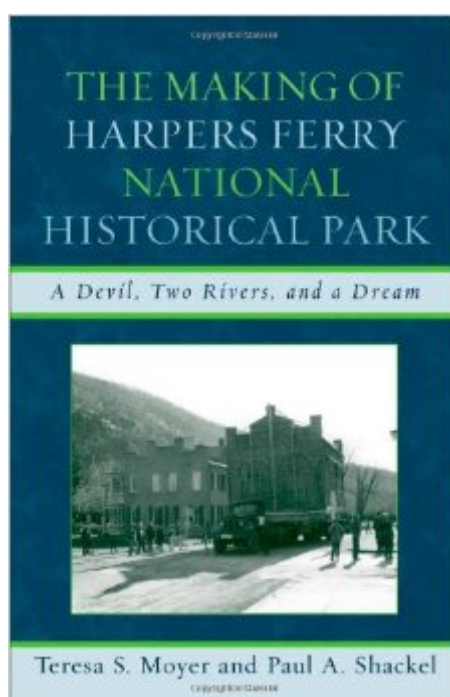


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# The Making Of Harpers Ferry National Historical Park: A Devil, Two Rivers, And A Dream (American Association For State And Local History)



## Synopsis

Harpers Ferry National Historical Park is most widely known today for the attempted slave revolt led by John Brown in 1859, the nucleus for the interpretation of the current national park. Here, Moyer and Shackel tell the behind-the-scenes story of how this event was chosen and preserved for commemoration, providing lessons for federal, state, local and non-profit organizations who continually struggle over the dilemma about which past to present to the public. Professional and non-professional audiences alike will benefit from their important insights into how federal agencies interpret the past, and in turn shape public memory.

## Book Information

Series: American Association for State and Local History

Paperback: 264 pages

Publisher: AltaMira Press (July 26, 2007)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0759110662

ISBN-13: 978-0759110663

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.7 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.7 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (3 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #702,734 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #67 in [Books > Business & Money > Industries > Sports & Entertainment > Park & Recreation](#) #1152 in [Books > Business & Money > Industries > Hospitality, Travel & Tourism](#) #4800 in [Books > Textbooks > Humanities > History > United States](#)

## Customer Reviews

Though it's just a small town, Harpers Ferry, West Virginia has a big history. It was the site of John Brown's Raid in 1859, changed hands multiple times in the Civil War, and was the home of an early normal school (later Storer College) for freedpersons, in addition to having an industrial history at the US Armory representing the shift from craft to factory. Much of that history is contentious: slavery and abolition, labor history and industrial relations, Jim Crow and segregation. It's not surprising, then, that Harpers Ferry National Historic Park has attracted more than its fair share of political interventions, chronicled in this book. One of the most notorious was a monument to the memory of Heyward Shepherd by the United Daughters of the Confederacy and Sons of Confederate Veterans. Shepherd was a free black railroad worker who was killed in Brown's Raid, but the

monument recast him as representative of the slaves who stayed loyal to their owners through the Civil War. Not surprisingly, the NAACP and other groups fought the monument, and the NPS handled this political hot potato rather poorly for fifty years. As that story suggests, the National Park Service at HFNHP has confronted decisions about whether to tell a single story based on 1856-1862, or to tell many stories about multiple time periods as well as different racial and class perspectives on history. Mostly by accident, HFNHP has also become a laboratory and training center for national park interpretation, and it houses the Harpers Ferry Center for interpretation. This book tells these various stories quite well. It's more descriptive than I'd like. A good first and last chapter help frame the stories, and I would have preferred similar framing in each chapter. It's an academic book more than a popular one, but if you like this kind of thing you will find the book an interesting and informative read.

The Making of Harpers Ferry National Park is a solid overview of the development of a historical site and shifting tides of park management practices. The occasional political sermons, however, are gratuitous.

This really was not that great in my own opinion. Again, I learned a little, but I think that there are other books that are better and you still get the info within.

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