

The following is from www.nps.gov/archive/hafe/jbfort.htm.

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The Armory's fire engine and guardhouse was erected in 1848 and described in an Armory report the same year as: "An engine and guard-house, 35½ x 24 feet, single-story brick, covered with slate, and having copper gutters and downspouts, has been constructed, and is now occupied."

As the structure became known, John Brown's Fort was the only Armory building to escape destruction during our Civil War.

The Engine House has been dismantled and rebuilt 2 times, as well as moved a total of 4 times:

In 1891, the fort was sold, dismantled, transported to Chicago, and displayed a short distance from The World's Columbian Exposition. The building, attracting only eleven visitors in ten days, was closed, dismantled again, and its materials left on a vacant lot.

In 1894, Washington, D.C. journalist Kate Field, who had a keen interest in preserving the memorabilia of John Brown, spearheaded a campaign to return the fort to Harpers Ferry. Local resident Alexander Murphy made five acres available to Miss Field, and the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad offered to ship the disassembled fort to Harpers Ferry free of charge. In 1895, John Brown's Fort was rebuilt on the Murphy Farm about three miles outside of town on a bluff overlooking the Shenandoah River. (It was, unfortunately, reassembled backward.)

In 1903, Storer College began its own fundraising drive to acquire the structure. In 1909, on the 50th Anniversary of John Brown's Raid, the building was purchased and moved to the Storer College campus on Camp Hill in Harpers Ferry. (Storer College was a historically black college located in Harpers Ferry. It operated from 1865 until 1955.)

Acquired by the National Park Service in 1960, the building was moved back to the Lower Town in 1968. Because the fort's original site was covered with a railroad embankment in 1894, the building now sits about 150-feet east of its original location.