

Storer College, Anthony Hall  
Harpers Ferry National Historical Park  
Harpers Ferry  
Jefferson County  
West Virginia

HABS No. WV-277-A

HABS  
WVA,  
19-HARF,  
32-A-

PHOTOGRAPHS

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Department of Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

ADDENDUM TO:  
STORER COLLEGE, ANTHONY HALL  
(Wirth Hall)  
Harpers Ferry National Historical Park  
Camp Hill  
Harpers Ferry  
Jefferson County  
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PHOTOGRAPHS

PAPER COPIES OF COLOR TRANSPARENCIES

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240-0001

## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY

### ADDENDUM TO STORER COLLEGE, ANTHONY HALL (Wirth Hall)

HABS No. WV-277-A

**NOTE:** Please see the following historical reports for additional information regarding the history of Storer College:

Addendum to Storer College, Lewis Anthony Library	HABS No. WV-277-C
Addendum to Storer College, Cook Hall	HABS No. WV-277-E
Addendum to Curtis Freewill Baptist Church	HABS No. WV-278
Bird-Brady House	HABS No. WV-304

**Location:** Camp Hill, Harpers Ferry, Jefferson County, West Virginia

**Present Owner:** National Park Service, Harpers Ferry National Historical Park

**Present Occupants:** National Park Service, Mather Training Center

**Present Use:** Offices and training center for the National Park Service

**Historian:** Mark Barron, University of Maryland, College Park

**Significance:** From 1881 to 1955, Anthony Hall served as the main building for Harpers Ferry's Storer College, a historically black school founded in 1867 by missionaries of the Freewill Baptist Church. In addition to administrative offices and basic classrooms, the building, at various times, also housed the school's dining hall, chapel, recitation rooms, music room, science laboratories, and the library. Because the building housed Storer College's administration offices from the time of its erection in 1881 through the school's closing in 1955, Anthony Hall lends itself particularly to investigating the overall academic history of the school: its opening as an institution of higher learning for African Americans following the Civil War; the difficulties faced in locating adequate funding for its continued operation; the effects of three damaging fires to the building and how it impacted the school and student body; and the eventual decline and closure of the school. Anthony Hall was also the site of several significant events in African American history including a dedication address by Frederick Douglass in 1882 and as a host venue for the second meeting of the Niagara Movement, a forerunner of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 1906.

After Storer College closed in 1955, the building remained vacant until the school's former campus was acquired in 1962 by the National Park Service (NPS). Following an extensive rehabilitation in 1963, the building was renamed Wirth Hall in honor of Conrad L. Wirth, the Director of the National Park Service who was instrumental in creating a training center at

Harpers Ferry. Opened in 1964 to facilitate the training and continuing education of NPS employees on the east coast, the Stephen T. Mather Training Center and the dedication of Wirth Hall were part of Mission 66, a decade-long, \$1 billion program to enhance the country's national parks.

## PART 1: HISTORICAL INFORMATION

### A. Physical History

- 1. Date of Erection:** The basic structure of the south wing of Anthony Hall dates to ca. 1847.<sup>1</sup> The center section and north wing date to 1881. In 1927, a massive fire gutted the interior of the building and caused the west wall of the center section to collapse. The building was rebuilt in 1928-1929 using the same foundations and its remaining exterior walls. A second fire damaged the interior of the building in 1939 and a third fire in 1943 destroyed the building's administrative offices. Neither the second nor third fire affected the exterior portions of the building.
- 2. Architect:** As Storer College continued to expand its student population in the first two decades of its operation, the school's administration and trustees agreed that the campus needed a centrally located building to house additional classrooms and administrative offices.<sup>2</sup> Nathan C. Brackett, both a founder of the school and its president from 1867 to 1897, assumed responsibility in locating an architect to design the proposed building. It is unclear how Brackett undertook the selection process, but Peter J. Lauritzen, an architect based in Washington, D.C., was awarded the contract.

Born in Denmark in 1847, Lauritzen received formal architectural training at the Polytechnic School of Copenhagen.<sup>3</sup> By 1870, he had moved to the United States and was living in Washington, D.C. While initially working as a draftsman and engraver,

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<sup>1</sup> There is some debate concerning when the Armory buildings were constructed. A total of four buildings were erected on the high ground above Harpers Ferry on the elevation known as Camp Hill. It is documented that construction began in the 1840s, but it remains unclear whether the buildings were constructed simultaneously or at different times. Philip R. Smith, a National Park Service historian in the 1950s and 1960s, concluded that the Camp Hill building that would later be incorporated into Anthony Memorial Hall as its south wing was erected in 1847. Though no exact primary documentation is known to exist that corroborates the 1847 date, it likely is correct plus or minus five years. Philip R. Smith Jr., "Research Report History of the Commanding Officer's Quarters, Camp Hill, Harpers Ferry, 1847-1867," folder HF-7, Storer College Collection, library and archive of Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, Harpers Ferry, West Virginia (hereafter **HAFE**).

<sup>2</sup> Nathan C. Brackett to Alexander Morrell, 29 Apr. 1881, folder HFT-00052, HAFE

<sup>3</sup> Additional background information for Peter Lauritzen can be found in Matthew A. Postal, "Offerman Building," New York Landmarks Preservation Commission, 15 Mar. 2005, online report accessible at <http://www.nyc.gov/html/lpc/downloads/pdf/reports/offerman.pdf>, and in James A. Jacobs, "Addendum to Storer College, Cook Hall," HABS No. WV-277-E.

Lauritzen began identifying himself in city directories as an architect beginning in 1874.<sup>4</sup> Perhaps attempting to drum-up support for his new practice, Lauritzen placed a full page advertisement in *Boyd's Directory of the District of Columbia* in 1875 that featured endorsements from Morrison Remick Waite, Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court, and United States Attorney General George Williams.<sup>5</sup> Waite was widely recognized as an abolitionist prior to the Civil War, while Williams served as a pall bearer for the funeral of his friend, President Abraham Lincoln.<sup>6</sup> It is possible that their references for Lauritzen may have influenced Storer College's Free Will Baptist trustees – who themselves were noted Republicans and former abolitionists – to contract the design to the Danish-born architect.<sup>7</sup> According to correspondence of Nathan C. Brackett, Lauritzen was a “first class architect from Washington D.C.” and received a fee of \$1,000.00 for the project.<sup>8</sup>

In 1883, just two years after completing the Anthony Hall design, Lauritzen moved his practice to New York City. It is unknown why he chose to move away from Washington, D.C., but he did achieve more success in New York, where he received commissions to design the Manhattan Athletic Club (1889), the Union League Club (1889), and the Offerman Building (1890).<sup>9</sup> With his practice located in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, Lauritzen also designed several private homes and a number of firehouses throughout the borough.<sup>10</sup> Unlike the somewhat stylistically eclectic Anthony Hall, Lauritzen's mature work was more grounded in individual styles, such as the Romanesque and Queen Anne, and also demonstrated command of Beaux-Arts principles.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> *Boyd's Directory of the District of Columbia, 1874* (Washington, William H. Boyd).

<sup>5</sup> *Boyd's Directory of the District of Columbia, 1875*.

<sup>6</sup> Biographical information on Morrison Remick Waite can be found in Paul Kens, *The Supreme Court Under Morrison R. Waite, 1874-1888* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2010). Biographical information for George Williams can be found in L. P. Brockett, ed. *Men of Our Day; or Biographical Sketches of Patriots, Orators, Statesmen, Generals, Reformers, Financiers and Merchants, Now on the State of Action: Including Those Who in Military, Political, Business and Social Life, are the Prominent Leaders of the Time in This Country* (Philadelphia, 1872).

<sup>7</sup> Information regarding the political and abolitionist views of Free Will Baptists can be found in Albert Burgess and John T. Ward, *Free Baptist Cyclopaedia: Historical and Biographical* (Chicago: The Women's Temperance Publication Association, 1889).

<sup>8</sup> Brackett to Morrell, 29 Apr. 1881.

<sup>9</sup> Postal, “Offerman Building.”

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> Though Lauritzen never achieved the name recognition of many of his contemporaries, the internet has allowed for preservationists and critics to re-evaluate his contributions to New York City architecture and planning. Two notable examples are: Montrose Morris, “Walkabout: Peter J. Lauritzen, Architect,” posted on Brownstoner (Apr. 2010), a website dedicated to Brooklyn architecture, [http://www.brownstoner.com/brownstoner/archives/2010/04/walkabout\\_brook\\_3.php](http://www.brownstoner.com/brownstoner/archives/2010/04/walkabout_brook_3.php); and Christopher Gray, “Social Clubs, Long Gone, Left their Meeting Places Behind,” *New York Times* 12 Aug. 2010, assessable online at <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/08/15/realestate/15scapes.html?scp=24&sq=lauritzen&st=cse>.

Peter Lauritzen departed New York City in 1897, leaving his architectural firm in the hands of his son, William Lauritzen. After several years participating in the Yukon gold rush, Peter Lauritzen eventually returned to Brooklyn, where he was known as an excellent “billiard and club man.”<sup>12</sup> Lauritzen died in Copenhagen, Denmark in 1934.

3. **Owners:** The south wing of Anthony Hall (ca. 1847) and the land upon which Anthony Hall sits was owned by the United States War Department until 1868 when it was conveyed to the Board of Trustees of Storer College. The building was erected in 1881 and remained a part of Storer College until 1962, when the National Park Service assumed ownership of the property by a “Declaration of Taking” and was subsequently renamed Wirth Hall.<sup>13</sup> From 1962 to the present, the building has remained a classified structure within the National Park Service.<sup>14</sup>
4. **Original and Subsequent Occupants:**  
1881-1955 Administration offices and classrooms for Storer College  
1955-1962 Unknown, but very likely vacant  
1962-Present National Park Service staff
5. **Builder, Contractors, Suppliers:** No primary source evidence is known to exist that outlines builders, contractors, or suppliers involved in the physical construction of Anthony Hall in 1881.<sup>15</sup>

Following a 1927 fire that destroyed the interior of the building and a portion of the exterior walls, R.A. Gillis, a local architect, inspected the remains of Anthony Hall and wrote a structural assessment. His findings were sent to Storer College’s Board of Trustees and to West Virginia’s State Board of Control.<sup>16</sup>

After a second fire in 1939 destroyed portions of the basement and chapel, L. J. Keller

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<sup>12</sup> Postal, “Offerman Building.”

<sup>13</sup> “Declaration of Taking, 28 August 1962,” *United States of America v. President and Trustees of Storer College*, photocopy in folder HAFE-106-06.

<sup>14</sup> A more detailed analysis of deed transactions associated with the Storer College campus can be found in James A. Jacobs, “Addendum to Storer College, Cook Hall,” HABS No. WV-277-E); Mark Barron, “Bird-Brady House,” HABS No. WV-304; and Heritage Landscapes, LLC, for the National Park Service, “Camp Hill Cultural Resource Landscape Report, Harpers Ferry National Park,” unpublished, Harpers Ferry National Park, Jun. 2009.

<sup>15</sup> Other than personal correspondence, there is a general lack of primary documentation dating to Storer College’s early years. In all likelihood, much of the school’s administrative papers were destroyed in the Anthony Hall fire of 1943. See Part 1.A.7 of this report.

<sup>16</sup> The West Virginia Board of Control oversaw state funding for educational purposes. Though Storer College received only a small allotment, the board most likely wanted to know whether the fire would hinder the school’s continued operation. R.A. Gillis to James S. Larkin, 16 Jan. 1928, A&M 1322 (Reel # 122, HAFE).

and Sons submitted a bid to Storer College for the repair of Anthony Hall that totaled \$3,206.50. The building contractor's itemized list included:

Carpentry, Plastering, Lumber, Millwork	\$1,615.35
Painting Walls and Woodwork	\$847.00
Plumbing	\$302.50
Wiring	\$181.50
Cleaning and Refurnishing Furniture and Piano	\$121.00
Heating	\$90.75
Glass and Glazing	\$48.40 <sup>17</sup>

Though documentary evidence does not indicate whether Storer College accepted the bid from L. J. Keller and Sons to perform the work, it is highly likely that they were awarded the contract given that their itemized list was the only one kept following the 1939 fire.

A third fire damaged the building's administrative offices in 1943. No information is known to exist that lists contractors associated with the repair or renovation of the building.

In 1963, one year after the National Park Service acquired the building, an extensive rehabilitation project was initiated. According to NPS building history reports, W. Harvey Miller, Inc. performed the renovation (for additional information, see Part I:A:7, Alterations and Additions).<sup>18</sup>

- 6. Original Plans and Construction:** The construction of Anthony Hall in 1881-82 incorporated an existing building into its design. Originally erected as housing for United States Army officers charged with overseeing production at the Harpers Ferry armories, the events of the Civil War had left the ca. 1847 building in a state of near ruin.<sup>19</sup> After being acquired by the Freewill Baptist Church, along with three other former armory buildings in 1867 for the creation of Storer College, the earlier building was reused by architect Peter Lauritzen to form the south wing of his three part design. Funds for the architect's fee and construction costs were raised by the Free Will Baptist's Women's Missionary Society by soliciting donations among churches in the Northeast and upper Midwest.<sup>20</sup> Augmenting the fundraising efforts of the church's charitable organizations was a \$5000.00 donation from Lewis Williams Anthony, a deacon in the Freewill church and a Storer College trustee for whom the new building was eventually named.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> The itemized list is found in "Anthony Hall Fire," A&M 1322 (Reel # 122, HAFE).

<sup>18</sup> Building history for Wirth Hall (HAFE # 59) is in the office of NPS historical architect Peter Dessauer. The history reports are bound and in numerical order based on their assigned HAFE number.

<sup>19</sup> Smith, "Research Report History of the Commanding Officer's Quarters."

<sup>20</sup> Burgess and Ward, 713.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 19. Completed in 1903 with donations from the Anthony family, the Lewis Anthony (Library) Building is also named for Lewis Williams Anthony.

Lauritzen's design for the new building favored an eclectic mix of formal architectural styles, including Greek Revival and Romanesque. The temple-façade of the center section and the incorporation of pedimented windows reflected a Greek Revival influence, while rounded-arched windows along the center section's second floor provided a nod to the Romanesque, a popular mode for Victorian-era design. Doorways under Lauritzen's design were marked by chamfered pilasters on the two wings and with fluted Doric columns at the building's front entrance. The pediments above the entryways into the two wings were marked "boys" and "girls," the south wing for the former and the north wing for the latter. It is unknown if the markings were etched or stenciled onto the wood pediments.<sup>22</sup>

Lauritzen's design allowing for the separation of genders had profound effects on the daily lives of the school's student body. By the 1920s, a complex set of rules, based on gender and age, emerged on campus that dictated how students could move from building to building. On the grounds surrounding Anthony Hall, high school-age girls could not cross to the south end of Anthony Hall without permission or special occasion; boys, similarly, could not cross to the north end. When attending recitation in the building, all first year college men were required to part their hair in the middle and to keep their shoes shined. Likewise, the school required young women to wear "low heel shoes."<sup>23</sup> As for men and women intermingling together, school etiquette dictated that college-aged students could converse on the front lawn of Anthony Hall, either immediately after classes or before the evening meal served in the building's dining hall.<sup>24</sup>

The interior portions of Lauritzen's design featured four rooms on each floor of the north and south wings. The wings housed various recitation rooms, while the south wing also contained Storer College's Roger Williams Library.<sup>25</sup> A hallway laid north to south also provided stairwells for the two wings. The center section of the design held three rooms on the first floor, which included a dining hall, music room, and office space. The second floor of the center section consisted of one large auditorium space that housed the school chapel.<sup>26</sup> The center building measured 49' x 58' and the two wings measured 42.5' x 42.5'.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Copies of Lauritzen's architectural renderings for Anthony Hall are housed in the Harpers Ferry National Park Archives and Collections room. See folder HFM-00125, HAFE.

<sup>23</sup> "Rules for Students" in Faculty Minutes, 18 Sep. 1922 – 18 Sep. 1940, A&M 1322 (Reel #131, HAFE).

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> The library and its origins are mentioned in Board of Trustees Minutes 30 May 1914, A&M 1322 (Reel # 130, HAFE). Roger Williams (ca. 1603-1683) was a prominent Protestant theologian who helped influence the Free Baptist Church and helped settle Providence, Rhode Island. For additional information, see Anthony O. Carlino, "Roger Williams and his Place in History: The Background and the Last Quarter Century," *Rhode Island History* 58:2 (2000): 34-71.

<sup>26</sup> Lauritzen's renderings and cross sections are housed in folder HFM-00125, HAFE.

7. **Alterations and Additions:** The earliest change to Lauritzen's 1881 design for Anthony Hall included the addition of porches to the north and south wings. It is uncertain when the porches were added, but they appear on postcards that pre-date the 1927 fire.<sup>28</sup> Each of the two porches featured a hipped roof supported by box columns with Queen Anne style brackets.<sup>29</sup>

In 1912, Storer College began making campus-wide improvements to its buildings and classrooms by purchasing new equipment, chairs, and books. According to a column appearing in the school newspaper, *The Storer Record*, "the final most important improvement is the installation of the water system, ours is the pneumatic system."<sup>30</sup> The system consisted of a 6000 gallon tank filled with water from a 100'-deep well placed approximately twenty feet from the west elevation of Anthony Hall.<sup>31</sup> The well was enclosed by a 12' x 12' concrete pump house powered by a four horsepower gasoline engine. The column also seems to indicate that the construction of the water tank expanded the basement portion of Anthony Hall, as the writer notes that it "furnishes storage room."<sup>32</sup> The installation of the water system provided indoor plumbing for Anthony Hall and also helped reduce insurance premiums for Storer College due to the tank's being connected to fire hoses inside the building.<sup>33</sup>

In spite of the fire prevention measures provided by the water system, a large fire on October 16, 1927 severely damaged the Anthony Hall building. The fire, which began at the back of the chapel, quickly spread throughout the hall, effectively destroying its contents.<sup>34</sup> For months following the fire, as Storer College's trustees debated how best

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<sup>27</sup> Brackett to Morrell, 29 Apr. 1881.

<sup>28</sup> The postcards are known to pre-date the 1927 fire because the images clearly show a large open-air cupola with widow's walk rising above the gable roof of the building's center section. This cupola was destroyed in the fire and was replaced by a much smaller, glass-enclosed cupola during the building's reconstruction. "Anthony Memorial Hall, Storer College, Harpers Ferry, West Virginia," undated, Negative Number 0745-01, Postcard Collection, West Virginia Archives and History). Accessible online at <http://www.wvculture.org/History/education/images/jefferson/jefferson.html>.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> *The Storer Record* (May 1912), A&M 1322 (Reel #122, HAFE).

<sup>31</sup> Eventually, the 6000 gallon tank was replaced with a 50,000 gallon water tower. At some point between 1945 and 1956, the tank froze during a particularly cold winter, causing the tower supports to buckle. The tower fell onto the De Wolf Building, severely damaging the structure. See Minutes of Trustees Meeting, 31 May 1912, A&M 1322 (Reel #130, HAFE).

<sup>32</sup> *The Storer Record* (May 1912), A&M 1322 (Reel # 122, HAFE).

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> "Special Meeting of Board of Trustees," 22 Feb. 1928, A&M 1322 (Reel # 114, HAFE).

to rebuild the structure, the western wall of the center section collapsed, crushing the remaining interior walls.<sup>35</sup>

The damage done by the fire to Anthony Hall reverberated across the campus. R.A. Gillis, an architect hired to assess the remains of the building left an extensive list of items needing to be replaced or repaired. He noted that charred wood should be removed due to its potential flammability; “soft bricks” should be replaced for structural concerns; the entirety of the building should be rewired; and steel beams should replace the original wood trusses.<sup>36</sup> Gillis placed his cost estimate between \$50,000 and \$60,000. “Best to employ a competent foreman,” the architect wrote in his report, “one experienced in work of this character and have him make out material bills and look after the work, subletting such portions as mentioned above.”<sup>37</sup> Unfortunately for Storer College, the insurance settlement only totaled \$15,000.00 and the estimate from R.A. Gillis only included structural repairs and not the costs of replacing furniture, equipment, or books.<sup>38</sup>

With such a large monetary shortfall, Storer College’s president, Henry McDonald, took to alternative measures. The first included looking for charitable donations. Hoping to solicit money to rebuild a separate library for the school, McDonald turned to the Carnegie Foundation. “I am writing,” McDonald stated, “to present our needs to the Carnegie Foundation with the hope that a building, in whole or part, may be provided for the college.”<sup>39</sup> The second measure involved making a substantial change to the school’s curriculum by reorganizing Storer College into a women’s-only institution for African Americans. Constructing a letter to be sent out to primary and secondary black schools in West Virginia, Virginia, and Maryland, McDonald began his inquiry:

Dear Sir or Madam...the burning of our main recitation building...leads me to seek the following information. There is no college for Negro girls north of north Carolina...do you think there is need for a Negro Woman’s college?<sup>40</sup>

McDonald continued with a questionnaire to be filled out by the letter’s recipients:

Questionnaire: Is this an advantageous place for such an institution? What courses should be included in such a college aside from the regular arts course? Would separate education of Negro girls be an advantage? If you are a high

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<sup>35</sup> “Henry McDonald, President’s Report” 7 May 1928, A&M 1322 (Reel #130, HAFE).

<sup>36</sup> The report also stated that metal lathe should replace wood lathe for fire prevention. See Gillis to Larkin, 16 Jan. 1928.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> “Special Meeting of Board of Trustees,” 22 Feb. 1928.

<sup>39</sup> There is no evidence that the Carnegie Foundation either responded or donated money to the school. Henry T. McDonald to F.C. Keppel, 2 Mar. 1928, A&M 1322 (Reel # 114, HAFE).

<sup>40</sup> Henry McDonald to various recipients, ca. 1928, A&M 1322 (Reel # 114, HAFE).

school principal, please tell me, how many Negro girl graduates are there annually completing you high school courses? If a grammar school, about how many Negro girls graduate annually from your school? Should Storer College become a Woman's college?<sup>41</sup>

It is unknown if McDonald actually sent out the letter and questionnaire, but their authorship speaks to the desperate situation Storer College found itself in following the fire.<sup>42</sup> With only a shell of a building left following the fire and wall collapse, the school eventually chose to rebuild Anthony Hall to include administrative offices, a music room, recitation rooms, and a chapel.<sup>43</sup> Gathering as much as possible in donations from members of the Free Will Baptist Church and their various charitable organizations, the school added \$20,000.00 to their final insurance settlement.<sup>44</sup> Perhaps acknowledging the discrepancy between Gillis's estimate and the amount of money on hand, Storer College rebuilt Anthony Hall with several differences from its earlier incarnation. Whereas before, for example, Anthony Hall also housed the library, scientific laboratories, and a cafeteria, the rebuilding of 1928-1929 allowed the school to reorganize its campus. The library, for example, was relocated to the Lewis Anthony Building, a move that secured academic accreditation by having a dedicated-use building for its book collections.<sup>45</sup> Likewise, scientific laboratories were moved into the De Wolf Building, sharing space with the school's domestic arts classes.<sup>46</sup> While rebuilding the interior of the hall, Frank Smith, a member of the Northern Baptist Convention's Board of Education wrote to McDonald, urging him to completely "update" all of its electrical components.<sup>47</sup>

The fire of 1927 also affected portions of the building's exterior. With the truss destroyed, the roof was rebuilt in accordance to Lauritzen's original design of a gable center section with two hipped roof systems over the two wings. The most significant difference in the rebuilding, however, was that the large, open-air cupola from 1881 was replaced with a smaller, glass-enclosed cupola. The two porches on the wings were also

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> No responses are known to be on file within the Storer College Collection at HAFE.

<sup>43</sup> Not-to-scale floor plans for the rebuilt Anthony Hall in folder HFM-00126, HAFE

<sup>44</sup> "Special Meeting of Board of Trustees," 22 Feb. 1928.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> The De Wolf Building originally housed all industrial arts classes prior to the erection of the Lewis Anthony Building in 1903. After the 1927, the school's library was moved into the Lewis Anthony Building and the DeWolf Building was split between the domestic arts and science laboratories. For more information, see Mark Barron, "Lewis Anthony Library," HABS No. WV-277-C.

<sup>47</sup> The exact cause of the fire is unknown, but given the insistence of Gillis in his report and Frank Smith to update the electrical systems, it is probable faulty wiring that ignited the fire. Frank Smith to Henry T. McDonald, undated, A&M 1322 (Reel # 122, HAFE).

altered, with simple Colonial Revival detailing replacing the Queen Anne brackets that connected the columns to the frieze.<sup>48</sup>

Just after midnight on November 2, 1939, a second fire erupted in the building as a student was awakened by the smell of smoke.<sup>49</sup> Within a few minutes, the rear of Anthony Hall was engulfed in flames. According to a press release from Henry McDonald later that day, the “stairway and adjacent floors were destroyed, as well as doors and casing nearby.”<sup>50</sup> With fire companies arriving from Charles Town, West Virginia and Brunswick, Maryland, the fire was eventually contained and Storer College faced another dilemma in how to rebuild the damaged portions of their main campus building. When the school’s administration finally entered into the building after the fire was extinguished, they noticed that the rear of the second floor chapel and several rows of seats were also damaged in addition to the stairwell and doorways leading to the basement.<sup>51</sup>

One day following the fire, an unidentified architect arrived at Storer College to survey the damage. In his estimation, any charred wood would need to be replaced due to its potential flammability. According to his notes, the architect recommended the removal and replacement of all burned joists and beams, the replacement of the first floor subfloor, the removal of all charred plaster and the lathe underneath, the rebuilding of the south stairwell, and the replacement of urinals and bathroom fixtures on the first and second floors.<sup>52</sup> The total cost estimate for the rebuilding according to the architect was \$4293.43.<sup>53</sup> While the architect’s estimate covered materials and construction costs, it did not include the cost of replacing furniture and other non-structural related articles.

The only recorded bid from a contractor is from L. J. Keller and Sons. Based on their estimate, the reconstruction cost for Anthony Hall would total \$3206.50 (see Part 1:A:5 for an itemized list).<sup>54</sup> As noted by Henry McDonald, the insurance adjustor granted

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<sup>48</sup> Gillis to Larkin, 16 Jan. 1928. Historic Photographs of the damage inflicted by the 1927 fire and images of Anthony Hall following its rebuilding in 1928-29 are on file with West Virginia University Libraries West Virginia and Regional History Collection, “Storer College Collection.” Photographs are also assessable online at <http://www.libraries.wvu.edu/exhibits/storer/>.

<sup>49</sup> Based on primary evidence, it appears that at various times in Storer College’s history that male students resided in the basement of Anthony Hall when other space on campus was lacking. President McDonald suggested the cause of the fire was a student who was carelessly smoking a cigarette. News Release, 2 Nov. 1939, A&M 1322 (Reel #122, HAFE).

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> “Repair Notes,” 3 Nov. 1939, A&M 1322 (Reel #122, HAFE).

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> “Anthony Hall Fire,” ca. 1928, A&M 1322 (Reel #122, HAFE).

Storer College a settlement of \$5200.00.<sup>55</sup> It is unclear why there is such a large discrepancy between the estimates of the architect and the contractor, but it is possible that Storer's administration did not undertake all of the suggestions left by the architect. Because no documentary evidence is known to exist, the exact changes made to Anthony Hall—outside of the replacement of unidentified joists, beams, and the like—are unknowable, but it is clear that alterations were introduced to the south and rear sections of the building where the fire occurred.

In 1943, just four years after the last fire, a third fire damaged the administration offices of Anthony Hall. Little information exists that documents the cause of the incident, but the fire appears to have affected the ability of the school to conduct certain administrative duties. During a visit from Dr. Anthony to view the damage, he noted that the school needed to invest in a fireproof vault. "The loss of records," he stated, "especially in the office of the treasurer during the burning of Anthony Memorial Hall ought to be a continuing challenge, and a situation which demands correction now."<sup>56</sup> After meeting with McDonald and the school's teachers, Anthony suggested that the college begin investing in four, new separate buildings that would include ones for administration, chapel services, recitation, and science.<sup>57</sup>

The third Anthony Hall fire coincided with Henry McDonald's last year as president of Storer College. After nearly fifty years as the school's administrative head, the trustees felt that a change needed to be made, and with subtle pressure, encouraged McDonald to step aside. While it is conjecture to posit that the 1943 fire accelerated his departure, the fact that the building had suffered its third destructive fire in sixteen years almost certainly did not strengthen his case for staying in an administrative role.<sup>58</sup>

In 1944, Storer College's trustees appointed Richard McKinney, an Ivy League graduate and African American theologian to become only the third president in the school's seventy-seven year history.<sup>59</sup> Unfortunately for McKinney, Storer College was on a

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<sup>55</sup> McDonald to Col. John Baker, undated, A&M 1322 (Reel #122, HAFE).

<sup>56</sup> The quote can be found in "13<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of Ministers and Christian Workers, July 17<sup>th</sup> – July 20<sup>th</sup>, 1944, A&M 1322 (Reel #122, HAFE). Dr. Anthony's first name is not identified but he was most assuredly the son of Alfred Williams Anthony (b. 1860) and the grandson of Lewis Williams Anthony (b. 1825). For more information regarding the Anthonys, see Burgess and Ward, 19. The loss of Storer College records in the fire explains why several large data gaps appear in the microfilm records housed at the Harpers Ferry National Park.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid. The buildings recommended by Dr. Anthony were never erected, but several renderings prepared by noted African American architect Louis Edwin Fry for proposed campus additions to Storer College are on file at HAFE, A&M 1471, Blueprints and Drawings (Reel #136, HAFE).

<sup>58</sup> An excellent detailed account of McDonald's last year in office is in Horizon Research Consultants, Inc., Gloria Gozdzik, Principal Investigator, "A Historic Resource Study for Storer College, Harpers Ferry, West Virginia," unpublished report, Morgantown, West Virginia, 2002, 191-193.

<sup>59</sup> Richard McKinney received his Ph.D. from Yale University in 1944. Oral History Interview, Dr. Richard McKinney interviewed by Todd Bolton and Gweniver Roper, Jun. 1993, Tape 3, untranscribed, in possession of Gweniver Roper, African American History Liaison, National Park Service, HAFE.

financial decline. With limited enrollment and mounting costs, the school was, more and more, unable to compete with larger African American college's in the area, including West Virginia State College in Kanawha County, West Virginia and Howard University in Washington D.C.<sup>60</sup>

After being acquired by the National Park Service in 1962, Anthony Hall was renamed Wirth Hall. In addition to its new name, the building witnessed extensive alterations for a total sum in 1963 of \$315,640.48.<sup>61</sup> Alterations to the building's interior included the replacement of all electrical and plumbing fixtures, the removal and re-plastering of all wall finishes, the replacement of wood floors, the installation of a new heating system, and the construction of new wall partitions.<sup>62</sup> Exterior alterations included the removal of all white paint from the brick walls, the re-pointing of brick masonry, the removal of the center section's front porch, and the replacement of all window sashes and frames.<sup>63</sup>

Since 1963, the National Park Service has periodically continued to make alterations to Wirth Hall. In 1972, all restrooms were updated and the ventilation systems were replaced. In 1980, gutters and downspouts were installed on the building and, in 1981, all interior light fixtures were replaced.<sup>64</sup> In 2003-04, the park repaired the windows and entry porch roofs, replaced some of the gutters, and painted all windows, shutters, doors, and porches. From 2004 through 2006, the park and the Historic Preservation Training Center repaired the slate roof and cupola.

In 2010-11, the Mather Training Center funded a \$750,000 project to improve the roof drainage, collect rain water, waterproof the perimeter foundation, and remove the east elevation

## **B. Historical Context**

### **Introduction**

As the main administrative building for Storer College between 1881 and 1955, Anthony Hall speaks to the overall academic history of the school—its opening as an institution of higher learning for African Americans following the Civil War; the difficulties faced in locating adequate funding for its continued operation; the effects of three damaging fires to the building and how it impacted the school and student body; and the eventual decline and closure of the school. Within a study of historical context, Anthony Hall elicits

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Building history for Wirth Hall (HAFE Classified Structure # 59) in the office of NPS historical architect Peter Dessauer.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

several themes, including African American education in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the role religious denominations played in supporting Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), and in how concepts of race and gender were constructed on African American college campuses.

For the past few years, historians from the Historic American Building Survey within the National Park Service have documented several buildings associated with the former Storer College Campus.<sup>65</sup> The reports that culminated from these documentation efforts have helped broaden the understanding of Storer College as a historic institution. In an effort to avoid redundancy, the following historic context will focus on two specific events in Anthony Hall's history: the decline and closure of Storer College and the eventual renovation of the hall as a NPS building.

### **The Decline and Closure of Storer College**

Following the third Anthony Hall fire in 1943, the instability of the institution was becoming more apparent. The trustees, feeling that a change in leadership might turn the school's fortunes towards better horizons, encouraged Henry T. McDonald to step down as president. After a brief search for a suitable replacement, the trustees offered the position to Richard McKinney, a recent Ph.D. recipient in Theology from Yale University. Originally from Georgia, McKinney's life had been geared towards education from the very beginning. In an oral history interview conducted in 1993, McKinney recalled that his father explained that his great-grandfather was an African from the Gold Coast. "He used to tell us always," McKinney recalled, "you are Asanta...you are Asanta, so we grew up feeling that was our background." After receiving a bachelors degree from Americus Institute in Georgia, McKinney studied religion at Pendall Hall in Philadelphia, eventually pastoring a Freewill Baptist Church in Providence, Rhode Island, before entering Yale University.

Fresh from being awarded his Ph.D. from Yale, McKinney moved into the presidency of Storer College at an unforgiving time. Since 1911, the year the Freewill Baptist Church realigned itself with other Baptists sects to form the Northern Baptist Convention, the zeal in which earlier member of the Freewill faith embraced Storer College seemed to dissipate.<sup>66</sup> From the 1920s onward, the school faced a continuing struggle to raise funds for the next academic year. As Storer's administration struggled to locate funding, they also faced declining student enrollment, as qualified African American students from the West Virginia area were largely choosing higher education from other black colleges and universities. Within McKinney's first year as president, he noted in a meeting before the trustees that "limitations in enrollment, a contracted faculty, inability to secure adequate workmen to help make repairs, and mounting costs have made necessary a policy of

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<sup>65</sup> African American educational practices in relation to Storer College is discussed at length in Addendum to Storer College, Lewis Anthony Library, HABS No. WV-277-C; a study of race and gender at Storer College is detailed in Addendum to Storer College, Cook Hall, HABS No. WV-277-E; a discussion of the Freewill Baptist Church is presented in Addendum to Storer College, Curtis Freewill Baptist Church, HABS No. WV-278.

<sup>66</sup> See also Mark Barron, HABS No. WV-278.

financial retrenchment in every activity concerning this college.”<sup>67</sup> In spite of the dire financial situation, McKinney assured the trustees and students that Storer would not cut courses in literature, music, or lectures.<sup>68</sup>

Another hindrance McKinney faced in his duties as president was with the disorganization of the school’s financial records. As he recalled years later, one of the first tasks he undertook as president was relieving Storer’s business manager from his position for not being able to “figure numbers correctly.” During a preliminary review of Storer’s endowment, McKinney was shocked to realize that no one in the previous administration had taken the time to conduct a full audit of the school’s finances in nearly fifteen years.<sup>69</sup> In an oral history interview, McKinney also remembered that McDonald, perhaps bitter for having been gently pushed out of office, never came to meet with him – “we never had any conference of any kind.” Remembering the struggles of his early days at Storer, McKinney continued:

I had no personal animosity or anything toward him [McDonald] at all. The only thing is that I did feel that Storer College was founded the same year as a number of other [black] colleges were founded and they had done pretty well. I wondered whether the administration and trustees had done as much as they might have done to have a larger endowment for the school than they had.<sup>70</sup>

During his eight years as president of Storer, McKinney attempted to expand the college by adding new buildings and athletic facilities, all with the intention of drawing more students to the school. With the help of noted African American architect Louis Edwin Fry, Sr., McKinney proposed a new landscape design for the campus. Unfortunately, the design never left the rendering stage and only one addition to the campus was ever completed, the expansion of the Lewis Anthony Library in 1953.<sup>71</sup>

Unable to turn the school’s financial situation towards the better, McKinney agreed to leave as president in 1952. Before his departure, McKinney suggested to the trustees that Storer should become a preparatory school for African American students. Noting that very few existed in the Mid-Atlantic, McKinney felt that a rigorous high school curriculum would benefit students who might choose to attend West Virginia State

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<sup>67</sup> “President’s Report,” 27 May 1944 (Reel #131, HAFE).

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Notes of Richard McKinney in folder HFT-00063, HAFE.

<sup>70</sup> McKinney interview, Jun. 1993.

<sup>71</sup> Fry’s rendering are available for viewing at HAFE. A&M 1471, Blueprints and Drawings (Reel #136, HAFE).

College, Howard University, or other HBCUs in the region. By offering something in short supply, McKinney argued, the school might well become self-sufficient.<sup>72</sup> The trustees, however, disapproved of the idea and McKinney left in 1952.

McKinney was succeeded by African American educator Leroy D. Johnson, but Storer College continued to decline in student population. After finishing the 1955 academic year still in debt, the trustees agreed to close the school before the 1956 academic year. According to many sources, once West Virginia integrated West Virginia University following the *Brown v Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* decision in 1954, the uniqueness of Storer College as an institution dedicated to educating African American students in the region declined.<sup>73</sup> Within a year of the desegregation efforts, West Virginia State College became fully integrated with black and white students; in a relatively short period of time, the HBCU held a white majority student population. With the state's board of education unwilling to spend money on Storer College as an institution of higher learning and with a declining endowment from the trustees, Storer never reopened after the 1955 school year.<sup>74</sup>

The closing of Storer College was not well-received by two minority members of the trustee board. As late as 1959, Madison Briscoe and Mary Dyson were attempting to find a court willing to halt the permanent closure of the school. In an article appearing in the *Washington Daily News* on February 12, 1959, the two trustees "said the board majority passed up an offer by AME Zion Church to finance the school" and instead, gave the remaining assets to Alderson-Broadus College.<sup>75</sup> Eventually, Briscoe and Dyson asked the court to rule "fiduciary duty to continue operation of the Storer under the United States grant," referring to the original deed passed by the Department of War for a Freedman's school.<sup>76</sup> The court, however, declined and Storer remained vacant until being acquired by the NPS through a "Declaration of Taking" in 1962.

### **Mission 66 and the Renovation of Wirth Hall**

The acquisition of the former Storer College campus and the renovation of the Anthony Hall building by the National Park Service was part of a large scale project designed to

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<sup>72</sup> McKinney interview, Jun. 1993.

<sup>73</sup> See "A Negro College Decides to Close," *New York Times* 7 Jun. 1955, and Lawrence V. Jordan, "Educational Integration in West Virginia: One Year Afterward," *The Journal of Negro Education* 24 (Summer 1955). Two excellent summaries surrounding the closing of Storer College can also be found in James A. Jacobs, "Addendum to Storer College, Cook Hall," HABS No. 277-E, and the Appendix for Dawne Raines Burke, "Storer College: A Hope for Redemption in the Shadow of Slavery, 1865-1955," diss., Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University, 2004.

<sup>74</sup> Although the school technically closed in 1955, trustees agreed to finish the 1955 academic year and the doors literally closed in 1956.

<sup>75</sup> A clipping of the newspaper article is ,” Storer College Collection, Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Manuscript Division, Howard University, Washington, D.C.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

restore and enhance the country's national parks. Largely conceived by Newton Drury, Director of the NPS from 1940-1951, and Conrad Wirth, a landscape architect and Director of the NPS from 1951-1964, the program was dubbed "Mission 66" in anticipation of the fiftieth year anniversary of the NPS set to occur in 1966.<sup>77</sup> With a ten-year timeframe and a budget of \$1 billion, Mission 66 added new lands to the park system, introduced new landscape design theories to existing parks, renovated neglected park buildings, and reorganized the internal structure of the NPS, while also bringing a degree of controversy to the Department of the Interior.

Born in Hartford, Connecticut in 1899, Conrad Wirth, the son of a horticulturalist and park planner, studied of landscape architecture at Massachusetts Agricultural College (University of Massachusetts). After graduation, Wirth entered into private practice before joining the NPS in 1931. During his early career, Wirth served a land planner before taking on the role of coordinating Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) activities in national parks.<sup>78</sup> Wirth's ability to navigate between local, state, and federal concerns during the New Deal led him to several high-profile projects, including the Tioga Road reconstruction. Originally began as a Public Works Administration (PWA) in the 1930s but extending into the 1950s, the project focused on creating a paved roadway through Yosemite National Park. As first a NPS planner and, later, as director, Wirth worked closely with organizations, agencies, and individuals such as the Sierra Club, Bureau of Public Roads, Frederick Law Olmstead, Jr., and Ansel Adams – all of whom had an interest in minimizing impacts that might affect the scenic beauty of the park.<sup>79</sup> As noted in Wirth's personal recollections of dealing with Tioga Road, the role of park planner and administrator was often riddled with potential controversies, from concerned citizens to other federal agencies.<sup>80</sup> The ability to balance the concerns of multiple parties at once no doubt helped Wirth with an ambitious plan: a massive reinvestment in the country's national parks.

After twenty years with the agency, Wirth was appointed director in 1951. Known for his long-range vision, such as the Tioga Road project, Wirth built upon the ideas of his predecessor, Newton Drury, and began putting together plans for a \$1 billion infusion into the NPS over ten years. Designed to be completed in time for the NPS's fiftieth anniversary in 1966, the scale and scope of Wirth's plan was on a level unseen since the

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<sup>77</sup> Wirth was Director of NPS from 1951-1964. He was succeeded by George B. Hartzog, Jr.

<sup>78</sup> Basic biographical information regarding Conrad Wirth is accessible online through the National Park Service website at [http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online\\_books/sontag/wirth.htm](http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/sontag/wirth.htm). The sketch is written by Douglas Caldwell under the title "National Park Service: The First Seventy-Five Years."

<sup>79</sup> Conrad L. Wirth, "Working with Conservationists: Reflections of National Park Service Director," *Journal of Forest History* 24 (Jul. 1980): 152-155. The Bureau of Public Roads became the Federal Highways Administration (FHWA) in 1967.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid*, 154.

1920s.<sup>81</sup> According to landscape historian Ethan Carr, the post-World War II years saw a sharp decrease in NPS funding as their budget, when adjusted for inflation, was below the amounts of previous years. Likewise, as Carr notes, “the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), the Public Works Administration (PWA), and the other New Deal programs abolished in 1942 were not resumed, crippling the ability of the NPS, and most state park departments, to build and maintain roads, trails, bathrooms, or any other visitor facilities.”<sup>82</sup>

The postwar baby boom and increase in automobile travel resulted in greater visitation at the national parks, which stressed staff, facilities, and infrastructure. Conrad Wirth, for his part, began a campaign within the Department of Interior to secure additional funding for the aging park system, an act that would eventually lead to meetings with President Eisenhower and members of Congress.<sup>83</sup> With Congressional support and sharp increases in annual funding, the NPS began an intensive internal reorganization that dramatically increased the number of NPS employees, saw the rebirth of largely dormant programs such as the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), and established training centers.<sup>84</sup> The NPS erected signs in the national parks explaining the proposed benefits of Mission 66:

#### WHAT IS MISSION 66?

MISSION 66 is a forward-looking program for the National Park System intended to so develop and staff these priceless possessions of the American people as to permit their wisest possible use; maximum enjoyment for those who use them; and maximum protection of the scenic, scientific, wilderness, and historic resources that give them distinction.

Construction is an important element of the program. Modern roads, well planned trails, utilities, camp and picnic grounds, and many kinds of structures needed for public use or administration, to meet the requirements of an expected

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<sup>81</sup> During the 1920s, the NPS built numerous roads and visitor’s centers in its parks, especially in Western States. Two excellent secondary sources examining NPS policy and architecture during the this era include Harvey H. Kaiser, *The National Park Architecture Sourcebook* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2008), and William C. Tweed, Laura E. Soulliere, and Henry G. Law, *National Park Service: Rustic Architecture, 1916-1942* (National Park Service, Western Regional Office, Division of Cultural Resource Management, 1977), also accessible online at [http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online\\_books/rusticarch/introduction.htm](http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/rusticarch/introduction.htm).

<sup>82</sup> Ethan Carr, *Mission 66: Modernism and the National Park Dilemma* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007), 4. Another useful piece focusing on Mission 66 is Sarah Allaback, *Mission 66 Visitors Center: The History of a Building Type* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, 2000). As of 2010, the historical impact of Mission 66 is just beginning to be studied in a critical manner. Future years will most likely see an increased number of scholars examining the programs and its effect on NPS and popular American culture.

<sup>83</sup> Carr, 10-12.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid*, 195-196. For more on HABS during this period, see: Lisa P. Davidson, “Assembling a New Foundation: Revitalization of HABS during NPS Mission 66,” in *American Place: The Historic American Buildings Survey at Seventy-five Years* (Washington, D.C., [2008]), 33-46.

80 million visitors in 1966, are necessary; but they are simply one means by which "enjoyment-without-impairment" is to be provided.

Under this program, outmoded and inadequate facilities will be replaced with physical improvements adequate for expected demands but so designed and located as to reduce the impact of public use on valuable and destructible features. It will provide both facilities and personnel for visitor services of the quality and quantity that the public is entitled to expect in its National Park System. It is intended to assure the fullest possible degree of protection, both to visitors and resources.<sup>85</sup>

In spite of much goodwill emanating from the Mission 66 initiative, the program was not without controversy. Much like Wirth's experience with the Tioga Road, for instance, many NPS critics pointed to the potentially destructive outcomes of the program. Roads, parking lots, visitor centers, and park ranger housing impacted areas of land that had frequently been previously untouched by development.<sup>86</sup> Other critics argued against the using Modern architecture in the parks. Before Mission 66, the NPS generally embraced a rustic style for its "parkitecture." In contrast, Mission 66 adopted a modernist perspective for new viewing towers, visitor centers, and housing. According to Ethan Carr, Conrad Wirth purposively steered park architecture towards modernism:

The overall tenor of Mission 66, like that of contemporary interstate highway and urban renewal programs, was imbued with the 'new spirit' of mid-century modernism: old and haphazard developments would be replaced through more rationally conceived construction, serving larger numbers more efficiently.<sup>87</sup>

In Harpers Ferry, Mission 66 funds helped to renovate many of the buildings in the historic lower town area. But while the renovations of historic Harpers Ferry focused on potential visitors to the park, the NPS acquisition of the former Storer College campus on the hill above the town had a significant effect on the internal structure of the NPS. As envisioned by Wirth, the Storer College campus would in part become the primary training center for NPS personnel in the East with Anthony Hall as its centerpiece.<sup>88</sup> Between 1962, when the NPS acquired the campus, and 1964, the year that the NPS eastern training center opened, Anthony Hall was extensively renovated and renamed "Wirth Hall," honoring of the soon-to-be-departing NPS director.<sup>89</sup> Overall, in contrast

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<sup>85</sup> The text is found on the website <http://www.mission66.com/mission.html>, a site written by Christine Madrid French whose forthcoming book on the history of Mission 66 will be released by Balcony Press. According to French, the original signage can be referenced as "Mission 66 for Gettysburg National Military Park," (Gettysburg, PA: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, n.d.).

<sup>86</sup> Wirth, 153-155; Carr, 227-229.

<sup>87</sup> Carr, 123.

<sup>88</sup> Carr, 190.

<sup>89</sup> "Declaration of Taking, 28 August 1962" *United States of America v. President and Trustees of Storer College*, photocopy in folder HAFE-106-06.

to the active embrace of modernism for new design in the parks under the Mission 66 initiative, the NPS repurposing of Storer College buildings was, on the surface, relatively subdued. Exteriors were rehabilitated and interiors blandly updated for modern uses.

In addition to being the location of the eastern training center, dedicated as the Stephen T. Mather Center in honor of the first Director of the NPS, the former Storer College campus is also home to the Interpretive Design Center (IDC), which the NPS established in 1970. Occupying a building on the campus designed and constructed in 1968-69, the IDC reflected a significant change in how the NPS interpreted its historical parks. In previous decades, historical parks often relied upon singular themes such as military events, European settlement, or westward expansion with text-heavy installations to interpret American history. Under George Hartzog, Wirth's successor, the parks were encouraged to think of new ways to engage visitors with more media-savvy displays, including artwork and living histories. According to archaeologists Teresa S. Moyer and Paul A. Shackel, the renewed interest in how history is presented to the public "prompted a reevaluation of methodology for NPS interpretation by the late 1960s."<sup>90</sup> By the 1970s, within the confines of the new IDC building in Harpers Ferry, teams of designers, media specialists, and technicians worked to remake visitors experiences, while at Wirth Hall, NPS employees learned the latest in administrative techniques and job training.

## PART II: ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement

1. **Architectural Character:** Anthony (Wirth) Hall's visual character is formed by its use of a three-part architectural plan consisting of a center section bound by two slightly smaller wings. The front façade is dominated by the center section's temple-front design, which places the two wings in subordinate architectural positions. The landscape immediately surrounding the building is relatively flat with a slight grade change from the front to the rear. Situated on the highest point of ground on Camp Hill, Anthony Hall was, historically, and remains the visual focus of the campus.
2. **Condition of Fabric:** Very good.

### B. Description of Exterior

1. **Overall Dimensions:** The building retains its historic dimensions dating from 1881-82. The footprint of the center section measures 49' x 58' and the two wings each measure 42'-6" x 42'-6".<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Teresa S. Moyer and Paul A. Shackel, *The Making of Harpers Ferry National Park: A Devil, Two Rivers, and a Dream* (Lanham, MD: Altamira Press, 2008): 182-183.

<sup>91</sup> Measurements for Anthony Hall are found in a letter, Brackett to Morrell, 29 Apr. 1881, folder HFT-00052, HAFE.

2. **Foundations:** The building has stone foundations. The foundation for the south wing of the building dates to ca 1847.<sup>92</sup> The foundations for the center section and north wing were laid in 1881.<sup>93</sup>

An interesting feature of the south wing's foundation is that limestone blocks jut beyond the square footprint at the southwest corner of the wing. These blocks were most likely connected to a wing for the ca. 1847 building. As evidenced at nearby Brackett and Morrell Houses, also built in the 1840s, each of the two story buildings has an adjacent, smaller wing attached to larger building's foundation. In 1881, it appears that the builders of Anthony Hall removed the wing, but left portions of its limestone foundation.

3. **Walls:** The load-bearing walls are composed of brick laid in a common bond pattern.
4. **Structural Systems, Framing:** The exterior walls are load-bearing masonry on stone foundations.
5. **Openings**
- a. **Doorways and Doors:** The center section of the building has two exterior doorways. The doorway on the east façade has a primary and secondary door. The primary door is wood with three recessed panels. The secondary door has two panels topped with a single light. Both locking mechanisms on the doors are modern replacements. In their arrangement, the primary door is for security, while the secondary door allows natural light to enter the interior space once the primary door is opened. The doors are bound by sidelights and are topped by a fixed, sixteen light transom. "Storer College" is spelled out within the lights of the transom. The doorway is inset into the brick exterior wall and features a Colonial Revival architrave. The doorway on the center section's west elevation features three sidelights and six-light transom. The door has three recessed panels and a modern security locking mechanism.

Two doorways are located on the north wing of Wirth Hall, one on the north elevation and one on the east elevation. The doorway on the east elevation consists of the same primary and secondary door arrangement found on the center section of the building. The doorway has no sidelights but is topped with a fixed, three-divided light transom. A flat-roofed

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<sup>92</sup> Smith, "Research Report History of the Commanding Officer's Quarters."

<sup>93</sup> Brackett to Morrell, 29 Apr. 1881.

porch, supported by four columns, marks the entryway. The door on north elevation is wood with three recessed panels. The locking mechanism is a modern replacement.

The south wing of Wirth Hall has two exterior doorways, one on the east elevation and one on the south elevation. The doorway on the south end of the wing is wood with three recessed panels and a modern locking mechanism. The doorway on the east elevation consists of the same primary and secondary door arrangement found on the center section of the building. The entrance is bound by sidelights and topped with a fixed, sixteen light transom.

- b. **Windows:** Window openings in the center section are arranged in five bays on both the east and west elevations. All openings hold double-hung, nine-over-nine sash. Window openings for the second level are capped with a fixed, four part elliptical light.

The openings in the wings are arranged in three bays on the east and west elevations. These windows are nine-over-nine, double-hung sash on the first level and six-over-nine, double-hung sash, divided light units on the second level. The north wing's north elevation has two nine-over-nine, double-hung units on the first level, two six-over-nine, double-hung units on the second level, and a single nine-over-nine, double-hung unit in the center of the elevation that allows sunlight into the wing's interior stairwell. The south wing's south elevation has two nine-over-nine, double-hung units on the first level, two six-over-nine, double-hung units on the second level, and a single six-over-nine, double-hung unit in the center of the elevation that allows sunlight into the wing's interior stairwell.

Three window openings are located in the basement level. One window on the north wing holds a six-over-six, double-hung unit. The other two openings hold fixed-light sash.

- 6. **Roof:** The roof for the center section of features two gable ends constructed on an east-west plane. The roofs for both the north and south wings are hipped with their ridgelines intersecting the slopes of the center section's gable roof. The roof covering is slate shingle with copper flashing, downspouts, and gutters.

## C. Description of Interior

- 1. **Plan:** The plan has three parts comprised of a center section with two wings. Each of the three parts has a basement and two levels with the center section also having an attic space. The basement areas of Wirth Hall are connected by a long, narrow hallway, accessible via a stairwell located inside the south wing. The first and second levels of the center section consist of one hallway with two large

rooms on each side. The first and second levels of the two wings are asymmetrically planned. Each has a short hallway that leads to individual offices and a stairwell. The attic space in the center section has an open plan.

2. **Flooring:** The basement level has poured concrete floors. The first and second levels are carpeted. A review of maintenance records on file with Harpers Ferry National Park indicate that the wood floors dating to the Storer College period of the building were replaced in 1963.<sup>94</sup> Terrazzo treads are present on all stair landings and are not original to the building.
3. **Wall and Ceiling Finish:** Wall board and plaster constitute all interior finishes for the building.
4. **Doorways and Doors:** No interior doors or doorways date to the Storer College period. All doors are metal. Doors leading to large meeting rooms on the first and second levels feature fire kick-out panels.
5. **Trim and Woodwork:** All architraves in are metal. The stairwells located in the north and south wings of the building were completely replaced during National Park Service renovations. The balustrades and newel posts are metal and are capped with brushed aluminum.
6. **Mechanical:** Site inspection revealed that no mechanical systems predate the 1960s renovation of the building by the NPS. Building history for Wirth Hall (HAFE # 59) indicates that the building's heating system, plumbing, electrical wiring, and light fixtures were all replaced between the years 1963-1981.<sup>95</sup>

## PART III: SOURCES OF INFORMATION

### Archive Collections

Harpers Ferry National Park (HAFE)

### Books and Reports

Allaback, Sarah. *Mission 66 Visitors Center: The History of a Building Type*. Washington, D.C., U.S. Department of the Interior, 2000.

Boyd, William. *Boyd's Directory of the District of Columbia*. Washington, 1874 and 1875.

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<sup>94</sup> Building history for Wirth Hall (HAFE Classified Structure # 59).

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

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**PART IV: PROJECT INFORMATION**

The documentation of Anthony (Wirth) Hall was undertaken in 2010 by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) under the direction of Richard O'Connor, Chief, Heritage Documentation Programs. The project was cosponsored by HABS, Catherine C. Lavoie, Chief; Harpers Ferry National Historical Park (HAFE), Rebecca Harriet, Superintendent; and the Harpers Ferry Center (HFC), Don Kodak, Director, all of the National Park Service (NPS). Project planning coordinated by Catherine C. Lavoie and Michael Alvarez, Deputy Associate Manager of the HFC. The project leaders were architect Mark Schara and historian James A. Jacobs. The project historian was Mark Barron (University of Maryland) and the large-format photography was produced by HABS photographer Renee Bieretz. Assistance provided by Peter Dessauer, historical architect, HAFE, and Doug Hicks, exhibit specialist, NPS, Historic Preservation Training Center.

ADDENDUM TO:  
STORER COLLEGE, ANTHONY HALL  
(Wirth Hall)  
Harpers Ferry National Historical Park  
Camp Hill  
Harpers Ferry  
Jefferson County  
West Virginia

HABS WV-277-A  
*HABS WVA, 19-HARF, 32-A-*

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

FIELD RECORDS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240-0001