

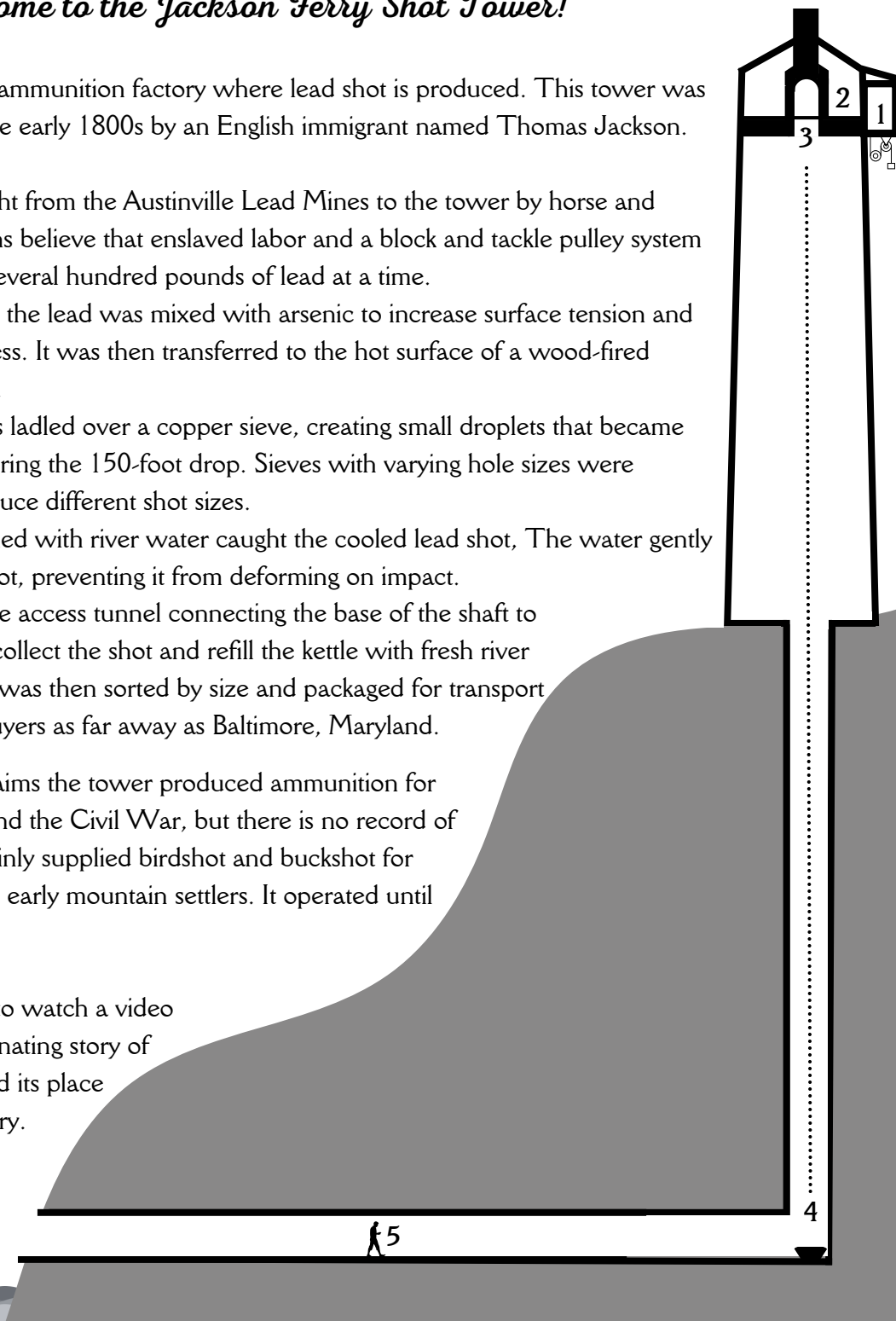
## Welcome to the Jackson Ferry Shot Tower!

A shot tower is an ammunition factory where lead shot is produced. This tower was commissioned in the early 1800s by an English immigrant named Thomas Jackson.

1. Lead was brought from the Austinville Lead Mines to the tower by horse and wagon. Historians believe that enslaved labor and a block and tackle pulley system was used to lift several hundred pounds of lead at a time.
2. Once at the top, the lead was mixed with arsenic to increase surface tension and improve roundness. It was then transferred to the hot surface of a wood-fired masonry furnace.
3. Molten lead was ladled over a copper sieve, creating small droplets that became spherical balls during the 150-foot drop. Sieves with varying hole sizes were swapped to produce different shot sizes.
4. A metal kettle filled with river water caught the cooled lead shot. The water gently cushioned the shot, preventing it from deforming on impact.
5. Workers used the access tunnel connecting the base of the shaft to the riverbank to collect the shot and refill the kettle with fresh river water. The shot was then sorted by size and packaged for transport to commercial buyers as far away as Baltimore, Maryland.

A common myth claims the tower produced ammunition for the War of 1812 and the Civil War, but there is no record of this. The tower mainly supplied birdshot and buckshot for hunting, essential to early mountain settlers. It operated until 1839.

Scan the QR code to watch a video that shares the fascinating story of the Shot Tower and its place in our region's history.



VIRGINIA STATE PARKS

## Jackson Ferry Shot Tower



Shot Tower Historical State Park

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