

THE POTOMAC RIVER AND THE C&O CANAL

MAP ONE

Tide Lock to Great Falls

MORE THAN THREE MILLION PEOPLE live in the Washington Metropolitan Area, and many of them find the Potomac to be the center of their recreational activities. Cyclists and joggers crowd the towpath of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal; skilled canoeists and kayakers challenge Mather Gorge and Stubblefield Falls below Great Falls. Rock climbers test their ropes on the cliffs along the Potomac, while hikers find solitude on the craggy Billy Goat Trail, less than a 25 minute drive from downtown Washington.

In 1608, Captain John Smith, after sailing up the Potomac to what is now Washington, reported fish "lying so thickke with their heads above water ... we attempted to catch them with our frying pans." Still popular for fishing, the river here is also the major source of drinking water for the Washington area. At Great Falls, about 200 million gallons of the Potomac are withdrawn daily for the water supply of the District of Columbia, Arlington, and Falls Church, Virginia. Operated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the system carries the water ten miles downstream along MacArthur Boulevard for treatment at the Dalecarlia Water Treatment Plant. One of the outstanding structures of the Aqueduct is the Cabin John Arch. Built in 1862, it was at one time the largest single-span stone arch in the Western Hemisphere. The Cabin John Arch and other Aqueduct structures are noted on this map by the Army Corps symbol, a castle.



THE SEARCH FOR GOLD
 During the past century, more than 5,000 ounces of the precious metal have been produced in Maryland, almost all of them in southern Montgomery County. Gold mines pocket the Great Falls area, some on National Park Service property. The *Ford Mine* was the site of gold discovered in the 1800's; some mine structures are still present. The *Maryland Mine* is, according to legend, haunted by "Tommyknockers." The most systematic exploration for gold began in 1915 when A. A. Hassan, a mining geologist, directed an exploration program that included 12 miles of trenches over 2100 acres. Trenches are still visible.

- HISTORICAL NOTES**
- 1** **Tide Lock:** Zero milestone for the C&O Canal.
 - 2** **Lime Kiln Ruins:** Two stone structures from the Godey Lime Kiln, 1864-1908, now under parkway ramp.
 - 3** **Pierce Mill:** Meal and flour mill built around 1820, now restored and part of Rock Creek Park.
 - 4** **Little Falls Skirting Canal:** Patowmack Co. completed a 2.2 mile canal around the falls in 1795; it was obliterated by C&O Canal.
 - 5** **Chain Bridge:** One of the earliest bridge sites across the Potomac; now popular for shad and herring fishing.
 - 6** **Dam No. 1:** Site of the original C&O Canal groundbreaking, July 4, 1828, by Pres. John Quincy Adams.
 - 7** **Rock Run Culvert:** Outstanding culvert once carried Rock Run under canal at an angle.
 - 8** **Plummers Island:** Home of the Washington Biologists' Field Club since 1901. Site of many biological studies.
 - 9** **Turning Basin:** Place where canal boats changed direction; now a good place to spot turtles. Camp during the Great Depression for workers restoring the canal was located nearby.
 - 10** **Widewater:** 500-foot wide, ¼ mile long old river channel used for the canal. Damaged in 1972 flood, restored.

GLEN ECHO AND CABIN JOHN
 Two fascinating towns that grew up along the Potomac. Glen Echo began as a resort in 1889, becoming the site of the "National Chataqua," a utopian community. The *Chataqua Tower* in Glen Echo Park is a partially restored reminder of the era, which was ended by a malaria epidemic in 1892. Glen Echo became an amusement park in 1911, drawing thousands of Washingtonians, many of them coming by trolley from Georgetown. The rails are still visible along the canal. The park is now operated by the National Park Service as an arts center. Nearby, the *Clara Barton House*, also operated by NPS, is an incredible home built in 1892, in Mississippi riverboat style, by the founder of the American Red Cross. The *Cabin John Arch*, the largest stone arch in the Western Hemisphere, links Glen Echo and Cabin John, and carries the Washington Aqueduct across Cabin John Creek. Cabin John is a small community probably named after "John of the Cabin," an early settler who found gold in the creek.

GEORGETOWN
 One of the earliest towns in the Washington area, Georgetown was established as a tobacco port, and is now a fashionable home for government officials, students, and artists. Restored warehouses have been turned into shops and restaurants, but many historic structures are still visible. The *Old Stone House*, at 3051 M Street, was built in 1765, is a National Park Service headquarters for information about the area; check there for more information. Notable sites include the *Duval Foundry*, built in 1856; the *Grace Protestant Episcopal Church*, begun as a mission for canal workers in the mid-1800's; the site of Francis Scott Key's house; and *Georgetown University*, oldest Catholic University in the U.S. Down by the waterfront, the *Potomac Boat Club* is the oldest surviving boat club on the river. Nearby are some ruins of the *Alexandria Aqueduct*, which crossed the Potomac to connect the C & O Canal to Alexandria in 1843.

Canoeing
 The Potomac River is a haven for canoeists. All classes of water can be found through its length. As on any river, it is important to study the segment you are planning to paddle—this map set is no substitute for detailed planning. Learn of hazards and check water levels before your travels. River levels for the basin are available by telephoning (703) 260-0305. Many canoeing guidebooks discuss the Potomac. We urge you to get one. Because of the many drownings on the river, lifejackets must be worn on the river from January 1 to June 30. Have a good time, and be careful!

GREAT FALLS
 Spectacular rock formations mark the area where the Potomac begins its change from a free-flowing stream into a tidal estuary. The Potomac River has been flowing through the area for 180 million years; rocks are remains of a zone of resistant mountain range 500 million years old. Parks on both sides of the river preserve the area for visitors, but be careful—slippery rocks have led to many drownings in the turbulent rapids. *Great Falls Tavern* is a Park Service headquarters and museum for interpretation and information about the park and the C & O Canal. In Virginia, *Great Falls Park* is an 800-acre preserve with a spectacular view of the falls. The park has a visitor center and picnic areas and trails leading to the locks of the *Patowmack Canal*, a project of George Washington, who saw navigation around the falls as a hope for national expansion, unity, and prosperity. The canal operated from 1802 to 1830. Only thoroughly experienced canoeists should attempt the rugged river between Great Falls and Little Falls. Many drownings have occurred here.



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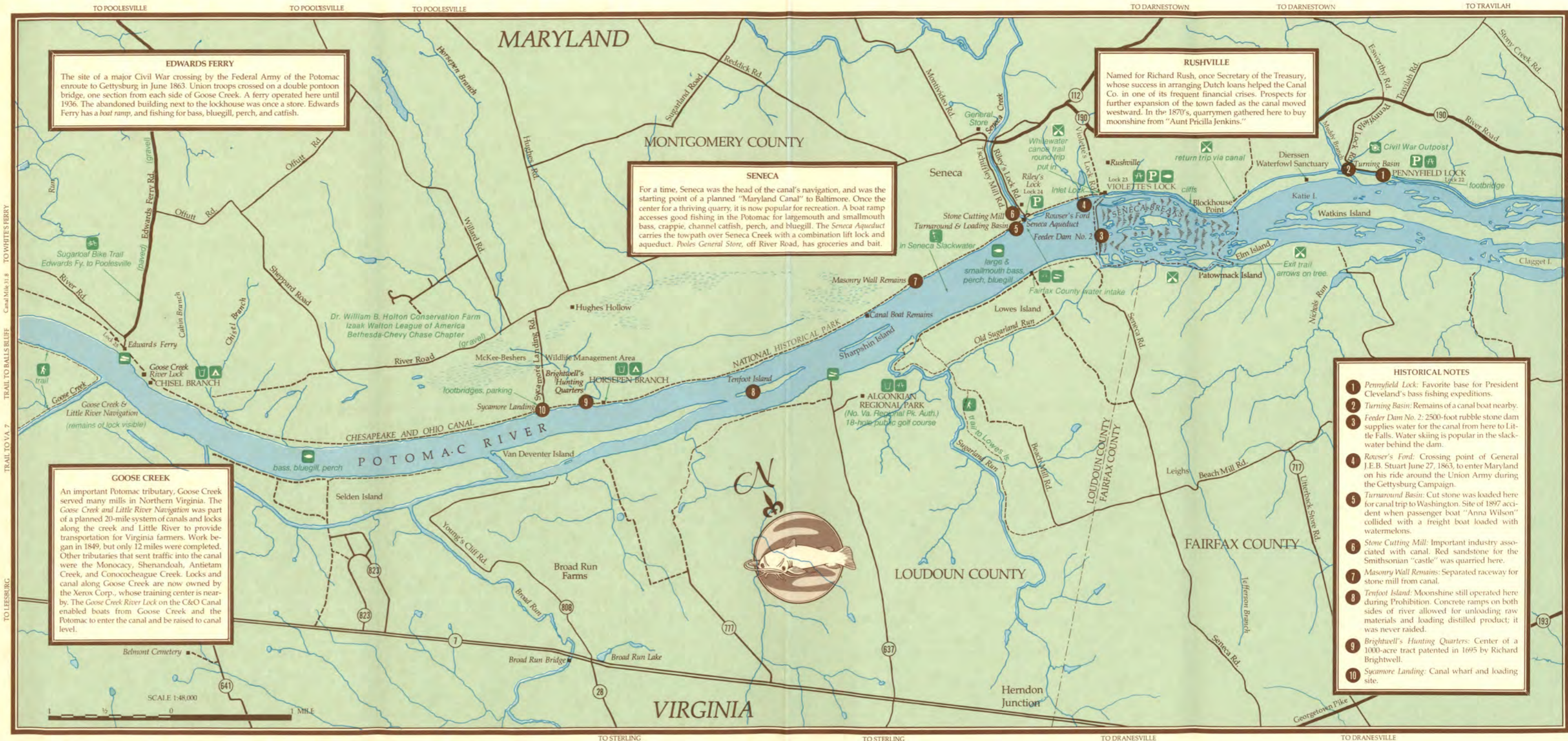
MAP TWO

Pennyfield Lock to Goose Creek

ABOVE GREAT FALLS, the Potomac is a calm and peaceful stream. Behind a rock dam built for the C & O Canal at Seneca (Feeder Dam No. 2), the river forms a seven-mile stretch of flat water. Turf farms and quiet villages dot this area, along with the 1475-acre McKee Beshers Wildlife Management Area, operated by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. In the summer, the "Seneca Slackwater" is a popular spot for water skiing and power boats, and the little town of Seneca becomes overcrowded with boaters. But during the rest of the year, the most populous inhabitants of the area are deer, quail, birds, rabbits, and waterfowl.

It was not always thus. During the second half of the 19th Century, thousands of tons of red sandstone were quarried nearby and cut here. The durable stone was used in constructing many buildings and locks along the C & O Canal, and dozens of buildings in Washington, D.C. At Seneca, it was cut by hammers, stone chisels and large saws. By 1900, most of the better-quality stone was cut, and the industry declined.

The deciduous woodlands of this part of the Potomac Valley are called the Piedmont, and lead to the foothills of the Blue Ridge beginning at Point of Rocks, on the next map. The Virginia shore of this section of the river is mostly privately-owned farmland, except for the Algonkian Regional Park, which includes a public golf course and picnic area.



EDWARDS FERRY
The site of a major Civil War crossing by the Federal Army of the Potomac enroute to Gettysburg in June 1863. Union troops crossed on a double pontoon bridge, one section from each side of Goose Creek. A ferry operated here until 1936. The abandoned building next to the lockhouse was once a store. Edwards Ferry has a boat ramp, and fishing for bass, bluegill, perch, and catfish.

SENECA
For a time, Seneca was the head of the canal's navigation, and was the starting point of a planned "Maryland Canal" to Baltimore. Once the center for a thriving quarry, it is now popular for recreation. A boat ramp accesses good fishing in the Potomac for largemouth and smallmouth bass, crappie, channel catfish, perch, and bluegill. The Seneca Aqueduct carries the towpath over Seneca Creek with a combination lift lock and aqueduct. Poles General Store, off River Road, has groceries and bait.

RUSHVILLE
Named for Richard Rush, once Secretary of the Treasury, whose success in arranging Dutch loans helped the Canal Co. in one of its frequent financial crises. Prospects for further expansion of the town faded as the canal moved westward. In the 1870's, quarrymen gathered here to buy moonshine from "Aunt Prilla Jenkins."

GOOSE CREEK
An important Potomac tributary, Goose Creek served many mills in Northern Virginia. The Goose Creek and Little River Navigation was part of a planned 20-mile system of canals and locks along the creek and Little River to provide transportation for Virginia farmers. Work began in 1849, but only 12 miles were completed. Other tributaries that sent traffic into the canal were the Monocacy, Shenandoah, Antietam Creek, and Conococheague Creek. Locks and canal along Goose Creek are now owned by the Xerox Corp., whose training center is nearby. The Goose Creek River Lock on the C&O Canal enabled boats from Goose Creek and the Potomac to enter the canal and be raised to canal level.

- HISTORICAL NOTES**
- 1 Pennyfield Lock: Favorite base for President Cleveland's bass fishing expeditions.
 - 2 Turning Basin: Remains of a canal boat nearby.
 - 3 Feeder Dam No. 2: 2500-foot rubble stone dam supplies water for the canal from here to Little Falls. Water skiing is popular in the slackwater behind the dam.
 - 4 Rouser's Ford: Crossing point of General J.E.B. Stuart June 27, 1863, to enter Maryland on his ride around the Union Army during the Gettysburg Campaign.
 - 5 Turnaround Basin: Cut stone was loaded here for canal trip to Washington. Site of 1897 accident when passenger boat "Anna Wilson" collided with a freight boat loaded with watermelons.
 - 6 Stone Cutting Mill: Important industry associated with canal. Red sandstone for the Smithsonian "castle" was quarried here.
 - 7 Masonry Wall Remains: Separated raceway for stone mill from canal.
 - 8 Tenfoot Island: Moonshine still operated here during Prohibition. Concrete ramps on both sides of river allowed for unloading raw materials and loading distilled product; it was never raided.
 - 9 Brightwell's Hunting Quarters: Center of a 1000-acre tract patented in 1695 by Richard Brightwell.
 - 10 Sycamore Landing: Canal wharf and loading site.

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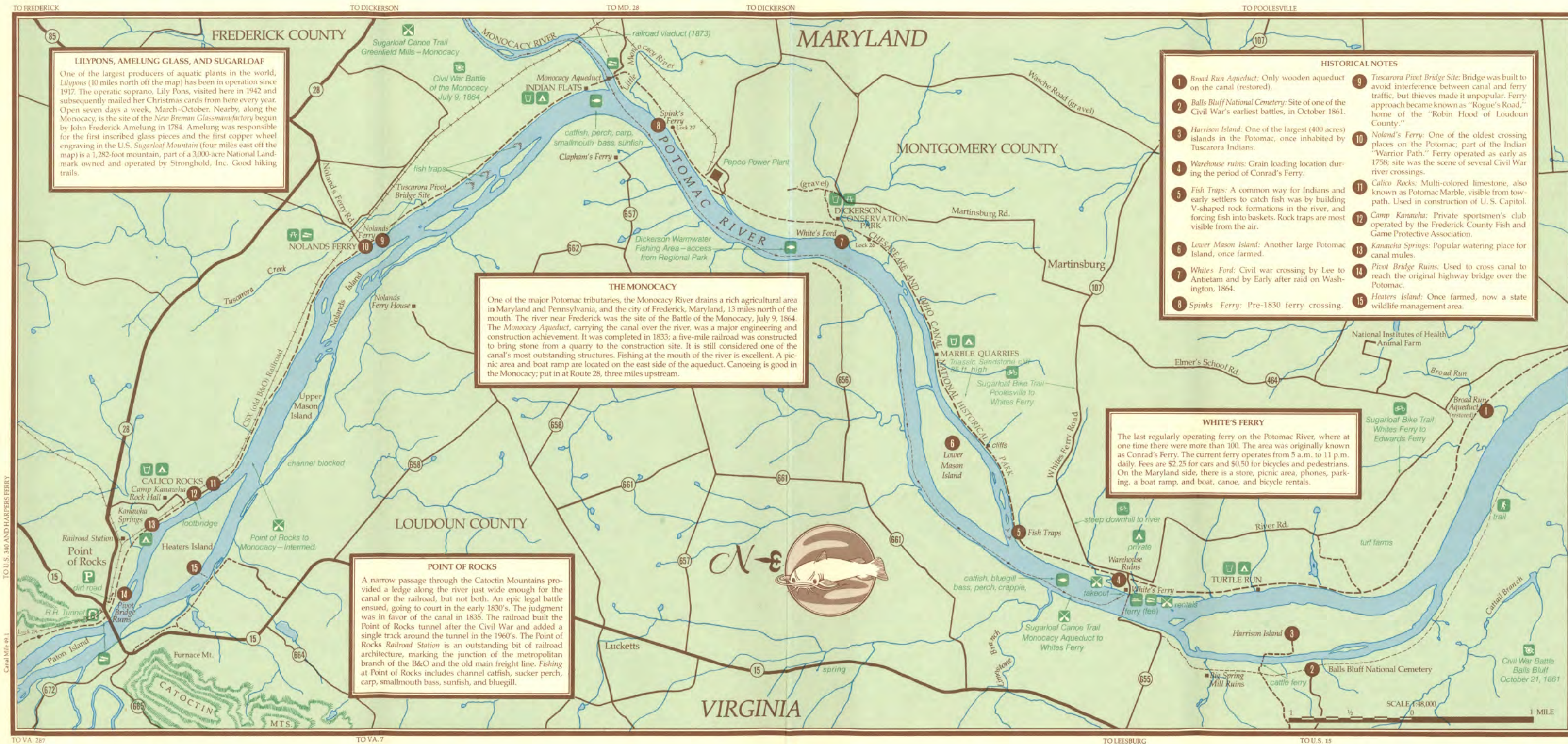
MAP THREE

Broad Run to Point of Rocks

ON THE FOURTH OF JULY, 1828, President John Quincy Adams turned the first spadeful of earth for the construction of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal at Little Falls (see Map One). On the same day, in a much less impressive ceremony, the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad began construction of its right of way from Baltimore to Cumberland. The canal met the railroad head-on at Point of Rocks, where both transportation companies fought for the same narrow shelf of land along the Potomac. The canal won the legal battle—but lost the race to Cumberland. Beset by financial and labor problems, the canal construction lagged more than four years behind the railroad in reaching Cumberland, and never fully recovered.

The railroad still runs along the river for most of its length above the Monocacy River. Freight trains loaded with coal from the West Virginia highlands run daily along the river, as well as a more recent development: commuter trains from Harpers Ferry and Martinsburg to Washington, D.C.

During the Civil War, the area between Lower Mason Island and the Monocacy River known as White's Ford became one of the most important crossing points for Confederate Armies advancing into the North. Robert E. Lee crossed here from Virginia on September 6, 1862, on his way to Antietam. The river formed an important dividing line between North and South, and was crossed many times by advancing or retreating troops.



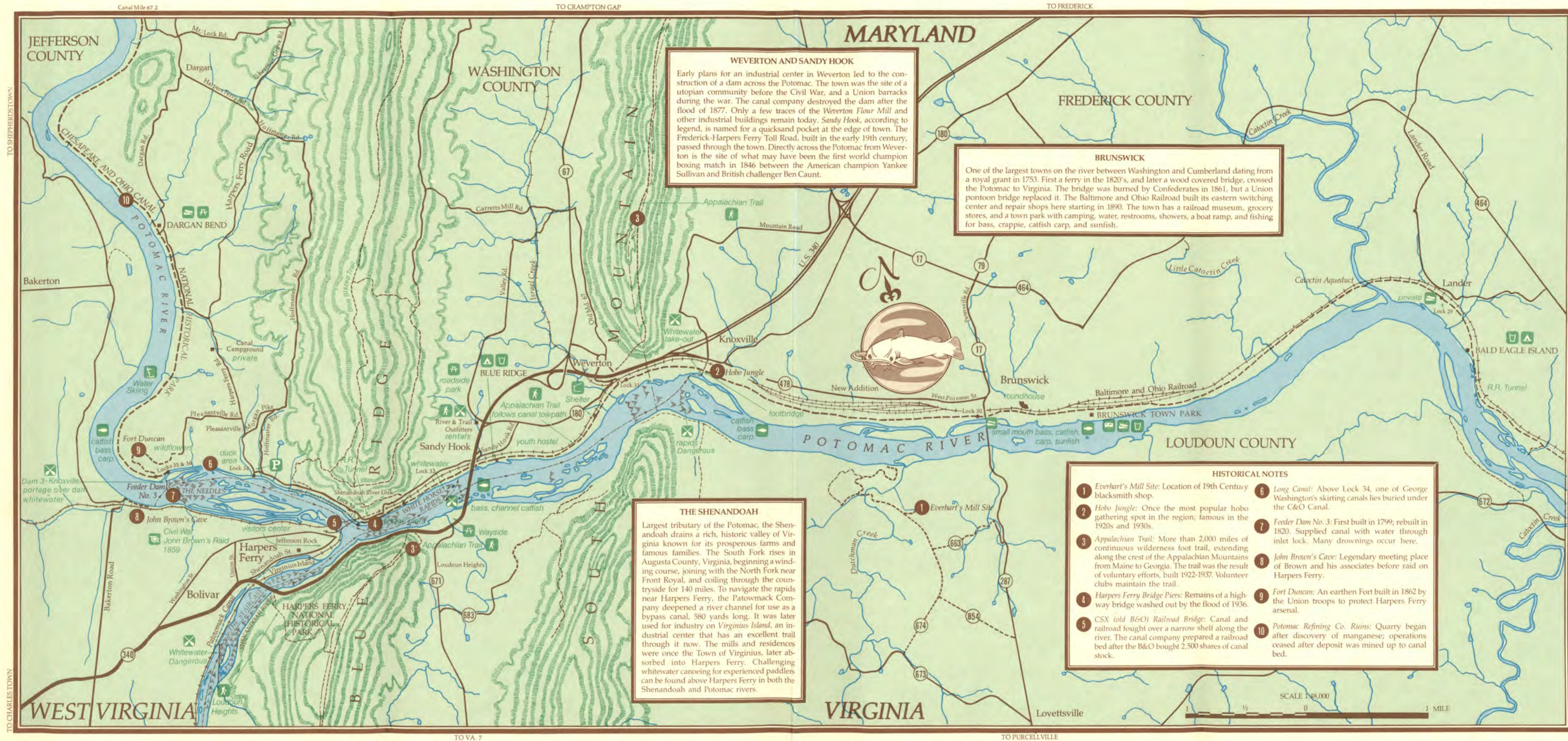
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MAP FOUR

Catoctin Creek to Harpers Ferry

THIS SCENE IS WORTH a voyage across the Atlantic," wrote Thomas Jefferson of the view from Harpers Ferry in 1783. Today, it's still as impressive as in Jefferson's time, although the area has seen repeated industrial growth, wars, destruction, fires, and floods. Robert Harper's mills became an important arms-producing center, and east-west transportation link—and the remains of many bridges still stand in the Potomac and Shenandoah. John Brown's raid and the Civil War brought the area into national prominence. In 1859, Brown captured the federal arsenal in an attempt to secure arms for slaves. Brown was eventually captured and hanged in Charles Town, W.Va. The arsenal was blown up in 1861; in 1862, a garrison of more than 10,000 Union troops surrendered to Stonewall Jackson.

Harpers Ferry still has many remnants of its busy pre-Civil War industries. Harper House is the oldest surviving structure in the town, built around 1775, and restored by the National Park Service, which administers the Harpers Ferry National Historic Park. Other highlights include Jefferson rock, St. Peter's Catholic Church, and the Master Armorer's House. Hilltop House is a famous hotel with a view of the town below; and the remains of the Salty Dog Tavern are filled with the memories of boisterous brawls, Prohibition, and legendary moonshine operations.



TO SHEPHERDSTOWN
TO CHARLES TOWN

TO CRAMPTON GAP
TO FREDERICK
TO POINT OF ROCKS
TO PURCELLVILLE

THE POTOMAC RIVER AND THE C&O CANAL

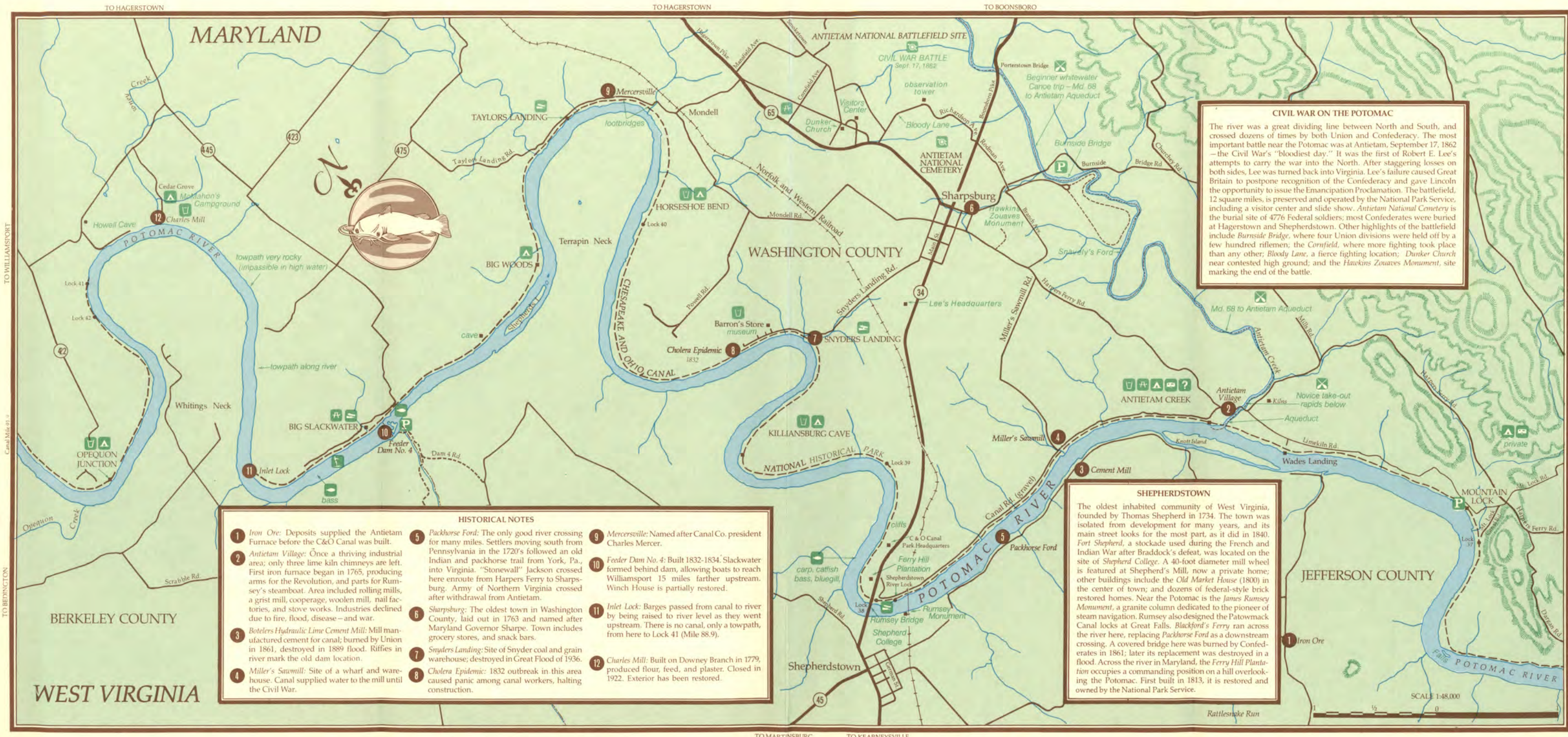
MAP FIVE

Mountain Lock to Opequon Creek

PADDLING THROUGH THE BATTLEFIELD at Antietam Creek is one of the best ways to view the site of the Civil War's "bloodiest day", September 17, 1862. More than 23,000 casualties were reported in this epic battle between North and South. At Burnside Bridge, where southern sharpshooters contested an advance of four Union divisions, National Park Service interpreters today describe the many attacks during that fateful day in September.

The Potomac and its tributaries have many other interesting sights for the canoeist. They vary from the difficult rapids near Harpers Ferry, both on the Shenandoah and Potomac, to long stretches of flat water for easy paddling. A few tips: make sure someone in your group is familiar with the area, or is an experienced canoeist. Check the river level before leaving, since during summer dry periods, small creeks can be unnavigable. Carry things you want to keep dry in a plastic bag, and wear old sneakers, because you may end up pulling, or pushing, your canoe out of difficult spots.

Above the Blue Ridge, the Potomac drains a series of ridges and valleys and winds through gargantuan bends that caused great difficulty during canal construction. The section of the river from here to Cumberland is far less populous than the lower portion.



CIVIL WAR ON THE POTOMAC
 The river was a great dividing line between North and South, and crossed dozens of times by both Union and Confederacy. The most important battle near the Potomac was at Antietam, September 17, 1862—the Civil War's "bloodiest day." It was the first of Robert E. Lee's attempts to carry the war into the North. After staggering losses on both sides, Lee was turned back into Virginia. Lee's failure caused Great Britain to postpone recognition of the Confederacy and gave Lincoln the opportunity to issue the Emancipation Proclamation. The battlefield, 12 square miles, is preserved and operated by the National Park Service, including a visitor center and slide show. *Antietam National Cemetery* is the burial site of 4776 Federal soldiers; most Confederates were buried at Hagerstown and Shepherdstown. Other highlights of the battlefield include *Burnside Bridge*, where four Union divisions were held off by a few hundred riflemen; the *Cornfield*, where more fighting took place than any other; *Bloody Lane*, a fierce fighting location; *Dunker Church* near contested high ground; and the *Hawkins Zouaves Monument*, site marking the end of the battle.

- HISTORICAL NOTES**
- 1 **Iron Ore:** Deposits supplied the Antietam Furnace before the C&O Canal was built.
 - 2 **Antietam Village:** Once a thriving industrial area; only three lime kiln chimneys are left. First iron furnace began in 1765, producing arms for the Revolution, and parts for Rumsey's steamboat. Area included rolling mills, a grist mill, cooperage, woolen mill, nail factories, and stove works. Industries declined due to fire, flood, disease—and war.
 - 3 **Botlers Hydraulic Lime Cement Mill:** Mill manufactured cement for canal; burned by Union in 1861, destroyed in 1889 flood. Riffles in river mark the old dam location.
 - 4 **Miller's Sawmill:** Site of a wharf and warehouse. Canal supplied water to the mill until the Civil War.
 - 5 **Packhorse Ford:** The only good river crossing for many miles. Settlers moving south from Pennsylvania in the 1720's followed an old Indian and packhorse trail from York, Pa., into Virginia. "Stonewall" Jackson crossed here enroute from Harpers Ferry to Sharpsburg. Army of Northern Virginia crossed after withdrawal from Antietam.
 - 6 **Sharpsburg:** The oldest town in Washington County, laid out in 1763 and named after Maryland Governor Sharpe. Town includes grocery stores, and snack bars.
 - 7 **Snyders Landing:** Site of Snyder coal and grain warehouse; destroyed in Great Flood of 1936.
 - 8 **Cholera Epidemic:** 1832 outbreak in this area caused panic among canal workers, halting construction.
 - 9 **Mercersville:** Named after Canal Co. president Charles Mercer.
 - 10 **Feeder Dam No. 4:** Built 1832-1834. Slackwater formed behind dam, allowing boats to reach Williamsport 15 miles farther upstream. Winch House is partially restored.
 - 11 **Inlet Lock:** Barges passed from canal to river by being raised to river level as they went upstream. There is no canal, only a towpath, from here to Lock 41 (Mile 88.9).
 - 12 **Charles Mill:** Built on Downey Branch in 1779, produced flour, feed, and plaster. Closed in 1922. Exterior has been restored.

SHEPHERDSTOWN
 The oldest inhabited community of West Virginia, founded by Thomas Shepherd in 1734. The town was isolated from development for many years, and its main street looks for the most part, as it did in 1840. *Fort Shepherd*, a stockade used during the French and Indian War after Braddock's defeat, was located on the site of *Shepherd College*. A 40-foot diameter mill wheel is featured at *Shepherd's Mill*, now a private home; other buildings include the *Old Market House* (1800) in the center of town; and dozens of federal-style brick restored homes. Near the Potomac is the *James Rumsey Monument*, a granite column dedicated to the pioneer of steam navigation. Rumsey also designed the Patowmack Canal locks at Great Falls. *Blackford's Ferry* ran across the river here, replacing *Packhorse Ford* as a downstream crossing. A covered bridge here was burned by Confederates in 1861; later its replacement was destroyed in a flood. Across the river in Maryland, the *Ferry Hill Plantation* occupies a commanding position on a hill overlooking the Potomac. First built in 1813, it is restored and owned by the National Park Service.

TO WILLIAMSPORT

TO BEDFORD

TO MARTINSBURG

TO KEARNEYSVILLE

TO DARCAN, Canal Mile 89