

Harpers Ferry Explorer | August 2010 | Interactive Flash Application

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Harpers Ferry EXPLORER

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ARMORY GROUNDS




Musket Factory ruins and new Bollman iron bridge spans across the Potomac River in July 1865. Photographed by James Gardner. (Historic Photo Collection, Harpers Ferry NHP)



TIMELINE: HARPERS FERRY ARMORY

- 1799** – Construction of the "United States Armory & Arsenal at Harpers Ferry" commences.
- 1803** – Meriwether Lewis procures weapons and hardware for his transcontinental expedition.
- 1845-1854** – The Armory undergoes a complete renovation, including construction of new workshops and installation of new machinery.
- 1859** – Abolitionist John Brown leads a raid on the Armory & Arsenal. U.S. marines commanded by Col. Robert E. Lee capture Brown in the Armory fire engine and guard house.
- 1861** – U.S. troops set fire to the Arsenal and several Armory workshops as Virginia militia approach Harpers Ferry. Confederate forces subsequently confiscate the Armory's ordnance stock, machinery, and tools before burning most of the remaining workshops.

Armory Grounds Photos | **James Burton Drawings**

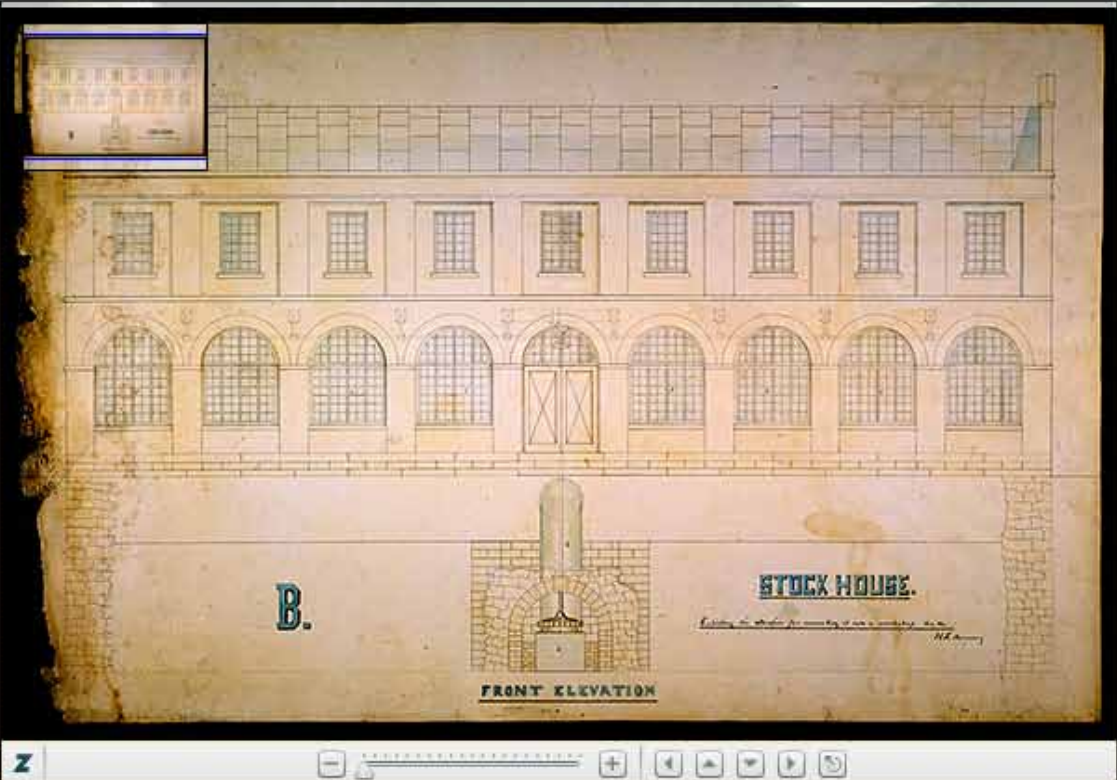


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ARMORY GROUNDS




B.
STOCK HOUSE.
Exhibiting the alteration for converting it into a workshop &c &c.
FRONT ELEVATION

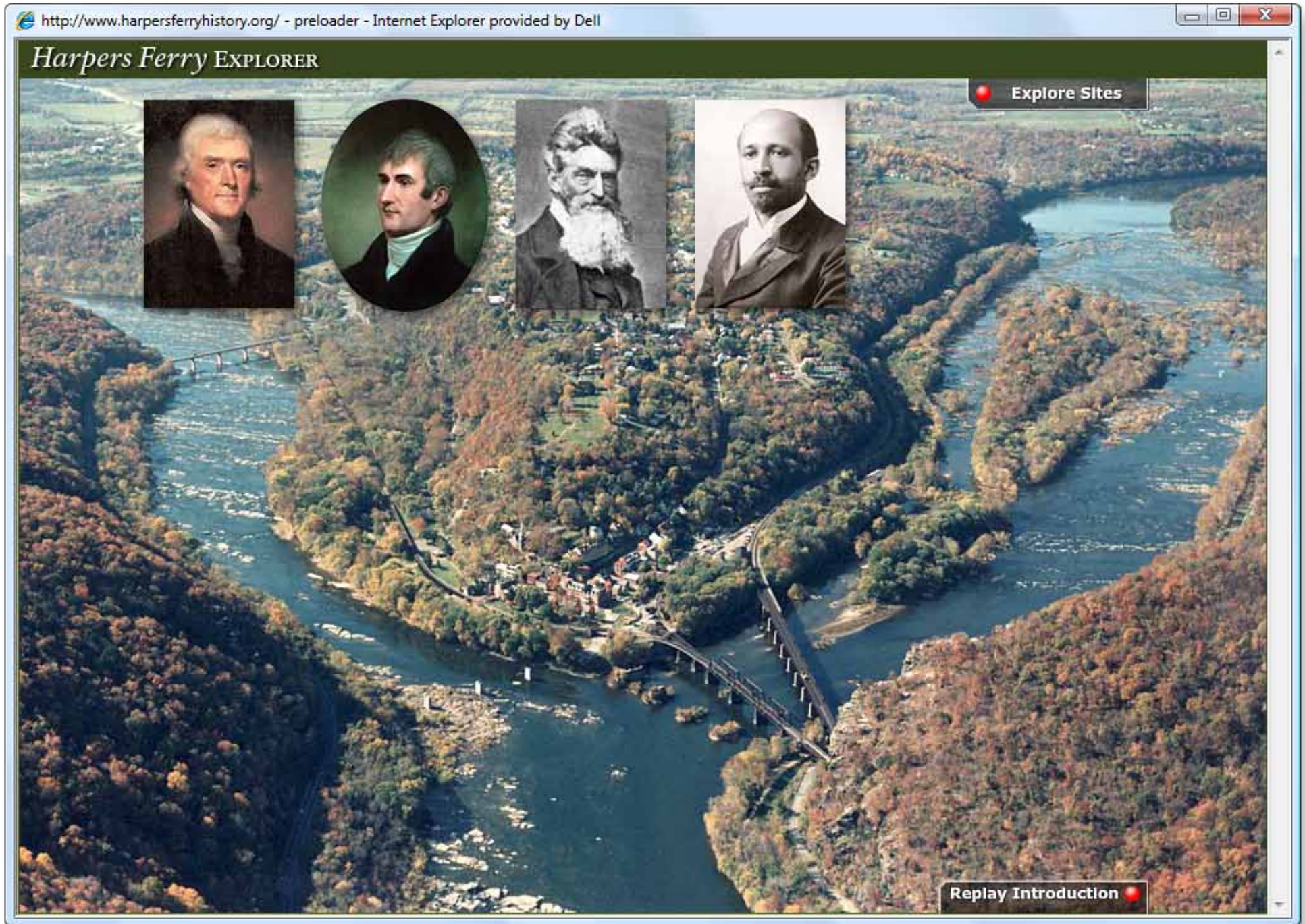


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THOMAS JEFFERSON AT HARPERS FERRY




Thomas Jefferson described the view at Harpers Ferry in his "Notes on the State of Virginia", published in 1785:

"The passage of the Patowmack through the Blue Ridge is perhaps one of the most stupendous scenes in Nature. You stand on a very high point of land. On your right comes up the Shenandoah, having ranged along the foot of the mountain a hundred miles to seek a vent. On your left approaches the Patowmack in quest of a passage also. In the moment of their junction they rush together against the mountain, rend it asunder and pass off to the sea. The first glance of this scene hurries our senses into the opinion that this earth has been created in time, that the mountains were formed first, that the rivers began to flow afterwards, that in this place particularly they have been so dammed up by the Blue Ridge of mountains as to have formed an ocean which filled the whole valley; that, continuing to rise, they have at last broken over at this spot and have torn the mountain down from its summit to its base. The piles of rock on each hand, but particularly on the Shenandoah, the evident marks of their disruptions and avulsions from their beds by the most powerful agents in nature, corroborate the impression.

"But the distant finishing which nature has given the picture is of a very different character. It is a true contrast to the former. It is as placid and delightful as that is wild and tremendous. For the mountains being cloven asunder, she presents to your eye, through the cleft, a small catch of smooth blue horizon, at an infinite distance in that plain country, inviting you, as it were, from the riot and tumult roaring around to pass through the breach and

Video Player Close X

Bill Barker as Thomas Jefferson



and at an infinite distance is the plain country,

Bill Barker reads an excerpt from the "Notes on the State of Virginia" at Jefferson Rock.

Jefferson Rock Photos

