old man, who had lived nearly 100 years when he died in 1830, recalled "seeing

¹¹ Prince Georges County Deed Book Q, Page 169, this deed, dated January 10, 1727, was recorded in 1730 by George Beall; Charles A. Hanna, *The Wilderness Trail*, Vol. 1 (New York: The Knickerbocker Press, 1911), p. 81.

¹² McConnell in Hofstra & Raitz, p. 71. The Conestoga, previously enemies of the Iroquois, were by the early 18th century aligned with the Iroquois Six Nations.

¹³ Helen Ashe Hayes, *The Antietam and Its Bridges: The Annals of An Historic Stream* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1910), p. 7.

¹⁴ Dr. Grace L. Tracey, "Notes from the Records of Old Monocacy," manuscript, p. 5, citing Warrant of Resurvey records, BC and GS, folio 1.

¹⁵ Paula S. Reed, *Tillers of the Soil: A History of Agriculture in Mid-Maryland* (Frederick, MD: Catoctin Center for Regional Studies, 2011), p. 1.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

WA-II-034
Packhorse Ford

Name of Property

Washington County, Maryland

County and State

Section 8 Page 4

the first *wagon* arrive in Carlisle, and the indignation it excited amongst the packers, as likely to ruin their trade!—even the widening of the roads when first ordered, offended them!”¹⁶

The “improved” route of Indian footpaths and trader’s packhorse trails became known as the “Waggon Road” on land documents and on maps as the “Waggon Road to Philadelphia.”¹⁷ Migrants followed the route leading southwestward from Pennsylvania through Maryland, crossing the Potomac River and into Virginia. The Packhorse Ford crossing of the upper Potomac River – then called Cohongoroota, an Indian name referring to the abundance of geese along the upper Potomac – led settlers into the lower Shenandoah Valley. Settlers began recording their land surveys there in 1732.¹⁸

The stream of emigrants passing through Maryland to Virginia, along with a depression in the colonial tobacco market, prompted Maryland’s proprietor, Cecil Calvert, Fifth Lord Baltimore, to open Maryland’s back country to settlement in 1732. By the following year, in 1733, 106 “taxables” were listed in Monocacy Hundred, a territory stretching across today’s Frederick County to the western end of Maryland in Garrett County. Benjamin Winslow’s 1736 map of the upper Potomac showed relatively dense settlement along the Potomac River bank on both sides of the Packhorse Ford. **(Figure 3)**

The Waggon Road to Philadelphia and the Valley Road

The road shown on the 1736 Benjamin Winslow map as the “Waggon Road to Philadelphia,” actually led the early migrants away from Philadelphia, moving west and south in search of fertile, cheap land. By the early 18th century, the rich farm land of southeastern Pennsylvania and along the eastern tidewaters of Maryland and Virginia were already claimed and occupied. As new immigrants arrived from Europe, many of them German Palatines seeking religious refuge, they were encouraged to continue westward by the lack of available land.¹⁹ Others were simply second or third sons of established, mostly English, planters not in line to inherit their father’s land. The travelers over the rough track reportedly were told “that the lands in the

¹⁶ St. George Leakin Sioussat, “Highway Legislation in Maryland”, dissertation, (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University, 1899), p. 132.

¹⁷ The Pennsylvania section of this route was called “The Great Waggon Road to Philadelphia” in the 1751 Fry and Jefferson map, by then connected to an alternate route into the Shenandoah Valley, today’s U.S. Route 11 (see Figure 4). See also f.n. 6.

¹⁸ Robert Brooke Survey Book, Thornton Perry Collection, microfilm copy, Ruth Scarborough Library, Shepherd University, Shepherdstown, WV. This part of Virginia’s Orange Co. became part of Frederick Co. in 1738, then part of Berkeley Co. in 1772, and then Jefferson Co. in 1801; West Virginia was established in 1863.

¹⁹ Though the road led the migrants away from Philadelphia, the port city remained the primary market for the wheat soon produced on the land settled by the migrants, thus the road “to Philadelphia” was emphasized.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

WA-II-034
Packhorse Ford

Name of Property

Washington County, Maryland

County and State

Section 8 Page 5

Colony of Virginia were rich and good,” according to a 1749 deposition in the Jost Hite vs. Thomas Lord Fairfax lawsuit:

...[they] were inclined to bear the Burden, Danger and Hardships in hopes to provide not only for themselves but to prevent as much as in them lay the Slavery of their Posterity and like wise [sic] hearing it was so very cheap as to be had for ten Shillings a hundred Sterling this we know experimentally has brought many from New Jersey and Pensylvania [sic].²⁰

The arduous trip along the Waggon Road, much of it still little more than a trail, led the migrants southwesterly through Maryland, across the Blue Ridge at South Mountain. Land surveys recorded in Prince Georges County (today’s Washington County) provide clues to the route of the wagon road between Antietam Creek and the Potomac River. A survey dated 1734 for the original *Felfoot* patent (near today’s Keedysville) described the beginning point as “in the fork of Little Antietam ten perches from a road commonly called the Wagon Road.”²¹ Several miles to the west, Dr. George Stewart’s 1739 survey for the *Smiths Hills* tract, noted its beginning point as “within a quarter of a mile of the waggon road that crosses anteatom [sic].”²² A short distance southwest of the *Smith Hills* patent was the 1738 survey of *Hickory Tavern* for trader Edmund Cartledge, “Beginning at a bounded Hickory standing between the Waggon Road & a spring called Garrison’s Spring...”²³ Garrison’s Spring was also known as the Big Spring (located in today’s Sharpsburg town limits). The exact route from Garrison’s or the Big Spring to the ford remains undetermined.

Isaac Garrison owned a tract of land on the Virginia side of the Potomac River, not far from the Big Spring on the Maryland side that also bore his name. Garrison’s April 1734 land survey, completed by Orange County Virginia surveyor Robert Brooke, is perhaps the earliest record of the Packhorse Ford. His survey for 200 acres was located on “the Western Side of Cohongolooto [sic] River,” fronting 428 poles – approximately 1 ½ miles – along the river bank, adjoining Samuel Taylor’s tract on the southeast (near today’s Knox Island and across from the mouth of Antietam Creek) and extended to “about 20 poles [330 feet] above the Waggon Road

²⁰ Hite/Fairfax Lawsuit, British Copy, pp. 80-81, as cited in Cecil O’Dell, *Pioneers of Old Frederick County, Virginia*, (Marceline, MO: Walsworth Publishing Company, 1995), p. 10. The lawsuit arose out of Thomas Lord Fairfax’s claim to a 5 million-acre royal grant he inherited through his mother, a Culpeper. The land covered all of northern Virginia as far as the headwaters of the Potomac River, then known as the Northern Neck. Jost Hite was given his disputed land within the Northern Neck territory by colonial Virginia Governor William Gooch who hoped to quash the Fairfax claim by accelerating settlement on the land.

²¹ As cited by Dr. Arthur Tracey, Washington County patents map.

²² Prince George’s County Circuit Court, Land Survey, Subdivision, and Condominium Plats, MSA S1203: (Certificates, Patented, PG), Patented Certificate 2012, Plato.net, accessed March 11, 2014, www.msa.maryland.gov.

²³ Prince George’s County Circuit Court, Land Survey, Subdivision, and Condominium Plats, MSA S1203: (Certificates, Patented, PG), Patented Certificate 1070, Plato.net, accessed March 11, 2014, www.msa.maryland.gov.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

WA-II-034
Packhorse Ford

Name of Property

Washington County, Maryland

County and State

Section 8 Page 6

Ford.”²⁴ The earliest known map showing the ford is dated 1736, drawn by Benjamin Winslow (**Figure 3**). A man by the name of “Spurgeant” (William Spurgeon) is noted on both sides of the ford, actually on Garrison’s land on the Virginia side. The Winslow map also shows William Shepherd (father of Thomas Shepherd founder of Shepherdstown) on the Maryland side of the ford. This appears to be the land called *Pell Mell* patented by John Van Metre in 1743.²⁵

In 1731, Jost Hite led an early migration along the Great Waggon Road into the lower Shenandoah Valley, fueled by his own colonial Virginia grant of 100,000 acres, in addition to the 40,000-acre Van Metre grant, on which he intended to settle the minimum requirement of 140 settlers.²⁶ When the travelers climbed up from the Potomac River at Packhorse Ford into Virginia, they passed through a trough-like gap in the ridge bounding the river valley. Their route toward the settlement along the Opequon Creek became known locally as “Jost Hite’s Road,” today known as Trough Road. At the Opequon, Hite’s road linked with the old “Warrior’s Path,” a road running up (southwest) the Shenandoah Valley known as the Valley Road. This was later joined by a northern branch of the Philadelphia Road, becoming today’s US Rt. 11.

Shenandoah Valley scholar Dr. Warren G. Hofstra emphasized the significance of this early road system, of which the Packhorse Ford was integral as the Potomac River connection between the Great Waggon Road to Philadelphia and the Valley Road through the Shenandoah Valley. Citing the Shenandoah Valley as the first “American western frontier,” Hofstra observes:

The road represented a way of moving across the land that would have immense significance for their lives as it would for the future of the region. During the colonial period, the road helped define and shape the southern backcountry frontier. Arguably Anglo-America’s first frontier, or inland area of expanding settlement, this backcountry forged the mold in which all subsequent frontiers were cast. Viewed from the later perspective of national history, the road would help guide the

²⁴ Robert Brooke Survey Book, Thornton Perry Collection, microfilm copy, Ruth Scarborough Library, Shepherd University, Shepherdstown, WV. Historically, the upper Potomac River was called the Cohongaroota, the name given by local American Indians for the sound of the Canada Geese that populated (and still do) the upper Potomac. The Potomac River flows in a southeasterly direction but takes many turns through this section. The east (MD) and west (WV) banks of the river are also commonly referred to as the north (MD) and south (WV) banks respectively. At this point along the river (between Shepherdstown, WV and Antietam Creek on the Maryland side) the river runs nearly due east, thus the “Western Side” is south here by the compass and Samuel Taylor’s tract is on the east/southeast of the Garrison tract.

²⁵ Sheet 380, p. 1659, Arthur Tracey Papers, Carroll Co. Historical Society, microfilm copy at Washington Co. Free Library, Hagerstown, MD.

²⁶ Warren R. Hofstra and Karl Raitz, eds., *The Great Valley Road of Virginia*, (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2010), p. 79.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

WA-II-034
Packhorse Ford
Name of Property

Section 8 Page 7

Washington County, Maryland
County and State

development of the United States as it expanded from the Atlantic Ocean to the Mississippi River during the first half of the nineteenth century.²⁷

The Valley Road eventually reached the subsequent frontiers of Tennessee, Kentucky, and Ohio, as well as the Carolinas. Hofstra, a cultural geographer, emphasized the road's regional significance for its important role in the shaping of the lower Shenandoah Valley cultural landscape: "Small-farm, mixed grain-livestock agriculture, ethnic diversity, religious pluralism, a middle-class society connecting town and country depended on the road for their origins and growth."²⁸ With that growth many smaller roads laced out from the early routes leading to the increasing number of farms, mills, churches, and courthouses.

Transportation Improvements

By 1751, when the Joshua Fry and Peter Jefferson "Map of the most inhabited part of Virginia" was drawn, a perhaps easier, northern route called "The Great Waggon Road to Philadelphia" was shown crossing the Potomac River at Williams' Ferry below the Conococheague Creek. The old "Philadelphia Waggon Road" was shown still crossing the river at the Packhorse Ford, marked by the land occupied by "Spurgent," but the road disappeared on the Maryland side. This seems to imply the old route's secondary importance to the newer northern road. **(Figure 4: 1751 Fry & Jefferson Map)**

The old route to the river was additionally marginalized by the advent of the Swearingen Ferry, which began operations by 1755, crossing the Potomac River just above the ford. The Frederick County court ordered a "new road" to be built to the ferry from "Christian Orndorff's mill," located at the Antietam Creek crossing by 1762.²⁹ In 1763, Col. Joseph Chapline established a new town called "Sharps Burgh" on the route between the ferry and Orndorff's mill. Though the Packhorse Ford fell out of regular use with the advent of the easier ferry crossing, those who did not wish to pay to cross the river continued to use the ford. **(Figure 5: 1809 Varle map)** During the Revolutionary War both the ferry and the ford were reportedly used by the Continental Army to transport prisoners to Frederick City as well as to Fort Frederick.³⁰ It is also likely that the men of Captain Hugh Stephenson's company commenced their "Beeline march to Cambridge" by crossing the Potomac River at the Packhorse Ford.

²⁷ Hofstra, pp. 80-81.

²⁸ Hofstra, p. 81.

²⁹ As cited in Millard Milburn Rice, *This Was the Life*, Genealogical Publishing Co., Baltimore, 1984.

³⁰ "Pack Horse Ford," Historical Marker, Maryland Bicentennial Commission and Maryland Historical Society, MD Rt. 34 near Sharpsburg, MD.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

WA-II-034
Packhorse Ford
Name of Property

Section 8 Page 8

Washington County, Maryland
County and State

Frederick County, Virginia, carved from Orange County in 1738, had grown in population by 1772 to the extent that a new county called Berkeley was created. In 1776, a similar growth of population on the Maryland side prompted the delineation of Washington County out of Frederick County, covering all of the Maryland territory west of South Mountain.³¹ These new counties on both sides of the river were a melting pot of Pennsylvania Germans, Quakers, and the sons of Maryland and Virginia's tidewater plantation owners, mostly of British descent. The Pennsylvania German farmers brought with them a heritage of grain agriculture. Those that ventured westward from the tidewater region – where tobacco was king – into the mountain and valley region quickly adjusted to the production of wheat as their primary cash crop, while still growing smaller amounts of tobacco.³² Wheat and corn, and to a lesser extent rye and oats, were processed in water-powered mills into flour and meal, or distilled into whiskey. By the 1790s, the region was active with grist and flour mills along nearly every waterway and stills located on nearly every farm.

The processed grain commodities were transported to markets in Alexandria, Virginia, to Annapolis and Baltimore in Maryland, and to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. However transportation of products was problematic from the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia and the grain growing regions of west-central Maryland and Pennsylvania. The old rough wagon roads, crossing several mountains, and across rivers via the old fords and ferries, remained the standard. Water transport, the traditional form of transportation in the tidewater counties of both Maryland and Virginia, was seen as essential for economic advancement on the western frontier. George Washington, John Semple, Thomas Johnson, and John Ballendine, whose Potomac River lands and iron works would certainly have benefited from transportation improvements on the Potomac River, sought to improve the river for commercial shipping beginning as early as 1762.³³ The 1770 river survey by Thomas Johnson suggested clearing the rocks at "Shepherds Falls," while Ballendine recommended a bypass canal at "Antietam Falls," both likely referring to the rock ledge of the Packhorse Ford.³⁴ The Revolutionary War interrupted the plans for improvement, but in 1785 the Patowmack Navigation Company was officially incorporated, with George Washington at the helm. The company cleared channels from Cumberland to the fall line at Great Falls. A company report in 1792 recorded "Captain Henry...clearing the Shepherds

³¹ Frederick County, Maryland was carved from Prince Georges County in 1748.

³² "The Diaries of George Washington," Donald Jackson, ed., (The Papers of George Washington, Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1976), transcription online at: <http://memory.loc.gov>, accessed July 2012.

³³ Grace L. Nute, ed., "Washington and the Potomac Manuscripts of the Minnesota Historical Society, [1754] 1769-1796," reprinted from the *American Historical Review*, Vol. XXVIII, no. 3, April 1923, p. 500.

³⁴ Dan Guzy, "Navigation of the Upper Potomac and Its Tributaries" (published online by WHILBR – Western Maryland Regional Public Library, 2011), pp. 6-7, accessed March 12, 2014, www.whilbr.org/assets/uploads/NavigationOnTheUpperPotomac.pdf.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

WA-II-034
Packhorse Ford

Name of Property

Washington County, Maryland

County and State

Section 8 Page 9

Town Falls,” though by 1820 a river survey by Thomas Moore found “no connected channel either natural or artificial” through the rocky ledge.³⁵ In the end the unpredictable nature of the upper Potomac River made boating of goods to the tidewater ports unreliable. By 1827 the Patowmack Navigation Company had failed.³⁶

The first decades of the 19th century saw road improvements by turnpike companies, spurred by construction of the National Road west from Cumberland, Maryland. Bridges began to replace the fords and ferries of the previous century. However, the Blue Ridge Mountains still stood between the farms of western Maryland and Virginia and their markets to the east. Dreams of water transport persisted and in 1828 the first shovel of dirt was turned on the construction of a still-water canal to run from the Ohio River to the tidal Potomac at Georgetown, Maryland. The Chesapeake & Ohio (C&O) Canal was planned to follow the northeast bank of the Potomac River through Maryland. Construction was slow, requiring the excavation of the canal prism as well as construction of stone-lined locks, culverts, aqueducts and dams. Additionally, in 1832, construction stopped altogether at Weverton, the southern tip of Washington County, where the narrow right-of-way between the Potomac River and the South Mountain bluff was contested in court by the Baltimore & Ohio (B&O) Railroad. The B&O Railroad, which had begun construction of its planned route from Baltimore to the western territory on the same day as the canal in 1828, lost the court battle and was forced to cross the Potomac River to Harpers Ferry, Virginia (later West Virginia).

The C&O Canal reached the Packhorse Ford crossing in 1834, forming a water-filled barrier between the old road and the ford. This barrier would have put an end to use of the ford by wagons, though it is likely few ventured across the river via the ford rather than using John Blackford’s ferry, just a mile up river. In fact, the C&O Canal also negatively impacted the ferry business. In 1833, the C&O Canal Company condemned a one-acre parcel, part of John Blackford’s “ferry lot,” in order to construct a lift lock for boats to leave the canal and cross the river to the Virginia side to pick up cargo. The compensation offered to the ferry owners, including John Blackford and the heirs of Thomas Van Swearingen was “one cent.” They took the company to court to get “just compensation,” not just for the land but also for the potential loss of ferrying business since people wouldn’t have to ferry their produce across the river to load it onto the canal boats. But the court found in favor of the canal company.³⁷ In 1835 Blackford recorded in his diary that the receipts for the ferry business had “depreciated 50 per

³⁵ Guzy, p. 48.

³⁶ Paula S. Reed & Associates, “Great Falls Park Virginia, Historic Resource Study,” (Great Falls Park, GWMP, NPS, 2008), pp. 31-70.

³⁷ December 3, 1833 letter from John Blackford & others attorneys to the President and Directors of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Company, National Archives, Record Group 79.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

WA-II-034
Packhorse Ford

Name of Property

Washington County, Maryland

County and State

Section 8 Page 10

cent from the preceding [sic] year," due to the canal.³⁸ John Blackford died in 1839 and ten years later, in 1849, his son Henry V. S. Blackford, sold the ferry landing to The Virginia and Maryland Bridge Company.³⁹ A wooden covered bridge was constructed across the Potomac River in 1851.⁴⁰

The Civil War on the Border between North and South

As the Union began to dissolve in 1861 following South Carolina's secession and attack on Fort Sumter, the Commonwealth of Virginia's strong sentiment toward states' rights became evident. At the first special convention held in April 1861 initial votes went against secession; that changed to a vote in favor of Virginia seceding from the Union in May 1861.⁴¹ Maryland, now sandwiched between Confederate Virginia and Union Pennsylvania, was a wavering border state still within the Union.

Virginia's secession from the Union drew the line of division along the banks of the Potomac River. The river served as a natural barrier between Union North and Confederate South. Most of the bridges were burned early in the war, including the bridge at Shepherdstown. Thus the several river fords above Great Falls served both sides in their forays into enemy territory. By August 1861, various Union regiments guarded the river fords on the Maryland side. At that time the 13th Regiment Massachusetts Volunteers covered the "Shepherdstown Ford," the old Packhorse Ford by then also commonly known as Boteler's or Blackford's Ford.⁴² Private James Ramsey, Co. E, of the 13th Regt., was stationed at the ford on the night of August 18th, 1861. In a letter home written later in October, Ramsey recalled the destruction of the Potomac Mills building adjoining the old ford on the then-Virginia shore:

While we were at Sheppardstown [sic] we were in a dangerous position which we then did not realize, our camp was situated on a hill within rifle range of the rebels, on their side of the river they had thick foliage besides a four story factory which

³⁸ John Blackford Diary, 1835-1836, transcribed by Margaret Young, manuscript in Western Maryland Room, Washington Co. Free Library; original in F. Pauline Blackford Collection, Special Collections, MdHS.

³⁹ Washington Co. Land Record, Deed Book IN 5, page 50.

⁴⁰ "The Virginia and Maryland Bridge Company at Shepherdstown," MSA SC 5330-5-6, *Maryland State Archives*, accessed March 11, 2014, www.msa.maryland.gov.

⁴¹ Millard Bushong, *A History of Jefferson County, West Virginia* (Westminster, MD: Heritage Books, reprint 2007), p. 100.

⁴² Elliot Clark Pierce, "A Midnight Ride," as cited on "Head Quarters, 13th Regt. Rifles, Mass. Vol.," "Camp at Sharpsburg, Md.," <http://13thmass.org/1861/sharpsburg.html#mozTocId170991>, accessed July 27, 2012.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

WA-II-034
Packhorse Ford
Name of Property

Washington County, Maryland
County and State

Section 8 Page 11

some of our company burnt, as a good place of protection against our firing they could pick off our guard without danger from our rifles.⁴³

Potomac Mills owner, Alexander Boteler, by then a Colonel in the Confederate army and a representative in the Confederate legislature, was specifically targeted when the mill complex was burned during the Union raid. Later, in 1864, Boteler was again targeted when his home, *Fountain Rock*, was torched in retaliation for attacks in Maryland.⁴⁴

Throughout the first year of the Civil War, Maryland's commitment to the Union was fragile, with a divided legislature and even divided families with fathers, sons, and brothers joining the fight in one or the other opposing army. Still, the majority of Marylanders professed their loyalty to the Union, though perhaps sympathetic to the southern cause. And with the nation's capital city of Washington located within the state's borders, Federal forces aimed to keep the state within the Union. Confederate General Robert E. Lee's Maryland Campaign in the late summer of 1862 sought to test the waters of rebellion in Maryland, and perhaps ease the strain of near constant fighting in Virginia. By bringing the war into Northern territory, he hoped to force a negotiated peace through public pressure on Congress.⁴⁵

On September 4, 1862, Lee's Army of Northern Virginia crossed the Potomac River at White's Ford, entering Maryland in Montgomery County and turning north. At Frederick, General Lee hatched his plan in Special Order No. 191, to divide his army between Harpers Ferry, Boonsboro, and Hagerstown where they were to reunite and head north into Pennsylvania. A mislaid copy of the order was later found in the field by a Union soldier and delivered to Maj. Gen. George B. McClellan, newly assigned commander of the Union Army of the Potomac. Knowing that Lee's army was dangerously divided, McClellan took chase catching up with the Confederate rear guard stationed near Boonsboro at South Mountain on the morning of September 14th. The small contingent of Confederates held the three South Mountain gaps throughout the day, blocking the Union army from passage until Harpers Ferry surrendered and the Confederate forces reunited. But instead of reuniting at Hagerstown as planned, they regrouped on the west bank of the Antietam Creek, occupying the rural Maryland town of Sharpsburg with their backs to the Potomac River and Packhorse Ford.

Lee's grossly outnumbered force of less than 65,000 men faced McClellan's approaching army of approximately 80,000 – though both armies were already reduced by casualties and stragglers

⁴³ As cited on "Head Quarters, 13th Regt. Rifles, Mass. Vol.," "Camp at Sharpsburg, Md.," <http://13thmass.org/1861/sharpsburg.html#mozTocId170991>, accessed July 27, 2012.

⁴⁴ Harlan Unrau, *Historic Resource Study: Chesapeake and Ohio Canal* (National Park Service, 2007), pp. 166-167 and *The Annals of the War Written by Leading Participants North and South* (Philadelphia: The Times Publishing Co., 1879), pp. 180-181.

⁴⁵ Paula S. Reed & Associates, Inc., "Cultural Resources Study, Monocacy National Battlefield," (NPS, 2004), p. 42.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

WA-II-034
Packhorse Ford
Name of Property

Section 8 Page 12

Washington County, Maryland
County and State

– with only the Antietam Creek and the ripened cornfields and orchards of the Sharpsburg area farms between them.⁴⁶ By about 3:00 that afternoon, Lee's forces had stretched dangerously thin and made remarkable adjustments to cover the Union advances throughout the day. Maj. Gen. Ambrose E. Burnside's forces had finally crossed the Antietam Creek below the stone bridge that would later bear his name. As the green Union troops of the Eighth Connecticut Infantry surged up the hill from the crossing, they met the bulk of Confederate Maj. Gen. A. P. Hill's Division, hastily thrown into line of battle as they reached the top of Miller's Sawmill Road from their river crossing at the Packhorse (Boteler's) Ford. The Division had been occupied earlier that day in Harpers Ferry, seventeen miles to the southeast, with the surrender of that Union town under siege by Maj. Gen. Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson:

We made a forced march up the river, crossed the river at Boteler's Ford, a short distance below Shepherdstown, and arrived on the field of Sharpsburg in the afternoon...reaching the actual presence of the enemy at 3:40 p.m., which was not a moment too soon...⁴⁷

Hill's perfectly-timed arrival repulsed the Union advance and rallied the Confederates, preventing a total defeat in Maryland. Recalled J. L. Napier of the Pee Dee South Carolina Artillery, "I believe the stand we made saved the army..."⁴⁸

The battle that raged throughout the day on September 17, 1862, called the Battle of Antietam in the North and the Battle of Sharpsburg in the South, left over 23,000 men killed, wounded or missing. The day ended with little ground actually lost by Lee's Confederates. But the overwhelming numbers of men still available to Union General McClellan left Lee little choice but to retreat back across the Packhorse Ford of the Potomac River on September 18th (**Figure 6: Sneden map and Figure 7: Official Atlas map**). The following day, September 19th, General McClellan sent a dispatch to Maj. Gen. Henry W. Halleck in Washington, D.C.:

Pleasanton is driving the enemy across the river. Our victory was complete. The enemy is driven back into Virginia. Maryland and Pennsylvania are now safe.⁴⁹

McClellan's dispatch, though ultimately true, would prove to be premature.

⁴⁶ Reed & Associates, p. 43; Paula S. Reed & Associates, Inc., "Sharpsburg Historic District," National Register documentation, 2008, Section 8, p. 8.

⁴⁷ Report of Brig. Gen. Samuel McGowan, CSA, Commanding Gregg's Brigade, A. P. Hill's Division, Jackson's Corps, as cited in Jay Luvaas & Harold W. Nelson, eds., *Guide to the Battle of Antietam* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1996), p. 237.

⁴⁸ Narrative of J.L. Napier, CSA, Pee Dee South Carolina Artillery (McIntosh's Battery), A.P. Hill's Division, Jackson's Corps, as cited in Luvaas & Nelson, p. 341.

⁴⁹ As cited in Thomas A. McGrath, *Shepherdstown: Last Clash of the Antietam Campaign September 19-20, 1862* (Lynchburg, VA: Schroeder Publications, 2008), p. 59.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

WA-II-034
Packhorse Ford
Name of Property

Section 8 Page 13

Washington County, Maryland
County and State

The final battle of the Maryland Campaign occurred on the Virginia side of the river crossing, around the burned-out ruins of Potomac Mills, the quarry cliffs above, and along the old “Waggon Road” by then known locally as Trough Road. **(Figure 8: Philadelphia Enquirer map)** On the morning of September 19th, Union artillery located on the Maryland hillside overlooking the Potomac River began pounding the Virginia bank in preparation for the Union crossing. Confederate General Lee’s instruction to his small force at the river was to “guard the fords” at least until night and then prepare the infantry “to join their respective divisions on the march to-morrow.”⁵⁰ The intended march was to head toward the Valley Road at Martinsburg and to re-cross the Potomac at Williamsport, continuing on toward Pennsylvania. It seems neither Lee nor McClellan anticipated the battle about to unfold around Boteler’s Ford and the ruined mill.

Just at sundown on the evening of September 19th, as the Federal batteries renewed their pounding fire, a group of 50 volunteer sharpshooters supported by the 4th Michigan Volunteer Infantry waded into the river at Boteler’s Ford. The shadows of the small Union force crossing the river under the dark of the evening appeared to the Confederate artillerymen on the bluff like “a million” men and their retreat began.⁵¹ The abandoned Confederate artillery on the Virginia side was easily captured. On the morning of the 20th, lulled by the success of the night prior, the unsuspecting men of the Union’s 1st Division, 1st Brigade, including the 118th Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry “Corn Exchange Regiment,” “splashed and paddled” across the ford to the Virginia side. They deployed up the Charlestown Road (Trough Road) and down the river road (today’s River Road) by the mill ruin. Then they followed a path up the hill to the fields of the Osbourn farm on the bluffs.⁵² There the Confederate forces of General Jackson surprised the Union troops. Despite renewed and reportedly vicious shelling from the Maryland side, the Confederate line relentlessly advanced on the Union force formed above the quarry cliffs.⁵³

Maj. Gen. Fitz John Porter, in command of the Federal troops on the Maryland river bank, arrived that morning to view the unfolding drama. Surprised by the extent of the reconnaissance-turned-battle, Porter recalled:

Seeing the small force of infantry on the opposite bank (two brigades of Sykes’s and part of one of Morell’s), and the impossibility of getting over and forming sufficient

⁵⁰ McGrath, p. 65.

⁵¹ McGrath, p. 80.

⁵² McGrath, pp. 101-112.

⁵³ McGrath, pp. 116-118.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

WA-II-034
Packhorse Ford
Name of Property

Washington County, Maryland
County and State

Section 8 Page 14

force in time to meet the attack, I ordered all to withdraw and take shelter within the canal.⁵⁴

Though the re-crossing began relatively orderly, as the columns collapsed into retreat they found themselves under fire from the Confederates behind them and from friendly fire in front. In the confusion, the green troops of the 118th Pa. Corn Exchange were at the rear and still in line of battle, not having been given the order to withdraw by their colonel.⁵⁵ Nearly alone on the cliff above the mill ruins, the Corn Exchange bravely stood their ground until they were completely overrun by Confederate troops. Their wild retreat down the ravine path over which they had initially arrived proved to be a death trap as rebel guns fired on them from above. Others found themselves at the edge of the cliff, falling to their deaths.

Those that did make it to the river alive faced the barrage of gun and artillery fire coming from above and from across the river. **(Figure 9: Leslie print)** The closest crossing, short of swimming, was the mill dam, which proved to be more a danger than a safe retreat. Private Joseph Meehan, who took refuge inside the stone limekiln on the river bank, recalled that a “breakwater ran across the river near us, and it contained many dead and wounded men.”⁵⁶ Confederate artilleryman J. B. Moore watched the carnage from the cliffs above:

As the Yankees began to give way and to rush down the sides of the ravine into the road and thence into the river, the fire of Hill’s infantry became steadier and their aim truer, and how many were killed no one knows. The ravine was narrow and full of men, every man for himself in a mad effort to cross the river before the rebels could overtake them. I remember seeing the river full of men, as I recall now, not firing a single gun, while our men lay on top of the bluff and poured volley after volley into the enemy, every man who was shot going down to his death in the river either by the shot or by drowning. It was one of the horrible sights of war.⁵⁷

The Battle of Shepherdstown, also known as the Battle of the Cement Mill, ended September 20th with 160 dead – 64 Confederate and 96 Union, of which 80 were from the 118th Pa. Corn Exchange Regiment.⁵⁸ This number may seem small, coming as it did after the bloody Battle of Antietam, but the scenes were horrific on the river and the results of the battle were significant.

⁵⁴ Porter’s official report, as cited in McGrath, p. 124.

⁵⁵ McGrath, p. 143. The order to withdraw given to Corn Exchange Colonel Charles Prevost was relayed to him through one of his Lieutenants from the adjunct of Colonel James Barnes, commander of the 1st Brigade at the time. Prevost, feeling that the relay of orders occurred improperly, refused to withdraw his regiment. After a second order was relayed from Barnes personally (not from his adjunct), and after Prevost was wounded, the regiment withdrew from its untenable position.

⁵⁶ McGrath, p. 157.

⁵⁷ As cited in McGrath, p. 161.

⁵⁸ McGrath, Appendix A.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

WA-II-034
Packhorse Ford
Name of Property

Washington County, Maryland
County and State

Section 8 Page 15

General McClellan came away believing it nearly impossible to follow Lee into Virginia, instead keeping his army encamped around Sharpsburg and along the Potomac through October 1862. On November 8th, frustrated by the delay, President Lincoln replaced McClellan with Maj. Gen. Ambrose E. Burnside as head of the Army of the Potomac.

In the end, General Lee found no sentiment for rebellion in Maryland and did not “anticipate any general rising of the people in our behalf.”⁵⁹ By the end of September 1862, Lee found his army to be in such a poor condition as to prevent his plan to again “threaten a passage into Maryland,” noting in his letter to Confederacy President Jefferson Davis:

I would not hesitate to make it even with our diminished numbers, did the army exhibit its former temper and condition; but, as far as I am able to judge, the hazard would be great and a reverse disastrous. I am, therefore, led to pause.⁶⁰

The Confederate army did not cross the Potomac River again into Maryland until the summer of 1863, once again bringing the war to the North. On June 24, 1863, the Packhorse Ford was used by Generals James Longstreet and A.P. Hill, who marched their men into Pennsylvania to join the rest of General Lee’s invading army, culminating with the Battle of Gettysburg in July 1863.⁶¹ Their failure in Gettysburg proved to be the last large invasion from the South. A smaller crossing occurred in July of 1864 when Confederate Lt. Gen. Jubal A. Early led a force of approximately 15,000 men to “threaten” Washington D.C. in an effort to draw Grant’s Union troops away from Petersburg and Richmond. Early’s plan was foiled when his force was delayed at the Monocacy River crossing near Frederick by 6,000 Federal troops under the command of Maj. Gen. Lewis “Lew” Wallace.⁶² Smaller incursions for supplies and ransom continued throughout the war, but the Confederate hope that Maryland would join the cause died with the end of the Maryland Campaign on the south bank of the Potomac River at the Packhorse Ford.

Conclusion

After the Civil War the ford fell out of use again as a ferry operated at the Shepherdstown landing until a new bridge was built in 1871 to replace the burned covered bridge. This bridge was destroyed in a flood in 1889 and was replaced with an iron truss bridge, also destroyed by flood in 1936. In 1939, the Wichert steel truss James Rumsey Bridge was constructed and

⁵⁹ Richard R. Duncan, “The Era of the Civil War,” in Richard Walsh and William Lloyd Fox, eds., *Maryland: A History* (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 1974), p. 357, quoting OR, series 1, XIX, part 2, pp. 590-592.

⁶⁰ McGrath, p. 184.

⁶¹ High, p. 34, 36.

⁶² Paula S. Reed & Assoc., “Monocacy National Battlefield,” National Register of Historic Places documentation update, 2004.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

WA-II-034
Packhorse Ford
Name of Property

Washington County, Maryland
County and State

Section 8 Page 16

dedicated. It was replaced by the current long-span steel James Rumsey Bridge in 2004.⁶³ A major flood in 1924 was the final blow to operations on the C&O Canal and it was closed for good. In 1971, the canal property was designated a National Historical Park.⁶⁴ Today Civil War re-enactors, fishermen, and hikers along the canal trail can cross the ford when the water level is low, utilizing this natural feature much as American Indians, traders, and emigrants used the ford centuries ago.

⁶³ Thomas Leech and David A. Lattanzi, "Erection of the James Rumsey Bridge: A Case Study in Long Span Steel Erection," OTEC Presentation, October 2007, accessed March 13, 2014, www.dot.state.oh.us/engineering/OTEC/2007%20Presentations/Tuesday/Session9/Lattanzi%20OTEC%20Presentation.pdf.

⁶⁴ "Chesapeake & Ohio Canal National Historical Park, Washington, D.C./Maryland, General Management Plan," 1976, accessed March 13, 2014, www.nps.gov/choh/parkmgmt/upload/C-O-Canal-NHP-General-Plan-1976.pdf.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

WA-II-034
Packhorse Ford
Name of Property

Section 9 Page 1

Washington County, Maryland
County and State

Major Bibliographical References:

- Brook, Robert. "Survey Notebook." Thornton Perry Collection, Ruth Scarborough Library, Shepherd University, Shepherdstown, WV.
- Bushong, Millard. *A History of Jefferson County, West Virginia*. Westminster, MD: Heritage Books, reprint 2007.
- Green, Fletcher M., ed. *Ferry Hill Plantation Journal*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1961.
- Guzy, Dan. "Navigation of the Upper Potomac and Its Tributaries." Published online by WHILBR – Western Maryland Regional Public Library, 2011.
- Hanna, Charles A. *The Wilderness Trail*. Vol. 1. New York: The Knickerbocker Press, 1911.
- Hayes, Helen Ashe. *The Antietam and Its Bridges: The Annals of An Historic Stream*. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1910.
- High, Mike. *The C&O Canal Companion*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997.
- Hofstra, Warren R. and Karl Raitz, eds. *The Great Valley Road of Virginia*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2010.
- Luvaas, Jay & Harold W. Nelson, eds. *Guide to the Battle of Antietam*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1996.
- Maryland State Archives, www.msa.maryland.gov.
- McGrath, Thomas A. *Shepherdstown: Last Clash of the Antietam Campaign September 19-20, 1862*. Lynchburg, VA: Schroeder Publications, 2008.
- Nute, Grace L., ed. "Washington and the Potomac Manuscripts of the Minnesota Historical Society, [1754] 1769-1796." Reprinted from the *American Historical Review*, Vol. XXVIII, no. 3, April 1923.
- O'Dell, Cecil. *Pioneers of Old Frederick County, Virginia*. Marceline, MO: Walsworth Publishing Co., 1995.
- Reed, Paula S. *Tillers of the Soil: A History of Agriculture in Mid-Maryland*. Frederick, MD: Catoctin Center for Regional Studies, 2011.
- Reed, Paula S. & Associates, Inc. "Cultural Resources Study, Monocacy National Battlefield." National Park Service, 2004.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

WA-II-034
Packhorse Ford
Name of Property

Washington County, Maryland
County and State

Section 9 Page 2

_____ "Sharpsburg Historic District." National Register of Historic Places documentation, listed 2008.

_____ "Potomac Mills." National Register of Historic Places documentation, listed 2013.

Rice, Millard Milburn. *This Was the Life*. Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1984.

Sioussat, St. George Leakin. *Highway Legislation in Maryland*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University, Dissertation, 1899.

Tracey, Arthur. "Tracey Map." Western Maryland Room, Washington County Free Library, Hagerstown, MD.

Tracey, Grace L. and John Philip Dern. *Pioneers of Old Monocacy: The Early Settlement of Frederick County, Maryland, 1721-1743*. Frederick, MD: Clearfield Company, 1998.

Unrau, Harlan. *Historic Resource Study: Chesapeake and Ohio Canal*. National Park Service, 2007.

Wallace, Paul A. W. *Indian Paths of Pennsylvania*. Harrisburg: The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1965.

Walsh, Richard and William Lloyd Fox, eds. *Maryland: A History*. Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 1974.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

WA-II-034
Packhorse Ford

Name of Property

Washington County, Maryland

County and State

Section 10 Page 1

Verbal Boundary Description:

The Packhorse Ford boundary begins on the south bank of the Potomac River, at a point approximately 300 feet NE of the northeast corner of the Potomac Mills ruin, extends eastward 20 feet along the Maryland/West Virginia line, turns 90 degrees and extends northerly across the Potomac River, approximately 700 feet to a point on the north bank; turns 90 degrees and extends westerly along the north bank a distance of 20 feet; turns 90 degrees and extends across the Potomac River to the beginning point. The nominated property thus encompasses approximately 14000 square feet.

Boundary Justification:

The boundary includes only the ford of the Potomac River, within the State of Maryland. Road traces on the Maryland side beyond the north bank of the Potomac River are interrupted by the C&O Canal and Canal Road and cannot be positively documented as historically part of "The Great Waggon Road to Philadelphia." The West Virginia extension of the route, today called Trough Road, is located outside of the survey area.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

WA-II-034
Packhorse Ford
Name of Property

Section PHOTO Page 1

Washington County, MD
County and State

Index to Photographs

The following information applies to all photographs which accompany this documentation:

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP) Number: WA-II-034

Name of Property: Packhorse Ford

Location: Washington County, Maryland

Photographer: Edie Wallace

Date taken: February 2012

Location of original digital files: MD SHPO

HP 100 Gray Photo Cartridge

HP Premium Plus Photo Paper

MD_Washington County_Packhorse Ford_0001.tif

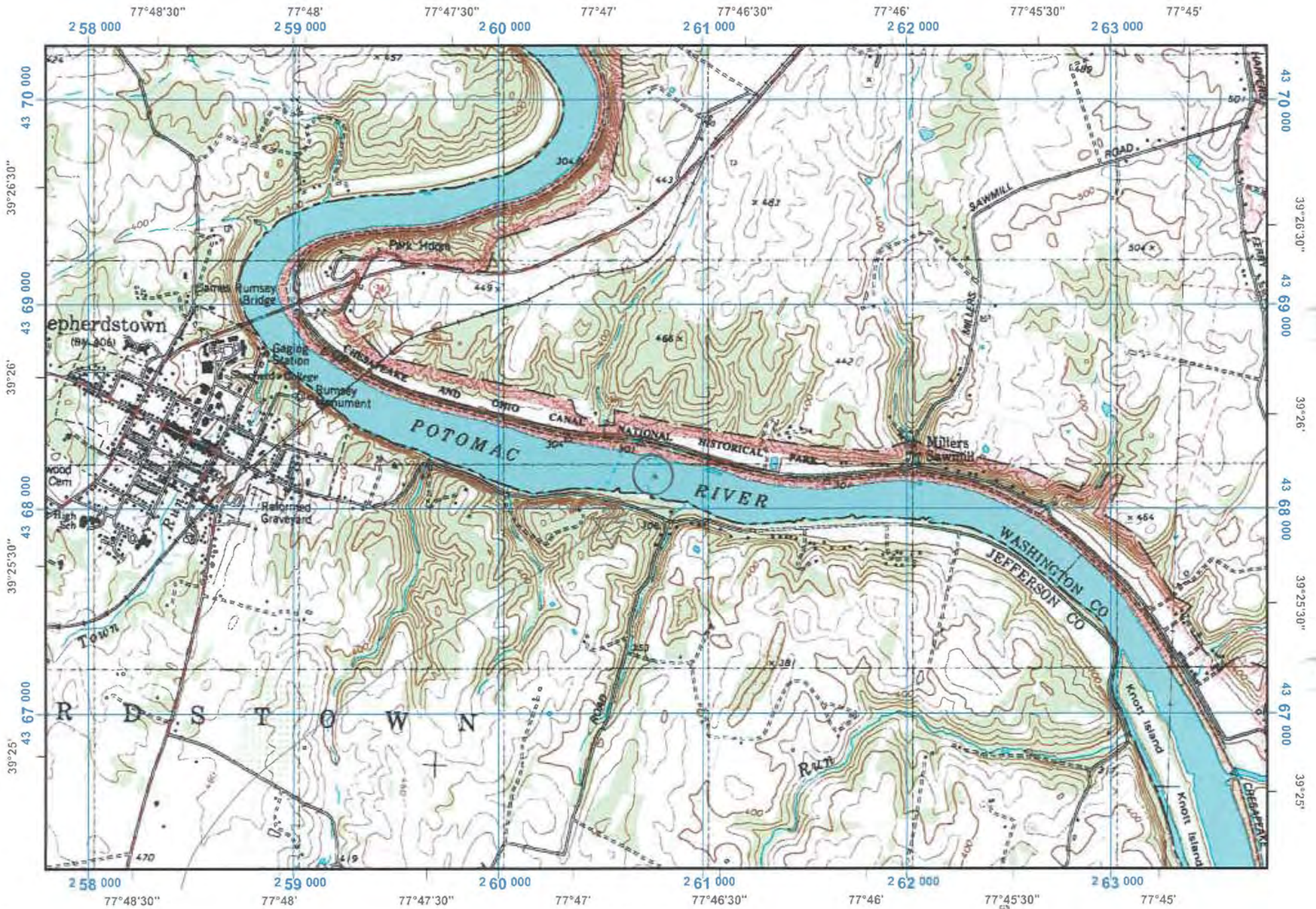
Potomac River, view SW from Maryland toward West Virginia at Packhorse Ford.

MD_Washington County_Packhorse Ford_0002.tif

Packhorse Ford, view S from NPS sign on C&O Canal towpath on Maryland side.

MD_Washington County_Packhorse Ford_0003.tif

West Virginia sign for "Pack Horse Ford," view W on River Road at Trough Road, Jefferson Co., WV.

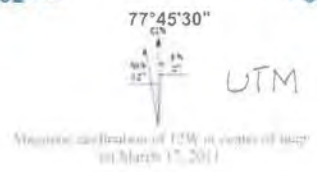


Rockhorse Ford
 MIHP WA-II-034
 Potomac River
 Canal Road, Washington County MD

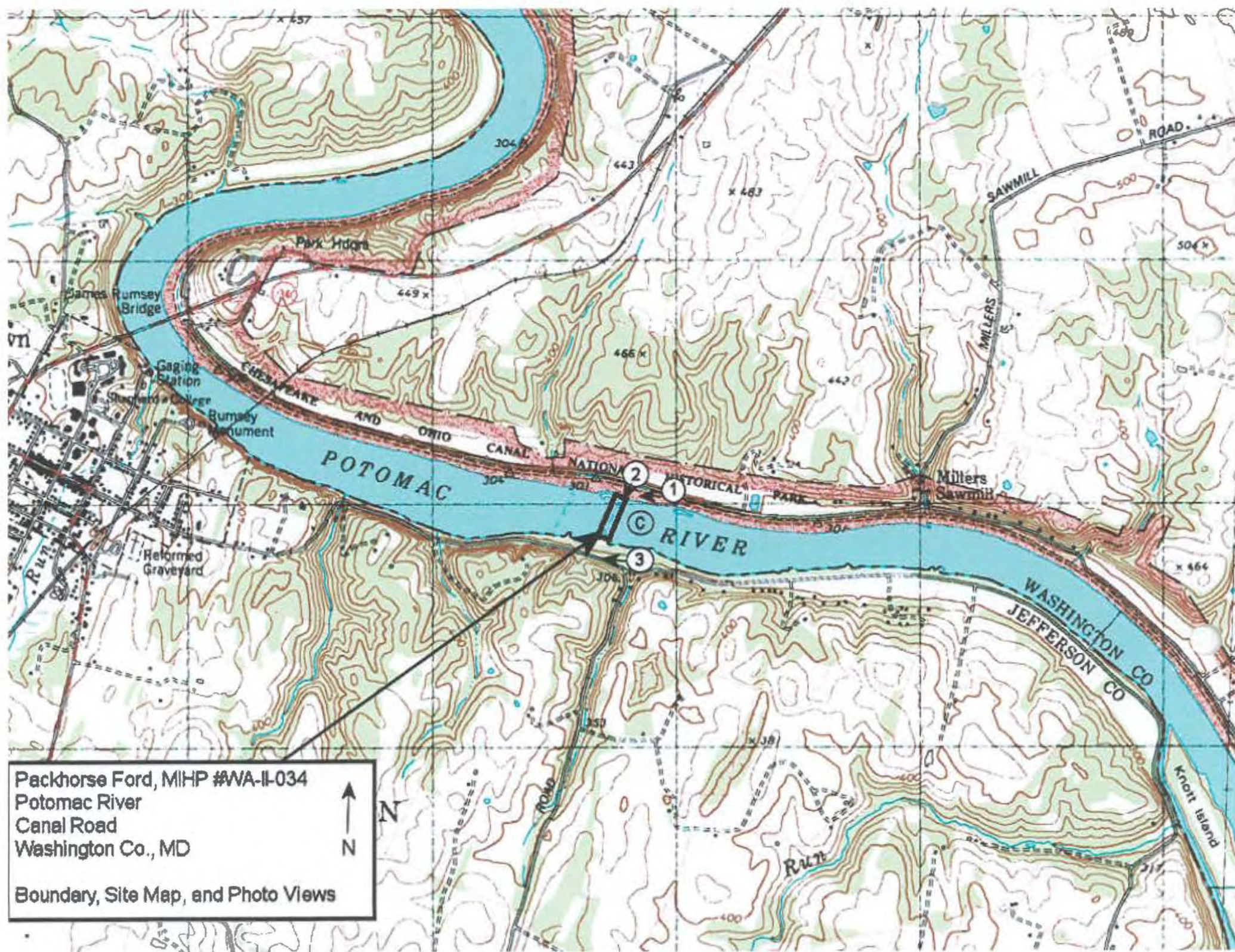
Universal Transverse Mercator (UTM) Projection Zone 18
 North American Datum of 1983
 1000 meter UTM / USNG / MGRS
 Grid Zone Designation: 18S
 100,000-m Squares: TJ



Shepherdstown WV Quad



UTM 18 260 740
 4368140



Packhorse Ford, MIHP #WA-II-034
Potomac River
Canal Road
Washington Co., MD
Boundary, Site Map, and Photo Views

Figure 1: Modern aerial view of the Potomac Mills dam remnant (center) and Packhorse Ford (right)



Packhorse Ford, MIHP #WA-IL-034
Canal Road, Washington Co., MD



Figure 2: Map of the Great Minquas Path and Monocacy Path (Wallace, 1964)

Packhorse Ford, MIHP #WA-II-034
Canal Road, Washington Co., MD

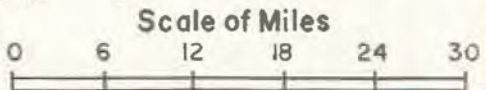
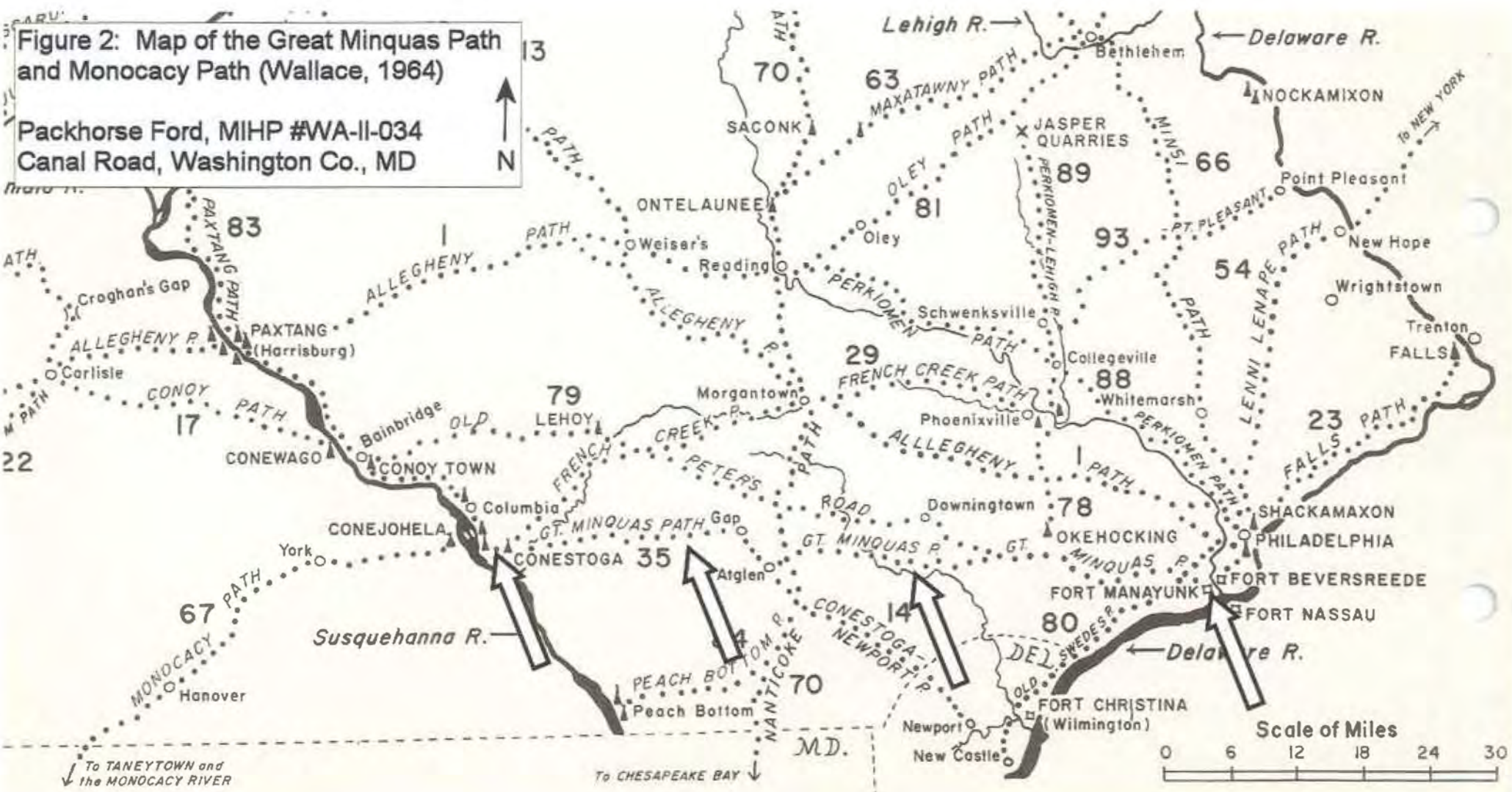


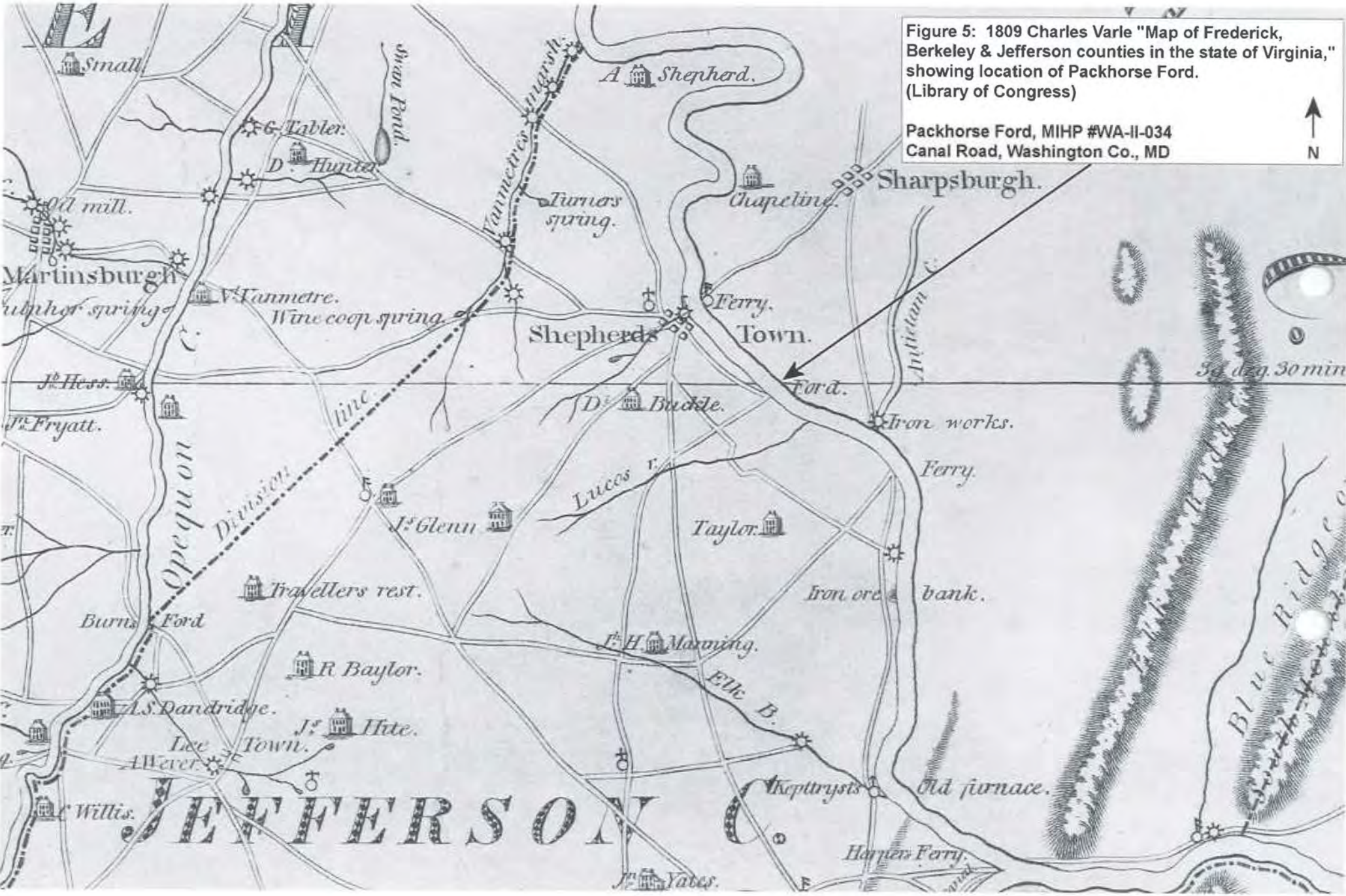
Figure 4: 1751 Fry and Jefferson map of Virginia, showing the older remnant of the "Philadelphia Waggon Road" and the newer northern branch of "The Great Waggon Road to Philadelphia." (Library of Congress)

Packhorse Ford, MIHP #WA-II-034
Canal Road, Washington Co., MD



Figure 5: 1809 Charles Varle "Map of Frederick, Berkeley & Jefferson counties in the state of Virginia," showing location of Packhorse Ford. (Library of Congress)

Packhorse Ford, MIHP #WA-II-034
Canal Road, Washington Co., MD



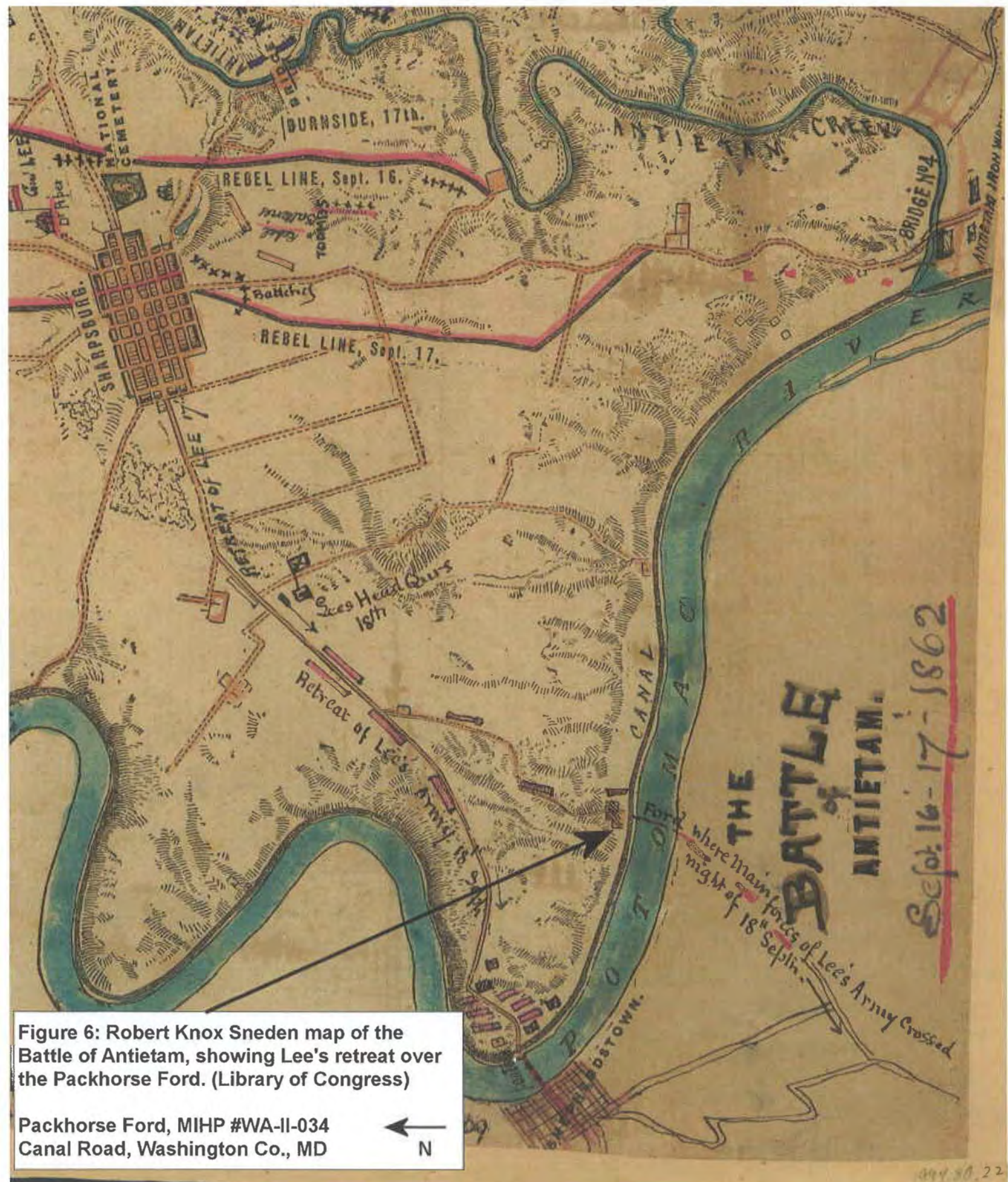


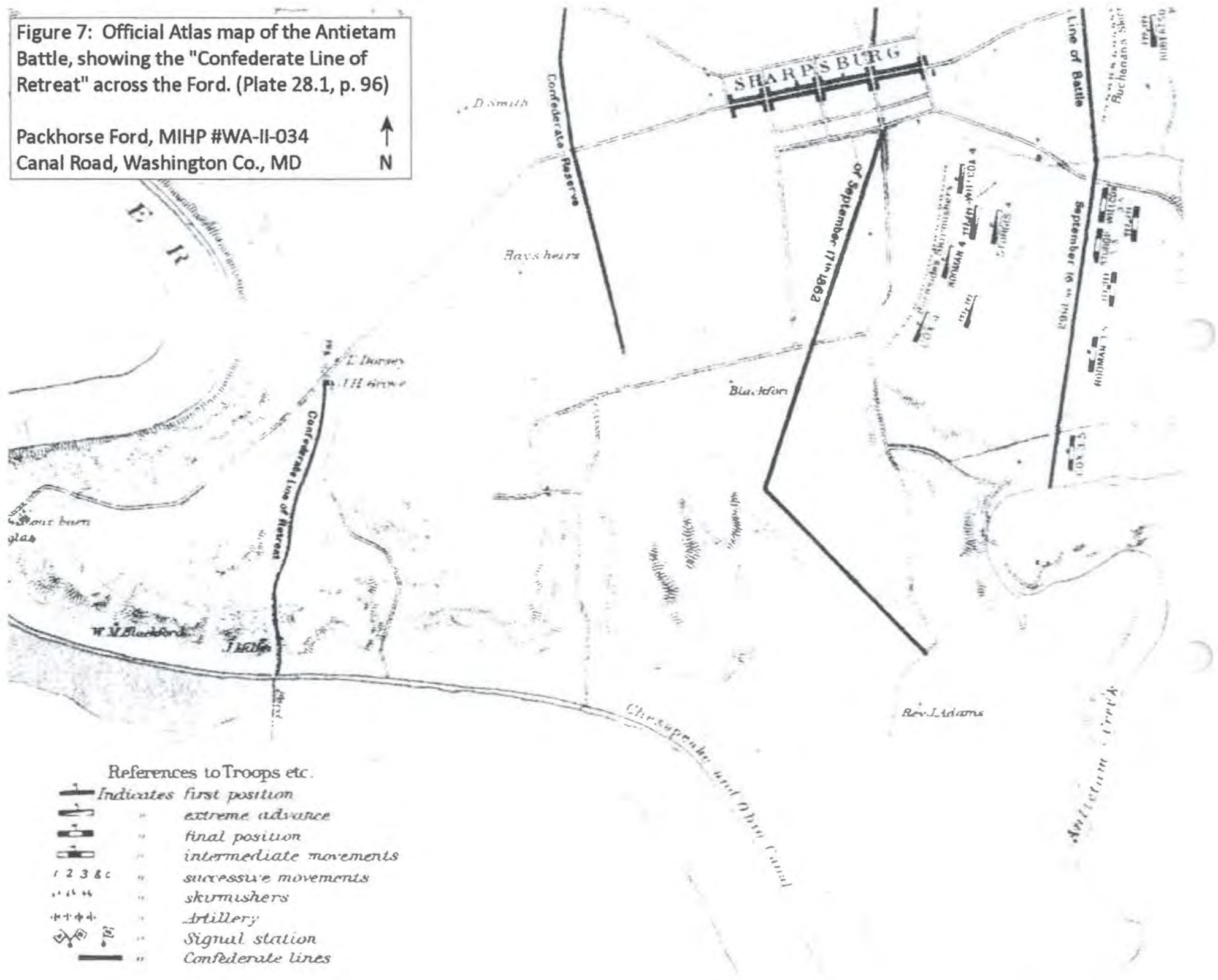
Figure 6: Robert Knox Sneden map of the Battle of Antietam, showing Lee's retreat over the Packhorse Ford. (Library of Congress)

Packhorse Ford, MIHP #WA-II-034
 Canal Road, Washington Co., MD



Figure 7: Official Atlas map of the Antietam Battle, showing the "Confederate Line of Retreat" across the Ford. (Plate 28.1, p. 96)

Packhorse Ford, MIHP #WA-II-034
 Canal Road, Washington Co., MD



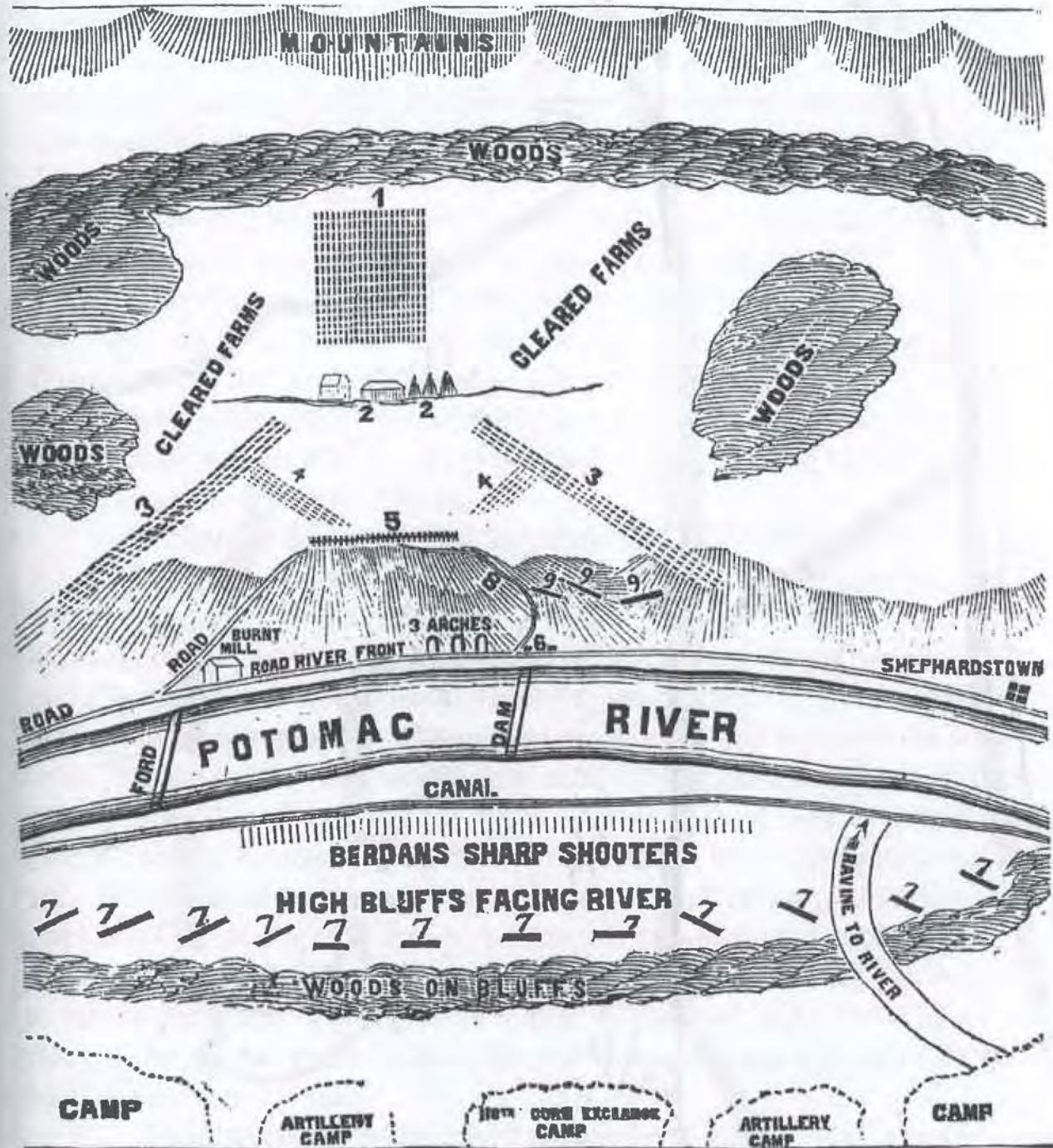
References to Troops etc.

- Indicates first position
- " extreme advance
- " final position
- " intermediate movements
- " successive movements
- " skirmishers
- " artillery
- " Signal station
- " Confederate lines

Figure 8: Map of the Battle of Shepherdstown printed in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* September 26, 1862. (from McGrath, p. 145)

Packhorse Ford, MIHP #WA-II-034, Canal Road, Washington Co., MD

SCENE OF THE ATTACK OF THE CORN EXCHANGE REG'T.



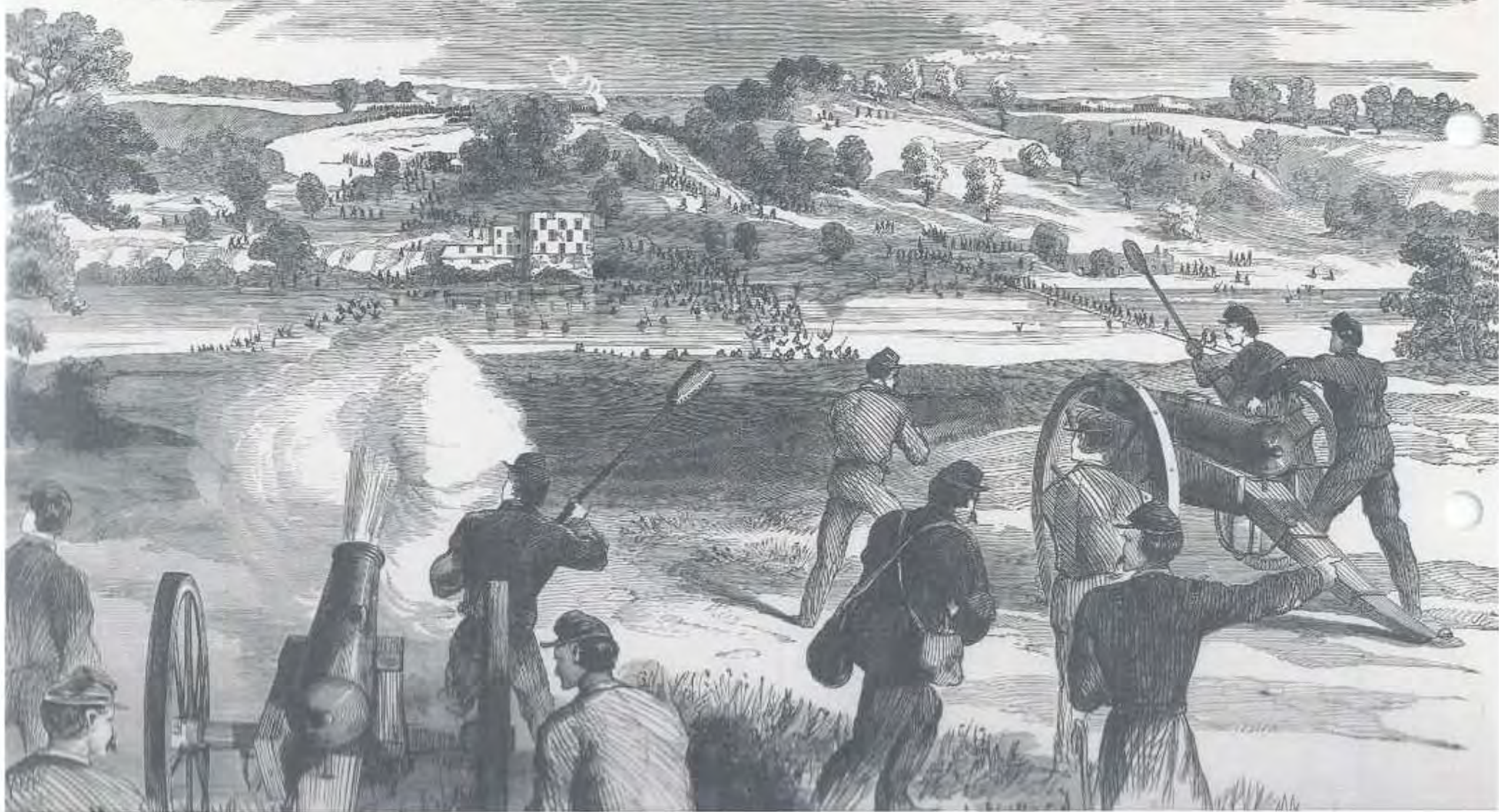
1. Solid column of Rebels advancing from wood on double quick.
2. Farm house and barn with hay stacks half mile back.
3. Columns of Rebels advancing in triangle.
4. Rebels advance with white flag.
5. 118th, Corn Exchange, in battle line

6. Col. Barnes' position.
7. Batteries in position in ploughed fields commanding opposite heights covering retreat.
8. Path which the 118th, Corn Exchange, ascended.
9. The New York 13th and 25th, and 13th Michigan in battle line.

This sketch appeared in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* just days after the battle. Although some of Confederate formations are inaccurate and the 13th Michigan was not present, it is good overall depiction of the terrain and positions during the battle.

Figure 9: Frank Leslie engraving of the Battle of the Cement Mill, September 20, 1862, erroneously entitled "Battle at Dam No. 4, Potomac River..." showing the Union retreat across the river. (Print published in 1895 by Frank Leslie's widow)

Packhorse Ford, MIHP #WA-II-034, Canal Road, Washington Co., MD







Packhorse Ford

Shenandoah and Great Smoky Mountains National Parks
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

A site often called the Battle of Ashtons, Confederate General Robert E. Lee retreated to the safety of the West Virginia (then Virginia) hills here in the fall of 1862. This was the only ground remaining on the route for many miles between the Government's base of base military units in northern West Virginia and the hills. Pursued by 100 soldiers from the 11th West Virginia Infantry, the Confederates retreated by crossing the river here, the Confederates kept their line. This was the Pennsylvania bridge from 1862.

of battle, they were discovered that they were in fact often with defective and porous. Instead of the hills' edge, some fell to their deaths, while others were killed or wounded trying to cross the ford across the river.

Early 18th century pioneers selected the site for the crossing and crossing of Maryland with Lee County. With settlement, leading to the first crossing.





PACK HORSE FORD

Early settlers crossed the Potomac here. "Stonewall" Jackson and A. P. Hill used ford enroute to Battle of Antietam. Here Lee's army forded after battle with the Corn Exchange Regiment & other Federals in pursuit.

WEST VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE AND HISTORY, 1983