Establishment
In the late 1960s Harpers Ferry National Historical Park was part of the Mid-Atlantic Region of the National Park Service, and Eastern National Park & Monument Association operated a sales outlet in the Park visitor center. At the end of the decade, the Park administration was placed under the jurisdiction of Harpers Ferry Center. At the recommendation of Doug Hubbard, acting manager of Harpers Ferry Center (HFC), the independent Harpers Ferry Historical Association was created in a letter of designation dated November 17, 1970 and signed by NPS Director George Hartzog. To assure that the proposed association became a reality, Jim Murfin, an editor at Mather or working with the IDC.

Original Purpose
The design directive for the new store to be located on the corner of Shenandoah and High Streets, which was to be called “The National Park Bookstore at Harpers Ferry Center”, specified the following instructions:

- To develop a model bookstore located in old Harpers Ferry National Historical Park as a cooperative effort between the National Park Service and the Harpers Ferry Historical Association. The store will handle Publications directly related to the National Park Service and its activities, or interests to visitors and service personnel in training at Mather or working with the IDC.
- The bookstore was only one phase of the original concept of the aims and purposes of the association. Distribution to schools and libraries of the educational materials center of the National Park Service (2016).
- The beginning of the new century brought many commemorative activities. In 2001 the association celebrated its 30th anniversary with remembrances from Bill Everhart and Carl Degen about the early years. The association supported many of the Park’s commemorative events as well. These included the Lewis & Clark Bicentennial (2003), Niagara Movement Centennial (2006), and 150th anniversary of John Brown’s Raid (2009), which included publication of a new John Brown Raid handbook.
- In the near future, the association will help support the Civil War Sesquicentennial (2011-2016), the Bicentennial of the War of 1812 (2012), and the Centennial of the National Park Service (2016).

40th Anniversary: A Perspective
in the NPS Division of Publications, was assigned to organize this association and to coordinate its activities with the Interpretive Design Center.

Formal incorporation of the Harpers Ferry Historical Association took place in January 1971, followed by the first annual meeting held on April 6, 1971. The first directors were William C. Everhart, Douglas H. Hubbard, Benjamin H. Davis, Roger J. Perry, Bradley D. Nash, Shirley Hunt, and Jeanne Martin. Many generous loans from other established cooperating associations made this organization possible.

Change of Administration
As the administration of the Park changed again to become part of the National Capital Region (NCR), the association became more park-focused. But it still maintained strong ties with HFC by renting and selling Park Service films, then videos, and today DVDs. Having repaid all its debts by 1978, the association initiated publication projects and began to increase its aid to the NPS, sponsoring many park interpretive events, especially living history programs. Publications and sales items focused primarily on Harpers Ferry’s history.

The Bookshop Moves . . . and Moves . . .
The first bookshop was located in the old bank building on the corner of Shenandoah and High Streets (location of today’s Wetlands Exhibit). This new store, designed by NPS architect Rip Stowell, was modern with large windows showcasing the products. When this block of buildings was scheduled to be renovated in the late 1970s, the store was temporarily moved to the Master Armorer’s House across the street.

In 1980, the store returned to High Street, one building up from its original location. This new sales area, with its solid red oak fixtures, increased the association’s revenue considerably. The flood of 1985 then drove the store from its home for about six months. By 1990, the association had outgrown this space and had moved back to its bookelling origins in the Stagecoach Inn Visitor Center on Shenandoah Street. Once more sales increased significantly. But in January 1996 the store was again flooded – once in January and again in September – with water over five feet high. It was temporarily relocated after the first flood for two months, and then for more than six months after second flood.

Growth
During the 1980s and 1990s, as the association grew in revenue and membership, it was able to provide more services to the park and produce more publications. A Walker’s Guide to Harpers Ferry by Dave Gilbert was first published in 1983, and The Harpers Ferry Heritage Trail by Ryan Campbell appeared in its first edition in 1984. In 1985 the association purchased its first computer—a second-hand one. Dave Gilbert designed and edited the first association newsletter, The View, in 1991.

Book selection expanded, and Author Fests were held from 1997-2002. A high-light during this period was the 50th anniversary of the park, with the association helping support this 1994 commemoration. A five-year strategic plan was formulated in 1998 focusing on education. Revenue and aid figures increased annually, interrupted only by flood evacuations.

The Association in the 21st Century
As the association has developed, it has provided more funding and services to the Park, playing an active role in park special events. Support in the form of grant seeking for park programs has been included in its role. An expanded scope of sales has provided the shop with a more diverse inventory and increased product development. The association now works closely with park staff to enhance the visitor experience at the Park. Total donations to the NPS from 1971 to the present now exceed $2 million.

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1970 Letter of designation establishing the Harpers Ferry Historical Association signed by George Hartzog, Director of the National Park Service.


1971 First Bookshop opened on the corner of Shenandoah and High Streets, designed by NPS architect Kip Stowell.

1976 HFHA wins publication award for Harpers Ferry, Child of the 19th Century at Albuquerque meeting of cooperating associations.

February 1977 Helen Snyder appointed as the association’s Business Manager. National Park Service employees discouraged from serving on cooperating association boards.

1978 Bookshop temporarily moved to Master Armorer’s House during restoration of Lower Town Package No. 110. On April 21, first Memorandum of Agreement signed between the association and the National Park Service.


March 17, 1980 Deborah Piscitelli officially appointed as the association’s Business Manager.

1981 Credit Cards first accepted in Bookshop.


August 1984 Association purchases papers of the “Burton Collection” for G. Wilson Building” on Shenandoah Street.

November 1990 Association purchases “National Association of Interpreters First Place Publications Award” for From the Riot and Tumult.

1985 The Flood of 1985 forces the bookshop to move out of its High Street location for six months. Bookshop housed in the “Nichol-Wil liams Building” further up High Street.

1989 Association publishes From the Riot and Tumult by James Martini.

May 1990 Bookshop moves from High Street location to Park Visitor Center (Stagecoach Inn or “John G. Wilson Building”) on Shenandoah Street.

1995 – 1998 Association presents Elderhostel programs featuring Harpers Ferry’s history.

1995 Association receives “National Association of Interpreters First Place Publications Award” for From the Riot and Tumult.

1996 Two historic floods (January 20 and September 81) force evacuation and relocation of Park Bookshop.


November 1990 Association receives “National Association of Interpreters First Place Publications Award” for From the Riot and Tumult.

1992 Association donates $10,000 to help acquire the “John Brown Family Bible” for the park’s museum collection. Association also adopts a new logo featuring John Brown’s Fort.

1994 Harpers Ferry National Historical Park celebrates its 50th Anniversary. The association produces several commemorative items and hosts a reception for the oil paintings of Garnet Jex.

1995 – 1998 Association presents Elderhostel programs featuring Harpers Ferry’s history.


1996 The Association receives Award of Excellence for the “School House Ridge Elementary Education Study Guide” and Award of Honorable Mention for Meritorious Achievement in Television: Public Access.

1997 – 2002 Association hosts annual Author Fest with artists and musicians featuring park themes.

June 7, 1996 “Dinner with the President” features Jim Getty as Abraham Lincoln.

1998 Association receives Award of Honorable Mention for Watercolor: Mills, Factories, Machines and Floods at Harpers Ferry, WV 1762-1991 by Dave Gilbert at the Cooperating Association Conference in Anchorage, Alaska.

2000 Association receives “National Association of Interpreters First Place Publications Award.”

2003 Park commemorates Meriwether Lewis’ visit to Harpers Ferry Armory; special Lewis and Clark Bookshop opened on High Street.


2004 Parkshop moves to High Street on December 5, 1980 (Preston Smith, Deborah Piscitelli, Paula Degen, Terry Raherty, Paul Lee, Dr. John Steeley, and Don Campbell). Flood of September 1996 forces the Bookshop to higher ground (Reused with permission of the Baltimore Sun Media Group. All Rights Reserved). Jim Getty as Abraham Lincoln at “Dinner with the President” fundraiser, June 7, 1996.


2006 Association supports the Park’s Niagara Centennial Event with Academic Symposium.

2007 The Association reformats Park Service films into DVDs for sales distribution.

2009 The John Brown Handbook is revised and published for 150th Anniversary of John Brown Raid event; Association supports week-long event and Academic Symposium.

2009 Cumulative Aid to the National Park Service surpasses $2 million.


2011 Association supports week-long event and Academic Symposium.

2012 Association supports week-long event and Academic Symposium.

2013 Association supports week-long event and Academic Symposium.

2014 Association supports week-long event and Academic Symposium.

2015 Association supports week-long event and Academic Symposium.

2016 Association supports week-long event and Academic Symposium.

2017 Association supports week-long event and Academic Symposium.

2018 Association supports week-long event and Academic Symposium.

2019 Association supports week-long event and Academic Symposium.

2020 Association supports week-long event and Academic Symposium.