

6A. SANDY HOOK

Travel 28 miles west of Frederick on Rt. 340 and go past the Rt. 67 exit and turn right onto Sandy Hook Road just before the Rt. 340 bridge across the Potomac River (Canal mile 59.60). It is a good idea before visiting Sandy Hook and the Maryland Heights to go to the Harpers Ferry Visitor Center, just 3 miles further on Rt. 340, to get maps, guides, and information.

Sandy Hook got its name from a quicksand deposit that used to exist at the edge of the river. The little village was a busy railroad depot before the B & O Railroad was centered in Brunswick. During the Civil War the Frederick-Harpers Ferry toll road passed through here and Sandy Hook had a railroad repair shop, warehouses, and many stores as well as a depot.

In June 1859 John Brown, using the name Isaac Smith, entered Maryland from Chambersburg, Pennsylvania and stayed the night of June 30, 1859, at the Washington House in Hagerstown. He and his sons Owen and Oliver, along with Jeremiah Anderson, then lodged at Sandy Hook until they located a permanent base of operations at the Kennedy farm at Sample's Manor (see site #6C). On October 17, 1859, a detachment of 90 U.S. Marines coming by train from Washington, D.C. disembarked at Sandy Hook where they were joined by their commander, Col. Robert E. Lee, and marched to Harpers Ferry to take over the siege of John Brown's raiders at the armory.

a. WEVERTON COTTON MILLS

The ruins of the mills are about 1.5 miles downstream (east) from Sandy Hook on the C & O Canal. By car take Sandy Hook Road east, turn right on Keep Tryst Road and go about 1 mile.

The abandoned mill buildings were used as a Union barracks during the Civil War for soldiers guarding the railroad. Built by Casper W. Wever in 1832, the cotton mills operated using water power from the Potomac River. Today all that is left of the extensive manufacturing and dormitory buildings are the 15-foot-tall stone walls next to the river that were the entrance to the intake sluice for the water to power the mills.

b. B & O RAILROAD BRIDGE

Go about a mile west of Rt. 340 on the Sandy Hook Road. The stone piers of the old bridge are on the downstream side of the current bridge. Canal mile 60.67.

In 1859 this bridge was covered and carried both the railroad and pedestrian traffic across the river. This is where John Brown and his men entered on the night of October 16, 1859, captured the night watchman, William Williams, and shot and killed the free black man, Hayward Sheppard.

The bridge was burned by Confederates on June 14, 1861, before their evacuation of Harpers Ferry. The bridge was rebuilt from March 4 to 18, 1862, but the trestling on the Maryland side was destroyed by a storm in April 1862. Although Lee's army destroyed every B & O Railroad bridge between

Cumberland and Harpers Ferry before their march to invade Maryland in September 1862, the Harpers Ferry bridge was spared. It was, however, destroyed by the orders of a Union commander on July 5, 1863, but the railroad line was back in operation by August of that year.

6B. MARYLAND HEIGHTS

A path leads up to the Heights from the C & O Canal near a small parking area on the right side of Sandy Hook Road about 2 miles west of Rt. 340. The path is steep and the trail takes from three to four hours to hike. You can get a trail guide from the Harpers Ferry Visitor Center. There are gun emplacements at several points along the trail.

Maryland Heights, with an elevation of 1,460 feet, overlooks Harpers Ferry from the Maryland side of the Potomac River. On April 18, 1861, the Heights were occupied by Confederate troops under the command of Col. (later Gen.) Thomas J. Jackson, as was Harpers Ferry. In June, Brig. Gen. Joseph E. Johnston took over the command of troops at Harpers Ferry and Maryland Heights. Realizing that Harpers Ferry could not be held without the protection of the Heights, and the difficulty of holding the Heights when the main force was on the Virginia side of the river, Johnston decided to evacuate. The B & O Railroad Bridge was destroyed on June 14, 1861, and the Confederates left Harpers Ferry, taking the machinery from the armory, cannon, and other equipment with them. Union troops soon took their place.

During the Confederate attack on Harpers Ferry on September 12-14, 1862, before the Battle of Antietam, Confederates of Maj. Gen. Lafayette McLaws' brigade, along with Kershaw's and Barksdale's brigades, began the attack on Maryland Heights on September 12, coming down the ridge of the mountain from the north, having crossed South Mountain at Brownsville Gap and camped overnight in Pleasant Valley. Maryland Heights was defended by the 32nd Ohio; three companies of the 1st Maryland Home Brigade under Maj. John Steiner; Companies H and I of the 1st Maryland Cavalry; the 5th New York Artillery; and a squadron of the Rhode Island Cavalry under Maj. Augustus W. Corliss, with Col. Thomas H. Ford of the 32nd Ohio in overall command. The Union forces were reinforced at noon by seven companies of the 115th New York Regiment, but they were still unable to hold onto the Heights when the Confederates resumed the attack on the morning of September 13. After taking Maryland Heights the Confederates then had to haul heavy artillery up the cliffs as the Federals had destroyed the cannons.

Confederate General Walker's division occupied Loudon Heights overlooking Harpers Ferry from the south on September 13, and Gen. "Stonewall" Jackson's troops took Bolivar Heights overlooking Harpers Ferry from the west. All three Confederate forces opened fire on Harpers Ferry on

the morning of September 15. The Union army in Harpers Ferry soon surrendered. Approximately 11,500 prisoners were taken, and large amounts of ammunition and supplies were captured. Led by Col. Benjamin "Grimes" Davis and Col. Arno Voss, 1,200 U.S. Cavalry escaped from Harpers Ferry on the night of September 14, and captured a Confederate supply train near Williamsport on the morning of September 15.

6C. KENNEDY FARM

From Sandy Hook take Harpers Ferry Road north about 5 miles. Turn right on Chestnut Grove Road, and proceed about 1 mile to the log farmhouse on the left. The farmhouse is private and only open to the public on weekends May through October from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.
jefferson.village.virginia.edu/~jbrown/kfarm.html



Kennedy Farm

This farm near Harpers Ferry was rented by John Brown, using the name Isaac Smith, in July 1859. Here he made his headquarters for a planned revolution to free the slaves that would begin with the capture of the Federal armory at Harpers Ferry. On October 16, 1859, Brown and 19 of his 22 men (three were left to guard the farm) left for Harpers Ferry with a wagon load of arms and pikes. Along the way they cut the telegraph wires leading into the town and took over the B & O Railroad bridge at about 10:30 p.m., then seized the armory building. The next day, after a siege, Brown and six of his followers were captured by U. S. Marines under the command of Col. Robert E. Lee. Brown was given a trial and hanged in Charlestown, Virginia (now West Virginia) December 2, 1859. The other captured men were tried and hanged later. Ten of Brown's men had been killed in the fighting. A plaque listing the names of Brown's men has been placed in front of the house by the Sons of Confederate Veterans.