

# **Historic Resource Study**

## **Williamsport, Maryland**

Historical Data

Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park

Md – D.C. – W.Va.

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## PREFACE

This study report has been prepared to satisfy in part the research needs for the preservation and interpretation of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal within the town of Williamsport, Maryland. This study report should serve as a valuable aid in the preparation of a development concept plan (DCP) for the Williamsport Area of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park.

The canal at Williamsport is in a good state of preservation. The major alterations to the canal in this area have been the filling in of the two basins (near Lock 44 and at Cushwa's Warehouse) within the town and the filling in of the basin just north of the aqueduct.

There are several remaining canal structures at Williamsport. The canal structures are: Lock 44; Lockhouse 44; Shed at Lockhouse 44; Bollman Bridge; Railroad Lift Bridge; and Aqueduct 5. All of these structures are well preserved.<sup>1</sup> In addition to the above structures, a Creosote Stand and a Stubbing Post are still standing at Lock 44. There are also two canal-related structures standing at Williamsport. They are: the Cushwa Warehouse; and the Original Williamsport Power House. Both of these structures are also in good condition. Several ruins can also still be seen along the canal at Williamsport. The ruins of the combination Carpenter Shop and Store can still be seen on the berm bank. Steffey and Findlay's coal firm once stood at the upper end of this wall. F. H. Darby's mill once stood at the lower end of the wall. Farther up the canal at the main or Cushwa Basin, the foundation of the Cottrill Slaughterhouse can still be seen. The wall around the Cushwa Basin can also still be seen.<sup>2</sup>

In accordance with the National Park Service's Activity Standards of 1971, this study deals with the historical background of a previously unstudied area of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park. Although historic structure reports (historical data) have been prepared on at least five of the canal and canal-related structures at Williamsport, there has not been a study devoted solely to the canal at Williamsport.<sup>3</sup> In the private sector, Scharf's *History of Western Maryland* (1882) and Williams' *History of Washington County, Maryland* (1906) both deal at some length with the history of Williamsport. Neither of these sources are footnoted, however, and both of them contain little primary documentation on the canal. The only other source that deals at any length with the history of Williamsport, is a short publication by the Williamsport Chamber of Commerce entitled, *Williamsport and Vicinity Reminiscences* (1933). This source also contains no footnotes or bibliography, and cannot be considered a scholarly work.

The primary importance of this historic resource study lies in its attempt to present a detailed history of the canal at Williamsport. The study is also important because it has relied to a great extent upon primary sources.

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<sup>1</sup> The house at Lock 44 was restored in 1978.

<sup>2</sup> For the approximate locations of all the remaining canal and canal related structures and ruins at Williamsport see Appendix C1.

<sup>3</sup> Historic Structure Reports (historical data) have been done on the following structures at Williamsport: Bollman Bridge; Railroad Lift Bridge; Conococheague Aqueduct; Cushwa Warehouse and the Original Williamsport Power House. Some historical data on Lock 44 appears in Harlan D. Unrau's *HSR, The Masonry Locks* (Denver: NPS, 1978). A brief survey of the history of Williamsport is obtained in Harlan D. Unrau's unpublished *HRS< The Chesapeake and Ohio Canal NHP: Chapter XIV—The Economic Impact of the C & O Canal on the Potomac Valley, 1828–1924* (Denver, 1976).

Williamsport is a town with a rich history. At the time that the first European settlers moved into the Conococheague Creek–Potomac River Area, the area was already occupied by two rival Indian groups. An Indian burial ground was apparently located near the present-day site of the Conococheague Aqueduct.<sup>4</sup> Soon after the arrival of European settlers, the original settlement of Conococheague grew up near the mouth of the creek. Soon after the town of Williamsport was incorporated and laid out, it was considered as a possible site for the nation’s capital. In the Spring of 1835, the canal was opened at Williamsport. Since 1835, the town’s history has been shaped primarily by the canal enterprise. Williamsport remains today the best preserved of the many towns that once flourished along the canal.

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<sup>4</sup> In 1956, archeologists from the Smithsonian Institution unearthed several remains in that area. See paper by Rosemary Minnick entitled “Washington County’s Indian Heritage” in Williamsport Vertical Files, Western Maryland Research Room, Washington County Free Library, Hagerstown. See also unsigned paper entitled, “Indian Village and Burial Grounds” also located in the Williamsport Vertical Files, Western Maryland Research Room, Washington County Free Library.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Recommendations for Preservation and Interpretation**

The preservation of the canal at Williamsport should present no problems in the future. The entire canal is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is theoretically protected by a body of preservation laws passed over the last two decades.

The entire “downtown” section of Williamsport is in a good state of preservation. An historic district could easily be created to encompass most of the original part of town. The initiative for creating such a district would have to come from local and state officials. The National Park Service, however, should encourage the creation of such a district. The creation of a Williamsport Historic District encompassing most of the original part of town and bordering against the canal, would go a long ways towards insuring that the town would maintain the appearance of a late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century canal town.

There should be no major problems in interpreting the canal at Williamsport. Except for the filled-in basins, the canal has not been altered at Williamsport. In addition, the collection of canal structures at Williamsport makes the town one of the best areas for telling the canal story. The Interpretative Prospectus for this area is presently nearing completion.

### **Recommendations Regarding Further Historic Research**

The author has thoroughly investigated the records of the canal company for this report. Primary and secondary sources related to the history of Williamsport were also examined by the author at the Library of Congress, the Washington County free Library, the Washington County Courthouse, and the Williamsport Town hall. The author, therefore, feels that no further historical research is needed on the canal at Williamsport.



## CHAPTER 1

### Early Indian Inhabitants and Early European Settlers in the Conococheague Creek–Potomac River area.

When the first Europeans entered the area of what is today Washington County, Maryland, they found that it was already inhabited to a certain extent by two opposing Indian groups. For some time before the arrival of European settlers, the Catawbias from the south and the Delawares from the north had apparently battled each other for dominance over the area. The two groups apparently continued to contend with each other even after the arrival of the first European settlers.<sup>5</sup>

Although English and perhaps French trappers had no doubt penetrated the area of present-day Washington County before 1730,<sup>6</sup> the first Europeans did not exactly begin to settle in sizeable numbers until after that date. The first European settlement in present-day Washington County was called “Conococheague”. Although this name soon came to denote a very large area of what was then Frederick County,<sup>7</sup> the original Conococheague settlement was apparently at the mouth of Conococheague Creek.<sup>8</sup>

The first settler to obtain a legal title to land near the mouth of Conococheague Creek was Charles Friend. In 1739, Friend obtained a grant of 260 acres from Lord Baltimore. This grant was called “Sweed’s Delight”. It was located on the north side of the creek near its mouth. In 1741, Friend obtained a smaller tract adjoining Sweed’s Delight which he called “Dear Bargain”.<sup>9</sup>

Although Charles Friend was the first settler to obtain a title to land near the mouth of Conococheague Creek, there were other settlers in the area at an early date. The area around the mouth of the creek was part of a larger area known as Lord Baltimore’s “Manor of Conococheague and Reserve”. The lord proprietor had set aside this huge area for himself in 1736. Lord Baltimore apparently leased land within his Conococheague Manor and Reserve several years before any

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<sup>5</sup> Thomas John Chew Williams, *History of Washington County, Maryland*, two volumes, (Hagerstown: Runk and Titsworth, Publishers, 1906; reprint ed. Baltimore: Regional Publishing Company, 1968), I: 19. According to Williams the two Indian groups fought a battle “on the western [northern] side of the mouth of the Conococheague, after the settlement of Conococheague had begun.”

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, I: 9, 11,20. See also Mary Vernon Mish, “Springfield Farm of Conococheague,” *Maryland Historical Magazine*, XLII (December, 1952): 315–316.

<sup>7</sup> Soon after the creation of Frederick County in 1748, the new county was divided into sixteen large areas called “hundreds”. A constable was appointed to each hundred except for Monocacy Hundred which was given three constables. William Erwin was the first constable of Conococheague Hundred. See Thomas Scharf, *History of Western Maryland*, 2 volumes, (Philadelphia: L. H. Evarts, Publishers, 1882, reprint ed., Baltimore: Regional Publishing Company, 1968), I: 419.

<sup>8</sup> Williams, *History of Washington County, Maryland*, I: 21. According to Williams, “the settlement . . . was situated on the Potomac, . . . at the mouth of the Conococheague Creek just about where the present town of Williamsport stands, or possibly on the opposite side of the creek.”

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* Williams believes that Friend had probably lived at Conococheague five or six years before he obtained any title to land. In 1950, the Washington County Historical Society dedicated the Friend Memorial on a site said to have been the Friend family burial plot on Sweed’s Delight. See *Washington County Historical Society Friend Memorial Williamsport, Maryland Sunday, March 5, 1950*, in Vertical Files, Western Maryland Room, Washington County Free Library, Hagerstown.

land titles were granted. Thus, there probably were “lessees” living near the mouth of the creek as early as 1736.<sup>10</sup>

Another early settler who obtained land near the mouth of Conococheague Creek was Jeremiah Jack. In 1739, he obtained a grant of 175 acres from Lord Baltimore. His grant or patent was called “Jack’s Bottom”.<sup>11</sup>

As the years passed, more titles were obtained in the area of Conococheague Creek and soon claims had been established for most of the land. Jacob Friend, the son of Charles Friend, apparently received the last patent in the area in 1780. Friend’s patent, which he called “None Left,” contained only three and one-fourth acres of land.<sup>12</sup>

The early settlers of the Conococheague Creek/Potomac River area were primarily of German and Scotch-Irish descent, although some, such as Charles Friend, were of English descent.<sup>13</sup>

The story of the settlement of the Conococheague Creek/Potomac River area is an integral part of the story of the settlement of all of Western Maryland. Although Maryland’s Eastern Shore had been well settled by 1730, only a few whites had penetrated Maryland’s back country by that date. In the early 1730s, however, Scotch-Irish and German settlers from southwestern Pennsylvania began to push southward into the Monocacy Valley area of what would eventually become Frederick County.<sup>14</sup> Many of these settlers came to Western Maryland because of the inducements advertised by Lord Baltimore in 1732. Lord Baltimore’s desire to settle the back country in the 1730s and 1740s was due to the fact that his colony’s boundary lines with both Pennsylvania and Virginia were in dispute during these years.<sup>15</sup>

By 1748, enough settlers were in the back country region to justify the creation of the new county of Frederick. Settlement was so thin, however, that the new county included what is now Frederick, Montgomery, Washington, Allegany and Garrett counties, as well as part of Carroll County. The new county contained approximately three-fourths of the total land within the colony.<sup>16</sup>

Soon after Frederick County was formed, the new county court established the “hundreds”. There were sixteen “hundreds” each one with one constable except for Monocacy Hundred

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<sup>10</sup> Mish, “Springfield Farm of Conococheague,” pages 316–317.

<sup>11</sup> Williams, *History of Washington County, Maryland*, I: 22. See also Mish, “Springfield Farm of Conococheague,” page 315.

<sup>12</sup> Williams, *History of Washington County, Maryland*, I: 22.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, I: 20.

<sup>14</sup> Harry I. Stegmaier, Jr., et. al., *Allegany County: A History* (Parsons, West Virginia: McClain Printing Co., 1976), page 12. See also Thomas John Chew Williams and Folger McKinsey, *History of Frederick County, Maryland*, 2 volumes, (Cumberland Maryland: L. R. Titsworth and Co., 1910; reprint ed., Baltimore: Regional Publishing Co., 1967), I: 1–11.

<sup>15</sup> Williams, *History of Washington County, Maryland*, I: 20, 31–36.

<sup>16</sup> Scharf, *History of Western Maryland*, I: 58.

which had three.<sup>17</sup> Conococheague Hundred included a huge area extending far beyond the mouth of Conococheague creek.<sup>18</sup>

By 1749, the original Conococheague settlement near the mouth of the creek apparently had become an important Potomac River settlement. In that year, the newly created Frederick County Court appointed one Edward Wyatt to keep a ferry at the mouth of the Creek.<sup>19</sup>

According to Williams' *History of Washington County, Maryland*, the settlement at the mouth of the Conococheague was an important point during the French and Indian War.<sup>20</sup> On its march to Fort Cumberland in 1755, General Braddock's army collected a store of provisions at Conococheague and crossed the Potomac at that settlement.<sup>21</sup>

After Braddock's defeat in July 1755, there was general panic throughout Western Maryland. All of the settlers who had earlier penetrated into the area of what is today Allegany and Garrett counties, fled east. Even Thomas Cresap, the founder of Skipton (Old Town) fled that settlement. There has been some disagreement, however, on the question of where Cresap settled after he fled Old Town. Scharf's *History of Western Maryland* states that Cresap "moved down the river to the plantation of his son, Michael Cresap, who lived near the Conococheague."<sup>22</sup> Harry Stegmaier's *Allegany County: A History* echoes Scharf somewhat by saying that Cresap retreated "to his son's home at Conococheague."<sup>23</sup> On the other hand, Williams' *History of Washington County, Maryland* maintains that Cresap retreated to his old home at Long Meadows about three miles from Hagerstown, where his son Michael then lived. At Long Meadows, Cresap and his son established a fort. Settlers fleeing Indian attacks, according to Williams, sought refuge at either Cresap's fort at Long Meadows or at the Conococheague settlement at the mouth of the creek.<sup>24</sup>

Despite Williams' assertion that Cresap retreated to Long Meadows, it is still likely that Cresap did at some time during the French and Indian War live near the mouth of the Conococheague. Tradition at least says that Cresap once occupied part of the site of what later became Springfield Farm adjacent to the town of Williamsport.<sup>25</sup> The story that Cresap once lived on the present site of Springfield Farm is apparently quite old. When George Washington, as President, visited Springfield Farm in 1790, he supposedly pointed out to the group accompanying him the general area where Cresap "had his quarter" during the French and Indian War. Colonel Elie Williams, who was with Washington at the time, is said to have assured the President of his correctness by

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid, I: 419.

<sup>18</sup> Therefore when Conococheague is mentioned in a mid-18<sup>th</sup> century record it is difficult to determine whether the document is speaking of the area of present-day Williamsport or of the broad area called Conococheague Hundred.

<sup>19</sup> Scharf, *History of Western Maryland*, I: 419.

<sup>20</sup> Williams apparently interprets references to "Conococheague" as meaning the settlement near the mouth of the creek.

<sup>21</sup> Williams, *History of Washington County, Maryland*, I: 39, 48.

<sup>22</sup> Scharf, *History of Western Maryland*, I: 92.

<sup>23</sup> Stegmaier, *Allegany County: A History*, pages 46–47.

<sup>24</sup> Williams, *History of Washington County, Maryland*, I: 22, 40, 50.

<sup>25</sup> Mish, "Springfield Farm of Conococheague," page 319. Mish says that according to tradition, Cresap occupied the "stone Springhouse at Springfield Farm."

pointing out an old shed a few hundred yards away, which according to Williams, was the only “remains of Cresap’s habitation.”<sup>26</sup>

It is difficult to describe the role and importance of the settlement near the mouth of Conococheague Creek during the French and Indian War. The difficulty is caused by the fact than the name Conococheague was used to refer not only to the small settlement near the mouth of the Creek, but also to a broad geographical and political division of Frederick County. It is safe, however, to accept Scharf’s accounts taken from the *Maryland Gazette* which show that throughout the War the residents of Frederick Town were in a state of freight and considered an area called Conococheague an important defense outpost. The *Maryland Gazette* printed a letter from Frederick Town dated July 19, 1763 which stressed the importance of the Conococheague area during the War. The writer of the letter said:

Every day, for some time past, has offered the melancholy scene of poor distressed families driving downwards through this town with their effects, who have deserted their plantations for fear of falling into the cruel hands of our savage enemies, now daily seen in the woods. And never was panic more general or forcible than that of the back inhabitants, whose terrors at this time exceed what followed on the defeat of Gen. Braddock, when the frontiers lay open to the incursions of both French and Indians. Whilst Conococheague settlement stands firm we shall think ourselves in some sort of security from their insults here. But should the inhabitants there give way, you would soon see your city and the lower counties crowded with objects of compassion, as the flight would in that case become general. . . We were so sensible of the importance of Conococheague settlement, both as a bulwark and supply to this neighborhood, that on repeated notice of their growing distress Capt. Butler, on Wednesday last, called the town company together, who appeared under arms on the court-house green with great unanimity. Just as the drum beat to arms we had the agreeable satisfaction of seeing a wagon sent up by his excellency [Governor Sharpe] . . . loaded with powder and lead, . . . A subscription was then set on foot and cheerfully entered into, in consequence of which twenty stout young men immediately enlisted under Mr. Peter Grosh to march immediately to the assistance of the back inhabitants, and with the other volunteers already there raised, to cover the reapers, in hopes of securing the crops. Had not the Governor’s supply arrived so seasonably it was doubted whether the whole town could have furnished ammunition sufficient for that small party, half of which marched backwards in high spirits on Thursday, and the remainder on Friday morning. And on Sunday subscriptions were taken in the several congregations in town for sending up further assistance.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> *Hagerstown Farmers’ Register and Maryland Herald*, June 17, 1828. This account was related to the newspaper editor in 1828 by Benjamin Galloway, first Attorney-General of Maryland, who was with Washington at the time of his visit to Williamsport in 1790. See also Scharf, *History of Western Maryland*, II: 1049, 1223.

<sup>27</sup> Earlier, in mid-1756, most of the settlers fled the Conococheague area, but apparently many had returned by 1763. See Scharf, *History of Western Maryland*, I: 97, 99–100. See also Williams, *History of Washington County, Maryland*, I: 55–58.

## CHAPTER 2

### The Conococheague Creek–Potomac River Area, 1765–1786

Little is known about the settlement near the mouth of Conococheague Creek during the period 1765–1786. Thanks to the research of Mary Vernon Mish, we do know something about the site of Springfield Farm which became the home of the founder of Williamsport.

As stated in Chapter 1, the area near the mouth of Conococheague Creek was part of Lord Baltimore's "Manor of Conococheague and Reserve" which was set aside in 1736. It has also been stated that there were settlers on Lord Baltimore's manor and reserve as "lessees" as early as 1736. One of the early settlers was George Ross. In June 1762 Ross leased from Lord Baltimore a 300-acre tract on Conococheague Manor called "Ezekiel's Inheritance". This tract would later become the site of Springfield Farm. Sometime around 1762, Ross had also leased from Lord Baltimore a 133-acre tract adjoining Ezekiel's Inheritance, called "Limestone Hill". The Limestone Hill tract would later become the site of most of the town of Williamsport. In July 1762, George Ross sublet the 122-acre Limestone Hill tract to one Joseph Williams, the father of General Otho Holland Williams, founder of Williamsport.<sup>28</sup> Although Mrs. Mish does not explain how or when Joseph Williams received title to the Limestone Hill tract, she says that Williams conveyed that tract to George Ross "original lessee" in April 1763 for 300 pounds.<sup>29</sup> Seven months after Williams conveyed Limestone Hill to George Ross, the Limestone Hill tract and the Ezekiel's Inheritance tract was resurveyed into one large tract called "Ross's Purchase".<sup>30</sup>

Joseph Williams died in 1764 probably leaving only a small amount of his property to his eight young children. His wife Prudence apparently had died earlier, so their children became orphans. George Ross became the administrator of Williams' estate and no doubt took in Williams' eight children.<sup>31</sup>

In 1768, George Ross married Mercy Williams, who was eighteen years of age and the eldest of Joseph Williams' eight children. According to Mish, the main house standing today at Springfield Farm could possibly have been the residence of George Ross in the 1760s. If so, Mercy and the orphaned children would have lived there.<sup>32</sup>

George Ross died just three years after his marriage to Mercy Williams, leaving her with two infant daughters in addition to the orphaned Williams children. After the death of George Ross, Dr. David Ross became the administrator of Ross Purchase. The Springfield Farm site, however, probably remained in the possession of Mercy Williams Ross for some time. Mercy eventually

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<sup>28</sup> Mish, "Springfield Farm of Conococheague," page 317. Joseph Williams and his wife Prudence had originally lived in Prince George's County, where Otho Holland was born in 1749. In 1750 they had moved to near the mouth of the Conococheague. See Scharf, *History of Western Maryland*, II: 1232. See also Osmond Tiffany, *A Sketch of the Life and Services of Gen. Otho Holland Williams, Read Before the Maryland Historical Society. . . March 6, 1851*, (Baltimore: John Murphy and Company, Printers, 1851), page 3.

<sup>29</sup> Mish, "Springfield Farm of Conococheague," page 317. According to Mish, "the terms of the contract constituted those of a mortgage."

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid*, page 318. These tracts were resurveyed by Dr. David Ross who was probably the father of George Ross.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid*, page 317. See also Tiffany, *A Sketch of the Life and Services of Gen. Otho Holland Williams*, page 4.

<sup>32</sup> Mish, "Springfield Farm of Conococheague," page 317, 319–320.

married Colonel John Stull in September 1773 and although she may have remained on the Ross estate for some time after her marriage, she eventually moved to her new home at Millsborough near Hagerstown. In 1775, Dr. David Ross, the administrator of the Ross estate was given a patent for Ross Purchase. It is possible, however, that some of the Williams children may have been allowed to remain on the Springfield Farm site after Dr. Ross obtained his patent.<sup>33</sup>

Dr. David Ross died in 1780. After his death, his son David became the administrator of his estate. At the request of General Otho Holland Williams and Colonel Leonard Marbury, the 528  $\frac{3}{4}$  acre Ross Purchase tract with an additional 40  $\frac{3}{4}$  acres was resurveyed on May 24, 1782 into a 569  $\frac{1}{2}$  acre tract called the “Garden of Eden”. Less than a month later, on June 13, David Ross “assigned a warrant of resurvey to Col. Leonard Marbury who had purchased said original tract.” Marbury then assigned General Williams the greater portion of the Garden of Eden on September 19, 1783. Ross probably still held a mortgage on the Ross Purchase portion of the Garden of Eden. He apparently assigned that mortgage to Denton Jacques on February 14, 1786. Finally, in February of the following year, Jacques released the mortgage to General Williams who then became the outright owner of Ross Purchase.<sup>34</sup>

It has been suggested that General Williams had always planned to purchase the Springfield Farm site which had been his boyhood home, but that his plans were probably delayed because of the outbreak of the Revolutionary War.<sup>35</sup>

Revolutionary War zeal was strong in the Conococheague area of Frederick County,<sup>36</sup> although most of the early protest against Britain’s colonial policies centered mainly at Frederick Town, the major population center for the county. No meetings of consequence were held in present-day Washington County to protest British colonial policies until July 2, 1774. On that date residents of upper Frederick County met at Elizabeth Town (later called Hagerstown) and adopted several resolutions denouncing Britain’s colonial policies; especially the recent Coercive Acts against Boston.<sup>37</sup>

In response to the urging of the First Continental Congress which had met in September 1774, a Maryland Provincial Convention (or Congress) met at Annapolis in late 1774. The Provincial Convention recommended the raising of funds for the formation of military companies. In response to the Convention’s recommendations a meeting was held in Frederick Town on January 24, 1775 in which committees were appointed in each “hundred” to raise the 1,333 pounds requested of Frederick County. The committee from Conococheague consisted of David Jones, Isaac Baker and Jacob Friend. It is interesting to note that Otho Holland Williams was not on the committee representing Conococheague, but rather was on the committee representing Elizabeth. Others on the committee representing Elizabeth were William’s brother-in-law John Stull, John Swan and John Rench.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid, pages 317–320.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, pages 320–321. Mish says that it is not known exactly what happened to the Springfield Farm site between the time of Dr. David Ross’ death and the time it was acquired by General Williams. See also Deed, Denton Jacques to Otho Holland Williams, February 20, 1787, in Frederick County Land Records, Liber E, folio 251.

<sup>35</sup> Mish, “Springfield Farm of Conococheague,” pages 320–321.

<sup>36</sup> On September 6, 1776 Conococheague became part of the newly created Washington County.

<sup>37</sup> Williams, *History of Washington County, Maryland*, I: 74.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, I: 75.

General Otho Holland Williams became the most famous Revolutionary War figure in what is present-day Washington County. Williams, however, spent very little time in the county from the time he joined the militia at the outbreak of the War until his death in 1794.

Williams had been born in 1749 in Prince George's County. In 1750, however, his parents had moved to near the mouth of Conococheague Creek. After both of his parents died in the early 1760s, he along with his six sisters and one brother were probably taken in by George Ross who later became his brother-in-law. He soon got a job with Mr. Ross in the Frederick County Clerk's Office where he remained until around 1767. He then moved to Baltimore where he worked for several years in a similar capacity. In 1774, he returned to Frederick Town and became engaged in mercantile pursuits.<sup>39</sup>

When the Revolutionary war broke out in 1775, Williams joined a militia company which had been formed at Frederick Town under the command of Captain Thomas Price. This company soon marched to Boston where it took part in the siege of that city. Captain Price was soon either wounded or promoted, and Williams took command as Captain.<sup>40</sup>

When a Maryland and Virginia Rifle Regiment was formed in mid-1776 under the command of Colonel Stephenson, Williams was appointed a Major within the regiment. He was with this regiment at Fort Washington on the Hudson when General Howe captured that fort on November 16, 1776. Williams was wounded at Fort Washington and was taken as a prisoner to Long Island. On Long Island, he was allowed to move about on parole for some time. Soon, however, he was confined to a jail in New York City on the charge that he had violated his parole by communicating information to General Washington. Here, he shared a small cell with Ethan Allen of Vermont for seven or eight months. The harsh and unsanitary condition of his confinement during this time probably had an adverse effect upon his physical health. It is likely that he never recovered fully from his prison experience.<sup>41</sup>

While still confined to prison, Williams was appointed a colonel to command the Sixth Maryland Regiment. When he was finally freed by an exchange of prisoners in January 1778, he immediately assumed command of the Sixth Maryland Regiment. As leader of this regiment, Williams participated in the Battle of Monmouth on June 28, 1778.<sup>42</sup>

Williams was later transferred to the Southern Department where he was made deputy adjutant general by the commander-in-chief of the Southern Department, General Horatio Gates. When General Nathaniel Greene replaced Gates as commander-in-chief, Greene promoted Williams to

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<sup>39</sup> Scharf, *History of Western Maryland*, II: 1232–1233. Williams' six sisters were Mercy Williams Ross Stull; Cassandra Williams Minor; Priscilla Williams Israel Chapline; Sarah Theresa Williams Davis; Emelia Williams; and Cynthia Williams. His only brother was Colonel Elie Williams who died in 1823. See Williams, *History of Washington County, Maryland*, I: 79, 163. Mercy Stull died in late 1787 and her sister Priscilla died in 1788. See Elizabeth Merritt, ed., *Calendar of the General Otho Holland Williams Papers in the Maryland Historical Society* (Baltimore: The Maryland Historical Records Survey Project, 1940), pages 143, 160.

<sup>40</sup> Scharf, *History of Western Maryland*, II: 1232.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid. See also Merritt, *Calendar of the General Otho Holland Williams Papers in the Maryland Historical Society*, pages 4–5.

<sup>42</sup> Scharf, *History of Western Maryland*, II: 1232. See also Merritt, *Calendar of the General Otho Holland Williams Papers in the Maryland Historical Society*, page 4.

adjutant general. While in the South, Williams took part in the battles at Camden, Guilford Court-house, Hobkirk Hill and Eutaw. He was promoted to brigadier-general on May 9, 1782.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Scharf, *History of Western Maryland*, II: 1232. See also Merritt, *Calendar of the General Otho Holland Williams Papers in the Maryland Historical Society*, pages 24, 42–43, 54–55, 64.

## CHAPTER 3

### Williamsport and the New Nation, 1786–1822

At the end of the War, General Williams moved to Baltimore to accept an appointment by the state of Maryland as naval officer of the Baltimore District. After the formation of the new national government under the Constitution, Williams' position as naval officer of the port of Baltimore was replaced by the new federal position of Collector of the port of Baltimore. Williams was therefore forced to apply for the new position. He was named to the new position in August 1789, and held that position until his death on June 15, 1794.<sup>44</sup>

General Williams' physical health deteriorated steadily during the last eleven years of his life. Despite his ever-failing health, however, he apparently remained a very busy man. In addition to his duties as naval officer of the port of Baltimore and later as Collector of that port, he apparently was busy acquiring real estate in Baltimore City as well as in Frederick and Washington Counties. It was during this period that he purchased Springfield Farm and laid out his town of Williamsport.<sup>45</sup>

As has been stated in Chapter 2, that General Williams had been assigned Ross Purchase tract in 1783 and had become the outright owner of that property on February 20, 1787. It also should be remembered that the original Ross purchase tract contained Ezekiel's Inheritance which was the site of Springfield Farm, and Limestone Hill which would become the site for most of the town of Williamsport. On September 7, 1786 Williams had also acquired a 160-acre tract adjoining Ross Purchase, called "Leeds". This tract situated near the mouth of the creek, was acquired from John and Charity Reed of Baltimore, Maryland.<sup>46</sup>

In November 1786 the Maryland General Assembly passed the first act of incorporation for the town of Williamsport.<sup>47</sup> The first act of incorporation acknowledged the economic and commercial motivations behind the establishment of the town and emphasized the future town's dependence on the Potomac River trade. The act read as follows:

. . . it is represented to the General Assembly that General Otho Holland Williams possessed a tract of land called Ross' Purchase, and a tract adjoining hereto called Leeds, contiguous to the mouth of Conococheague Creek, and that, from the advantages of navigation from the head branches of "Potowmack" River to the mouth of Conococheague, and the great prospect of the navigation of the said

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<sup>44</sup> Scharf, *History of Western Maryland*, II: 1233. See also Merritt, *Calendar of the General Otho Holland Williams Papers in the Maryland Historical Society*, pages 74–75, 170–171, 174, 185–187.

<sup>45</sup> Williams took time out during this period to get married in October 1785. His bride, Mary "Polly" Smith, was the daughter of the wealthy Baltimore merchant and one-term congressman, William Smith. To this couple was born five sons: Robert Smith Williams who died in childhood, William Eli Williams, Edward Green Williams, Harry Lee Williams who died unmarried, and Otho Holland Williams who was thrown from a horse and killed. See Williams, *History of Washington County, Maryland*, I: 79. See also Merritt, *Calendar of the General Otho Holland Williams Papers in the Maryland Historical Society*, pages 127, 144.

<sup>46</sup> Williamsport Chamber of Commerce, comp., *Williamsport and Vicinity Reminiscences* (Williamsport, 1933), page 19.

<sup>47</sup> Scharf, *History of Western Maryland*, II: 1222–1223. See also Appendix A: Copy of original plat of Williams Port recorded at the Washington County Courthouse May 16, 1787, in Liber E, folio 421.

river being extended to tide-water, on the application of many citizens of Washington County he had been encouraged and induced to lay out part of said tracts into a town, and both contracted with the commissioners of the said county to build a warehouse on the said land and to furnish scales and weights for the inspection of tobacco, and an inspector is already appointed, and prayed to lay out and erect a town on the said lands and to secure the purchasers of lots in the said town.<sup>48</sup>

The first act of incorporation created a board of commissioners who were given authority to lay out “a town not to exceed one hundred and fifty acres.” The town was to be called Williams Port. The “main streets of the town were not to be less than eighty feet wide, and the cross streets not less than sixty feet wide.” The town’s commissioners were also “authorized to levy a tax of ten pounds a year to pay a clerk.” The first commissioners were Thomas Hart, Thomas Brooke, Moses Rawlings, Richard Pindell and Alexander Clagett.<sup>49</sup>

The first act of incorporation indicated that General Williams had been led to establish his town because of the improvements that were being made to Potomac navigation by the Potomac Company. The Potomac Company was chartered by the states of Virginia and Maryland in 1784–85. Its purpose was to open the Potomac from tidewater to the “highest point of permanent navigation,” which was thought to be Fort Cumberland. At Fort Cumberland, connection could be made with the Braddock Road which led to the “Forks of the Ohio.”<sup>50</sup>

The Potomac River had been used as a major trade route long before the creation of the Potomac Company. The first company to attempt to use the Potomac as a major trade route was the Ohio Company, which had been chartered in 1749. According to one source, the first trade route established by the Ohio Company went as follows:

The eastern terminus was Belhaven (Alexandria) on the Virginia side of the river. From there a wagon road led about eighteen miles up the river past Little Falls to the phantom town of Philae at the upper end of the Great Falls of the Potomac. From Philae the route used the river as far as Fort Cumberland.<sup>51</sup>

Prior to the improvements of the Potomac Company, however, a boat leaving the site of Williamsport could have traveled only about 35 miles downstream before encountering major obstacles above Harpers Ferry. From just above Harpers Ferry down to Georgetown there were five major areas through which a boat could not pass: House’s Falls, Shenandoah or Payne’s Falls, Seneca Falls, Great Falls and Little Falls.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Scharf, *History of Western Maryland*, II: 1222.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, II: 1222–1223. For the original list of commissioners see also Appendix A: copy of original plat of Williams Port recorded at the Washington County Courthouse May 16, 1787. According to one secondary source, the town was spelled “Williams Port” until the new act of incorporation changed it to “Williamsport” in 1832. Various newspapers indicate, however, that the name was generally spelled “Williams-Port” much later than 1823. See Williamsport Chamber of Commerce, *Williamsport and Vicinity Reminiscences*, page 7. See also how “William-Port” is spelled in the *Williams-Port Republican Banner* of January 2, 1830.

<sup>50</sup> Walter S. Sanderlin, *The Great National Project: A History of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 1946), pages 28–29.

<sup>51</sup> Walter S. Sanderlin, *A Study of the History of the Potomac River Valley* (Washington: National Park Service, 1948), page 21. See also Sanderlin, *The Great National Project*, page 25.

<sup>52</sup> Ricardo Torres-Reyes, *HSR, Potowmack Company Canal and Locks* (Washington: Division of History, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation, National Park Service, 1970), page 4. See also George Washington Ward,

The principle plan of the Potomac Company was to build a series of skirting or bypass canals around those unnavigable and dangerous portions of the Potomac. By 1789, the company had completed three bypass canals thus permitting an occasional boat to go from Cumberland to near Georgetown.<sup>53</sup> In 1790 George Washington, after visiting Williamsport, returned to Mount Vernon by way of the Potomac Company's route. The route, however, was still not entirely clear between Cumberland and Williamsport and at Great Falls. Thus in 1792, the company made a contract with Thomas Beall of Samuel, the founder of Cumberland, "to clear the river of all obstructions from Cumberland to Williamsport by opening canals through all shoals." Beall was to complete this project within one year for the sum of 1,900 pounds. His time was extended in 1796. There is some question, however, as to whether he ever fully completed this project. A final settlement was made with Beall in 1799. The Great Falls portion of the Potomac Company route was not completed until 1802.<sup>54</sup>

Because of the river improvements made by the Potomac Company, Williamsport soon became a thriving little town. In 1791, Thomas Dobbins, a merchant at Williamsport, wrote that many "bushels of wheat" had "come down the river in boats" which were unloaded in Williamsport. This wheat was apparently being ground into flour at mills on the banks of the Conococheague. The flour was then sent down the river to Georgetown.<sup>55</sup>

The letters of General Williams written between 1786 and 1791 show that he was very interested in the success of his new town. Sometime between April and June 1787 he held a lottery for the first lots to be sold in the new town. He also leased many lots about this time.<sup>56</sup>

At the same time that General Williams was deeply concerned with the growth of his new town, he was also deeply concerned about the growth and development of the new nation. In 1787, he expressed an interest in the new national constitution which was being drawn up by the convention in Philadelphia. A year later he expressed considerable interest in the organization and location of the new government which was to be formed as a result of the new constitution.<sup>57</sup>

For years there has been a strong tradition in Williamsport and Washington County, which holds that during the very early years of the nation's history Williamsport had a good chance at becoming the site of the national capital. Scharf's *History of Western Maryland* and Williams' *History of Washington County, Maryland* both indicate that Williamsport was considered as a possible

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*The Early Development of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Project* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 1899), pages 15–16.

<sup>53</sup> Stegmaier, *Allegany County: A History*, pages 120–121.

<sup>54</sup> James Walter Thomas and Thomas John Chew Williams, *History of Allegany County, Maryland*, 2 volumes, (Cumberland: L.R. Titworth and Company, 1923; reprint ed., Baltimore Regional Publishing Company, 1969), I: 203. See also Carra Bacon-Foster, "Early Chapters in the Development of the Potomac Route to the West," *Proceedings of the Columbia Historical Society*, XV, (Washington, 1911), pages 177, 183.

<sup>55</sup> Scharf, *History of Western Maryland*, II: 1223. Dobbins apparently was engaged in the business of making brushes as well as the manufacture of ink powder. Thomas John Chew Williams, however, claims that Thomas Dobbins and one Charles Brooks jointly owned a warehouse near the Potomac at Williamsport. Wheat would be brought down the river on flat boats and landed at the warehouse. Later it would be ground into flour and sent down the river. See Williams, *History of Washington County, Maryland*, I: 95.

<sup>56</sup> Merritt, *Calendar of the General Otho Holland Williams Papers in the Maryland Historical Society*, pages 143, 146.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid*, pages 148–149, 156.

site for the capital. Both writers also tell of George Washington's visit in 1790 to look over Williamsport as a possible site for the capital. These writers, however, have not left any footnotes to indicate the primary sources upon which they based their information.<sup>58</sup> Today, the tradition is still as strong as ever, although few people would probably say that they are certain of the validity of the story. Since the story has become such an important part of the folklore of Williamsport and of Washington County, it is important that it be examined in some detail in this study.<sup>59</sup>

The subject of the location of the new government was apparently on General Williams' mind as early as September 1788. In a letter to David Ross (a Maryland member of the old Confederate Congress) dated September 1, 1788, Williams declared that "Ultimately, some spot on the Potomac" would have to be selected for the permanent residence of the new government.<sup>60</sup>

Although the first Congress elected under the Constitution proceeded to meet in New York City, there was continuous discussion inside and outside Congress concerning the location of a permanent residence for the government.<sup>61</sup> General Williams was apparently kept informed by his father-in-law, Congressman William Smith, concerning the formal and informal discussions relative to the question of a permanent residence for the new government.<sup>62</sup>

In a letter dated April 6, 1789, Smith wrote from New York that as soon as the presidential ballots were counted, the Pennsylvania delegation would probably make a motion that Congress adjourn to Philadelphia. Many members in both houses were displeased with New York. Board in New York was more expensive than in either Philadelphia or Baltimore, and accommodations would probably be better in either of the latter cities. In a letter dated August 17, 1789, Smith wrote that a majority of the members of Congress wanted to leave New York, but could not agree on a new location. Smith felt, however, that the permanent residence, when agreed to, would be placed on the Potomac.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Scharf, *History of Western Maryland, II*: 1223. See also Williams, *History of Washington County, Maryland, I*: 89–91.

<sup>59</sup> The story has no doubt been researched to some extent. A Maryland State Roads Commission commemorative plaque which stands near the entrance to the town on Route 11, informs visitors that President Washington was authorized to locate the capital at any point on the Potomac between the Conococheague and the Eastern Branch, and that in 1790 Washington inspected Williamsport as a possible site. A Maryland Historical Society commemorative plaque which stands on Route 11 at the entrance to Springfield Farm informs visitors that Washington was in the area in 1790 to look over Williamsport as a possible site for the capital, and that he dined at Springfield Farm while on his visit to the town.

<sup>60</sup> Merritt, *Calendar of the General Otho Holland Williams Papers in the Maryland Historical Society*, pages 156.

<sup>61</sup> The Confederation Congress had met in New York City from 1785 until the meeting of the first United States Congress in 1789. Prior to 1785, the Confederation Congress and its predecessor, the Continental Congress had met in various places. Since October 1783, however, there had been talk of establishing a permanent residence for the government. The talk of a permanent residence was first generated in 1783 when a mob of dissatisfied soldiers threatened the Confederation Congress at Philadelphia, thus forcing the congress to adjourn to Princeton. See John Clagett Proctor, et. al., eds., *Washington Past and Present: A History*, 2 volumes, (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., Inc., 1930), I: 25–30. See also William Tindall, *Standard History of the City of Washington: From a Study of the Original Sources* (Knoxville, Tennessee: H.W. Crew and Co., 1914), pages 21–23.

<sup>62</sup> Smith had been elected to the First Congress.

<sup>63</sup> Merritt, *Calendar of the General Otho Holland Williams Papers in the Maryland Historical Society*, pages 168, 187–188.

According to one secondary source, at least “half of the thirteen states” were at one time or another “pressing for the location of the capital within their own borders.”<sup>64</sup> This statement is probably accurate. The *Annals of Congress*, however, show that the several memorials submitted to the Senate relative to the subject, were primarily from Pennsylvania. On August 22, 1789 a memorial was presented from citizens of New Jersey and Pennsylvania praying that the permanent seat of the government be located on the banks of the Delaware. Three days later, Senator McClay presented a letter from a Pennsylvanian recommending a ten square mile area around Lancaster. Senator McClay reminded the Senate, however, that the following places in Pennsylvania had also been proposed for the permanent residence of the government: “Wright’s Ferry, on the Susquehannah; Carlisle, west of the Susquehannah; Reading, on the Schuylkill; and Germantown, in the neighborhood of Philadelphia.” The House debates on the question, show that other cities and town outside of the state of Pennsylvania were also on the minds of some members of Congress.<sup>65</sup>

In a letter dated August 23, 1789, William Smith informed General Williams that the House or Representatives would probably take up the question of a permanent residence for the government within the next week. According to Smith, some members were mentioning Trenton, New Jersey and Lancaster, Pennsylvania as possible sites. It was rumored that the members representing New York and Philadelphia had agreed to Trenton. Smith felt, however, that the whole idea of Trenton would eventually end “in smoke”. He also felt that if Maryland and Virginia would agree on a specific site, they would be able to convince the Congress to accept it. This would be possible because with “the western country being taken into the account a spot between the Susquehanna and the Potomac” would be in the best interest of the whole country. According to Smith, Fort Cumberland, the area near the mouth of the Conococheague; Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, Wright’s Ferry, Pennsylvania; and Harve de Grace, Maryland were being talked about by many; while Baltimore, Annapolis, and Georgetown were being mentioned by only a few persons.<sup>66</sup>

A week later, Smith informed General Williams of the vote trading taking place in regards to the permanent residence of the government. Those members in favor of a Potomac site were apparently leaning towards Carrollsburg or Alexandria. Smith, however, was not among this group. Smith was from Baltimore and perhaps because of this, he was more in favor of the Susquehanna than the Potomac. He favored York Town or Wright’s Ferry on the Susquehanna in Pennsylvania, although he could probably accept a site in the Conococheague Valley.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Proctor, *Washington Past and Present*, I: 29.

<sup>65</sup> *Annals of Congress*, (1789), I: 66, 71, 83. On September 21, 1789 Senator Robert Morris of Pennsylvania submitted a resolution from the Pennsylvania General Assembly which offered Congress the use of any or all public buildings in Philadelphia should that city be chosen as the permanent residence for the government. In the House, petitions were presented on September 8, 1789 from: citizens of New Jersey praying that the permanent residence for the government be located at Perth Amboy; and from citizens of Georgetown, Maryland praying that it be located at that place. See *Annals of Congress* (1789), I: 888. John Clagett Proctor has shown that the states of Virginia and Maryland passed acts in 1788 and 1789 respectively, which offered to cede to Congress an area of ten square miles anywhere within those states. See Proctor, *Washington, Past and Present*, I: 30–31.

<sup>66</sup> Merritt, *Calendar of the General Otho Holland Williams Papers in the Maryland Historical Society*, pages 188–189.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid*, page 189.

The House of Representatives took up the question of a permanent residence for the government on September 3, 1789. The debate that followed shows that by that time the question had narrowed down to whether the capital would be placed on the Potomac or on the Susquehanna. There were some northeastern members who still favored a site on the Delaware, but these members had apparently settled on the Susquehanna as a compromise. Members from Virginia claimed that the members representing the interests of Philadelphia and New York had agreed to push through the acceptance of a Susquehanna site. The most vocal opposition to a Susquehanna site came from Virginia. The voices of Maryland's members were divided. William Smith of Baltimore favored the Susquehanna, while Congressman Daniel Carroll of Rock Creek favored a Potomac site. The House debated the pending bill from September 7 through September 22. On the latter date the House finally passed a bill in the form of resolutions, one of which stated that "the permanent seat of the Government of the United States ought to be at some convenient place on the banks of the river Susquehanna in the State of Pennsylvania." All attempts to amend the bill by adding Potomac had been voted down. The bill passed the House by a vote of thirty-one to seventeen.<sup>68</sup>

The Senate took up the House-passed bill on September 24, 1789. It struck out the section relative to the Susquehanna, and replaced it with a section that said that the capital should be "a district of ten miles square, bounded on the south by a line running parallel at one mile's distance from the city of Philadelphia, on the east side of the river Delaware, and extending northerly and westerly, so as to include Germantown." On September 27, the bill was returned to the House for its concurrence.<sup>69</sup>

In a letter dated September 25, 1789, William Smith informed General Williams that he doubted that the bill as amended by the Senate would pass the House. There was so much bargaining going on, however, that no one could predict what would happen.<sup>70</sup> As it turned out, the House did not accept the Senate amendment on September 28. The House added a minor proviso, however, which said that nothing contained in the bill should "be construed to affect the operations of the laws of Pennsylvania, within the district ceded and accepted, until Congress shall otherwise provide by law." The bill was then sent back to the Senate for its concurrence, but that body decided to postpone the consideration of the bill until the next session.<sup>71</sup>

When Congress reconvened in January 1790, William Smith wrote to General Williams that the Pennsylvania members had wanted to immediately take up all unfinished business so that the capital could be fixed at Germantown. A conference committee of the two houses, however, recommended that all unfinished business pending from the last session should be taken up in the same order as new business. Therefore, the bill for the establishment of a permanent residence for the government was left pending.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> *Annals of Congress* (1789), I: 785–911. See also Merritt, *Calendar of the General Otho Holland Williams Papers in the Maryland Historical Society*, pages 189–191.

<sup>69</sup> *Annals of Congress* (1789), I: 84–89, 920. See also Merritt, *Calendar of the General Otho Holland Williams Papers in the Maryland Historical Society*, page 191.

<sup>70</sup> Merritt, *Calendar of the General Otho Holland Williams Papers in the Maryland Historical Society*, page 191

<sup>71</sup> *Annals of Congress* (1789), I: 92, 926–927.

<sup>72</sup> Merritt, *Calendar of the General Otho Holland Williams Papers in the Maryland Historical Society*, pages 199–200.

The subject of a permanent residence for the government was not taken up again by either house until late May of 1790. Between January and May, however, the question of a permanent residence for the government had become connected with another divisive question which was being debated in Congress. This was the question of the funding of the national debt and the assumption by the federal government of the state debts. This question had become a great subject of debate after the new Secretary of the Treasury, Alexander Hamilton, outlined his nationalistic economic program in early 1790. Hamilton's first proposal was that the unpaid Continental debt of over fifty million dollars be funded by the federal government. This was necessary in order to restore the public credit of the country. Another Hamilton proposal was that the federal government assume the debts incurred by the various states in fighting the Revolution. The assumption of these debts, totaling more than twenty million dollars, would not only restore the public credit; it would also attach state creditors to the federal government and thus strengthen the federal government at the expense of the states.<sup>73</sup>

William Smith kept General Williams well informed on the public credit question between January and May. In a letter dated February 25, 1790, Smith indicated that he favored the funding of the Continental debt, but that he and the rest of the Maryland delegates were opposed to the assumption of the state debts. He believed that the Virginia delegation was also opposed to the assumption of the state debts.<sup>74</sup> In a letter dated March 7, 1790, Smith wrote that the House of Representatives was divided over the question of the assumption of the state debts. The northeastern representatives (except those from New Hampshire) were in favor of the proposal; southern members (except those from South Carolina) were opposed to the measure; and the middle-state representatives were divided.<sup>75</sup>

A compromise was reached relative to the assumption proposal sometime in June 1790. On May 24, 1790, Senator Robert Morris of Pennsylvania had offered a resolution calling for the next session of Congress to be held at Philadelphia. Consideration of his resolution, however, was postponed for several days. For some reason, Morris eventually withdrew his resolution on May 28.<sup>76</sup>

On May 31, Senator Pierce Butler of South Carolina introduced a bill to determine "the permanent seat of Congress and the Government of the United States." This bill contained a blank line which was to be filled in with the location of the site selected. On the same day, the House passed a resolution stating that Congress should hold its next session at Philadelphia.<sup>77</sup> On June 2, the Senate referred the Senate's Butler bill and the recently passed House resolution to a

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<sup>73</sup> Proctor, *Washington Past and Present*, I: 34–35. See also Tinball, *Standard History of the City of Washington*, pages 29–31; and Charles Sellers and Henry May, *A Synopsis of American History* (Chicago: Rand McNally and Co., 1969), pages 80–83.

<sup>74</sup> Merritt, *Calendar of the General Otho Holland Williams Papers in the Maryland Historical Society*, page 206. There was very strong opposition to Hamilton's proposal that the federal government assume the state debts. Virginia had nearly paid off her debts and was especially hostile to the proposal. See Sellers and May, *A Synopsis of American History*, page 83.

<sup>75</sup> Merritt, *Calendar of the General Otho Holland Williams Papers in the Maryland Historical Society*, page 207.

<sup>76</sup> *Annals of Congress* (1790), I: 978–980. See also Merritt, *Calendar of the General Otho Holland Williams Papers in the Maryland Historical Society*, page 216.

<sup>77</sup> *Annals of Congress* (1790), I: 980–81. See also Merritt, *Calendar of the General Otho Holland Williams Papers in the Maryland Historical Society*, pages 217–19.

committee. The committee reported the House resolution on June 8, and the Senate immediately voted that it did not concur in the resolution. The Senate then proceeded to consider the report on the Butler bill which had just been reported back from committee. Among other things, the committee's report recommended that the capital "be placed on the eastern or northeastern bank of the Potomac." The Senate soon voted to reject the committee's report and proceeded to consider the bill. The primary question became: What location should be used to fill in the blank? The first enacting clause (before amended) read:

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress assembled, That a district of territory not exceeding ten miles square be located, as hereafter directed, at \_\_\_\_\_; and the same is hereby accepted as the permanent seat of Congress and the Government of the United States.

A motion was first made to fill in the blank by inserting the words: "the easterly bank of the Potomac." Later, a motion was made to fill in the blank with the word "Baltimore." Finally a motion was made to fill in the blank with the words "Wilmington, in the State of Delaware." All three of the above motions were rejected, and the Senate finally adjourned for the day.<sup>78</sup>

While the Butler bill was still pending in the Senate, the House passed another resolution calling for the Congress to meet in another city at its next session. This time the House resolution proposed that Congress hold its next session at Baltimore. The Senate, however, voted on June 24 to postpone consideration on the House resolution.<sup>79</sup> It was just about this time that a compromise was reached in which the word "Potomac" would be used to fill in the blank in the bill in exchange for Virginia's support for the recently defeated assumption bill.

Secretary of the Treasury, Alexander Hamilton, was probably the person most responsible for the compromise. On June 15, 1790, Hamilton met with Senator Robert Morris of Pennsylvania. Morris was told that Hamilton needed one vote in the Senate and five in the House in order to assure the passage of the assumption bill. In exchange, Hamilton was willing to use his influence to have the permanent residence of the government fixed at Germantown or elsewhere on the Delaware. Morris assured Hamilton that he would discuss the matter with the Pennsylvania delegation. Secretary Hamilton then cornered Secretary of State, Thomas Jefferson of Virginia, and impressed upon him the importance of bringing about some kind of compromise. Jefferson agreed to invite the interested parties to dinner the next day. At dinner on June 16, 1790, the compromise was supposedly worked out. Jefferson has left the following account of how the compromise came about:

Hamilton was in despair. As I was going to the President's one day, I met him in the street. He walked me backwards and forewords before the President's door for half an hour. He painted pathetically the temper into which the legislature had been wrought, the disgust of those who were called creditor States, the danger of the secession of their members, and the separation of the States. He observed that the members of the Administration ought to act in concert, that tho' this question was not of my department, yet a common duty should make it a common concern; that the President was the center on which all administration questions ultimately rested, and that all of us should rally around him and support with joint efforts measures approved by him; and that the question having been lost

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<sup>78</sup> *Annals of Congress* (1790), I: 982–986..

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid*, I: 988. See also Proctor, *Washington Past and Present*, I: 31.

by a small majority only, it was probable that an appeal from me to the judgment and discretion of some of my friends might affect a change in the vote, and the machine of government, now suspended, might be again set in motion. I told him that I was really a stranger to the whole subject; not having yet informed myself of the system of finances adopted, I knew not how far this was a necessary sequence; that undoubtedly if its rejection endangered a dissolution of our Union at this incipient stage, I should deem that the most unfortunate of all consequences, to avert which all partial and temporary evils should be yielded. I proposed to him, however, to dine with me the next day, and I would invite another friend or two, bring them into conference together, and I thought it impossible that reasonable men, consulting together coolly, could fail, by some mutual sacrifices of opinion, to form a compromise which was to save the Union. The discussion took place. I could take no part in it but an exhortatory one, because I was a stranger to the circumstances which should govern it. But it was finally agreed that whatever importance had been attached to the rejection of this proposition the preservation of the Union and of the concord among the States was most important, and that therefore it would be better that the vote of rejection should be rescinded, to effect which some members should change their votes. But it was observed that this pill would be particularly bitter to the Southern States, and that some concomitant measure should be adopted to sweeten it a little to them. There had been propositions to fix the seat of government either at Philadelphia or a Georgetown on the Potomac; and it was thought that by giving it to Philadelphia for ten years and to Georgetown permanently afterwards this might, as an anodyne, calm in some degree the ferment which might be excited by the other measure alone. So two of the Potomac members (White and Lee, but White with a revulsion of stomach almost convulsive) agreed to change their votes, and Hamilton undertook to carry the other point.

In doing this, the influence he had established over the Eastern members, with the agency of Robert Morris with those of the Middle States, effected his side of the agreement and so assumption was passed, and twenty millions of stock divided, among favored states, and thrown in as a pabulum to the stock-jobbing herd. This added to the number of votaries to the treasury, and made its chief the master of every vote in the legislature which might give to the Government the direction suited to his political views.<sup>80</sup>

The Senate did not take up the Butler bill again until June 28, 1790. Consideration of the bill was postponed for a few minutes in order that two letters relative to the bill could be read. The first letter was from several citizens of Baltimore. It spoke of the advantages of that town and urged that the permanent residence of the government be fixed there. The second letter was from citizens of Georgetown who urged that the capital be fixed at that place. When the Senate resumed consideration of the bill a motion was made to fill in the blank with the word “Baltimore.” This motion was rejected. Then a motion was made to amend the first enacting clause and fill in the blank with the following words:

On the Potomac, at some place between the mouths of the Eastern Branch and Conococheague.

The motion was passed by a vote of sixteen to nine. As amended, the first enacting clause now read:

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That a district of territory, not exceeding ten miles square, to be located as hereafter directed, on the river Potomac, at some place between the mouths of the Eastern Branch and Conoco-

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<sup>80</sup> Quoted in Tindall, *Standard History of the City of Washington*, pages 29–31. See also Proctor, *Washington Past and Present*, I: 34–35.

cheague, be and the same is hereby accepted for the permanent seat of Government of the United States: Provided, however, That the operation of the laws of the State within such district shall not be affected by this acceptance, until such time fixed for the removal of the Government thereto, and until Congress shall otherwise by law provide.

This clause was not amended again and the wording remained the same in the final draft of the bill.<sup>81</sup>

The *Annals of Congress* do not indicate who made the above motion concerning Conococheague, and this writer was unable to discover why Conococheague was selected as the upper limit for the location of the capital.

After the first enacting clause was approved, the Senate proceeded to deal with the other enacting clauses in the bill. The second clause, for example, authorized the President to select a specific site within the limits described in the first enacting clause of the bill. Another clause would require the government to move to Philadelphia prior to the first Monday in December 1790 and to remain there until 1800. Just before the Senate passed the bill on July 1, 1790, a motion was made to amend the first enacting clause by striking out the words “between the mouths of the Eastern Branch and Conococheague” and inserting the words “within thirty miles of Hancock Town.” This motion may have been aimed at confining the limits (described in this clause) more closely to Williamsport, since, by water, Williamsport was about twenty-five miles from Hancock. On the other hand, however, the motion could have been designed to try to put the capital in Pennsylvania. The motion was defeated, and the bill was passed by a vote of fourteen to twelve. The bill was then sent to the House for its concurrence.<sup>82</sup>

The House took up the Senate bill (often referred to as the Residence Bill) on July 6, 1790, and debated it for three days. The House debates in the *Annals of Congress* are spelled out in greater detail than are the Senate debates. There was opposition to the bill, but it was obvious from the debates, that a compromise had already been worked out.<sup>83</sup>

The debates in the House were basically over the first enacting clause, which provided that the permanent residence for the government should be located on the Potomac. There were motions to amend that clause by writing in “Baltimore,” “the Delaware,” “Germantown,” and “between the Potomac and Susquehanna.” All of these motions were defeated.<sup>84</sup>

The House debates are most interesting because they reveal how a few Congressmen felt about the possibility of having to move to that distant place with the strange name of “Conococheague.” Congressman Burke of South Carolina was in favor of the motion to strike out Potomac and insert Baltimore “because he preferred Baltimore to Conococheague. He thought a populous city better than building a palace in the woods.” Congressman Gerry of Massachusetts “ridiculed the idea of fixing the Government at Conococheague. He did not think there was any

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<sup>81</sup> *Annals of Congress* (1790), I: 995. The final draft of the bill which was signed into law on July 16, 1790 appears in Appendix B: taken from the *Annals of Congress* (1789–91), II: 2234–35.

<sup>82</sup> *Annals of Congress* (1790), I: 996–1002. See also *Annals of Congress* (1790), II: 1658.

<sup>83</sup> In the House debates, there were several references to the “funding bill”, and it was suggested that that bill was tied to the passage of the Residence Bill. See *Annals of Congress* (1790), II: 1661, 1663, 1667.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, (1790), II: 1660, 1672, 1678.

serious intention of ever going to this Indian place. He considered the whole business to be a mere manoeuvre.”<sup>85</sup>

The House debate was brought to an end on July 9, 1790. All proposed amendments had been voted down. The bill then passed (on July 9) by a vote of thirty-two to twenty-nine. The President signed the bill into law on July 16, 1790.<sup>86</sup>

In a letter dated July 15, 1790, Congressman William Smith informed General Williams that the Residence Bill had been passed. Smith enclosed a copy of the Act with his letter. He also informed Williams that the Senate had just “passed a Bill 14 to 12, for assuming the State debts” and had sent it on to the House. In a letter dated August 1, 1790, Smith wrote that “a law” had “passed both houses for funding the Public debt.” The law included a provision for the assumption of the state debts. This assumption, according to Smith, was said to be part of the bargain worked out relative to the Residence Bill.<sup>87</sup>

After President Washington signed the Residence Bill into law, he had the responsibility of selecting a specific site along the Potomac anywhere between the mouth of the Eastern Branch (which is within the present boundaries of the District of Columbia) and the mouth of Conococheague Creek (Williamsport). The President’s selection apparently was not hastily made. He remained in New York until after Congress adjourned in August 1790, and he did not set out to view the area between the Eastern Branch and Conococheague Creek until October 1790. Washington perhaps was in no great hurry to tour the area because he was already well familiar with it.<sup>88</sup>

In mid-October 1790, President Washington left Mount Vernon on a trip up the Potomac to view possible sites for the capital. On October 15, he spent the day viewing the area around Georgetown. The next day he left Georgetown for Great Falls enroute to Conococheague Creek.<sup>89</sup>

On October 20, 1790, General Williams (who had made his home in Baltimore since the end of the War) sent a message to his friend, Dr. Philip Thomas of Frederick. Williams said that he had heard that “the great man” was “out upon his tour up the Potomac” and would presumably “pass through Frederick.” Williams enclosed a note which Thomas was to present to the President’s personal secretary, Major William Jackson. The note requested Jackson to introduce Thomas to the President. Williams also enclosed a letter which Thomas was to deliver to Williams’ brother, Colonel Elie Williams, who was living at Springfield Farm. General Williams urged Thomas to

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid, (1790), I: 1662, 1667.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid, (1790), II: 1679–1680. See also Proctor, *Washington Past and Present*, I: 32.

<sup>87</sup> Merritt, *Calendar of the General Otho Holland Williams Papers in the Maryland Historical Society*, pages 220–221. The funding bill received the President’s signature on August 9, 1790. See Proctor, *Washington Past and Present*, I: 35.

<sup>88</sup> Washington was also well acquainted with the landholders in the area. See Proctor, *Washington Past and Present*, I: 37.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid, I: 37–38. See also Tinball, *Standard History of the City of Washington*, page 43.

forward the letter to Elie Williams “without delay . . . so as to be delivered before the Pres[iden]t arrives at W[illia]msport.”<sup>90</sup>

Since General Williams’ message to Dr. Thomas was dated October 20, 1790, it is possible that the enclosed letter which was intended for Elie Williams did not reach him before the President arrived at Williamsport. Although all of the secondary sources are not in agreement as to the day of the President’s arrival in Williamsport, it is probably safe to say that he was there on October 20. The President apparently went first to Hagerstown and then to Williamsport. He looked over the area around Williamsport and probably spent the night at Springfield Farm. The next day he left Williamsport on his return trip down the river to Mount Vernon.<sup>91</sup>

General Williams had good reason to be encouraged about the possibility of Williamsport becoming the nation’s capital. Before George Washington had left on his tour up the Potomac he had commissioned Francis Deakins to travel with him and make plats of the lands near the mouth of the Monocacy and near the mouth of the Conococheague. Deakins was also to assist in finding out what propositions the various landowners were willing to make. On November 12, 1790, Deakins sent the following report to Washington:

Monocacy, November 12, 1790

Sir: I now enclose you a draft of the Lands you viewed about this place, with the offers the proprietors has made for the use of the public building’s, etc. You’ll please to Consider our neighbors as retired Industrious planters having no income but the produce of their farms; not more than a moderate Support for their families, as a Reason why they have not been more Liberal.

I expected Mr. Williams to have sent me some papers and notes about the mouth of Conococheague which has not come to hand, his Brother Genl. Williams was up immediately after you, who I suppose will make that return to you.

Having no assistance in laying down the plats—much other business on hand and a faint expectation of its possessing superior advantages to any other place, I hope you will in some degree apologize for the roughness of it.

I have the honor to be Sir,

Your most obedt Servt

Francis Deakins<sup>92</sup>

In a letter dated November 1, 1790, General Williams had written to President Washington concerning the possibility of Williamsport being selected as the site of the new capital. Williams said that he was going to send the President maps of the land he owned in the area as well as maps of the town of Williamsport. According to Williams, Williamsport “altho [ugh] small” was “upon a large scale, the streets and alleys being much wider than common.” The streets could also be extended “to a great distance.” Williams was willing to donate the land required for the public buildings. He wanted to retain, however, one acre of land where his parents and other relatives were buried.<sup>93</sup>

<sup>90</sup> Merritt, *Calendar of the General Otho Holland Williams Papers in the Maryland Historical Society*, pages 225–226.

<sup>91</sup> Mish, “Springfield Farm of Conococheague”, pages 328–329. See also Scharf, *History of Western Maryland*, II: 1223. Scharf says that the President arrived on October 14.

<sup>92</sup> Quoted in Tindall, *Standard History of the City of Washington*, pages 43–44.

<sup>93</sup> Merritt, *Calendar of the General Otho Holland Williams Papers in the Maryland Historical Society*, page 226.

During November and December of 1790, it still looked as if any of the prospective sites along the Potomac could eventually become the capital. Georgetown was surely a front runner, but as mentioned earlier, the President had ordered plats to be made of lands adjacent to the mouth of the Monocacy and the mouth of the Conococheague.<sup>94</sup>

President Washington's decision on the site for the capital was announced in the form of a Proclamation to Congress on January 24, 1791. Washington said that he had directed commissioners "to survey and limit a part of the territory [outlined in the Residence Act] of ten miles square, on both sides of the river Potomac, so as to comprehend Georgetown, in Maryland, and extend to the Eastern branch."<sup>95</sup>

In a letter dated the day of the President's Proclamation, Congressman William Smith informed General Williams that the President had decided against Williamsport and other prospective sites and had selected the Georgetown area as the site for the capital. General Williams apparently accepted the news thoughtfully and without any trace of anger. Later, Congressman William Smith praised General Williams for accepting the news like a "philosopher and a Christian."<sup>96</sup>

After the suspense concerning the selection of the federal city was over, Williamsport settled back down to a busy little river town.<sup>97</sup> It has already been noted that as early as 1791 a consid-

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<sup>94</sup> Some people still believed, however, that once the government was moved temporarily to Philadelphia, no one in the government would want to leave Philadelphia in 1800. The theory was that Philadelphia would become so wealthy and powerful during the government's ten-year, temporary residence there until no one in the government would want to leave that city despite the requirements of the Residence Law. Therefore, many believed that Congress would eventually repeal the Residence Law and make Philadelphia the permanent home of the government. Pennsylvania even went so far as to build a Presidential Mansion at state expense. George Washington, however, refused to occupy the structure because to do so might have led to the undermining of the Residence Law. See Proctor, *Washington Past and Present*, I: 38.

<sup>95</sup> The President also said that he had not "given to the said territory the whole extent of which it" was "susceptible in the direction of the river," because he "thought it important that Congress should have an opportunity of considering whether, by an amendatory law, they would authorize the location of the residue at the lower end of the present, so as to comprehend the Eastern branch itself, and some of the country on its lower side, in the State of Maryland, and the town of Alexandria in Virginia." For the message accompanying the President's Proclamation see Appendix C: taken from the *Annals of Congress* (1791), II: 1750. The Senate immediately took the President's advice and passed an amendatory act on February 26, 1791 that allowed the President to include within the district, land on the lower side of the Eastern Branch and land above Hunting Creek. The House approved the amendatory act on March 1, and it received the President's signature on March 3. It was through this act that the town of Alexandria became a part of the new district. In 1846, however, all of that portion of the district that had originally been a part of Virginia (this had been Alexandria city and Alexandria County) was retroceded to Virginia. For the full text of the amendatory act see Appendix D: taken from the *Annals of Congress* (1789–1791), II: 2340–2341. See also the *Annals of Congress* (1791), II: 1770, 1973; Merritt, *Calendar of the General Otho Holland Williams Papers in the Maryland Historical Society*, pages 235–236; and Proctor, *Washington Past and Present*, I: 39, 111–114.

<sup>96</sup> Merritt, *Calendar of the General Otho Holland Williams Papers in the Maryland Historical Society*, pages 231–233.

<sup>97</sup> The residents of the town, however, never forgot that their town had been considered as a possible site for the national capital. The story of George Washington's visit in 1790 to look over Williamsport as a possible site for the national capital was repeated so often during the early years of the town history that it became part of the folklore of Washington County. An example of how the story was told in the early years can be seen in the *Hagerstown Farmer's Register and Maryland Herald* of June 17, 1828. President Washington apparently paid Williamsport another visit on October 13, 1794. This time, however, he was on his way to review the troops assembled in Cumberland in response to his orders to put down the Whiskey Rebellion in Western Pennsylvania. See Williams, *History of Washington County, Maryland*, I: 114, and Mish, "Springfield Farm of Conococheague," page 329.

erable amount of wheat was being boated down the river and landed at Williamsport. Large quantities of this wheat were being made into flour presumably at Williamsport or near there, and then boated down to Georgetown.<sup>98</sup> Williams' *History of Washington County, Maryland* maintains that as early as 1795, "large quantities of flour and other produce" were also being boated down the Conococheague to Williamsport on the Potomac. From Williamsport the produce was boated down the Potomac to Georgetown "whence it was shipped to Philadelphia."<sup>99</sup> John Thomas Scharf has given the following description of the various businesses which operated in and near Williamsport between 1793 and 1800:

In March, 1793, Jeremiah Evans and Charles Shanks, merchants, dissolved partnership, and in May of the next year James Brown & Co. also dissolved, and Shanks, Osburne & Co. went out of business. Dr. James Forbes came from Pennsylvania to practice in 1795. . . In April, 1796, P. Devecmon and Randolph Brill each had a store in the town, and in 1797, Samuel Porter kept an inn, Christian Ardingier was the ferryman, P. and L. Henop & Co. general merchant, and John Kennedy & Co. sold dry-goods, hardware, and groceries. In 1798 William Didenhover had a hemp and gun-powder-mill near Conococheague Creek, six miles above Williamsport.<sup>100</sup>

The commercial importance of Williamsport in the late 1790s is illustrated by the fact that a movement began in Washington County in late 1796 to have a turnpike constructed from Baltimore through Frederick and Hagerstown to Williamsport on the Potomac. Colonel Elie Williams was a member of a committee that petitioned the General Assembly to charter a company to build a pike. A charter was apparently granted in March 1797. The secondary sources, however, do not reveal whether or not this road was ever built.<sup>101</sup>

By the year 1800, Williamsport had a population of 525 persons.<sup>102</sup> Also in 1800 the Williamsport Election District (District No. 2) was among five new election districts formed in Washington County. This district included a sizeable area of Washington County in and around Williamsport. Elections within the district, however, were to be held within the town of Williamsport.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Scharf, *History of Western Maryland*, II: 1223.

<sup>99</sup> Williams, *History of Washington County, Maryland*, I: 181. Williams implied that the waters of the Conococheague had been "turning numerous mill wheels" since the outbreak of the American Revolution. See Williams, *History of Washington County, Maryland*, I: 73.

<sup>100</sup> Scharf, *History of Western Maryland*, II: 1224. Scharf probably gathered this information from notices appearing in the early newspapers of Hagerstown.

<sup>101</sup> Williams, *History of Washington County, Maryland*, I: 151. See also Morris Leon Radoff, ed., *The Old Line State: A History of Maryland* (Annapolis, 1971), page 170.

<sup>102</sup> In Williamsport in 1800 there were 227 white males, 214 white females, 27 free-colored and 57 slaves. See Raymond B. Clark, Jr., *Washington County, Maryland: 1800 Census* (Washington, 1964), pages 44–46. Between 1790–1800, the population of Washington County increased from 15,822 to 18,659. In 1800 there were 2,200 slaves in Washington County. See Williams, *History of Washington County, Maryland*, I: 93.

<sup>103</sup> Prior to 1800 there had been only one polling place in Washington County. That polling place was at Hagerstown. An act passed in 1799 (became effective in 1800) divided the county into five election districts, of which the area around Williamsport was designated No. 2. According to Thomas Chew Williams, the polling place in District No. 2 was moved to Langley's Tavern in 1801 but was returned to Williamsport in 1821 when the county was divided into seven election districts. See Williams, *History of Washington County, Maryland*, I: 126, 177–79. See also Scharf, *History of Western Maryland*, II: 1219–1220.

According to Scharf's *History of Western Maryland*, the following men were engaged in various business enterprises at Williamsport between 1800 and 1810:

Tavern-keepers, Henry Cyester, Abram Hibbling, James Kendall, Henry Funk, Samuel Porter, John Langley, William McCoy, Thomas Edwards, Thomas Helm, John Russell, Milton H. Sackett (who kept the Columbian House); merchants, John Hogg, Thomas Kennedy (who boated flour from that place to Georgetown for one dollar per barrel in 1802, was also merchant, poet, etc.), Rudolphus Brill (died in 1802), Basil Carricoe, Jacob T. Towson, Ringgold & Brothers, Joseph Kennedy, Jacob Brosius, John Irwin, John Weisel, Henry Heckrotte, William Bayly, John Wolfkill; Jacob Bowles (blacksmith), Christian Ardinger (who boated on the river between Williamsport and Georgetown); Col. William Van Lear and Dr. Scott were physicians; Thomas Williams and William B. Williams were distillers; James Walker was a wood-corder.<sup>104</sup>

The above quotation indicates that the two major shippers of produce between Williamsport and Georgetown were Thomas Kennedy and Christian Ardinger. During the first decade of the nineteenth century, Thomas Kennedy was probably the leading merchant of Williamsport. He had apparently first entered business at Williamsport as a partner with his brother, John Kennedy, sometime before 1797. In addition to boating, they also “sold dry-goods, hardware and groceries.” In 1801, the Kennedy partnership was dissolved and Thomas gave notice to the Hagerstown newspaper that he was about to open a store in a brick house on the corner of the public square. Thomas Kennedy moved five miles from Williamsport in 1807, but returned to that town two years later. In 1812, he moved one mile from Williamsport and a year later he moved to within six miles of Hagerstown. Finally, in 1822, he moved to Hagerstown. While still a resident of Williamsport, Kennedy wrote some patriotic songs which were published by the *Hagerstown Maryland Herald*. These songs were used to build enthusiasm for the War of 1812. In 1815, Kennedy published a small volume of poems. In the early 1820s, he served in the General Assembly and was the chief proponent during that period of a bill to allow Jews to hold political office within the state. It was mainly due to his persistent efforts that a bill removing political disabilities against Jews became law in 1825. Kennedy established the *Hagerstown Mail* newspaper in 1828 and was its editor until his death during the cholera epidemic of 1833.<sup>105</sup>

Christian Ardinger, the other major shipper at Williamsport during the first decade of the nineteenth century, also operated a ferryboat at Williamsport as early as 1797. It is not known how long Ardinger operated the ferry. It is known, however, that he was engaged in the boating business at Williamsport for over twenty-five years.<sup>106</sup>

During the first decade of the nineteenth century several notable improvements were made at Williamsport. In 1805, the General Assembly passed a bill which authorized a lottery to be held for the purpose of raising money to build a market house in Williamsport. The commissioners appointed to supervise the lottery were Jacob T. Towson, William McCoy, Thomas Helm, John

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<sup>104</sup> Scharf, *History of Western Maryland*, II: 1224–1225.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid*, II: 1224–1226. See also Williams, *History of Washington County, Maryland*, I: 144, 168–173. Kennedy apparently also was a member of the House of Delegates in 1832 because on April 13 of that year, his newspaper, the *Hagerstown Mail*, commented extensively on his recent speech, in the House of Delegates, against a bill designed to remove free blacks from the state of Maryland. The bill had apparently been hastily drafted in response to the Nat Turner slave uprising in Virginia in 1831. See the *Hagerstown Mail*, April 13, 1832.

<sup>106</sup> Scharf, *History of Western Maryland*, II: 1224. See also Williams, *History of Washington County, Maryland*, I: 63.

Hogg, Daniel Weisel and William Compton. The lottery was to produce \$400 and the commissioners were required to post bond of \$1,200. For some reason, the lottery was not immediately held and the market house did not take shape for several years. Eventually, a new commission was appointed. The members of this commission were Jacob T. Towson, Daniel Weisel and Thomas Edward. After a successful lottery was held, the market house was finally built. It was first opened on April 18, 1810. The market house was to be open two days a week; on Wednesdays and Saturdays. Certain penalties were established for selling before the ringing of the bell, for buying certain provisions on market days at places other than the market house, and for selling certain provisions on market days at places other than the market house.<sup>107</sup>

Another improvement made during the first decade of the nineteenth century was the erection of a bridge across the Conococheague sometime before 1810. This may have been the first bridge built across the creek. This bridge, unfortunately, was washed away during a flood in November 1810. According to Scharf's *History of Western Maryland*, this flood caused considerable damage at Williamsport. Jacob T. Towson suffered losses totaling more than \$1,200 when his warehouse at Williamsport was washed away.<sup>108</sup>

By 1820, the population of Williamsport had increased to 827.<sup>109</sup> During the decade between 1810–1820, the trade of the town was mainly with Washington and Georgetown by river boat. According to Scharf's, *History of Western Maryland*, however, the only person mentioned by his sources<sup>110</sup> as being engaged in the boating business at Williamsport between the years 1810–1820 was one Joseph Holland.<sup>111</sup> The author of study, however, believes that at least two other men were involved in boating sometime between 1810–1820. Christian Arding, who was mentioned earlier as being involved in the boating business during the first decade of the nineteenth, probably continued in that business between 1810–1820. Sometime during this period he appar-

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<sup>107</sup> Scharf, *History of Western Maryland*, II: 1224 and Williams, *History of Washington County, Maryland*, I: 182. Williams says that \$4,000 was to be raised from the lottery. See also Harlan D. Unrau, unpublished *HSR, The Cushwa Warehouse, Historical Data* (Seneca, Maryland, 1977), page 11. Unrau has made the conjecture that the market house may have been located on the public square and that the "market house might have been the original brick portion of the present Cushwa Warehouse." It seems logical that the market house would have been built on the public square, but town folklore holds that it was located in the area of what is now Number 24 East Salisbury Street. The Minutes of the Town of Williamsport for April 2, 1832 indicate that the old market house was situated on a "lot." Since the public square area was not ordered to be "laid off into lots" until 1835, the market house, which was opened in 1810, could not have been situated on a "lot" on the public square. See Minutes of the Town of Williamsport Meetings", April 2, 1832 and January 5, 1835. For a view of where folklore places the market house, see map entitled "Williamsport Maryland, 1787" compiled by Pat Miller for the Williamsport Bicentennial Festival Activities Program, 1976, located in the Williamsport Town Hall.

<sup>108</sup> Scharf, *History of Western Maryland*, II: 1201, 1224–1225. Scharf does not say where Towson's warehouse had been located.

<sup>109</sup> There were 318 white males, 317 white females, 66 male slaves, 53 female slaves, 42 free colored males and 31 free colored females. See Scharf, *History of Western Maryland*, II: 1225. See also Williams, *History of Washington County, Maryland*, I: 178. According to Williams, 111 persons were engaged in manufacturing in Williamsport in 1820.

<sup>110</sup> Scharf says in his preface that he used "newspapers, musty manuscripts, family, church and society records." I believe, however, that his information concerning commercial activities in early Williamsport came primarily from advertisements which periodically appeared in the early Hagerstown newspapers, such as the *Washington Spy*, the *Hagerstown Herald*, and the *Torch Light*.

<sup>111</sup> I believe that this may be a typographical error and that Scharf may have been referring to Joseph Hollman. See Scharf, *History of Western Maryland*, II: 1225.

ently formed a partnership with Peter Ardinger, who was probably a relative. An advertisement which appeared in a Hagerstown newspaper on June 15, 1819, said that Peter Ardinger had “just received a quantity of Stone Coal,” which he was offering “for sale, at his warehouse, near the bridge in Williams-Port.”<sup>112</sup> Peter Ardinger apparently died prior to December 16, 1823. On that date, the County Sheriff issued a notice in a Hagerstown newspaper which said that due to a suit brought “against Christian Ardinger and John Burns as securities for Peter Ardinger,” the sheriff would sell at public auction Burns’ lot and house in Williamsport, and “all the right, title and interest of C. Ardinger, in and to 26 perches of land, in W’ms-Port, adjoining the Bridge with a WARE HOUSE thereon.”<sup>113</sup> Christian Ardinger apparently was able to hold onto his property, because two months later, he had the following advertisement printed in a Hagerstown newspaper:

Boating! Boating!

The subscriber (formerly a partner of Peter Ardinger, dec’d,) informs his customers and others, that he intends carrying on the Boating business in all its varieties, from his Ware House in Williams-Port, to Georgetown. He will receive all kinds of loading viz: Whiskey, Flour, & C. and convey the same to Georgetown, at a most reasonable price. As he intends to pay particular attention to the boating business, he hopes to merit and receive a share of the public patronage.

In my absence, Mr. James Shoaff will receive all kinds of loading, at my Ware house, at the Conococheague Bridge—who has on hand Shingles and a quantity of Lumber.

Christ’ N Ardinger.

Williams-Port, Feb. 3, 14-3 w.

N. B. Flour will also be taken from Mr. Jacob Tice’s Ware house, which will be received by him at a reasonable price. C. A.

The advertisement just mentioned, indicates that Peter and Christian Ardinger had been in the boating business together for some time, and that Christian intended to carry on that business. The “warehouse at the Conococheague Bridge” was undoubtedly the same warehouse referred to in Peter Ardinger’s “Stone Coal” advertisement of June 15, 1819. Thus it is very likely that the two Ardingers were jointly involved in boating between Williamsport and Georgetown before 1820.<sup>114</sup>

The decade between 1810–1820 was undoubtedly one of considerable commercial growth for Williamsport. According to Scharf’s, *History of Western Maryland*, the following are the names of some of the persons doing business in Williamsport between 1810–1820:

. . . ; James Muir, tavern keeper (1812); Weisel (Daniel) & Humrickhouse (Albert), merchants; James Sterret, tanner; John Gelwick, brewer (1813); Charles Heseltine, merchant (1810); Willis & Frankenberg, shoemakers (1813); Mr. Kreps, hatter; Jacob Miller, weaver; Turner & Haseltine, merchants; Robert McCullough & Son, tanners; Samuel Ross, shoemaker;. . . ; Michael G. Kessinger, merchant; Jacob Wever, who purchased Gelwick’s brewery (1817);. . . ; Richard Pool, tailor (1817);. . . ; Joseph G. Brown, shoemaker; Lane & Cramer, merchants, in 1819.<sup>115</sup>

<sup>112</sup> *Hagerstown Torch Light and Public Advertiser*, June 15, 1819.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, December 16, 1823.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, February 17, 1824.

<sup>115</sup> Scharf, *History of Western Maryland*, II: 1225.

When the War of 1812 intervened during the second decade of the nineteenth, the residents of Washington County warmly supported it. According to Williams', *History of Washington County, Maryland*, there had in fact been a growing military spirit within the county for some years prior to the outbreak of the war. For some time before the outbreak of the war the various volunteer companies had conducted frequent drills and marches.<sup>116</sup> Almost a year before the war, for instance, a local newspaper printed the following notice from O. H. Williams, Captain of the American Blues:

American Blues, Parade in front of my quarters on Saturday the 20<sup>th</sup> instant, at 10 o'clock A.M. completely equipped, with three rounds of blunt cartridges. The election of an officer of the Troop will take place, & business of importance will be laid before the members, on that day, it is therefore expected that every Trooper will be punctual in his attendance. O. H. Williams Captain, July 10, 1811.<sup>117</sup>

When the war started, Edward Greene Williams (the third son of General O. H. Williams) of Springfield Farm was made a captain and placed in command of a company called the Washington Hussars. His cousin, Captain O. H. Williams, then of Hagerstown, was appointed second in command of a Washington and Frederick County cavalry regiment. This cavalry, under the general command of Colonel Frisby Tilghman of Rockland, was involved in the Battle of Bladensburg in 1814.<sup>118</sup>

The commercial growth of Williamsport continued during the War of 1812. One of the first banks in Washington County was established at Williamsport during this period. The Conococheague Bank of Williamsport was incorporated by the General Assembly on January 7, 1814. The bank was opened that year with a capital stock of \$250,000. Its directors for the first year were: Samuel Ringgold, Thomas Buchanan, John Bowles, Matthew Van Lear, Charles Heseltine, Jacob T. Towson, Peter Miller and John Irvine. Samuel A. Chew became the bank's first cashier. The bank remained in operation for ten years. It closed in 1824 "after satisfying all claims."<sup>119</sup>

<sup>116</sup> Williams, *History of Washington County, Maryland*, I: 144.

<sup>117</sup> *Maryland Herald and Hagers-Town Weekly Advertiser*, July 16, 1811. The Captain O. H. Williams, who issued the above notice, was the son of Colonel Elie Williams, who was the brother of General O. H. Williams. Colonel Elie Williams was the first Clerk of the Circuit Court of Washington County. He held that position from the time of the creation of Washington County in 1776 until 1800. He was succeeded in 1800 by his son Captain O. H. Williams who served in that position until 1845. Captain Williams had no doubt spent much of his youth at Springfield Farm which his father had inherited from general O. H. Williams in 1794. By 1811, however, Springfield Farm was in the possession of General O. H. Williams' third son, Edward Greene Williams. At this time Colonel Elie Williams and Captain O.H. Williams were probably residents of Hagerstown. Colonel Elie Williams eventually moved to Georgetown around 1815. He died in Georgetown in 1823. See Williams, *History of Washington County, Maryland*, I: 76, 163, 417. See also Mish, "Springfield Farm of Conococheague", pages 329–330. Mish says that Edward Greene Williams came into possession of Springfield Farm around 1810. See also Scharf, *History of Western Maryland*, II: 1233.

<sup>118</sup> Williams, *History of Washington County, Maryland*, I: 144, 147.

<sup>119</sup> This bank was apparently meant to serve the whole county rather than just the town of Williamsport. Thus its first board was composed not only of prominent men of Williamsport but also of prominent men of the county, such as Samuel Ringgold of Fountain Rock and Thomas Buchanan of Woburn. The board of directors elected in 1815 was: Jacob T. Towson, Thomas Buchanan, Dr. William B. Williams, Charles Heseltine, John Bowles, Matthew Van Lear, Michael A. Finley and John Hogg. In 1817 the board was composed of: William Williams, Jacob T. Towson, Edward G. Williams, Thomas Buchanan, Thomas C. Brent, Daniel Rench, Daniel Schnebly and Robert Wilson. The bank was examined in 1819 by Frederick A. Schley, Alex Neill, Richard Ragan, Frederick Dorsey and James S. Lane. At the time of this examination the bank was found to be in good order. Jacob T. Towson apparently served as

In the second decade of the nineteenth century the residents of Williamsport continued to push for better road conditions. According to Williams', *History of Washington County, Maryland*, a company was chartered in 1813 to build a road from Boonsborough to Williamsport. In the same year a company was also chartered to construct a road from Rockville to Williamsport. Williams does not say, however, whether these roads were ever constructed.<sup>120</sup>

By the end of the second decade of the nineteenth century, Williamsport was a well-established little town with some potential for further growth. Although it still lagged well behind Hagerstown in population, Williamsport was larger than Funkstown, Sharpsburg, Hancock and Boonsborough.<sup>121</sup> It already had a major county banking institution and a varied lot of merchants. Furthermore, it already had an established river trade with Georgetown and the tidewater area. Therefore, the people of Williamsport entered the decade of the 1820s with a great deal of optimism concerning the future success of their town. The next chapter will demonstrate how developments during the 1820s and 1830s fulfilled to some degree the hopes of the town's residents and shaped the town's history for the rest of the nineteenth century.

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the bank's last president. See Scharf, *History of Western Maryland*, II: 1229. See also Williams, *History of Washington County, Maryland*, I: 164.

<sup>120</sup> Williams, *History of Washington County, Maryland*, I: 152.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, I: 177–178. The 1820 population figures for Washington County towns were as follows: Hagerstown—2,690; Williamsport—827; Sharpsburg—656; Funkstown—533; Hancock—271. Boonsborough was so small that its population was not listed. Clearspring was not listed because no lots were sold there until 1822.

## CHAPTER 4

### Williamsport Anticipates the Coming of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, 1823–1835

During the decade of the 1820s, the town of Williamsport appeared to take on new life. Although its population increased only slightly, its commercial activities increased considerably. Before the end of the decade, many observers optimistically reasoned that the town was destined to become a city of major importance.<sup>122</sup>

The town's increase in commercial activity during the 1820s corresponded to the growing agitation in Maryland and Virginia for the construction of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal. The Chesapeake and Ohio Canal project can be considered the fourth enterprise intended to open the West by using a Potomac Valley route. The three earlier enterprises were the Ohio Company, the Potomac Company and the National Road.<sup>123</sup>

By the early 1820s, river improvements such as those envisioned by the Potomac Company were beginning to be viewed by most supporters of internal improvements as being insufficient and clearly outmoded. The answer to the young nation's transportation problems, according to most supporters of internal improvements, could only be solved by the construction of complete canal systems.

The era of active canal building was actually started in 1817 when the state of New York began construction of the Erie Canal. Pennsylvania soon began planning its system of canal in order to compete with the Erie for the western trade. To the south of Pennsylvania, supporters of internal improvements in Maryland and Virginia also began to think of the possibility of constructing an independent canal to better tap the western trade at the Ohio.<sup>124</sup>

The residents of Virginia appear to have taken the lead in gathering early support for the idea of a canal separate from the river improvements of the Potomac Company. Between 1812 and 1823 there were three separate attempts in Virginia to charter a company to construct a canal along the banks of the Potomac.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Perhaps because of this new life, a new act of incorporation was passed for the town in 1823. According to this act, the town would no longer be spelled "Williams Port" but rather would be spelled "Williamsport." See Williamsport Chamber of Commerce, *Williamsport and Vicinity Reminiscences*, page 6. See also "Minutes of the Town of Williamsport Meetings", May 14, 1824, page 3. I have not examined the new charter. Some present-day residents of Williamsport believe that it was the first and only act of incorporation for the town. This cannot be true, however, because General Williams first had the town incorporated in 1786. It is significant to note, however, that no minutes exist for the meetings of the town commissioners prior to 1824.

<sup>123</sup> Sanderlin, *The Great National Project*, page 19. The National Road should be considered among these enterprises although it started at Cumberland and went over the mountain to Wheeling.

<sup>124</sup> Some of the supporters of the various schemes to build a canal up the Potomac Valley were men who were already involved with the dying Potomac Company. *Ibid*, page 45.

<sup>125</sup> In 1812 an attempt was made to charter a company to build a canal from Seneca to Hunting Creek. In 1816, an attempt was made to charter a company to build a canal from Seneca to Alexandria. In 1823, the Virginia Assembly did pass an act of incorporation for the Potomac Canal Company (so-called to distinguish it from the Old Potomac

By 1823, however, the supporters of a canal along the Potomac had turned most of their attention to the United States Congress in an effort to obtain federal aid for the proposed project. Even more important, by 1823, Congress appeared to be willing to support some type of general program of internal improvements.<sup>126</sup>

The first Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Convention met on November 6–9, 1823 in Washington to beef up support for the construction of a canal along the Potomac.<sup>127</sup> The meeting was called by Loudoun County, Virginia. Delegates were present from several counties and cities in Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania and the District of Columbia.<sup>128</sup> Washington County, Maryland sent four delegates: Casper W. Wever, O. H. Williams, Thomas Kennedy and Frisby Tilghman. None of the Washington County delegates were at that time residents of Williamsport, although both Thomas Kennedy and O. H. Williams had lived there in the past.<sup>129</sup>

In his annual message to Congress in December 1823, President James Monroe commented on the recently held Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Convention. Monroe urged Congress to consider appropriating money for “the employment of a suitable number of the officers of the corps of engineers, to examine the unexplored ground, during the next season and to report their opinion.”<sup>130</sup>

Congress responded to the President’s recommendation by appropriating \$30,000 for a survey of the proposed canal route by the United States Board of Engineers. In the meantime, the state of Virginia passed an act incorporating the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Company on January 27, 1824. Efforts to secure Maryland’s confirmation of the Virginia Act of incorporation were unsuccessful in 1824, but efforts were successful on January 31, 1825. The United States government confirmed the Virginia act on March 3, 1825 and Pennsylvania reluctantly passed a confirmation act in early 1826.<sup>131</sup>

The United States Board of Engineers made its preliminary survey report on February 14, 1825. The report indicated that it was entirely possible and practical to connect the upper Potomac with the Youghiogheny or Monongahela Rivers by canal. The preliminary report therefore removed most of the doubt concerning the practicability of the project.<sup>132</sup>

The final report of the United States Board of Engineers was released on October 23, 1826. According to Sanderlin’s history of the canal, the Board of Engineers’ estimate of approximately

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Company). This act, however, never received the confirmation of Maryland, and therefore never became valid. Ibid, page 51.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid, page 5.

<sup>127</sup> The convention was originally called the “Grand Union Convention” because of its supposed importance to the several states. Delegates soon learned, however, that a short canal in Pennsylvania had already been given that name, so the delegates chose “Chesapeake and Ohio” as the next best name. Ibid, page 52. See also *Washington (D.C.) Daily National Intelligencer*, November 6, 1823.

<sup>128</sup> *Daily National Intelligencer*, November 6, 1823.

<sup>129</sup> *Proceedings of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Convention Which assembled in the Capitol of the United States, in the City of Washington, On the Sixth Day of November, 1823 And Re-assembled in the same City on the sixth day of December 1826* (Washington: way and Gideon, Printers, 1827), page 4.

<sup>130</sup> *Cumberland Maryland Advocate*, December 15, 1823.

<sup>131</sup> Sanderlin, *The Great National Project*, pages 53–54.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid, page 54.

\$22,000,000 “fell like a thunderbolt on the hopes of the canal supporters.”<sup>133</sup> The supporters of the canal had envisioned a canal of slightly smaller dimensions costing from four to five million dollars.

A call was now sent out for the reassembling of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Convention of 1823. The new convention was to meet in Washington on December 6, 1826.<sup>134</sup>

At least seventeen delegates from Washington County attended the second Chesapeake and Ohio Convention. They were: Franklin Anderson, Marmaduke W. Boyd, William Fitzhugh Jr., George Hedrick, Samuel M. Hitt, Thomas Keller, Thomas Kennedy, John Reynolds, Frisby Tilghman, Matthew S. Van Kear, Otho H. Williams, John Blackford, Thomas C. Brent, Thomas Buchanan, John R. Dall, William Gabbey and David Schnebly.<sup>135</sup>

The primary purpose of the second Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Convention was to drum up support for the canal project in the aftermath of the Board of Engineers’ report. The strategy worked out at the Convention was to discredit the Board of Engineers’ report and press for a new survey to arrive at a more accurate estimate of the cost of a canal with enlarged dimensions.

Eventually a committee appointed by the convention to prepare and report revised estimates, found that the Board of Engineers’ estimates for labor costs as well as for masonry, walling and excavation were too high. Supporters of the canal in Congress then pressed the President to order a new survey in order to settle the conflicting estimates of the Board of Engineers and the Convention. President Adams responded by appointing James Geddes and Nathan Roberts to conduct a new survey. Geddes and Roberts completed their survey in 1827 and reported that a canal with enlarged dimensions could be completed from tidewater to Cumberland for about \$4,500,000.<sup>136</sup>

Reassured by the Geddes and Roberts report, supporters of the canal opened subscription books on October 1, 1827, although the formal organization of the company had to be delayed until Congress passed the act subscribing \$1,000,000 to the company’s stock. Congress passed this act on May 24, 1828.<sup>137</sup>

In the meantime, the town of Williamsport was bustling with commercial activity. The boating business remained active as in previous years. The local newspapers indicate that there were two major shippers in Williamsport during the decade of the 1820s. It was stated in the preceding chapter that Peter and Christian Ardinger were engaged in the boating business at Williamsport between 1810–1820. These two men continued to do business together until the death of Peter Ardinger around 1823. After the death of Peter Ardinger, Christian Ardinger continued his boat-

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<sup>133</sup> Ibid, page 55. The Board of Engineers’ estimates were: “\$8,177,081.05 for the eastern section; \$10,028,122.86 for the middle section; and \$4,170,223.78 for the western section; making a total of \$22,375,427.69.”

<sup>134</sup> Ibid.

<sup>135</sup> *Proceedings of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Convention*, page 23. See also Williams, *History of Washington County, Maryland*, I: 203.

<sup>136</sup> Sanderlin, *The Great National Project*, page 56.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid, pages 56–57. The United States’ subscription fulfilled the condition of a Maryland act which had promised a subscription of \$500,000. Congress also allowed the three district cities to subscribe a total of \$1,500,000. There also were some private investments in the company.

ing business at Williamsport. At the same time, however, he was also involved in the same business elsewhere. During his absence from Williamsport, he made tavern keeper, James Shoaff, his partner and agent to handle the business at Williamsport. In early 1825 Ardinger had the following advertisement printed in the Hagerstown newspapers:

#### BOATING

The subscriber respectfully informs his friends and the public generally, that he has at present

#### FOUR NEW BOATS

in complete order for conveying Flour, Whiskey and other produce from Williams-Port to the city of Washington, on term to suit the times.

He has appointed Mr. James Shoaff, for his agent to conduct business in Williams-Port, such as taking in loading and securing the same, so that it may be safely delivered, and have punctual returns made to all those who may please to favor him in the above line of business.

Christian Ardinger

March 15.

N.B. Any person wishing to have Fish, Plaster, Salt or any back loading, can be accommodated on reasonable terms.<sup>138</sup>

By 1828, James Shoaff had taken over the old warehouse (near Conococheague Bridge) and the boating business formerly owned by Christian Ardinger. On February 28, 1828, Shoaff had the following advertisement printed in the Hagerstown newspaper:

#### Boating

The subscriber having on hand several new Boats, still continues at the old warehouse formerly occupied by Ardinger & Shoaff to receive and deliver to Georgetown and the city of Washington, Flour and Whisky upon reasonable terms. . .

James Shoaff, Williams-Port, February 28. 18-tf.

In addition to being involved in the boating business, Shoaff still owned his tavern which was located near the corner of the public square. In October 1828, he announced that he had “opened, in the house adjoining his Tavern a general assortment of Groceries.” In 1828, he was also involved in cabinet making and he owned “a Hearse and gentle Horse for the accommodation of those who may need them.” Furthermore, he was a dealer in what was referred to at that time as “Stone Coal.”<sup>139</sup>

The other major shipper at Williamsport during the 1820s was Joseph Hollman. In February 1828, Hollman had the following advertisement printed in the Hagerstown newspaper:

<sup>138</sup> Quoted in Williams, *History of Washington County, Maryland*, I: 63. For a similar but earlier advertisement, see footnote 71, Chapter 3.

<sup>139</sup> *Hagerstown Torch Light and Public Advertiser*, February 28, and October 30, 1828. See also *Hagerstown Farmers' Register and Maryland Herald*, June 17, and November 11, 1828. Shoaff was in the tavern business as early as 1824. See advertisement entitled “Watch and Clock Making”, *Hagerstown Torch Light and Public Advertiser*, February 17, 1824. For an indication of where Shoaff’s tavern was located, see advertisement entitled “New apothecary Shop, And Grocery Store,” *Williamsport Republican Banner*, January 2, 1830.

To Farmers, Millers and Distillers.

The subscriber continues to hold that large and commodious Ware-House, situated near the mouth of Conococheague Creek—where he will store Flour, Whiskey, &c. He is also provided with Boats to carry produce to Washington City or Georgetown, on terms suitable to the times; and will be responsible for accidents that may occur in carriage.

He will deliver flour in Baltimore much lower than wagon carriage; it would be advisable for millers to turn their attention to that route, as wagons become scarce in the spring and summer season. Joseph Hollman

Williams-Port, February 7.

15-tf.

N.B. He has on hand several hundred bushels of Stone Coal, which will be sold low, for Cash.<sup>140</sup>

In addition to being involved in the boating business, Hollman was also a dealer in “Stone Coal,” and the owner of a tavern. In 1826, he was a member of the town’s board of commissioners.<sup>141</sup> Later during the 1830s and 1840s he would become a prominent contractor on the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, the owner of a mill at Lock 44 and the keeper of Lock 44.

During the 1820s the major merchants of Williamsport had advertisements printed periodically in the Hagerstown newspapers. The sale of lumber was apparently a business of some importance during this decade. In 1824, a Hagerstown newspaper printed an advertisement for one William Starling of Williamsport, under the heading “Cheap Lumber.” Starling promised to dispose of his lumber at a price “much lower than the common selling price.” In 1828, John Van Lear Jr., gave notice in a Hagerstown newspaper that he had “Fat Hogs and Lumber” for sale. He had “104 Very Fat hogs” ready for market, which he wanted to dispose of immediately. In addition, he had for sale “100,000 feet Pine Boards” at a reasonable price. In another notice Van Lear said that he had “1500 Bushels of Corn” and “30,000 Feet Prime Pine Boards” for sale.<sup>142</sup>

An important lumber and general merchandise dealer in Williamsport during the 1820s was Charles A. Warfield. Sometime before 1828, Warfield joined the general merchandise firm owned by Sherward P. Moore. In early January 1828, Warfield gave notice that he had “purchased Mr. Towson’s [Jacob T. Towson] entire Stock of Lumber” and was offering it for sale at the S. P. Moore and Company store.<sup>143</sup> On November 20, 1828, Warfield and Moore gave notice that their partnership was dissolved. On the same day, in a newspaper advertisement headed “Good News,” Warfield announced that he had “purchased the Entire Stock of Goods of S. P. Moore & Company.” His brother, Dennis Warfield, was now his partner. The business would be “continued at the Old Stand, opposite the Taverns of Messrs. Hollman and Moudy” and would be conducted under the name of C. A. & D. Warfield. They had on hand “a fresh assortment of

<sup>140</sup> *Hagerstown Torch Light and Public Advertiser*, February 28, 1828. It should be noted that in the above advertisement, Hollman said that he continued “to hold that large and commodious Ware-House, situated near the mouth of Conococheague Creek.” Since the warehouse was located near the mouth of the creek, it may have been the same warehouse which was later referred to as Mrs. Williams’ Warehouse, and later as the Cushwa Warehouse.

<sup>141</sup> *Hagerstown Farmers’ Register and Maryland Herald*, June 17, 1828. See also “Minutes of the Town of Williamsport Meeting,” January 6, 1826. Reference to Hollman’s tavern can be found in the advertisement entitled “Daniel Weisel, Attorney At Law,” *Hagerstown Torch Light and Public Advertiser*, January 7, 1830.

<sup>142</sup> *Hagerstown Torch Light and Public Advertiser*, February 17, 1824. See also *Hagerstown Farmers’ Register and Maryland Herald*, June 17, 1828.

<sup>143</sup> *Maryland Herald and Hagers-Town Times*, January 29, 1828. Jacob T. Towson had apparently been a major dealer in lumber up to this time.

Fall and Winter Goods.” In addition, they had (and intended to keep) on hand” a general assortment of Casting, Wrought Iron & Steel,” as well as “4 to 500,000 Feet of Seasoned Lumber.”<sup>144</sup>

Another major merchant at Williamsport should be mentioned at this point. In the preceding chapter, John Thomas Scharf was quoted as listing the firm of Lane and Cramer as being one of the major businesses in Williamsport during the decade 1810–1820. According to Scharf, J. S. Lane and A. M. C. Cramer went into business together in 1819. The firm was primarily engaged in general merchandising. James S. Lane died in late 1823 or early 1824. On March 23, 1824, Cramer and the administrators of Lane’s estate announced that the partnership was dissolved. On the same day, Cramer had an advertisement printed in a Hagerstown newspaper under the heading “Come to Williams-Port!” He said that he had “purchased the entire interest of J. S. Lane” and was prepared to offer his goods at cheap prices. Cramer continued in business throughout the decade of the 1820s.<sup>145</sup>

There were also other kinds of businesses operating in Williamsport during the decade of the 1820s. A Hagerstown newspaper indicates, for example, that one John Hogg of Williamsport owned an interest in a “Merchant Mill near the town of Williams-Port, on the Conococheague.” The mill was operated under the name of the Union Manufacturing Company of Maryland. Hogg, unfortunately, got behind in his taxes and the mill along “with one hundred and thirty acres of Land” was probably sold by the sheriff at public auction on December 8, 1821.<sup>146</sup>

On February 17, 1824, one Henry A. Leonard of Washington City, District of Columbia, informed the residents of Washington County, Maryland that he had commenced a “Watch and Clock Making” shop in Williamsport. His shop was located “one door west of Mr. J. Shoaff’s tavern.” He would clean and repair “all kinds of Watches and Clocks.” He was also prepared to make house calls to those “persons residing in the County,” who wished to have their clocks repaired.<sup>147</sup>

During the decade of the 1820s, Williamsport could also boast of several professional men. In early 1824, Dr. W. D. Macgill removed his practice from Williamsport to Hagerstown. In 1828, however, Dr. Howard Kennedy announced that he had reopened the “office formerly occupied by Dr. Helm,” in Williamsport. A Dr. Smith also practiced medicine, in Williamsport during the 1820s. Smith apparently died around 1829. In September 1829, attorney Daniel Weisel, a native of Williamsport, announced that he intended to remove his office and residence from Hagerstown to Williamsport. In December 1829, Weisel announced that he had moved to Williamsport where he established his office “in the house of the late Doctor Smith, next door to Mr. Hollman’s Tavern.”<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> *Hagerstown Torch Light and Public Advertiser*, November 20, 1828. For some reason, Warfield signed his name “Charles A. Warfield of A.” In 1830, Warfield served as Assistant Burgess for the town of Williamsport. See “Minutes of the town of Williamsport Meetings,” June 7, 1830.

<sup>145</sup> *Hagerstown Torch Light and Public Advertiser*, March 23, 1824. See also *Maryland Herald and Hagers-Town Weekly Advertiser*, November 20, 1821.

<sup>146</sup> *Maryland Herald and Hagers-Town Weekly Advertiser*, November 20, 1821.

<sup>147</sup> *Hagerstown Torch Light and Public Advertiser*, February 17, 1824.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, July 20, 27, 1824. See also *Hagerstown Farmers’ Register and Maryland Herald*, November 18, 1828, and December 29, 1829.

Williamsport also had a professional school teacher during the 1820s. In 1828, an advertisement in a Hagerstown newspaper informed the “citizens of Williams-Port and its vicinity,” that Mr. Matthew M’Clannahan had “recovered his health” and would soon be “opening a school.” M’Clannahan’s school was to open on August 25. Someone apparently had operated a school in Williamsport before this time because the notice said that M’Clannahan’s school would be located “in the School-House belonging to Col. Jacob Wolf, near the Presbyterian Church.” M’Clannahan probably had taught in the vicinity prior to his illness. The notice said that “as usual” he would use “every exertion” to “promote both the moral and intellectual improvement of his pupils.” His terms for tuition were as follows: “Spelling and Reading, two dollars per quarter, per scholar—Writing and Arithmetic, two dollars and twenty-five cents, per [quarter, per scholar]—Book-Keeping, Grammar, constructing Maps, Geometry, Trigonometry, Surveying, Gauging, Mensuration, &c. two dollars and fifty cents.”<sup>149</sup>

During the decade of the 1820s, steps were taken by town and county officials to bring about several improvements at Williamsport. It was perhaps with improvements in mind that the town commissioners in 1824 levied a twenty-five cent real-estate tax on lots within the town. Every lot holder was to pay the twenty-five cent tax by April 1, 1825. In 1828, the town commissioners passed a resolution stating that the town would “pay the balance of the sum required for building a house of confinement for disorderly persons within the limits of the Corporation.” The Burgess, Colonel Jacob Wolf, was to “make the contract for building” the home “or build it himself.”<sup>150</sup>

In 1826, the General Assembly passed an act authorizing the repair of the bridge over Conococheague Creek at Williamsport. It should be remembered that the first bridge had been washed away in 1810. It was replaced sometime after that date. By 1826, the second bridge had become dilapidated and the act of 1826 authorized its repair. In May and August of 1828, however, the County Levy Court announced that proposals were being accepted “for the erection of a Stone Bridge over the Conococheague Creek at Williams-Port at or near the site of the present bridge.” The bridge was to have the following dimensions:

Four arches—the two center ones to be 37 feet span each, and 28 feet high above low water mark; the two outside ones 32 feet span each, and the height corresponding in proportion to the center arches. The abutments and wing walls to be of sufficient height and thickness, to make the bridge substantial and give it a complete appearance. The width of the bridge to be 16 feet in the clear. The curtain walls to be 4½ feet high and covered with seasoned pine plank 3–4 inch thick and well pointed. The abutments and bridge to be well filled up, turnpiked and graveled at 2½ degrees elevation.<sup>151</sup>

Several other improvements were either contemplated or started during the 1820s. On February 28, 1828 a Hagerstown newspaper announced that the General Assembly had passed a bill incorporating the Washington County Bank. This bank was to be located in Williamsport. It would

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<sup>149</sup> *Hagerstown Torch Light and Public Advertiser*, September 18, 1828. Free public schools were not established in Washington County until 1847.

<sup>150</sup> “Minutes of the Town of Williamsport Meetings,” September 17, 1828, and May 14, 1824.

<sup>151</sup> *Hagerstown Farmers’ Register and Maryland Herald*, June 17, 1828. See also *Hagerstown Torch Light and Public Advertiser*, August 21, 1828. The new bridge was probably completed prior to 1830, but no documentation was found to support any specific completion date. The inscription on the present bridge says that it was “built in 1829 by Charles Wilson & Co. for the Levy Court of Washington County.”

replace the old Conococheague Bank of Williamsport which had closed in 1824. The Washington County Bank did not open, however, until 1832.<sup>152</sup> In 1839, the General Assembly passed an act for the incorporation of a railroad which was to run from Williamsport to Hagerstown. This road was never built. In the same year, however, construction was begun on a Lutheran Church in Williamsport. Also, in 1829, the town commissioners voted that the town should purchase a fire engine. A committee was appointed to find out how much an engine would cost so that a tax could be levied. The town commissioners also voted in 1829 that a new market house should be established in Williamsport. Both the fire engine and the market house would become reality during the 1830s.<sup>153</sup>

By the late 1820s, the residents of Washington County generally looked upon Williamsport as being a growing town with a bright future. During the middle of 1828, both of Hagerstown's newspapers printed long articles concerning Williamsport. The first article appeared in the *Hagerstown Farmers' Register and Maryland Herald* on June 17, 1828, under the simple heading "Williams-Port." The article gave a brief history of the town and described its location and lay-out. It then went on to give some other details about the town. Although Williamsport had always been "an inconsiderable town," it had "always contained several large stores and tanneries." The town also had always "carried on a smart trade in lumber." The lumber came down the river to Williamsport "from the saw mills in the upper districts." The lumber had "found a good demand among the merchants in town." In exchange for the lumber the merchants gave "dry goods, groceries and other barter." Williamsport's prospects for the future were bright. The article said: "Important as the place has been, its new destinies we apprehend, will soon outstrip the calculations of its founders, who little dreamed that an Iron Road, and a magnificent Canal would one day traverse its streets, . . . "Williamsport was destined to "receive an impulse in business," and would eventually become "ranked among the most thriving country towns in Maryland."<sup>154</sup>

The second newspaper article on Williamsport appeared in the *Hagerstown Torch Light and Public Advertiser* of July 10, 1828 under the heading "Celebration at Williams-Port." The article was about the Fourth of July Celebration held in Williamsport and was therefore more like a news report, than an informative article. Similar Fourth of July celebrations had been held in Baltimore and Washington. The celebration at Williamsport, however, was designed not only to commemorate the Declaration of Independence but also to display support for the two great works of internal improvements that were commenced at Baltimore and Little Falls on that day. The celebration at Williamsport was begun at dawn on July 4, with the firing of muskets and the ringing of bells. At 10 o'clock citizens gathered in front of Mr. Hollman's Globe Tavern and marched to the Lutheran Church. At the church, the Reverend Wilson offered a prayer and the merchant, A. M. C. Cramer, read the Declaration of Independence and made some remarks. The key address was delivered by Attorney Daniel Weisel, a Williamsport native, who at that time had his office and residence at Hagerstown.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> *Hagerstown Torch Light and Public Advertiser*, February 28, 1828.

<sup>153</sup> Williams, *History of Washington County, Maryland*, I: 194–195. See also "Minutes of the Town of Williamsport Meetings," March 6, 1829.

<sup>154</sup> *Hagerstown Farmers' Register and Maryland Herald*, June 17, 1828.

<sup>155</sup> *Hagerstown Torch Light and Public Advertiser*, July 10, 1828

Weisel's long speech was devoted primarily to extolling the aims of the American Revolution. In a section of his speech, however, he praised the two great works of internal improvement that had been commenced in Maryland that day. Weisel hoped that in the "not far distant" future the citizens of Washington County would again be summoned to meet "upon this spot to commemorate the completion" of the railroad and canal to Williamsport. He felt that the railroad and canal would change the face of Williamsport and bring "rapid growth" and an abundance of trade to the town. The town's "present state of comparative repose" would "be converted into the bustle of a busy mart." The articles of trade presently coming into Williamsport were the products "of a few neighboring counties," but upon the completion of the canal and railroad, the products "of the Ohio, the Missouri and the Mississippi" would "be poured into" the town.<sup>156</sup>

Weisel's address indicated that the people of Williamsport expected both the Baltimore and Ohio railroad and the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal to pass through their town. Prior to the commencement of both works, the supporters of the canal had felt confident that the canal company would inherit the old Potomac Company's rights in the Potomac Valley. Therefore, the supporters of the canal were in no hurry to secure land waivers from landowners in the valley. On the other hand, the railroad company expected to use the same route as the canal. Therefore, it wasted little time in sending its surveyors up the valley to locate its line and secure waivers. On May 1, 1828, a Hagerstown newspaper reported that "Jonathan Knight, Esquire, and Colonel Long of the United States Engineers" were "in the neighborhood of Williams-Port." The object of their visit was "to test the surveys made last summer with a view to the final location of the route of the contemplated Rail Road from Baltimore to the Ohio." They were "to commence running from Williams-Port" and "pursue the route" to "Harman's Gap." According to the newspaper, "Mr. Knight" had been "employed by the company to make the final location."<sup>157</sup>

Supporters of the canal did not take steps to counter the movement of railroad officials until June 10, 1828. On that day, the stockholders of the canal company secured an injunction which prohibited the railroad from proceeding beyond Point of Rocks. The railroad company countered by obtaining three injunctions against the canal company on June 23, 24 and 25. The legal controversy between the two companies was not settled until January 1832, when the Maryland Court of Appeals ruled that the canal company had the right to prior location in the Potomac Valley. Eventually, a compromise was worked out by the Maryland Legislature in 1833 whereby the railroad was allowed to continue construction on the Maryland side of the river as far as Harpers

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<sup>156</sup> Ibid. Near the end of his address, Weisel took time to deal with another topic that was being discussed quite widely in the late 1820s. According to Weisel, it had "become the practice with a large portion of the United States, to dedicate this season not only" to the celebration of the Revolution, "but also to some benevolent purpose characteristic of Liberty, and tending to the public good." Weisel believed that the American Colonization Society had such a benevolent purpose. The society's aim, according to Weisel, was "to colonize all the free black population" (if they made "no objection") "on the Coast of Africa." Weisel made an appeal for the society's work. At the end of his address, a collection was raised to aid the society. The society probably received a large part of its support from border-state areas where the free black and slave population was not essential to the operation of the economy. In 1820, for example, Williamsport had total population of 827 of which 119 were slaves and 73 were free blacks. In 1830 the town had a total population of 859. The black population in 1830 is not known. It is likely, however, that the free blacks and slaves still made up less than a fourth of the population. A local colonization society was formed in Williamsport in November 1834. See Williams, *History of Washington County, Maryland*, I: 227.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid, May 1, 1828.

Ferry. At Harpers Ferry, it had to cross over into Virginia. This compromise put an end to the possibility that the railroad would pass through Williamsport.<sup>158</sup>

When Williamsport entered the decade of the 1830s, the two great works which were expected to converge on the town were well under construction, although injunctions prohibited them from proceeding past the Point of Rocks. The residents of Williamsport maintained a keen interest in the progress of both of these works, and beginning in 1830 they were kept informed by Williamsport's first newspaper, the *Republican Banner*.

The first issue of the *Republican Banner* appeared on January 2, 1830. The newspaper was edited by Daniel Weisel and printed by Thomas Price. The newspaper continued in operation for a number of years but only a few issues have been preserved. These few issues, however, give some view of what was happening in Williamsport during the early 1830s. They also contain some information on the progress of the canal and railroad.<sup>159</sup>

In the first issue of the newspaper, the editor made some lengthy comments concerning the beneficial impact “of those immense improvements,” that were “in successful progress, between the waters of the Chesapeake and Ohio.” Because of the progress of these improvements, Williamsport would “continue to receive an accession to its population and means of wealth.” The progress of these works had already had a beneficial impact upon the town. In expectation of these works passing through Williamsport, many “changes and improvements” had recently occurred in the town. The editor felt that the progress of the canal and railroad would eventually have a favorable impact on land values in the town. He envisioned Williamsport becoming a place of “imports and exports for a widely spread region.” He envisioned “the continual passage of Cars, Barges, and Boats, from east to west” loaded with products and passengers. Such bustle of traffic would “contribute to” the “prosperity” of Williamsport “in various ways.”<sup>160</sup>

The *Republican Banner* carried several articles relative to the progress of the canal and railroad. In its first issue, the editor discussed the maps and profiles which had accompanied the first Annual Report of the President and Directors of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company. According to the editor, these maps showed that Williamsport was “certainly a point intended to be reached” by the railroad. According to the editor, the railroad's route from Baltimore vis the Point of Rocks would run as follows:

The route by the Point of Rocks on the Potomac, is the one adopted by the Company. It commences at Pratt Street, Baltimore, near the Washington road, which it crosses twice in its course, and strikes the Patapsco, at a point below the Avalon works; it then runs with the Patapsco to Ellicott's mills, where it crosses the Frederick turnpike, and continues in its course along the Patapsco, to the north of the turnpike, to Parr Spring Ridge, where it crosses the turnpike again, and passes on to the south of it.

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<sup>158</sup> Sanderlin, *The Great national Project*, pages 83–89, 101–102. After crossing over into Virginia, the railroad left the river bank and went northwest through Martinsburg. It took up the river bank again just below Fort Frederick and proceeded along the Virginia bank of the river until it neared the present-day village of North Branch about 8½ miles below Cumberland. It recrossed the Potomac and entered Maryland at North Branch and then proceeded into Cumberland.

<sup>159</sup> The office of the newspaper was located on Potomac Street. A yearly subscription was \$2.00. See *Williamsport Republican Banner*, January 2, 1830.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*

From the Ridge, two routes appear to be surveyed, (if we understand the Map correctly, in the absence of the Report) to the Point of Rocks; the one by Bush Creek to the north, and the other by Bennett's creek to the south, branches of the Monocacy. The northern or Bush creek route appears to be the one adopted. It strikes the Monocacy at a point a short distance below Buckey's town, and then passes on across the country to the Point of Rocks, from which place it follows the course of the Potomac to the mouth of Marsh Run, which divides the Williams-Port from the Sharpsburg districts, from which point it diverges to the north and passes in a pretty direct line across the neck of land within the intervening bend of the river, to Williamsport.

The railroad's right-of-way had already been graded from Baltimore to Ellicott's Mill, "except at two or three spots." The rails had been laid "on a single line" from Baltimore to Gwinn's Falls, and the rails were expected to be laid to Ellicott's Mill "by next May."<sup>161</sup>

On January 9, 1830, the *Republican Banner* printed the latest news concerning the progress of the canal. Richard Rush's "mission to Europe, in behalf of the three corporations of Washington, Georgetown and Alexandria," had been successful. The success of Rush's mission, according to the editor, had "established the hopes of the friends" of the canal, and had "secured the speedy progress of the work itself." There was "now but one obstacle" to the "rapid advancement" of the work. That obstacle was "the suit pending between the Rail Road and Canal Companies." The editor would not venture to guess how the suit would eventually be determined. He had been informed that canal company officials had previously "made fair offers and earnest efforts to bring the cause to a speedy conclusion." Now that the canal company officials had "command of all the capital desired for the Eastern Division," they were probably "more anxious than ever" that the case should be settled. The editor, along with many others, felt that a compromise could be worked out regardless of the decision of the court. The latest news concerning work on the canal was that "the principal excavation" and "heaviest part of the whole work" between Georgetown and the Point of Rocks had been accomplished. Only a small part of work remained to be done before these sections could be watered.<sup>162</sup>

By 1830 Williamsport had a population of 859. This represented only a slight increase from 1820. Local newspapers, however, indicate that in the early 1830s Williamsport was a busy and expanding town. A lively boating business was still carried on by James Shoaff, who continued to ship whiskey and flour from "his old warehouse." Joseph Hollman also continued "to boat produce to Georgetown as usual."<sup>163</sup>

Other types of businesses were also active at Williamsport during the early 1830s. Charles and Dennis Warfield were still carrying on a lively trade in lumber, brick, iron and other general merchandise. In 1832, Jacob Rhodes and Adam Shoop owned a lumber yard in Williamsport. There were at least two drug stores in Williamsport during the early 1830s. Charles Rice owned

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<sup>161</sup> Ibid.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid. January 9, 1830. The District cities had been allowed by Congress to subscribe to a total of \$1,500,000 worth of canal company stock in 1828. When the District cities had difficulty in making their subscription payments in 1829, they sent Richard Rush to Europe to negotiate a loan in order to enable them to meet their payments. Rush failed to negotiate a loan in England but he had success in Holland. In 1829, Rush also was appointed by the canal company to act as its agent in Europe and "receive subscriptions up to \$6,000,000 for the eastern section and \$10,000,000 for the whole canal." See Sanderlin, *The Great National Project*, pages 66, 82.

<sup>163</sup> *Hagerstown Mail*, September 9, 1831. See also *Williamsport Republican Banner*, January 9, 1830. Both Shoaff and Hollman were still in the tavern business and sold coal.

a drug store in 1830. Jacob Rhodes opened a combination drug and grocery store in 1830. Rhodes' store was located "on the Northeast Corner of the Public Square, opposite Mr. Shoaff's Tavern." By 1832, Rhodes' store was called Rhodes & Shoop Drugstore.<sup>164</sup>

Williamsport had other important businesses during the early 1830s. A. M. C. Cramer was still carrying on a general merchandise store. John Stake operated a "Boot and Show Making Business." His "stand" was located "on Conococheague Street. . . , one door North of Mr. Cramer's Store and opposite Mr. Hollman's Inn." In 1832, William Morrison operated a store in Williamsport. In the same year, William Edwards and Son announced that they had "a large assortment of Tin & Earthenware at their stand on South Conococheague Street." It appears that Daniel Weisel Sr., the father of Attorney Daniel Weisel, operated a "well known Tan Yard and Curing Shop" in Williamsport during the early 1830s. The elder Weisel died around 1832. In the early part of that year, Skipwith C. Wilson announced that he had rented the Weisel facilities and would continue to carry on the business. Also, in 1832, Jesse Fahnestock operated a grocery and dry goods business in Williamsport.<sup>165</sup>

During the early 1830s, Williamsport lost the office of one well-known professional, but gained another. Attorney Daniel Weisel moved his residence and office back to Hagerstown in 1832. In the same year, however, Weisel's younger brother, Dr. Samuel Weisel, established his medical office in Williamsport. Dr. Samuel Weisel remained in practice at Williamsport for forty years.<sup>166</sup>

The growth and commercial prosperity of Williamsport during the early 1830s led to the establishment of the second bank in Williamsport's history. It should be remembered that Williamsport's first bank, the Conococheague Bank of Williamsport, had closed in 1824. The General Assembly passed an act in 1828 to incorporate the Washington County Bank, which was to be located in Williamsport. For some reason, however, the bank was not established. During the December session of 1831, the General Assembly passed another act to incorporate the Washington County Bank. In April of 1832, stock subscription books were opened in all major Washington County towns. In Williamsport, subscription books were opened "at the counting room of Messrs. C. A. & D. Warfield, under the superintendence" of the commissioners in charge of receiving subscriptions. In Hagerstown, subscription books were opened "at the office of Dr. Weisel, Esq., under the superintendence of William Heyser, Marmaduke W. Boyd, and William C. Drury." Each initial share of the company's stock sold for twenty-five dollars. The commissioners in charge of receiving subscriptions were: John R. Dall, Daniel Weisel, Matthew S. Van Lear, James Grimes, Michael A. Findley, Charles A. Warfield (of A.), Abraham M. Barnes and Robert Wason. The bank was organized in November of 1832. The first president of the bank

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<sup>164</sup> *Hagerstown Mail*, September 9, 1831. See also *Williamsport Republican Banner*, January 2, 9, 1830 and October 13, 1832. The lumber yard owned by Rhodes and Shoop was located "at the southern end of Williams-Port, on the road leading to Boonsborough."

<sup>165</sup> *Williamsport Republican Banner*, October 13, 1832.

<sup>166</sup> *Hagerstown Mail*, February 3, 1832. See also *Williamsport Republican Banner*, October 13, 1832; and Williams, *History of Washington County, Maryland*, I: 428. Samuel Weisel died in January 1872.

was John Van Lear. The first directors were Charles A. Warfield, Jacob T. Towson, Daniel Weisel, Robert Wason, John R. Dall, Joseph Charles, Jr. and Jacob Wolf.<sup>167</sup>

During the early 1830s, the officials of Williamsport continued to make and order improvements within the town. In June of 1830, the town commissioners ordered all homeowners to “procure on or before the 1<sup>st</sup> day of September” a “well-made fire bucket, labeled with the owner’s name in plain letters.” The town had not yet acquired a fire engine or organized a fire company. In the early 1830s, town officials also passed an ordinance requiring that all town lots be paved. In March of 1831, lots 210, 211 and 212 located “on Potomac Street between the Lutheran Church and the residence of Dr. M. A. Finley” were sold because the person in possession of the lots had refused to pay the town for paving them. In April and May of 1831, the joint owners of lot 57 on Salisbury Street were warned that their lot would be sold if they continued to delay “paying the expenses incurred in the grading and paving before said lot.” On May 2, 1831, the commissioners ordered the paving committee to “receive proposals for grading, paving and curbing, . . . all unpaved lots on both sides of Potomac Street from Samuel Millers and O. H. Williams west to Martin Ensmingers and Henry Cysters east in same street.”<sup>168</sup>

During the early 1830s the town commissioners also took steps to reopen the old market house. It should be remembered that the market house had first opened during the spring of 1810. It is unclear exactly how many years it remained in operation. By 1829, however, it was no longer in operation. In March of that year, the town commissioners passed a resolution which stated “that a market should be established in Williamsport to commence on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of April 1829.” For some reason, however, the market was not immediately established. On April 2, 1832, the commissioners passed a resolution which authorized a committee of three to “examine the ‘market house’ and lot and have necessary repairs made.” On April 23, the town commissioners appointed a committee to “draft rules and regulations” to govern the soon to be opened market house. On the same day, the commissioners also appointed John Nitzell to be “market master for the ensuing year.” Nitzell was to be paid “two dollars per month during the continuance of the market.” On April 27, the town clerk was authorized to sell market stalls to the highest bidders. The stalls were to be sold for a term of one year. At the same time, the commissioners stated that the market house would be opened on Wednesdays and Saturdays beginning on May 12. A fine of three dollars was to be levied against persons caught selling outside of the market house during market hours.<sup>169</sup>

During the same time that the officials of Williamsport were striving to improve their town, canal company officials were rushing to complete the first 100 miles of canal as was required by the company’s charter. The company’s charter had specified that the first 100 miles of canal (from Georgetown to Williamsport) should be completed within five years. That five-year period was to end in 1833. It should be remembered that from 1828 to 1832, a series of injunctions had prevented canal company officials from proceeding with construction beyond Point of Rocks. The Maryland Court of Appeals handed down a decision in favor of the canal company in early

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<sup>167</sup> *Hagerstown Torch Light and Public Advertiser*, February 28, 1828. See also *Hagerstown Mail*, April 13, 1832; and Williams, *History of Washington County, Maryland*, I: 201. It should be noted that most (if not all) of the first directors were either residents or former residents of Williamsport.

<sup>168</sup> “Minutes of the Town of Williamsport Meetings,” June 7, 1830, April 4, May 2, and August 1, 1831.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, March 6, 1829, April 2, 23, 27, 1832, May 18, 1832, and October 1, 1833.

January 1832. In response to the favorable decision, the canal company's board of directors, on January 7, 1832, ordered that a public notice be printed stating that contracts for the construction of the twelve miles between Point of Rocks and Harpers Ferry would be let on February 23, 1832. The Board also ordered that "at the same time" that the above notice was issued; another notice should be issued stating that contracts for the construction of the canal between Harpers Ferry and Williamsport would be let on April 4, 1832. The public notices were printed on January 9, 1832. The winter of 1832 was so severe, however, that the Board decided to suspend the order concerning construction between Harpers Ferry and Williamsport. In mid-March and early June, the Board let enough contracts above Harpers Ferry so that with the aid of slackwater navigation the first one hundred miles, from Georgetown to Williamsport, could be considered complete.<sup>170</sup>

Although Williamsport could be reached by canal with the aid of slackwater navigation by mid-1834, the canal was by no means complete to that point. In order to give a history of the construction of the canal in the vicinity of Williamsport, it is necessary to go back to the year 1832. On the same day (January 7, 1832) that the canal company's board of directors ordered that notices be printed concerning the letting of contracts between the Point of Rocks and Williamsport, the Board also ordered that "steps be taken" to acquire "the ground required for the construction of the canal" between the Point of Rocks and Williamsport. Since the order concerning the letting of the forty miles between Harpers Ferry and Williamsport was later rescinded because of the severe winter, no land was acquired in Washington County until the summer of 1832.<sup>171</sup>

On June 18, 1832, the Board authorized fellow board member William Price to proceed to acquire lands in Washington County. Price promptly proceeded to seek agreements with the various landowners in Washington County. In those instances where he was unable to gain an agreement, he brought about condemnation proceedings as was required by the company's charter. By the middle and latter part of 1833 the canal company had acquired a large part of its right-of-way below Williamsport.<sup>172</sup>

All of the land originally acquired by the canal company within Williamsport and immediately adjacent to the town, had been the property of Mrs. Ann Williams and her daughter, Mary Smith

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<sup>170</sup> *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, C, p. 49. Unless otherwise noted, all C & O Canal manuscript materials referred to in this report are deposited in the Department of the Interior files at the National Archives and are designated Record Group 79. See also *Hagerstown Mail*, February 3, 1832; and Sanderlin, *The Great National Project*, pages 90–91. According to Sanderlin, the Board later decided to take full advantage of their favorable position over the railroad, and let contracts for the first two miles above the Point of Rocks without giving the standard public notice.

<sup>171</sup> *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, C, p. 50. The resolution rescinding the order relative to construction above Harpers Ferry can be found in the *Proceedings of the Stockholders*, A, p. 204. Four years earlier, in anticipation of the moves of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company, the canal company made several optional agreements with various landowners in Washington County. In exchange for a small sum of money (normally \$5.00) some landowners promised in 1828 to sell to the canal company "in preference to all other companies and persons" any of their lands that might be required for the construction of the canal. For examples of optional deeds, see Deeds and Other Records Concerning Land, 1828–1873, C & O Co. See also Washington County Land records, Liber RR, folios 279–282, and 295–299.

<sup>172</sup> *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, C, pp. 171, 388, 414, 416, 437, 440, and D, pp. 23, 32. See also Deeds and Other Records Concerning Land, 1828–1873, C & O Co.; Washington County Land records, Liber OO, folios 203, 652; and Washington County Judgment Records, Liber 20, folios 26, 63 70.

Williams. The property was acquired by the canal company through an inquisition held on January 9, 1833.<sup>173</sup> The jury awarded Ann and Mary Williams the sum of \$156 for sixteen acres and thirty-two perches of land. The owners immediately filed an objection to the certification of the inquisition on the grounds that the boundaries were not “sufficiently described.” Another objection was filed by John A. Keedy and David Woljamot who claimed that they still held a one year unexpired lease on the land. It is not known how these objections were decided. It is known, however, that the canal company subsequently awarded Mrs. Williams and additional \$80 for earth taken for embankment.<sup>174</sup>

Construction had begun on the one-half mile section of the canal within Williamsport (and also on those two sections adjacent to the town) well before all of the property settlements were completed. The section of the canal within Williamsport was Number 187. It included Lock 44 and ran from that lock up to the south side of Conococheague Creek. Much of this section was along the side of a hill. The upper part of the hill contained “a considerable quantity of Slate.” The engineers planned to use some of the slate hill for embankment. The remainder of the earth to be used for embankment was to come from excavation. The grubbing on this section would involve the removal of “several trees.”<sup>175</sup>

On July 17, 1832, the Board ordered “that the portion of the canal from Section 173 to 203 inclusive, be advertised to be let on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of August.” These sections were to be finished “within 12 months.” The contract for Section 186 immediately adjacent to Williamsport on the south was awarded to Patrick Donovan. The contractors for Section 187 within Williamsport and for Section 188 immediately to the north of the town are not known. The Board eventually allowed Patrick Donovan to assign his contract for Section 186 to the firm of Fitzpatrick and Jamieson on June 21, 1833. Fitzpatrick and Jamieson completed the section in August 1833. Since Section 186 was finished within the twelve months allowed by the Board, it is quite likely that Section

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<sup>173</sup> See Appendix E: Mackall Map drawn in May 1896 from original deeds. See also Washington County Judgment Records, Liber 20, folio 65. Ann Williams was the widow of Captain Edward Greene Williams, the third son of the founder of Williamsport. The daughter of Edward and Ann Williams was Mary Smith Williams. Before Edward’s death on February 7, 1829, he named Benjamin Chew Howard of Baltimore and Henry H. Gaither of Hagerstown as executors of his will. His will stated that his large estate should “be equally divided between” his wife and daughter, when the latter either attained the age of eighteen or married with the consent of her mother. See Will, Edward Greene Williams, April 11, 1829, in Washington County Register of Wills, Liber C. See also Mish, “Springfield Farm of Conococheague,” page 332. At the time the inquisition was taken, Mary Smith Williams was described as “an infant under twenty one years of age.”

<sup>174</sup> Washington County Judgment Records, Liber 20, folio 65. See also Deeds and Other Records Concerning Land, 1828–1873, C & O Co.; Reference Book Concerning Land Titles, 1829–1868, C & O Co., page 145; Notebook entitled “Lands in Washington County, Maryland,” page 8, in Deeds and Other Records Concerning Land, 1828–1873, C & O Co.; and *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, D, p. 308.

<sup>175</sup> Back when the canal was first begun in 1828, the company’s board of directors divided the canal into three broad geographical areas: the eastern area, the middle or mountain area, and the western area. Since the company’s charter specified that construction should start on the eastern area first, that area was divided into three smaller areas containing 120 sections each. A section was about a half mile long. See Sanderlin, *The Great National Project*, page 61. The section of canal immediately adjacent to Williamsport on the south was Number 186. The section adjacent to Williamsport on the north was Number 188. The latter section included Aqueduct Number 5 over Conococheague Creek. For drawings showing the topography of sections 186, 187 and 188, see Appendices F, G, H: Profile Maps of sections 186–188 found in Drawings and Other Records Concerning Construction, 1828–1937, C & O Co.

187 and Section 188 were also finished within the time allowed. No records have been found, however, to document the precise date of completion for these sections.<sup>176</sup>

On October 4, 1833, the Board accepted a proposal from Eli Stake of Williamsport to build a bridge across the canal on Section 187. The final estimate on this bridge was paid to Stake on May 9, 1834. Since a ferry had been operated near the mouth of Conococheague Creek since 1749, this bridge was probably built to provide easy access to the ferry. An 1838 sketch of the basin area indicates that a bridge was located just south of the basin and probably opposite the public square.<sup>177</sup>

At the same time that sections 186–188 were under construction, workmen were also constructing two major canal structures at Williamsport. The contracts of Lock 44 on Section 187 and Aqueduct 5 on Section 188 were awarded to Michael Byrne in the summer of 1832. Byrne completed the aqueduct in the mid-summer of 1834. On November 19, 1834, the Board reminded the Resident Engineer that a “wrought Iron railing” was required for the aqueduct. The railing was eventually installed during the spring of 1835. Michael Byrne was paid the final estimate for Lock 44 on December 24, 1834.<sup>178</sup>

The work on the canal within Williamsport, and in the vicinity of the town, would have proceeded much faster had it not been for outbreaks of cholera and labor violence during this period. From the beginning of its construction, the canal had been plagued by an “annual sickly season.” The first cases of Asiatic cholera, however, appeared on the line of the canal in late August 1832 near Harpers Ferry. The disease soon spread southward along the line to the Point of Rocks. Eventually it spread upriver to Williamsport. On September 4, 1832, Joseph Hollman of Williamsport wrote that one of his men at Dam 4 had come down with cholera on the previous night. Hollman said that up to this time he had been able to prosecute his work “without any interruption or a single case of sickness.” Now that this case had appeared, however, there was “a great deal of excitement” and people were “flying to and fro.” Hollman had no doubt that if this case should prove fatal “nearly all” of his men would leave the work. Eventually, most of the laborers and contractors abandoned the whole line of the canal from the Point of Rocks to Williamsport.<sup>179</sup>

The canal company took some steps to aid the sick. On August 31, 1832, the Board authorized Joseph Hollman of Williamsport (who was then working on Dam 4 below town) to rent a house at Harpers Ferry to be used as a hospital. Hollman was also to look into the possibility of estab-

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<sup>176</sup> *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, C, p. 189, 347–348, 390, 433.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*, C, 432 and D, 88. For the location of the canal bridge in 1838, see Appendix I: Sketch Map of Basin Area (1838) showing the location of J. A. Magruder’s proposed warehouse. A bridge was later constructed over Lock 44. Byrne and Company was paid \$662 for the construction of the Lock 44 bridge on January 31, 1838. See Edwin C. Bearss, *HSR, The Bridges, Chesapeake and Ohio Canal* (NPS, 1968), page 109. Bearss does not mention the bridge which was located near the main basin at Williamsport.

<sup>178</sup> John F. Luzader, unpublished *HSR, Conococheague Aqueduct* (Washington: National Park Service, 1962), page 9. See also *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, D, 144, 192, 208. Lockhouse 44 was not built during this period.

<sup>179</sup> Sanderlin, *The Great National Project*, pages 93–95. See also Williams, *History of Washington Country, Maryland*, I: 222; and Hollman to Ingle, September 4, 1832, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

lishing a hospital at Point of Rocks. According to Sanderlin's history of the canal, a permanent hospital was established at Harpers Ferry in late September 1832.<sup>180</sup>

By October 1832, the epidemic had apparently disappeared at Williamsport, but a state of uneasiness still existed among the inhabitants of the town. On Saturday, October 13, the editor of the *Republican Banner* announced that the "mysterious epidemic" had reappeared in Hagerstown. Two cases, "one a negro woman, the other a white apprentice boy," had occurred in Hagerstown on Thursday. The latter case had been fatal. The editor warned that although "the health of Williams-Port" had remained "unimpaired" it behooved all "to live cautiously."<sup>181</sup>

The cholera epidemic of 1832 came to an end as the weather turned colder. By that time, however, the canal company was in such financial straits that it could not finish the twelve miles between the Point of Rocks and Harpers Ferry before the end of 1832.<sup>182</sup>

In the summer of 1833, cholera again struck the line of the canal. This time the disease first appeared on the line near Williamsport. On June 24, Resident Engineer Thomas Purcell informed the President "that Asiatic Cholera [had] made its appearance on the line of the canal near" Williamsport. There had been "6 cases within the last 3 days, and 5 deaths." A "new case" had been reported that very morning "on section 175" below Williamsport. Purcell said that the disease was "creating alarm among the hands" and would eventually "cause a general desertion of the line as the number of cases" increased.<sup>183</sup>

Although the cholera epidemic of 1833 was not as severe as the epidemic of the previous year, it took its toll in lives, and hindered the progress of the canal. During this epidemic, Williamsport officials took steps to care for the sick. On July 10, 1833, the town commissioners passed a resolution which stated that a committee should "be appointed to solicit subscriptions" from "citizens and others, for the completion of a hospital near the town." At the same time, four town commissioners were appointed to serve as an executive committee to see to the completion of the facility. Commissioners Elie Stake and Peter Steffey were to serve as representatives of the town on the executive committee, while commissioners James Fitzpatrick and James Fielding were to serve as representatives of the canal company. The executive committee was also instructed to see that the facility received the necessary aids and supplies. According to tradition, the hospital was located on "Hospital Hill" on the Clearspring Road just outside of Williamsport.<sup>184</sup>

The cholera epidemic of 1833 had apparently ended by early October. On October 1, the town commissioners of Williamsport passed a resolution which stated that a committee of three should

<sup>180</sup> *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, C, 212, 215. See also Sanderlin, *The Great National Project*, pages 94–97.

<sup>181</sup> *Williamsport Republican Banner*, October 13, 1832.

<sup>182</sup> Sanderlin, *The Great National Project*, pages 93, 97.

<sup>183</sup> Purcell to Eaton, June 24, 1832 [1833], Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co. See also Sanderlin, *The Great National Project*, page 117; and Williams, *History of Washington County, Maryland*, I: 223. Purcell also said that high water was doing damage to the canal. The rains that had fallen the past two days had caused Conococheague Creek to rise to such "a height as to overthrow & carry away one of the centers of the Aqueduct that was lately put up."

<sup>184</sup> "Minutes of the Town of Williamsport Meetings," July 10, 1833. The town minutes do not reveal exactly where the hospital was to be located. For a view of where tradition places the hospital, see map entitled "Williamsport Maryland, 1787" compiled by Pat Miller for the Williamsport Bicentennial Festival Actives Program, 1976

“be appointed to attend to the removing of the hospital to the market house lot in town for a school.”<sup>185</sup>

Several months after the epidemic of 1833 had ended, labor violence erupted on the canal near Williamsport. For some time, ill feeling had existed on the canal between two rival groups of Irish laborers. These groups were from two different parts of Ireland. Members of the first group were from Cork and were known as Corkonians. Members of the second group were called Fardowners or Longfords. Violence broke out between these groups in January 1834. At that time, the Corkonians were employed in the vicinity of Dam 5 above Williamsport. The Longfords were employed in the vicinity of Dam 4 below Williamsport. On January 20, members of the two rival factions had a brief encounter below Williamsport. Several persons were wounded. Two militia companies were summoned from Hagerstown to preserve order. The militia arrested thirty-four persons and took them back to Hagerstown. After the first encounter, the rival factions began to arm themselves for a greater battle. Since the town of Williamsport was situated between the two hostile groups, the citizens of the town formed citizen groups to protect the town. The Williamsport citizens also tried to patrol the aqueduct in order to keep the rival groups separated. Despite these precautions, however, the Corkonians soon went on the march and committed several acts of violence on the canal. On January 24, a party of about 300 Longfords marched up the canal armed with clubs, guns and helms. They were halted at the aqueduct by the Williamsport citizens who patrolled the aqueduct. They were allowed to cross the aqueduct, however, after they had given assurances that they intended only to make a show of strength. Shortly after the Longfords had crossed the aqueduct, they were joined by several hundred more members of their group. The combined Longford force met about 300 Corkonians near Dam 5. A short pitched battle followed, and the Corkonians were forced to retreat. At least five Corkonians had been killed in the short battle. The Longfords pursued the retreating enemy and killed many more Corkonians during the pursuit. The Longfords then disbanded and retired to their shanties near Dam 4. On the day after the battle, Washington County Sheriff William H. Fitzhugh arrived at Williamsport with the two militia companies from Hagerstown. Upon the arrival of the companies from Hagerstown, Colonel Jacob Wolf, former Burgess of Williamsport, and Captain Isaac H. Allen, a school teacher, immediately organized a local militia company known as the Williamsport Riflemen. A militia company from Clearspring also came down to help preserve order. The militia companies maintained order until two companies of the United States Army arrived from Fort McHenry. The leaders of the rival groups were eventually brought together and a peace agreement was signed.<sup>186</sup>

On February 3, 1834, the commissioners of Williamsport passed a resolution of thanks to all of the non-residents who had assisted in protecting the town “from violence during the late violent proceedings on the line of the canal.” The commissioners ordered that the resolution be published in the *Republican Banner*.<sup>187</sup>

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<sup>185</sup> “Minutes of the Town of Williamsport Meeting,” October 1, 1833.

<sup>186</sup> Sanderlin, *The Great National Project*, pages 117–118. See also Williams, *History of Washington County, Maryland*, I: 223–224.

<sup>187</sup> “Minutes of the Town of Williamsport Meetings,” February 3, 1834. In February of 1835, laborers struck for higher wages on the canal. There were some brief hostilities, but they were by no means as serious as the labor violence of the previous year. There were many other outbreaks of violence as construction proceeded towards Cumberland. See Sanderlin, *The Great National Project*, pages 119–122.

Although the canal company had been ailing financially since the cholera epidemic of 1832, construction was continued towards Williamsport. The joint construction of the canal and railroad between the Point of Rocks and Harpers Ferry was completed in April 1834. Also in 1834, that portion of the canal between Dam 3 at Harpers Ferry and Dam 4 below Williamsport was completed. With the slackwater formed by Dam 4, “boats could now reach Williamsport.”<sup>188</sup>

By 1834, however, the canal company was in desperate need of money. During this year of hard times, the canal company was able to continue construction through three means. First, the state of Maryland authorized an additional subscription of \$125,000 in March 1834. Secondly, the canal company began to issue canal scrip. Thirdly, the canal company was successful in securing loans from the Bank of the United States and from several local banks.<sup>189</sup>

The Washington County Bank, of Williamsport, was among those banks from which loans were acquired in 1834. On January 6, 1834, the Board authorized its Clerk to negotiate a loan with the Washington County Bank to pay the estimates due for work on the canal. On January 13, the Clerk reported that “he had negotiated a loan with the Washington County Bank, upon the following terms:

That the Bank should lend to the Canal Company for 90 days the sum of \$22,166.67 on the corporate note of the company with the following as collateral security: Viz. a transfer of an equal amount of the Stock of the Corporation of Washington: a pledge of the Installment of \$22,166.67 becoming due to the Canal Company on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of May next, by the Baltimore and Ohio Rail Road Company, covered by the acceptance of the Treasurer of the Canal Company for the same; and, a pledge of all monies received from delinquent subscribers to the Stock of the Company until the said note shall be paid.

The Board immediately authorized the loan upon the term stated above.<sup>190</sup>

In anticipation of the arrival of the canal at Williamsport, some residents made early application for privileges along the canal at Williamsport. As early as June 1833, one Eli Beatty made an application to purchase water power at Conococheague Aqueduct. Beatty also desired to exchange some land with the canal company near Williamsport, and, “to erect a warehouse on the margin of the Basin at Williams-Port.” Beatty’s letter was referred to Resident Engineer Purcell who was ordered to report on the request and to submit a map of the Williamsport area. It will be shown later that Beatty was granted his request for water after the canal was opened at Williamsport.<sup>191</sup>

By the end of 1834, the canal was almost ready to be watered from Dam 5 down to Lock 41. In anticipation of the watering of this portion of the canal, James Dunlop and other citizens of Franklin County, Pennsylvania requested the Board in late 1834, to have an engineer “examine the Conococheague River, with a view of making a Branch Canal down that stream from Cham-

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<sup>188</sup> Sanderlin, *The Great National Project*, page 113.

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*, page 129. In 1834, the company made unsuccessful appeals to the United States and the states of Virginia and Pennsylvania.

<sup>190</sup> *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, D, 39, 41–42, 66, 71. The Washington County Bank was authorized to receive deposits for the canal company on April 4, 1834.

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*, C, 376, 415–416.

bersburg to Williamsport.” Resident Engineer Purcell was ordered to make the examination, provided it did not interfere “with his duties at Williams-Port.” In early January of 1835, Purcell met with a committee of Chambersburg citizens. The citizens requested that Purcell furnish “a plan and estimate of the cost of improving the Creek.” The Board authorized Purcell on January 13, to make the survey provided the Chambersburg citizens “would pay the expenses necessarily incurred thereby.” It is not known at this time whether substantial improvements were made to the Conococheague as a result of these appeals from the citizens of Chambersburg.<sup>192</sup>

The water from Dam 5 was finally let onto the Williamsport level of the canal in April 1835. On April 11, *Niles’ Register* printed the following report on the town’s new life:

We learn from the *Williamsport Banner* . . . that the water was let into the canal below that place on the 1<sup>st</sup> inst. and it was expected that, in a very few days the canal would be navigable the whole distance from Dam No. 5, above Williamsport, to Washington city. The *Banner* says—‘The basin at the foot of Potomac Street has been for upwards of a week past, crowded with boats, arks, &c. laden with coal and flour, and that the busy, bustling appearance which the arrival of the boats has given to that part of the town, in the vicinity of the canal, is truly gratifying, and brings to mind the wharves of a commercial city.’<sup>193</sup>

On the same day, the *Williamsport Republican Banner* gave the following report on the town’s busy basin area and on the first boats to pass through the lock below the town:

Wednesday and Thursday last, the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> instant, were busy days with us on the canal. The water was let into the level next below Williamsport, and the numerous vessels which had, within the previous few days been literally wedged in our basins and canal, forming as complete a bridge of boats as ever crossed the Rhine, thronged and pressed to the lock, eager for passage below. As fast as balance beam and valve key could be plied, were they passed on amid the shouts of a number of our citizens, who had assembled to witness the novel sight. Of the number of vessels which were admitted, we have been duly informed; but our estimate, and we speak, we are sure, much within the number, is from fifty to sixty. . .

‘It was a glorious sight to see’ the numerous boats as they lay in the basin at night, each illuminated by a glowing coal fire, which cast ‘a long level rule of light’ across the water; and the silence of night was not unpleasantly interrupted by the cries of the hoarse boatmen, as they were disturbed from their moorings by new arrivals, and driven to closer contact with their neighbors. We heard divers remonstrances boisterous and uncouth against ‘scrowging,’ to make use of the navigator’s expressive, however, inelegant term.<sup>194</sup>

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<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*, D, 209, 219. The old Potomac Company had apparently made some improvements on both Antietam Creek and Conococheague Creek. On September 9, 1831, the Board ordered the Resident Engineer “to examine [the] works constructed by the late Potomac Company upon the Antietam and Conococheague river to make [an] estimate of [the] cost for proper improvements.” See *Ibid.*, B, 454.

<sup>193</sup> *Niles’ Register*, XLVIII (April 11, 1835), 89.

<sup>194</sup> *Williamsport Republican Banner*, April 11, 1835, quoted in *Niles’ Register*, XLVIII (April 25, 1835), 135. Since few issues of the local Washington County newspapers have survived from the year 1835, one must rely on sources such as *Niles’ Register* for reports on the opening days of the canal at Williamsport.

## CHAPTER 5

### Williamsport and the Canal in Operation, 1835–1850

Soon after the canal was watered at Williamsport, the Board appointed a committee to visit the finished portion of the canal, as well as the proposed line extending from Dam 5 to Cacapon. The committee was empowered to make any arrangements which were necessary for “the further progress of the work” above Dam 5. It was also ordered to deal with any “other matters” along the line of the canal. The committee was composed of President George C. Washington, Directors Walter Smith and William Gunton, the newly appointed Commissioner, George Bender, and the Clerk of the Company, John P. Ingle. The committee left Washington on May 11. It examined the proposed line from Dam 5 to Cacapon, and then proceeded down to Williamsport. Upon its arrival at Williamsport on May 12, it ordered Resident Engineer Thomas Purcell (who was stationed at Williamsport) “to proceed forthwith in the examination and location of the canal from the South Branch to Cumberland.” In order to provide for “the care and repair of the line below Dam No. 5” the committee appointed two additional superintendents and extended the territory covered by the existing superintendent. The area under the superintendency of John Y. Young was extended “as high up as Lock No. 25.” William Elgin was appointed “to superintend from that point [Lock 25] to Dam 3 above Harpers Ferry.” George W. Rogers was appointed “to superintend from Dam 3 to Dam 5.”<sup>195</sup>

Before leaving Williamsport, the committee acted on several applications from residents of Williamsport. These applications had been pending for some time. According to the committee, Joseph Hollman had “proposed to construct a flume around Lock No. 44 and to build for the Company a suitable house of brick or stone for the keeper of said lock.” Hollman proposed to build both the flume and lockhouse “under the direction of an Engineer of the Company.” Hollman would also serve as lockkeeper. In exchange for his services, Hollman proposed that he be allowed to use the water at the lock and be permitted to build “at his own cost a Dry Dock for the repair of boats.” He suggested that the agreement between himself and the company run for a term of twenty-one years. The committee reported that Hollman’s proposal had been accepted substantially though varied in form.” The committee agreed “to appoint” Hollman as “keeper of the Lock at \$150 per annum, during the faithful performance of the duty of Lock Keeper.” Hollman, however, was obliged to pay “the annual rent of \$150 for the water.”<sup>196</sup>

The committee also decided on the application of Eli Beatty of Williamsport. It should be remembered that Beatty had requested as early as June 1833 that he be allowed to purchase water at the Conococheague Aqueduct. Beatty made a similar application in February of 1835. According to the committee, Beatty was “the owner of the land adjoining the waste weir at Aqueduct 5.” The committee agreed to allow him to use “100 square inches of water at that place for ten years.” The water was “to be applied only to the use of grinding plaster, sawing and a planning machine.” Beatty was “to pay an annual rent of \$150, dating from the 1<sup>st</sup> day of March next.”<sup>197</sup>

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<sup>195</sup> *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, D, 310–312.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*, D, 313–314. Hollman had made his original proposal to the Board on February 25, 1835. See *Ibid.*, D, 255. Hollman never fulfilled his agreement to construct a house at Lock 44, although the Board continued to remind him of the agreement. See *Ibid.*, E, 202, 208, and F, 435–436, 495.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*, D, 230, 314.

The final application at Williamsport was from William Price, who was a member of the canal company's board of directors. According to the committee, Price owned land "on the towpath side of the canal opposite the above mentioned waste weir [at Aqueduct 5]." Price had "long since informed" the Board "of the nature of his claim for water power to be applied on his land." He was not prepared, however, to make a specific agreement at that time. The committee, therefore, decided "to allow him the privilege of taking one square foot at that place, within six months at the usual rate of price."<sup>198</sup>

By May 1835, Williamsport had become perhaps the second busiest town on the canal. The following report on the bustling little town appeared in the *National Intelligencer* of May 26:

From Williamsport. . . we learn that that town has quite a lively appearance, from the bustle of business, present and prospective. Among other circumstances, consequent on the extension of the Canal thus far, we learn that two considerable iron-masters in the neighborhood of Chambersburg, in Pennsylvania, have agreed to send, each, five thousand tons of bar-iron and castings to Williamsport, this year, for transportation down the Canal, to be forwarded to New York, Massachusetts, &c. The advantage of [this] arrangement to them is, that the same wagons which bring down the iron, can load back with coal from the Canal. For the purpose of this branch of business a very large warehouse is now building on the margin of the Basin of the Canal at Williamsport. We understand, further, that the officers of the Company, on a late visit up the line of the Canal, made a disposition of water power to individuals at three different places in the vicinity of Williamsport.

It should be noted that the above report from the *National Intelligencer* stated that "a very large warehouse" was being built "on the margin of the Basin of the canal at Williamsport." This warehouse was probably owned by Ann Williams. It would later be owned by Charles Embrey and eventually by Victor Cushwa. Architectural evidence indicates that the main part of the brick portion of the Cushwa Warehouse was built sometime between 1835–1840.<sup>199</sup>

As the canal went into operation at Williamsport, town officials took steps to further improve the town. In anticipation of the canal being opened at Williamsport, the town commissioners on January 5, 1835, authorized the Burgess to "have the public square near the basin of the canal laid off into lots suitable for building warehouses on." The Burgess was also authorized to seek "legal advice" to "ascertain whether or not the Corporation [of the town]" had "the power to lease said lots." If the town had such power, the Burgess was authorized to advertise the lots for lease. The lots were probably laid off sometime before 1838. A sketch map which was drawn in 1838 shows a warehouse situated on the public square.<sup>200</sup>

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<sup>198</sup> Ibid, D, 314–315. When the committee had completed its business at Williamsport, it was disappointed "to find that from the want of water they could not return by canal, and transact the other business assigned to them on the line." The committee was therefore "constrained to take the stage." It arrived back in the District on May 15. See Ibid, D, 315.

<sup>199</sup> Washington *National Intelligencer*, May 26, 1835. According to National Park Service Architect, James Askins, the earliest part of the Cushwa Warehouse was built sometime between 1790–1810. The structure was enlarged sometime between 1835–1840 in order to accommodate the canal trade. See Harlan D. Unrau, unpublished *HSR, The Cushwa Warehouse* (Seneca, Maryland: National Park Service, 1977), page 15.

<sup>200</sup> "Minutes of the Town of Williamsport Meetings," January 5, 1835. For a view of the sketch map showing a warehouse on the public square in 1838, see Appendix I: taken from Rogers [Report] to Ingle, December 28, 1838, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

The individual citizens of Williamsport were also apparently eager to see improvements made in 1835. On March 27, twenty-two residents of Potomac Street presented a Memorial to the Burgess and Commissioners requesting that the streets of Williamsport be graded and paved on the McAdam plan. The memorial said:

To the Burgess and Commissioners of Williamsport. The undersigned, the owners of property recpt. request the Burgess and Commissioners to cause to be graded on a permanent plan the streets from curb to curb on the McAdam plan, with a depth of stone in the center of not less than ten inches tapering to the sides not less than seven inches and not to exceed in weight six ounces, also to pave and space sufficient space to carry the water along the curb stones and to raise the necessary funds to complete the same according to the act passed at December session 1833, 1834.

John Van Lear—Acting Exec. of Mary Van Lear	Trustees of the M. E. Church
Jacob Rhodes, Jr.	John Hogg
Elie Stake	Wm. Van Lear
Wm. Van Lear—Agent for Mrs. Williams	O. H. Williams
H. McPherson—Cash.	John Herr
Jacob Whitman	J. I. Stake
Elizabeth Whitman	W. S. Morrison
M. A. Finley	Michael Kreps
Dan Porter	Dr. Dan Weisel—Trustee
M. S, Van Lear—Adm. of W. H. Van Lear	Jacob Wolf
Ben Regel	C. A. Warfield

In response to the memorial, the Commissioners ordered the Burgess to appoint a committee of five “to attend particularly to the grading of Potomac Street preparatory to the paving of said street in compliance with the memorial of a majority of the property holders.” The Burgess appointed Elie Stake, M. A. Finley, John Hogg, Benj. Regel and Wm. J. Morrison to serve on the committee. The Commissioners then ordered the Burgess to “give public notice in the *Republican Banner*” that “proposals” would be received until the tenth of April for paving Potomac Street.” The town fathers continued to follow up on the request of the citizens of Potomac Street. On April 15, 1835, the Commissioners announced that Peter McCoskar’s proposal for the paving of Potomac Street had been accepted “(According to Specifications) at thirty dollars, per rod.” On April 21, the Commissioners ordered that the property owners along Potomac Street were to pay one-sixth of the paving tax by May 1, 1836, and one-sixth “on the first day of each succeeding month until the amount required by the contract for [the] grading and paving [of] Potomac Street shall be received.” The paving of Potomac Street on the McAdam plan was completed in October of 1836. On October 25, 1836, the committee which had been appointed to supervise the paving of the street reported “that the improvement of said street” had “been done according to contract specifications.”<sup>201</sup>

On December 7, 1835, the town commissioners unanimously passed a resolution stating “that Commerce Street should be extended in a straight line, parallel with the property owned by Gen. O. H. Williams to Potomac Street with a width of One Hundred and Five feet.” At the same time, the Commissioners also passed a resolution stating “that a street of twenty-two feet in width should be opened running west from Commerce Street as extended, through the center of the public square to the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, said street to be called Canal Street.” The “bal-

<sup>201</sup> “Minutes of the Town of Williamsport Meetings,” March 27, April 15, 17, 21, 1835 and October 25, 1836.

ance of the ground in the public square” was to “be laid off in lots, and sold at public sale, provided that the highest bides” were “as much as the Burgess and Commissioners” considered “the lots to be worth.” These improvements were apparently made sometime between late 1835 and late 1838. An 1838 sketch map of the basin area shows the road which ran through the public square to the canal bridge. This same map also shows a warehouse situated on the public square.<sup>202</sup>

In the past, some historians have apparently misinterpreted the Commissioners’ resolutions of December 7, 1835. The authors of the Williamsport Chamber of Commerce publication entitled *Williamsport and Vicinity Reminiscences* (1933), erroneously wrote that on December 7, 1835 the Commissioners “unanimously resolved, That Salisbury Street be extended west from Commerce Street.” The authors therefore concluded that at this time Salisbury Street was extended through the hill and “the bridge built” to give the town easy access to the ferry. Some other sources also maintain that a bridge was built over the canal at Salisbury Street in the late 1830s.<sup>203</sup> A careful examination of the Minutes of the town meeting of December 7, 1835 shows that no reference was made to Salisbury Street. The business regarding the extending of Commerce Street through the Public Square was clearly stated as follows:

The business in relation to the public square was then taken up and disposed of as follows. It was unanimously resolved that Commerce Street should be extended in a straight line, parallel with the property owned by Gen. O. H. Williams to Potomac Street with a width of One Hundred and Five feet. It was also resolved that a street of twenty-two feet in width should be opened running west from Commerce Street as extended, through the center of the public square to the Ches. and Ohio Canal, said street to be called Canal Street. It was also resolved that the balance of the ground in the public square should be laid off into lots, and sold at public sale, provided that the highest bids should be as much as the Burgess and Commissioners think the lots to be worth.<sup>204</sup>

The above resolutions made no reference to the extension of Salisbury Street. No documentary evidence has been found to indicate when Salisbury Street was extended through the hill to the canal. A map dated October 4, 1867 shows that the street had been extended through the hill by 1867. The resolutions of December 7, 1835, however, did not call for the extension of Salisbury Street, and that street was most likely not extended through the deep cut until many years later.<sup>205</sup>

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<sup>202</sup> “Minutes of the Town of Williamsport Meetings,” December 7, 1835. For a view of the 1838 sketch map which shows the road, bridge and warehouse, see Appendix I. The owners of the warehouse may have leased a lot on the square in accordance with the Commissioners’ resolution of January 5, 1835, or they may have purchased a lot on the square in accordance with the Commissioners’ resolution of December 7, 1835. It should also be noted that the Commissioners’ resolution of December 7, 1835 said that the smaller street was to be called Canal Street. The present-day Canal Street is on the south end of Riverview Cemetery and extends west from Vermont Street to the Canal. Therefore, it is unlikely that the Commissioners’ resolution of 1835 was referring to the construction of the present Canal Street.

<sup>203</sup> Williamsport Chamber of Commerce, *Williamsport and Vicinity Reminiscences*, page 80. The publication admits that no documentation has been found to indicate when Salisbury Street was extended through the hill. For other sources that maintain that a canal bridge was built at the end of Salisbury Street in the late 1830s, see Thomas F. Hahn, *Towpath Guide to the C & O Canal*, 4 vols. (Glen Echo, Maryland: Thomas Hahn Printer, 1973), III: 49–50; and George “Hooper” Wolfe’s article in the *Hagerstown Daily Mail*, August 6, 1971.

<sup>204</sup> “Minutes of the Town of Williamsport Meetings,” December 7, 1835.

<sup>205</sup> For a view of the 1867 map which shows a bridge at Salisbury Street, see Appendix K: Map Showing “Whites Addition to Williamsport” drawn by S. S. Downin, October 4, 1867, recorded in Washington County Land Records, Liber 89, folio 168.

The officials of Williamsport continued to authorize improvements during the late 1830s. In August of 1838, the Commissioners ordered that the fence enclosing the market house lot be repaired. In early January of 1839 the Commissioners called a special meeting of the citizens to form a fire company. The fire company which was formed in 1839 was probably the first organized company in the town's history. The first officers appointed to the company were among the most prominent men of town.<sup>206</sup>

The arrival of the canal in 1835 brought many jobs to Williamsport. It should be noted, however, that from the very beginning of its construction in 1828, the canal had provided employment for a number of Williamsport's residents. Joseph Hollman, for example, had boated cement for the construction of the canal during 1830 and 1831. During the summer of 1832, he was awarded the contract to build Dam 4 and in 1834 he probably did some work on Dam 5. Other citizens were also associated with the canal long before it reached Williamsport. Charles Embrey was involved with the canal as early as 1829. After he moved to Williamsport in 1833 he continued to boat stone for the lower sections of the canal. Elie Stake was a contractor on the canal in 1833, 1834 and 1835. Other citizens were probably employed quite early as laborers on the canal.<sup>207</sup> The arrival of the canal at Williamsport, however, created many more canal-related jobs. The arrival of the canal also created opportunities for industrious individuals to develop businesses which were uniquely related to the canal.

Soon after the canal was opened at Williamsport, the job of "Collector of Tolls" was created for that port. On May 27, 1835, the Board appointed William Harvey<sup>208</sup> of Williamsport as the first Collector of Tolls at Williamsport. Harvey was to be paid \$250 per annum. During the late 1830s, no one held the position of Collector of Tolls for very long. Harvey was Collector for just over a year. The Board accepted his resignation on August 17, 1836. His resignation was to take effect on September 1. The Board appointed the storekeeper, William Morrison, to succeed Harvey. Morrison became ill in late 1837 and the Board gave him the authority to appoint James R. Armin as Acting Collector. On February 12, 1838, Armin informed the Board that Morrison had died. On the same day, the Board appointed Armin as Collector. Armin submitted his resignation, however, on February 8, 1839 to take effect on March 1. William Irwin was appointed to replace him. When Irwin was appointed, the Collector's salary was increased from \$250 per year to \$400 per year. Irwin died sometime around February of 1840. On February 27, 1840, the Board appointed Joseph Hollman as Acting Collector to serve until a regular appointment could be made. William McKeppler was appointed to the regular position on May 7, 1840. His appointment was to take effect on May 12, 1840.<sup>209</sup>

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<sup>206</sup> "Minutes of the Town of Williamsport Meetings," August 4, 1838, January 4 and November 14, 1839. See also Williamsport Chamber of Commerce, *Williamsport and Vicinity Reminiscences*, page 83.

<sup>207</sup> For Hollman's early employment on the canal, see *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, A, 348, 412; B, 10; C, 45, 165, 212, 215, 228, 250, 311, 315, 334; D, 24, 84, 86, 95, 122, 130, 144, 154, 159, 162, 169, 171. See also Hollman to Ingle, September 4, and October 29, 1832. For Embrey's early employment on the canal, see *Ibid*, A, 317; C, 36, 248, 263, 319, 382, 384, 393, 396. For Stake's contracts, see *Ibid*, C, 88, 185, 232, 309, 432.

<sup>208</sup> When Harvey was appointed to the position his name appeared in the Proceedings of the Board as "William Harvey." When his resignation was accepted on August 17, 1836, however, his name appeared as "James Harvey." The latter is undoubtedly an error, because his acceptance letter of June 1, 1835 is signed "W. Harvey." See Harvey to Ingle, June 1, 1835, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

<sup>209</sup> *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, D, 320, 327; E, 122, 130, 135, 338, 364–365, 369; F, 7, 18, 175, 188, 210.

During the period from May 1835 through May 1840 all of the turnovers in the position of Collector of Tolls at Williamsport were caused by deaths and voluntary resignations. In May 1840, however, the spoils system was brought to the canal for the first time. It will be shown later how this system was used in regard to the position of Collector of Tolls at Williamsport.

Soon after the canal was opened at Williamsport, the officials of the canal company received several letters from prominent citizens who desired to take advantage of the new waterway. On July 11, 1835, for example, Michael A. Finley informed the Board that he and Charles A. Warfield had “had constructed a small boat, 25 feet in length, adapted for use on the canal.” They intended to use the boat primarily for “short excursions” with their “families and friends.” The boat was large enough, however, to be used “as a packet or pleasure boat for the convenience of parties” who might want to visit Williamsport. Finley requested that the regular toll for operating his boat on the canal be reduced whenever he used it for family excursions. The regular toll, according to Finley, was “8 cents per the first 15 miles.” Finley was somewhat willing to pay the regular toll whenever his boat was used by others as a packet or pleasure boat. He felt, however, that since his boat was “much smaller” than “other boats” the Board should even reduce the toll he would pay whenever the boat was used to carry parties of visitors. Such a reduction, according to Finley, “would no doubt increase the revenue” by inducing more people to make pleasure trips. The canal company records do not reveal what action was taken by the Board in response to Finley’s letter.<sup>210</sup>

On July 27, 1835, Charles A. Warfield of A., informed the Board that he was contemplating the building of “a large warehouse” on his lot “immediately adjoining the Canal Company’s lot at Lock 44.” The warehouse would be used “for the receipt & forwarding of Produce.” Although the warehouse would be entirely on Warfield’s lot, he needed to create a basin so that boats could be maneuvered up to his proposed warehouse. Therefore, he requested that he be allowed to make “an excavation of 15 to 20 feet fronting the Canal, running back parallel with the Western line of the Company’s lot, not less than 120 feet to a street [present-day Canal Street], and to the depth of the Canal.” The excavation would be confined entirely to Warfield’s lot. In response to this request the Board directed Division Superintendent, George W. Rogers “to present a plat of the ground near the Lock, in order that the Board” could “grant the request if it” decided that the basin would not “interfere with the use and repairing of the Canal.” Permission was eventually granted and the basin was created immediately above Lock 44. In the same letter, Warfield also informed the Board that he had “commenced to run a regular line of Burthen Boats from Williamsport to Georgetown.” For this business, Warfield required a piece of ground at Georgetown “for the deposit of Plaster or other articles, designed as back loading for the Boats.” Therefore, he requested the Board to rent him “a piece of ground near the outlet lock at Georgetown.” In response to this request, the Board voted to rent him “a part of the Mole at Rock Creek” for “a period not exceeding one year.”<sup>211</sup>

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<sup>210</sup> Finley to Washington, July 11, 1835, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

<sup>211</sup> Warfield to President and Directors, July 27, 1835, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co. See also *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, D, 372. At the time that Warfield made his request concerning the creation of the basin, he apparently had not yet received a deed for his land near Lock 44. Warfield’s deed for Lots 1 and 19 in Howard’s Addition near Lock 44 was made on February 12, 1836 and recorded on March 10 of that year. The two lots were acquired from “Ann Williams Executrix and Benjamin C. Howard Executor of the last will and testament of Edward G. Williams.” Howard’s Addition to Williamsport was apparently named for Benjamin C. Howard. The nineteen lots within Howard’s Addition were probably laid off in the early 1830s in anticipation of the arrival of the

By the end of 1835, at least five firms at Williamsport were actively engaged in canal shipping. The five firms had a combined total of “Ten Boats running regularly from Williamsport to the District.” Each boat carried approximately “35 Ton[s] each.” In December of 1835 the five firms informed the canal company that they desired to continue shipping “during the Winter.” They offered to use “Two scows” to “break the ice” if the Canal Company would reduce the tolls during the winter season. In the following joint letter the five firms tried to convince the Board that the canal company would profit greatly by allowing the “Canal from Williamsport to George Town” to be kept open during the winter months:

To the Honorable the President and Directors of the Chesapeake & O Canal Co.

Gentlemen:

The undersigned, transporters of produce on the Chesapeake & O Canal at Williamsport, beg leave respectfully to suggest to your honorable body, the importance of keeping open the navigation on the Canal from Williamsport to George Town during the Winter. They believe, it is only necessary to submit the following facts, in order to convince your honorable board, that it is in the interest of the Company you represent, to provide the means for accomplishing this object, forthwith. Two scows, one a Williamsport and one at George Town to start simultaneously and meet at Harpers Ferry, and return again with hands and horses, sufficient to break the ice, would not cost more than (\$120) one hundred and twenty dollars.

Since the reduction of the toll & transportation on the Canal a large quantity of produce has been brought to Williamsport for transportation to George Town, and a great demand is thereby created, for Plaster, salt, etc., as back loading for the teams. It has only been within a few weeks past, that the millers & Farmers of Franklin County, Pa. Have been brought to see & feel the decided advantages which the George Town market affords, in consequence of the difference in carriage—and all eyes are now turned to Williamsport—and although some of our transporting merchants had laid in, as they supposed large supplies of Plaster & salt, they now find, that the quantity, falls far short of the demand—every Ton of Plaster & every bushel of Salt, has already been sold or engaged.

There are Ten Boats running regularly from Williamsport to the District, one from the mouth of Opequon, one from Sucks landing, and five from Shepherds town, amounting in all to 17 Boats, averaging 35 Tons each. From the following statement, your honorable body will at once perceive the advantage of such an arrangement to the Canal Company. Viz.

10 Boats from Williamsport Down, 35 Tons Each is 350 Tons at 1.50	= \$525
10 Boats return loading say 25 Tons Each is 250 Tons at 1.00	= \$250
7 Boats from say Shepherdstown down 35 Tons Each is 245 Tons at 1.00	= \$245
7 Boats return loading say 25 Tons Each is 175 tons at .80	= \$140
	\$1160
- Deduct expense of Ice Breaking	<u>120</u>
	\$1040

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canal at Williamsport. For a view of Howard’s Addition and Warfield’s Basin on Lot number 1, see Appendix L: Plat of Williamsport, Md., drawn by S. S. Downin, August 28, 1891, recorded in Washington County Land Records, Liber 97, folio 698. See also Appendix M: “Map of Lots Laid off adjoining Wms. Port above Lock No. 44 Bounded on the West by the Ches. & Ohio Canal,” drawn by S. S. Downin, 1882, recorded in Washington County Land Records, Liber 81, folio 704. For Warfield’s deed to Lots 1 and 19, see Deed, Ann Williams, Executrix and Benjamin C. Howard, Executor, to Charles A. Warfield of A., February 12, 1836, in Washington County Land Records, Liber RR 37, folios 552–554. Earlier, another prominent Williamsport merchant and businessman, Joseph Hollman, purchased Lots 2 and 18 on June 30, 1835. See Deed, Ann Williams, Executrix and Benjamin C. Howard, Executor, to Joseph Hollman, June 30, 1835, Washington County Land Records, Liber RR 37, folios 291–292.

leaving a gain of about one thousand dollars in Two Weeks (allowing nothing for Harpers Ferry & other places). Should this arrangement not be made, the whole of the produce of this rich Valley, will be crowded into the Balt. Market by the Rail Road, and of course, will be so much lost to the Canal Company. Should it not be the pleasure of your honorable body to enter into this arrangement, the undersigned propose, at their own risk & expense to keep open the navigation in the manner proposed above, upon the condition that the Canal Co. relinquish in their favor, fifty cents per Ton on all produce sent down the Canal during the continuance of the Ice, and fifty cents per Ton on all back loading to Williamsport, and the same ration on all exports & imports to & from other places below Williamsport.

In conclusion, the undersigned beg leave to call the attention of your honorable body to this subject as early as possible in as much as a large portion of the trade, has already been diverted to Frederick in consequence of the closing of the navigation on the Canal, and which circumstance is calculated to injure the character of our place as a market, while it deprives the Canal Co. of toll on the produce down, and the advantages of the toll on the return loading, to say nothing of the loss to George Town & the other Cities of the District, of this trade.

[signed by:]

Warfield & Hollyday  
 Jos. T. Van Lear  
 Anderson & Lyons  
 Wm. S. Morrison  
 Joseph Hollman

The Board took up the above letter from the Williamsport shippers on December 19. After considering the subject, the Board ordered the Superintendents of the canal “to employ Ice breakers for keeping open the navigation when practicable.”<sup>212</sup>

The canal business at Williamsport continued to thrive throughout the remainder of the 1830s. On June 20, 1836, Joseph Hollman (who was already boating produce) informed the Board that he was about to form a Packet Boat Company to run between Shepherdstown and Williamsport. Hollman requested that his company be given privileges similar to those already “granted to the Georgetown Canal Packet Co. and upon” similar terms. The Board voted to grant Hollman’s request upon the condition that their “agreement be made for the remainder of the present year only.”<sup>213</sup>

In 1835 and 1836 the Board voted to make some improvements on the Williamsport level. As early as July 13, 1835, the Board ordered Commissioner Bender to report “upon the expediency of walling up the Margin of the Basin at Williamsport, and of renting out the disposable land of the Company near said Basin.” At the same time, the Board ordered Superintendent Rogers “to mark out the property of the Canal Company around the Basin at Williamsport,” and prepare “a

<sup>212</sup> Warfield, Holliday & Others to President and Board of Directors, December 11, 1835, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co. See also *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, D, 440. One of the above shippers was probably leasing Mrs. Williams’ Warehouse, but I found no evidence to suggest who was leasing Mrs. Williams’ Warehouse at this time.

<sup>213</sup> *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, E, 77. On August 17, 1836 the Board allowed Hollman to join in a partnership with John D. Grove to build “a Towpath from Guard Lock No. 4 to Lk. 41.” The two men had until April 1, 1837 to complete “that part of it below Galloways’ Mill, and to the 1<sup>st</sup> day of January 1838 for the completion of the entire work.” See *Ibid*, E, 123. Also on August 17, 1836 the proposal submitted by Joseph Hollman and George Reynolds for the construction of Dam 6 was accepted by the Board with some modifications. See *Ibid*, E, 141.

plan and estimate for walling up the same.” Rogers was then to submit his plan and estimate to the Commissioner. On August 17, 1836 the Board reported that an “application” had been made to the Board “to wall up the sides of the Basin at Williamsport.” The Board therefore passed a resolution directing the Superintendent “to cause the walls to be erected,” as soon as the Burgess and Commissioners of the Town of Williamsport” had provided “for conveying the wash of Potomac Street into the Conococheague Creek near Mrs. Williams’ ware House.” The Board ordered that a copy of its resolution be transmitted to the officials of Williamsport. The Burgess and Commissioners of Williamsport took up the canal company’s resolution on September 6. After considering the matter, the Commissioners directed the Burgess “to notify the Superintendent [canal superintendent] that the proviso of the Board of Directors could not be complied with.” Since the town officials rejected the canal company’s proviso at that time, it is difficult to establish exactly when the basin was eventually walled up.<sup>214</sup>

In July of 1836 Elie Beatty informed the Board that water from the waste weir “near Williamsport” was causing “serious injury to this land.” Since he owned land “on the towpath side of the canal opposite” the waste weir at Aqueduct 5, this was probably the waste weir that he was referring to. The Board referred the matter to Superintendent Rogers. On October 14, Beatty reminded the Board of the problem. The Board therefore took up Superintendent Roger’s report on the problem. After considering the report, the Board ordered the Superintendent “to have protection walls” constructed on Beatty’s land in order to prevent further water damage.<sup>215</sup>

On December 8, 1838 the J. A. Magruder Company of Georgetown notified the Board that it had opened a store at Williamsport, and intended to run “a line of Boats on the Canal.” Magruder wanted to erect a warehouse on one of the canal company’s lots near the main basin in Williamsport. Magruder gave the following description of the lot on which he wanted to build his warehouse:

. . . [the] lot ‘bounded on the West by the Canal and Aqueduct and running East between the Basin and Creek to the Street [probably Water Street] running north and south on the East side of the Basin.’

Magruder desired to know “on what terms” would the Board lease the above lot. The Board took up Magruder’s letter on December 19, and referred it to Superintendent Rogers with instructions to prepare a report on the application. On December 28, Rogers submitted his report which contained “a rough sketch of the Basin” at Williamsport. The rough plan or sketch map is very important because it is probably the only early basin map that is still in existence. Rogers’ report recommended that the Board grant Magruder permission to build the warehouse. The Board, however, referred the report to a committee, and the records of the canal company do not reveal

<sup>214</sup> Ibid, D, 366 and E, 123. See also “Minutes of the Town of Williamsport Meetings,” September 6, 1836. *The Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors* do not reveal who made the initial application for the walling up of the basin.

<sup>215</sup> *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, E, 98, 155. See also footnote 3 in Chapter V of this study report. Beatty apparently had first informed the Board of the problem on March 30, 1836. At that time he described the problem as a “leak . . . under the Eastern step of the Waste Weir.” He had observed the leak “in Oct. or Nov. last,” and had mentioned it to the Superintendent. Since “the thaw it had increased to an alarming extent.” See Beatty to Ingle, March 30, 1836, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

what subsequent action was taken on the subject. Since the Superintendent recommended that permission be granted, it is likely that the warehouse was eventually built.<sup>216</sup>

During the final years of the 1830s, the prosperity of Williamsport probably declined somewhat because of the Panic of 1837 and the nationwide depression that followed. According to Williams' *History of Washington County, Maryland*, the Washington County Bank at Williamsport was forced to temporarily suspend specie payments in October 1839. The optimism of the town's citizens, however, remained high. Many felt that Williamsport would soon become the terminus of the Franklin Railroad. In April 1839, the Franklin Company made a conditional offer to extend the railroad to Williamsport. Williamsport was apparently slow in meeting the conditions of the company. Hagerstown, on the other hand, eagerly accepted a similar proposal from the company and thus became the terminus for the railroad in 1841.<sup>217</sup>

By 1840 Williamsport had become a well-established center for the canal trade. The canal company, however, was still being plagued by financial difficulties and the waterway had only recently been completed to Dam 6. In order to understand the financial difficulties of the canal company up to this point, it is necessary to go back in our story to the year 1834. In that difficult year the canal company had been able to continue construction through three means. First the state of Maryland had authorized a small additional subscription of \$125,000 in March 1834. Secondly, the canal company began to issue canal scrip. Thirdly, the canal company was successful in securing loans from the Bank of the United States and from several local banks. Through these means, the canal company was able to complete the canal to Williamsport and Dam 5 by the early Spring of 1835. In the meantime, the canal company and the citizens of Western Maryland had begun a well-organized campaign to get the Maryland Legislature to provide \$2,000,000 for the completion of the canal to Cumberland. Although the \$2,000,000 figure would later prove to be inadequate, company officials felt assured in 1834 that this sum would be sufficient to complete the project. The Maryland Legislature responded to the appeals of the company and citizens of Western Maryland by passing an act in March 1835 which provided for a loan of \$2,000,000. The loan was payable to the canal company in installments spreading over a period of almost two years. State bonds were issued to pay for the loan. The bonds were sold with little difficulty, and the canal company took "the proceeds from the first installment" of the \$2,000,000 loan and paid off its "entire debt of over a half million dollars." Construction was then resumed on that portion of the canal between Dam 5 and Dam 6. The company also began to locate the line from Dam 6 to Cumberland. The \$2,000,000 loan had been based on Engineer Alfred Cruger's 1834 estimate of the cost of the twenty-seven and a half miles between Dam 5 and Dam 6. Because of rising inflation, however, Cruger's 1834 estimate fell far below the actual costs. By June 1836 his estimate for the twenty-seven and a half miles between Dam 5 and Dam 6 had been revised twice and the latter estimate was four times the 1834 estimate. The canal

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<sup>216</sup> For Superintendent Rogers' report and sketch map, see Appendix I. See also Appendix J: James A. Magruder, Report of G. W. Rogers, Referred January 9, 1839 to the President, Wm Gunton & Phineas Janney, in Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.; Dodge to Ingle, December 15, 1838, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.; Magruder to the President and Board, December 8, 1838, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.; and *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, E, 534.

<sup>217</sup> Williams, *History of Washington County, Maryland*, I: 258–260. The conditions of the company's offer were that the citizens of Williamsport subscribe to \$10,000 worth of the company's stock by May 1, 1839, and subscribe to "such further amount as would pay for the right-of-way in a direct line from Mason's and Dixon's line to the town." For further evidence that some of Williamsport's residents expected the Franklin Railroad to come to Williamsport, see Superintendent Rogers' report in Appendix J.

company was forced as early as January 1836 to suspend all preparations of the line between Dam 6 and Cumberland. At the same time, the work between Dam 5 and Dam 6 was curtailed. Once again the canal company turned to the state of Maryland for aid. This time, the state responded by passing an act on June 4, 1836 which provided for a subscription of \$3,000,000 to the canal company. The subscription was in the form of state bonds. Unlike the 1835 bonds, which were sold with little difficulty, the 1836 bonds proved to be difficult to market. The canal company, however, proceeded to execute the work between Dam 5 and Dam 6 and resumed the preparation of the line above Dam 6. In September 1837 the company let contracts for all the sections between Dam 6 and Cumberland despite the fact that the 1836 bonds still had not been sold. The state's agents tried unsuccessfully in 1837 to dispose of the bonds in Europe.<sup>218</sup> After the state's agents had failed to sell the bonds, the canal company made an unsuccessful attempt to sell them in the spring of 1838. By the end of May 1838, it looked as if the bonds were not going to be sold anytime soon. The board therefore "decided to seek loans from the banks on the pledge of the bonds while awaiting an improvement in the money markets." The decision ushered in what canal historian Walter Sanderlin has called "one of the most disastrous episodes in the canal's history." According to Sanderlin, the canal company obtained loans in America and in Europe "on the pledge of Maryland bonds at 85." When the huge debt caused by these loans was finally liquidated between June 1839 and June 1840 "the bonds were sold for an average of 66 and 67 in New York, and 71 in England. Only in Baltimore and Washington did the company salvage even the 85 percent hypothecated value."<sup>219</sup>

By early 1840, it was generally recognized by the board of directors of the canal company and by the contractors on the line between Dam and Cumberland that construction would have to be halted. When the Maryland legislature adjourned in March 1840 without providing for further aid, a work stoppage of some kind was almost assured. The contractors, however, continued with their works throughout the remainder of 1840 and the first half of 1841. In August of 1841, the Board finally ordered the suspension of all work. According to Sanderlin's history of the canal,

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<sup>218</sup> One of the three agents appointed by the state in December 1836 to negotiate the sale of bonds in Europe was Chief Justice John Buchanan of "Woodland" near Williamsport. See *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, E, 226–227, 259. The other two agents were George Peabody and Thomas Emery. When the appointments were made, Peabody was already in Europe. Justice Buchanan and Thomas Emery went to England in the spring of 1837. After their mission had failed, they returned to the United States in December 1837. Peabody remained in Europe. In April 1805 Buchanan had been appointed Chief Judge of the Fifth Judicial Circuit which was composed of Frederick, Washington, and Allegany Counties. As head of the Fifth Judicial Circuit, Buchanan automatically became an Associate Justice of the Court of Appeals of Maryland. John Buchanan's younger brother, Thomas Buchanan, of "Woodburn" near Downsville, joined him on the bench of the Fifth Circuit Court in 1815. In July 1824, John Buchanan became the Chief Justice of the Court of Appeals of Maryland. In 1832, as Chief Justice, he delivered the majority opinion for the Court in the case of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Co. vs. the Baltimore and Ohio railroad. John Buchanan became the son-in-law of Colonel Elie Williams who was the first Clerk of the Circuit Court for Washington County, and the brother of General Otho Holland Williams. John Buchanan served as Chief Justice until his death at age 73 in 1844. Thomas Buchanan remained on the Fifth Circuit Court until his death in 1847. See Williams, *History of Washington County, Maryland*, I: 132–134. Daniel Weisel, a native of Williamsport then living at Hagerstown, was named by Governor Pratt to fill the vacancy caused by John Buchanan's death in 1844. See *Ibid*, I: 241.

<sup>219</sup> Sanderlin, *The Great National Project*, pages 104–108, 111, 130–134. In 1838 and 1839 the canal company was again plagued by labor violence which also hindered the progress of construction. See *Ibid*, pages 120–121.

some contractors were able to write “drafts on the company” and thus continued to work for a while longer. By December 1842, however, all the work came to a halt.<sup>220</sup>

Despite the fact that Williamsport had become a well-established trade center by 1840, the town’s continued growth and prosperity was dependent on the success of the canal. During the decade of the 1840s (as during most of the decades of its existence), the canal was not a successful enterprise.<sup>221</sup>

During the height of the canal company’s financial problems in mid-1840, the spoils system was brought to the canal. At Williamsport, George W. Rogers was removed as Superintendent of the Third Division. He was replaced by John D. Grove. On May 7, Joseph Hollman, the Acting Collector of Tolls at Williamsport, was promoted to Superintendent of the Fourth Division. Upon Holman’s promotion, William McKepplar became Collector of Tolls at Williamsport. These officials, however, did not remain in their new positions very long. In April 1841, a new Board proceeded to reinstate many of the officials who had been removed in May 1840. By mid-April of 1841, George W. Rogers had been reappointed to his old job as Superintendent of the Third Division (the Williamsport Division); John G. Stone had resumed his old job as Superintendent of the Fourth Division; and Elie Stake had replaced William McKepplar as Collector of Tolls at Williamsport. The new Board passed a resolution forbidding company officials from interfering in politics.<sup>222</sup>

In spite of the financial problems of the canal company, Williamsport remained a fairly active canal center during the decade of the 1840s. Evidence that Williamsport remained a fairly active canal center during the 1840s can be found in the various applications for privileges along the canal at Williamsport during the 1840s. In May 1840, Eli Stake informed the Board that he was about to construct a Boat Yard at Williamsport. He desired “to cut the Berm Bank of the Canal for the purpose of passing Boats into” the “Boat Yard.” His application was referred to the Superintendent of the Williamsport Division. The canal company’s records do not indicate if permission was granted. Stake’s letter is instructive, however, because it suggests that the canal trade at Williamsport was still quite active despite the financial condition of the company.<sup>223</sup>

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<sup>220</sup> Ibid, pages 135–137. During the period between 1838–1842, the Board was able to continue construction primarily by obtaining loans from banks and by issuing more canal scrip. See Ibid, pages 131–137. The state of Maryland authorized an additional subscription of \$1,375,000 to the canal company’s stock, but these bonds like the 1836 bonds, did not find a ready market.

<sup>221</sup> The population of Williamsport in 1840 is not known. The town’s population had been 859 in 1830. By 1850 it had increased to only 1,091. This latter figure suggests that the town grew only slightly after the canal was opened in 1835. For Williamsport’s population in 1830, see Williams, *History of Washington County, Maryland*, I: 196. The following source: United States Census Office, *Compendium of the Enumeration of the Inhabitants and Statistics of the United States as obtained at the Department of State, From the Returns of the Sixth Census (1840) by Counties and Principal Towns* (Washington: Thomas Allen Printer, 1841), pages 28–31, gives the population of Hagerstown in 1840, but does not give the population of Williamsport. For Williamsport’s population in 1850, see United States Superintendent of the Census, *The United States Seventh Census, 1850* (Washington Robert Armstrong, Public Printer, 1850), page 221.

<sup>222</sup> *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, F, 188, 209, 210, 216, 221, 307, 308, 333. See also Sand-erlin, *The Great National Project*, pages 136–137.

<sup>223</sup> *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, F, 207.

On November 5, 1841, Edward Greene Williams Stake (who was probably a relative of Eli Stake) asked the Board for “permission to erect a warehouse” on land belonging to the canal company at Williamsport. His request was referred to the Chief Engineer. The records of the canal company do not indicate if permission was granted.<sup>224</sup>

On July 20, 1842, John G. Stone, who had been Superintendent of the Fourth Division of the canal, was appointed Superintendent of the Third or Williamsport Division. He apparently replaced George W. Rogers. By this time, division superintendents were being paid a salary of \$800 per year.<sup>225</sup>

During the early 1840s, the canal company continued to urge Joseph Hollman to construct a suitable lockhouse at Lock 44 in accordance with his agreement of 1835. It should be remembered that in 1835 Hollman had been granted a water privilege at Lock 44. In exchange for that privilege, Hollman supposedly had agreed to construct the flume around Lock 44, build a suitable lockhouse, and serve as lockkeeper. Hollman apparently completed the flume and assumed the position of lockkeeper. He was tardy, however, in building the lockhouse. In February of 1837, the Board first reminded him of the agreement. Hollman replied with a letter explaining when he expected to construct the house. The Board considered the letter “satisfactory and ordered [it] to be filed.” Hollman was apparently using the water at Lock 44 to run some kind of mill. On July 25, 1838, the Board ordered the Clerk to notify Hollman that the water would be withheld from his mill at Lock 44 unless he proceeded immediately to construct a keeper’s house at the lock. By April 1842, however, Hollman still had not constructed the lockhouse. Therefore, the Clerk was again ordered to notify Hollman of his agreement. Hollman’s reply to this letter was unsatisfactory, and on November 8, 1842 the Board again ordered the Clerk to notify Hollman that he should proceed to construct the house on the company’s land at Lock 44. Hollman apparently never complied with the Board’s last order. It is not known how long he remained as keeper of Lock 44. Hollman died on March 7, 1848 at the age of 57. He lies buried in Riverview Cemetery in Williamsport. His water lease at Lock 44 was not due to expire until 1856. In 1854, however, one Benjamin F. Hollman (probably a son or brother) assumed the water lease and was able to persuade the Board to extend it for ten years.<sup>226</sup>

According to Sanderlin’s history of the canal, “the financial condition of the company in 1842 was deplorable, if not entirely hopeless.”<sup>227</sup> As controlling stockholder, the state of Maryland was able to force the canal company to take some steps to improve its financial situation.<sup>228</sup> In

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<sup>224</sup> Ibid, F, 397, 423. On April 28, 1841 Edward Greene Williams Stake offered to remove an old sunken boat from the main basin at Williamsport. The Board accepted his proposal on February 24, 1842. See Ibid, F, 310, 429.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid, F, 467.

<sup>226</sup> Ibid, E, 202, 208, 470; F, 435–436, 495; I, 13, 75–76. For Hollman’s death, see Scharf, *History of Western Maryland*, II: 1221. In 1842, Hollman may have been in tight financial straits. Collector Elie Stake reported to the Board on November 5, that Hollman claimed that he was not able to pay his tolls. According to Stake, Hollman promised to pay all of his overdue tolls as soon as he got “a bill of lumber Delivered to Harpers Ferry for [the] Government.” See Stake to President and Directors, November 5, 1842, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

<sup>227</sup> Sanderlin, *The Great National Project*, page 139.

<sup>228</sup> On February 14, 1841, the Maryland Legislature increased the number of agents or trustees to represent the state in stockholders meetings of the canal company. Prior to this time the Governor had had the authority to appoint three agents. The new act of February 14, 1841 increased the number of agents to five and provided that the agents should be chosen by the concurrent vote of the two houses. The first election of agents was held on March 4, 1841. Attorney John Van Lear, Jr., a member of the distinguished Van Lear family of “Tammany” near Williamsport, was

the Spring of 1842 the Maryland legislature ordered the canal company to sell all excess canal properties. Prior to this order, the Board had taken steps to inventory all of its properties. On January 7, it had ordered the Chief Engineer to survey and have “accurate plats” made of “all the lots or parcels of land belonging to” the “company in or near Williamsport.” At the conclusion of his assignment, the Chief Engineer was to advise the Board whether some of the properties at Williamsport could “be disposed of, or leased without detriment to the Canal.” The canal company sold excess lands along the canal between 1842–1844. The company records for these years do not show that any land was sold within Williamsport.<sup>229</sup>

In the meantime, the canal’s old rival, the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad had reached Cumberland in November 1842. With prodding from the state, the canal company “took steps to improve the position of the canal as a transportation agency pending the successful” completion of the canal to Cumberland. In September 1843 it made an agreement with its old rival, the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company, whereby the railroad would transport coal from Cumberland to the canal terminus at Dam 6 for “2 cents a ton per mile.” This arrangement was probably quite beneficial to that sizeable group of merchants at Williamsport who had long been dealers in “stone coal.” Because of this arrangement, 4,871 tons of coal were carried over the canal in 1844. Although the arrangement lasted for nearly two years, it was not wholly beneficial to the canal company’s interest. The amount of coal carried by the railroad was small. Furthermore, the railroad company used the arrangement politically to argue that the railroad should be made a permanent feeder to the canal at Dam 6.<sup>230</sup>

During the period 1841–1845, while construction was suspended on the canal, a movement developed to have the canal company’s office moved from Frederick to Williamsport. The main office of the company had originally been located at Georgetown. After the canal was completed to Dam 6, however, the main office was moved to Frederick. On May 20, 1841, the Board voted down a resolution which called for the office to be permanently located in Frederick. On the same day, the Board voted in favor of a resolution which called for the removal of the office to Williamsport. Fellow board members, John R. Dall of Williamsport, and Frisby Tilghman of Tilghmantown, were appointed to locate suitable rooms for an office at Williamsport. The stockholders, however, refused to go along with the order of the Board. Therefore, on July 14, 1841, the Board rescinded its order of May 20, and the office remained in Frederick throughout the 1840s.<sup>231</sup>

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among the five agents elected on that date. Van Lear was still one of the state’s agents in 1850. He died at Williamsport in 1859 at the age of 71. See Scharf, *History of Western Maryland*, II: 1059. See also *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, G 354, 359; H, 106–107, 317; and *Report to the Stockholders on the Completion of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal to Cumberland, with a Sketch of the Potomac Company, and a General Outline of the History of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Company from its Origins to February, 1851*, (Frederick: D. Schley and T. Haller, Printer, 1851), pages 90–91.

<sup>229</sup> Sanderlin, *The Great National Project*, pages 139–140. See also *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, F, 421; G, 11, 21, 34, 109, 129, 147, 237, 255, 357. According to Sanderlin, “the forced disposal” of canal company “property was completed by June, 1844.” It appears, however, that excess property was being disposed of as late as 1845.

<sup>230</sup> Sanderlin, *The Great National Project*, pages 150–151. See also *Report to the Stockholders on the Completion of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal to Cumberland*, pages 93–94.

<sup>231</sup> *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, F, 320, 325, 326, 327, 353. In 1846, the Chief Justice of the Maryland Court of Appeals (Judge Archer) ruled that the Board had the right to fix the location of the office.

Although construction had been halted, the canal company's board of directors continued to plan for the canal's completion. The plan that was eventually accepted by the Maryland Legislature was "the proposal to waive the state's prior liens on canal revenues and permit the canal company to issue its own bonds to pay for the completion of its work." This proposal was accepted by the Legislature in March 1843. The proposal provided that the canal company "could issue \$1,700,000 of preferred construction bonds on the mortgage of its revenues, when it received guarantees from interested parties for 195,000 tons of trade annually for five years." The Board obtained the necessary guarantees and by November 1, 1845 construction had been resumed on the unfinished portion of the canal. The contractors were Walter Gwynn, William Thompson, James Hunter and Walter Cunningham, all partners in Messrs. Gwynn and Company.<sup>232</sup>

By July 1846, however, all work had again ceased because the bonds of the canal company had not been sold. Work remained suspended during the remainder of 1846 and most of 1847.<sup>233</sup>

Finally, in October 1847 the Board worked out an arrangement for the sale of the company's bonds. The estimated amount of cash needed to complete the canal was \$1,100,000. According to the terms of the arrangement, a group of New York, Boston and Washington businessmen agreed to take \$500,000 of the bonds. The subcontractors would take \$200,000. The state of Virginia agreed to take \$300,000 and the District cities agreed to take \$100,000.<sup>234</sup>

On November 18, 1847 construction was again resumed. A new contract had been drawn up with James Hunter, William Thompson and a third partner, Thomas Harris.<sup>235</sup>

Work proceeded with only a few interruptions until the company ran out of money again in July 1850. The contract with Hunter, Harris and Company was declared abandoned.<sup>236</sup>

A new contract was immediately drawn up with Michael Byrne, who agreed to complete the canal "for \$3,000 cash and \$21,000 in bonds." Byrne finally completed the canal in the fall of 1850. The formal opening at Cumberland was held on Thursday October 10, 1850.<sup>237</sup>

According to Sanderlin's history of the canal, the canal trade prior to 1850 was predominately agricultural in nature. During the 1840s the principal products transported over the canal were flour, wheat and corn. Only a very small amount of coal was transported before 1851. Lumber, lime and stone were "also shipped in varying quantities" during the 1840s. Because of the agricultural nature of the canal trade, its size was often dependent upon the size of the local crops.<sup>238</sup> On the other hand, the increases in the size of the canal trade before 1850 corresponded to some extent to the progress of construction. For example, 1831 was a good year for trade probably because enthusiasm generated by the opening of the canal between Seneca and Georgetown. After

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The Board then ordered that the office be immediately moved to Cumberland. This order, however, was probably never carried out. See *Ibid*, G, 344–345, 362–384, 389, 399, 457–458.

<sup>232</sup> Sanderlin, *The Great National Project*, pages 144–145, 152, 154–155.

<sup>233</sup> *Ibid*, page 155.

<sup>234</sup> *Ibid*, page 157.

<sup>235</sup> *Ibid*. Gwynn and Cunningham were no longer associated with the partnership.

<sup>236</sup> *Ibid*, pages 157–158.

<sup>237</sup> *Ibid*, pages 158–159.

<sup>238</sup> *Ibid*, pages 190, 306–308.

the enthusiasm of 1831 had died down, the size of the canal trade remained at about the same level until 1838. The rise in the volume of trade in 1838 was probably related in some small degree to the vigorous efforts that were being made by the canal company to complete the canal to Cumberland. The volume of trade rose sharply during the years 1838–1841. Some of the rise was also due to the opening of the canal to Dam 6 in 1839. Between 1842 and 1847, the volume of trade “fluctuated irregularly about the new level” which had been attained in 1841. Finally, just before the canal was opened at Cumberland, the canal trade grew sharply in 1848 and 1849 and remained about steady in 1850.<sup>239</sup>

The increase in the canal trade during the final years of the 1840s is perhaps reflected in the flurry of canal-related letters which were written to the canal Board by residents of Williamsport during these years. On October 28, 1847, Owen Ardinger, for example, requested permission from the Board “to construct a Dry Dock on the berm side of the Canal near Williamsport.” In a letter dated November 9, 1847, the President granted Ardinger permission to build the dock. The Board ratified the grant on December 8.<sup>240</sup>

The first letter from Charles Embrey regarding his warehouse at Williamsport was written during the late 1840s. On December 30, 1847, Embrey informed the Board that he had “leased of Mr. John Dovenberger on the Ches. & Ohio Canal his warehouse for a number of years.” According to Harlan D. Unrau’s unpublished *HST, The Cushwa Warehouse*, Dovenberger had probably been one of the earliest managers of a warehouse which was owned jointly by Ann and Mary Williams. Architectural evidence suggests that the Williams’ Warehouse was enlarged sometime between 1835–1840.<sup>241</sup> Embrey told the Board in his letter of December 30, 1847 that the warehouse he had leased from Dovenberger was “a new one Supt Built.” This statement by Embrey could suggest that the warehouse had recently been built brand new from the ground up. On the other hand, Embrey could have simply meant that the warehouse had recently been drastically enlarged and remodeled. Embrey said that since the warehouse was new “no suitable place for a landing” had yet been found. The “property between the House & Canal,” according to Embrey, belonged to the canal company. He, therefore, requested permission “to Build a wharf along the Berm Bank opposite the W House so as to make [a] suitable & convenient landing.” Embrey explained the necessity of the landing in the following manner:

. . . The county Road leading from Sharpsburg strikes the canal at this point, for the convenience of the public as well as myself a landing place at this point is much wanted, Mr. W. S. Elgin Supt. on the Division has been applied to both by myself & Mr. Dovenberger for permission to Build a wharf & make a landing, he informed us that the grant had better come out of the Co. and promised [to] obtain

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<sup>239</sup> Ibid, pages 191, 306.

<sup>240</sup> *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, H, 112.

<sup>241</sup> Unrau, unpublished *HSR, The Cushwa Warehouse*, page 16. In late 1837, Mrs. Ann Williams has assigned her share of the Williams estate to Benjamin C. Howard to hold in trust because of her upcoming marriage to John S. Donnell of Baltimore. Mrs. Williams died around 1840 and all of the Williams’ estate passed into the hands of her daughter, Mary Smith Williams. On July 20, 1840 Mary Williams assigned the estate to Benjamin C. Howard as trustee because of her upcoming marriage to Reverend John Campbell White of Baltimore. Mary Smith Williams White later assigned her estate to a succession of trustees: John White in 1841; Joseph White in 1842; and Reverend John Campbell White in 1848. See Ibid, pages 16–17. For the approximate date of Ann William’s death, see Deed, John S. Donnell, Ann Donnell and Benjamin Howard to Jacob Wolf, March 19, 1839, in Washington County Land Records, Liber UU, folios 188–189; and Deed, John S. Connell and Benjamin Howard to David Boyer, September 11, 1840 in Washington County Land Records, Liber WW, folio 632.

it for us, but as yet no permission has been given to do the work, the wharf can only be built when the water is out of the canal, hence the great necessity of doing the work this Winter while the water is out of the canal, as there will be no time to lose if the work is done this winter, I have thought to try & get an early hearing from the Board on this subject by address[ing] you myself, and ask for your early & favorable consideration of my petition you will please let me be informed on the subject as soon as a decision is made. . .

In response to Embrey's request, the Board voted on January 12, 1848 to grant him permission to build a "wharf under the direction of the Chief Engineer." Embrey's privilege to hold the wharf was "to continue during the will and pleasure of the Board." The wharf was probably built before the Spring of 1848.<sup>242</sup>

Another letter from Charles Embrey in June of 1848 indicated that his canal business at Williamsport was expanding. On June 13, he notified the Board that he wanted "to Erect a Building & a Landing" on the canal company's vacant lot "adjacent to Lock No. 44." The building when erected would be used "for the purpose of Pressing Hay." Embrey went on to explain why a hay press should be located at Williamsport:

. . . there is no hay press for many miles of this place, it would prove a source of revenue to the Co., if there was a press here, there is a great quantity of hay raised, in this section of [the] county that would find its way to the D.C. markets if there was the necessary conveniences of getting it there I hope you will refer the matter to your Supt. Mr. J. G. Stone, for further information on the subject, and grant the request.

Embrey's request was referred to Chief Engineer Fisk who reported favorably on the request on June 28. On June 29, the Board voted to grant Embrey permission to occupy the vacant lot and erect the building for pressing hay. The building was to be constructed under the direction of the Superintendent of the Williamsport Division. Embrey could continue to use the lot "during the will & pleasure of the Board."<sup>243</sup>

Further evidence of an increase in canal activity at Williamsport during the late 1840s can be found in a letter from John M. Stake. On September 4, 1848 Stake informed the Board that he had "bought out Mr. J. H. Anderson's portion of the unfinished warehouse situated on the Basin of the Ches. & O CC at Williamsport."<sup>244</sup> He requested that he be granted the "privilege of moving it [the unfinished warehouse] from its present location down upon the edge of the Basin at the south east corner." The move could be accomplished "without obstructing the passway, or the landing or receiving of any produce." In exchange for the privilege of moving the warehouse, Stake promised to "have an office for the Collector of Tolls finished off in it." This would "be very convenient" for the Collector, because the warehouse would be situated "immediately upon

<sup>242</sup> Embrey to President and Board of Directors, December 30, 1847, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co. See also *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, H, 125. The wharf was probably completed before the Spring of 1848 because Embrey said in his letter of December 30, 1847 that the work had to be done that "winter while the water" was "out of the canal."

<sup>243</sup> Embrey to President and Board of Directors, June 13, 1848, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co. See also *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, H, 185. At the time Embrey requested the use of the vacant lot, he said that it was "unused except, occasionally by Lumber Men, for landing their lumber."

<sup>244</sup> This warehouse is shown as A [Anderson] & Lyons Warehouse on the 1838 sketch map of the main basin area. In 1838, the building was probably located on the public square near the basin. See Appendix I.

the canal.” Stake said that he was making the application because he expected to receive “a large amount of produce” and needed a place to store it near the canal. Stake’s application was referred to John G. Stone, Superintendent of the Williamsport Division. On September 12, Stone reported favorably on the application. Therefore, the Board voted on September 14, to grant Stake permission to remove the warehouse “to such location as John G. Stone, Superintendent, shall approve.” The Board also stated that Stake should: “at all times so long as the said building occupies said location, furnish and set apart a room in it for an office for the Collector of tolls free of rent, and that he keep at all times an ample open way for wagons to pass without any inconvenience.” The building could “be removed at the pleasure of the Board.”<sup>245</sup>

The increase in the canal trade during the late 1840s may have caused the Board to again call for the construction of a Lockhouse at Lock 44. According to the Board, Joseph Hollman had agreed in 1835 to construct the lockhouse in exchange for water privileges at Lock 44. Hollman apparently never built a house at Lock 44. He died on March 7, 1848. On December 8, 1848, the Board ordered the Superintendent of the Williamsport Division to “have built a Lockhouse on the company’s land at Lock 44 Williamsport at as low a rate as practicable.”<sup>246</sup> The canal company’s records do not indicate whether or not this order was carried out.

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<sup>245</sup> Stake to President and Board of Directors, September 4, 1848, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co. See also *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, H, 203.

<sup>246</sup> *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, H, 228. For a review of Hollman’s connection with Lock 44, see footnote 32 in Chapter 5 of this study report.

## CHAPTER 6

### Williamsport and the Canal in Operation, 1850–1860.

By 1850 Williamsport was still the second largest town in Washington County. The town's population, however, had increased only slightly since 1830. In 1830 its population had been 859. By 1850 its population had increased to 1,091.<sup>247</sup> The town never experienced a rapid increase in its population during the nineteenth century. The town in fact experienced decreases in population during two decades of the nineteenth century.

The opening of the canal at Cumberland in October 1850 caused an increase in commercial activity all along the canal. Although Cumberland was influenced more than any other town, all of the canal towns benefited from the increased traffic caused by the opening at Cumberland.

The people of Western Maryland had always felt that the coal resources of Western Maryland were nearly unlimited. Most agreed that once the canal was able to fully tap the coal resources beyond Cumberland, the financial problems of the Canal would be solved and the project would no longer be a burden to the state. Therefore, the key to the success of the Canal, according to canal supporters, was coal. Perhaps in anticipation of the opening of the canal at Cumberland, Henry C. Beatty asked the Board in July 1850 to permit him to use "a small strip of land lying on the Northside of the basin at Williamsport for a coal yard."<sup>248</sup>

Soon after the canal was opened at Cumberland, there was a drastic reduction in the price of coal throughout Western Maryland. According to the *Hagerstown Herald of Freedom*, after the opening of the canal at Cumberland, many persons purchased coal stoves with the intention of using "Cumberland Coal . . . instead of Wood."<sup>249</sup> According to the *Hagerstown News*, the price of coal at Williamsport dropped from sixteen cents to ten cents per bushel soon after the canal was opened at Cumberland.<sup>250</sup>

In anticipation of the opening of the canal at Cumberland, the Board reorganized the divisions of the canal in September 1850. The reorganization, however, was not to take effect until January 1, 1851. The canal was laid off into six divisions and a superintendent was placed in charge of each division. Williamsport remained the headquarters for the Superintendent of the Third Division. All incumbent officials on the lower line of the canal were retained. Therefore, John G. Stone

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<sup>247</sup> For Williamsport's population in 1830, see Williams, *History of Washington County, Maryland*, I: 196. For the town's population in 1850, see United States Superintendent of the Census, *The United States Seventh Census, 1850*, p. 221. See also footnote 27 in Chapter 5 of this study report. In 1850 Williamsport had 410 white males, 459 white females, 84 free black males, 97 free black females, 15 male slaves and 26 female slaves.

<sup>248</sup> Superintendent Stone recommended that Beatty be permitted to use the land, but the Board referred the matter to the Chief Engineer. See *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, H, 367. Also in July 1850 Sharpless and Cassin made application to erect a warehouse "at the basin, two miles above Williamsport." The request was referred to the Chief Engineer. See *Ibid*, H, 368.

<sup>249</sup> *Hagerstown Herald of Freedom* quoted in the *Cumberland Civilian*, October 25, 1850.

<sup>250</sup> *Hagerstown News* quoted in the *Cumberland Civilian*, October 25, 1850.

was allowed to keep his job as Superintendent of the Third Division, and Elie Stake was allowed to stay on as Collector of Tolls at Williamsport.<sup>251</sup>

In mid-1851 the people of Western Maryland still had high hopes for the eventual success of the Canal. These high hopes were based on the estimated high volume of coal the waterway was expected to carry. Beginning in 1851 coal “became the principal article of trade” on the canal, and the tolls from coal “became the chief source of canal revenue.” The canal had carried only 5,224 tons of coal in 1849 and only 7,956 tons in 1850. In 1851, however, 82,690 tons of coal were shipped over the canal.<sup>252</sup>

By mid-1852, however, the high hopes for the early success of the canal had been shattered. The flood which shattered the high hopes of the people of Western Maryland in 1852 had also shattered the canal. The flood which struck the canal in April 1852 was considered the worst since 1816. According to one newspaper account, the “unfortunate” canal was “almost torn to pieces.”<sup>253</sup>

On April 29, 1852, Chief Engineer C. B. Fisk gave an assessment of the damage caused by the flood. The canal had been damaged rather severely from Dam 6 down to Georgetown. Fisk described the line between Dam 4 and Dam 5 as being “much injured.” He estimated that it would take about three months and \$80,000 worth of work to restore navigation.<sup>254</sup>

According to Sanderlin’s history of the canal, the cost of repairing the canal after the flood of 1852 “amounted to \$100,000.” The flood caused a loss of revenue during the three-month period in which navigation was suspended because of damages. More importantly, however, the flood of 1852 caused many people to lose “confidence in the stability and reliability” of the canal “as a means of transportation.”<sup>255</sup>

On June 5, 1852, Chief Engineer Fisk reported the restoration work on the canal was well underway and would be completed within the three-month time period that he had set forth in his report of April 29.<sup>256</sup> It was perhaps in anticipation of the reopening of the canal that the Board on June 5, granted Charles Embrey permission to build “stocks [partially on canal company land]

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<sup>251</sup> Sanderlin, *The Great National Project*, p. 203. See also *Report to the Stockholders on the Completion of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal to Cumberland*, pp 6–7, 140. Just before Stone was reappointed, a group of Williamsport citizens recommended that Andrew K. Stake of Williamsport be appointed Superintendent of a division of the canal. Their petition in favor of Stake was laid on the table and apparently the Board took no further action regarding it. See *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, H, 375, 393, 396.

<sup>252</sup> Sanderlin, *The Great National Project*, pp. 204, 306–307.

<sup>253</sup> *Cumberland Miners' Journal*, April 23, 1852.

<sup>254</sup> Fisk [Report] to President and Board of Directors, April 29, 1852, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co. All sources agreed that the flood of 1852 was much more severe than the flood of 1847. The 1847 flood had been the worst recorded up to that time. There had also been minor floods in 1836, 1843 and 1846. See Sanderlin, *The Great National Project*, pp. 192, 207–208. See also Fisk [Report] to President and Board of Directors, June 5, 1852, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

<sup>255</sup> *Twenty-Seventh Annual Report* (1855), C & O Co., p. 12, quoted in Sanderlin, *The Great National Project*, p. 208.

<sup>256</sup> Fisk [Report] to President and Board of Directors, June 5, 1852, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

for the repair of boats at Williamsport above Lock 44.” Embrey had originally made the request on May 6. Many boats had no doubt been severely damaged during the flood.<sup>257</sup>

The repairs were completed on schedule; and by July 16, 1852, the water had been let into the entire length of the canal.<sup>258</sup> Although the canal had been repaired, however, the hopes of the people of Western Maryland remained low. The canal had a rather troublesome history throughout the remainder of the 1850s. Soon after the flood had struck the canal, the direction of the canal company was upset by political interference. Beginning in June 1852 and continuing throughout the 1850s and into the early 1860s, the canal company was used as part of the State’s political spoils system. Each time a different political party gained control of the Legislature, there would be a removal of most (if not all) of the canal officials, including lockkeepers. At Williamsport in 1852, long-time Superintendent John G. Stone was removed and replaced by Benjamin F. Hollman. Collector of Tolls Elie Stake was removed and replaced by John Baker. Later in the year, John Buchanan, keeper of Lock 44, was removed and replaced by Edward Morrison.<sup>259</sup>

Superintendent Benjamin F. Hollman was probably a relative of the late Joseph Hollman. Joseph Hollman had been the first keeper of Lock 44 and had operated some type of mill at that lock. After Joseph Hollman died in 1848, Benjamin Hollman must have taken over the operation of the mill at Lock 44. On April 5, 1853, Benjamin Hollman notified the Board that the water lease that had been granted to the late Joseph Hollman at Lock 44 was due to expire within “a few years.” Benjamin Hollman desired to have the lease renewed and extended “for ten years longer; to enable him to dispose advantageously of said property.” The Board refused to grant the extension. A year later, however, Hollman appeared before the Board to make the same request. He explained that the water lease which had been granted to Joseph Hollman would “expire in about two years.” He asked that upon the expiration of the old lease, he be granted a ten-year water lease at the same site. He also informed the Board that if granted the water lease, he intended to make certain “improvements at said point.” After hearing Hollman’s appeal, the Board passed the following resolution:

Resolved—That a water privilege be granted to Benj. F. Hollman from the flume passing from Lock 44 for a saw mill, to continue for ten years from the expiration of the lease heretofore granted to Joseph Hollman, at the rate of \$150 per ann, payable semi-annually—provided, that at no time shall any greater quantity of water be used from said flume, than is necessary to supply the level of the Canal below said Lock, and that no saw dust or other substances shall be thrown into the Canal.<sup>260</sup>

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<sup>257</sup> *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, H, 525. The precise spot where Embrey desired to build the stocks was “above Lock 44 in a ravine about 400 feet above the Lock.” Embrey said: “The ravine is most on a lot in my possession, the Bal[ance] on the Ground of the Ches & O C Co. I therefore ask your Hon[orable] Body permission to use until the Co may find removal of said stock as much of the Co.’s Ground as may be necessary to build said Stock.” See Embrey to President and board of Directors, May 6, 1852, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

<sup>258</sup> *Cumberland Miners’ Journal*, July 16, 1852.

<sup>259</sup> *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, H, 538, 540, 542 and 569.

<sup>260</sup> *Ibid*, I, 13, 75–76. Several months earlier, Hollman had been granted conditional permission to build the stocks at Williamsport for the repair of boats. See *Ibid*, I, 66.

While the canal was having its problems during the early 1850s, cholera struck the Potomac Valley in 1853. The death toll from the disease was quite high. Thirty-two persons died of the disease in Williamsport during the summer of 1853.<sup>261</sup>

In early 1854, John Baker, who had been appointed Collector of Tolls at Williamsport in 1852, died at the age of fifty-eight. He was replaced by J. W. Baker (probably a relative) on March 1, 1854. J. W. Baker resigned voluntarily on August 10 and was replaced by Charles Embrey.<sup>262</sup>

In April of 1855, the canal company's board of directors were informed of the death of Superintendent Benjamin F. Hollman of Williamsport. Hollman was replaced by Henry Artz.<sup>263</sup>

The canal company underwent another complete political reorganization in June and July of 1855. At Williamsport, Henry Artz, who had just been named as Superintendent of the Williamsport Division, was removed and replaced by Lewis G. Stanhope. The Collector of Tolls, Charles Embrey, was removed and replaced by the canal veteran Elie Stake. The canal company's records do not indicate what personnel changes were made at Lock 44.<sup>264</sup>

In the meantime, the forces of nature continued to interfere with the canal during the 1850s. There were repeated dry spells and several more floods. According to Sanderlin's history of the canal, after 1852, "no year passed [in the 1850s] without some [natural] interference with navigation."<sup>265</sup>

In spite of the problems of the 1850s, however, the canal remained an important asset to Williamsport. The canal provided water which was leased to several small mill owners in the vicinity of Williamsport. It also provided at least three official jobs (Superintendent, Collector and Lockkeeper) for the more prominent citizens of the town. Even more important, however, the canal was a welcome aid to a number of the town's residents who were involved in boating. The boating business in turn provided jobs to local boatmen. The canal company's boat registration records for 1851 indicate that during that year fourteen boats were registered to boat owners who lived in Williamsport. J. N. Stake & Company [probably John N. Stake] owned the "John Van Scoop," the "Potomac" and the "Gov. Sprigg." Jas. H. Anderson owned the "Abn Liter," the "Robt G. Violet" and the "Jas R. Annan." Owen Ardinger owned the "Isaac Motter" and the "Josiah H. Davis." Charles Embrey owned the "Dewitt Clinton" and the "Ben Franklin." John Ardinger owned the "Union." Sam Icker owned the "William." Peter Wolf owned the "Saloma Clark," and Peter Ardinger owned the "L. M. Baker." The boat registration records of 1852 indicate that during that year, nine boats were registered to boat owners who lived in Williamsport.

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<sup>261</sup> Williams, *History of Washington County, Maryland*, I: 273. According to Williams, there was "not a single case" of the disease in Hagerstown during the epidemic of 1853. There were, however, some cases in Cumberland. William G. Van Lear, a native of Williamsport who had settled in Cumberland, died of the disease in that town during the epidemic of 1853.

<sup>262</sup> *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, I, 63, 69, 97 and 102.

<sup>263</sup> *Ibid*, I, 156, 158 and 161.

<sup>264</sup> *Ibid*, I, 180–183. At the same time that these changes were made, John G. Stone, former long-time Superintendent of the Williamsport Division, became a member of the canal company's board of directors. See *Ibid*, I, 176. William Coble had become the keeper of Lock 44 in April 1855. See *Ibid*, I, 146.

<sup>265</sup> Sanderlin, *The Great National Project*, p. 210.

The registration records for the years 1853–1859, however, indicate that few boats were registered to residents of Williamsport after 1853.<sup>266</sup>

The residents of Williamsport continued to believe that the canal was a valuable asset to their town, despite the declining prosperity of the waterway during the 1850s. In the late 1850s the town's citizens urged the Canal Board to move the company's office to Williamsport. The citizens argued that the canal office should be moved to Williamsport because the town was centrally located "midway between the two extremes of the canal and equidistant from the two dams, No. 4 & 5, where heavy contracts" had "been made for work to be done." The citizens offered to "cheerfully extend to" the Board "every facility, should they determine to locate" at Williamsport.<sup>267</sup>

It was during the late 1850s that the canal company started a Carpenter's Shop near Lock 44 in Williamsport. The house which eventually became the Carpenter's Shop had originally been used by Henry E. Beatty as a hay press. Beatty died around 1852 or 1853. John F. Dellinger became the administrator of the Beatty estate. In 1853, Superintendent Benjamin F. Hollman purchased the Beatty house for \$250, but the money was never paid to the Beatty estate. The house was purchased to be used as a work or carpenter's shop. Superintendent Hollman died in April of 1855. In August of 1855, the Board ordered the new superintendent to submit a report on the house. The house was not mentioned again in the records of the company until May of 1858. On May 4, 1858, the Board learned from Charles Embrey that the house had never been paid for. Embrey informed the Board that he had been appointed the new administrator of the Beatty estate. As administrator, Embrey was trying to collect the various debts owed to the estate.<sup>268</sup> According to Embrey, the house was located "on the Bank of the Canal near Lock 44" and had been purchased for the company by Superintendent Hollman "for the purpose of a Work Shop." Embrey's letter was referred to the Superintendent of the Williamsport Division who was ordered to investigate Embrey's allegations. In August, the Superintendent reported that the house which was then being "used and occupied by the Company as a Carpenter's Shop" had not been paid for. He stated that the original sales price agreed to between Benjamin F. Hollman and the seller in 1853 had been \$250. He agreed with Embrey that the house was still worth \$250. The Board accepted the Superintendent's report and ordered him "to pay the sum of \$250" for the house. The house was not mentioned again in the records of the canal company until February 1861. On February 26, Charles Embrey requested the Board to either pay him the \$250 for the Beatty House or else return the house to him. The Board voted not to pay the money and ordered the General Superintendent "to cause [the] said building to be returned to Mr. Embrey." The records of the canal company do not indicate when the house was returned to Embrey. It is probably safe to conclude, however, that the canal company did return the house. The company's records do not make any further reference to a Carpenter Shop at Lock 44 until the twentieth century. Thus the earlier Carpenter Shop should probably not be confused with the Carpenter Shop which stood in the early twentieth century. According to a long-time resident of Williamsport, the twentieth-

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<sup>266</sup> Record of Boat Registrations, 1851–74, C & O Co. The earliest extant lists of registered boats are those of 1851. The lists of registered boats, however, are probably not complete for any of the years between 1851–74.

<sup>267</sup> Citizens of Williamsport to President and Board of Directors, May 1858, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co. See also *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, K, 19.

<sup>268</sup> Beatty had apparently died indebted to Embrey. Embrey was now trying to collect those debts.

century Carpenter Shop was located in a building which also housed a store. The ruins of this building can still be seen along the berm bank at Lock 44.<sup>269</sup>

It was also during the late 1850s that Charles Embrey was permitted to build another wharf at Williamsport. It should be remembered that Embrey had been granted permission to build a wharf in December 1847. On April 9, 1859, the Board granted Embrey permission “to lease a Lot for a Wharf to be constructed at Williamsport.” Although the Board did not say that this wharf was to replace an earlier one, it is probably safe to conclude that the earlier wharf had deteriorated by 1859. The new wharf was to be built under the direction of the General Superintendent and the lease on the lot was to run for ten years. This wharf had definitely been built by 1863.<sup>270</sup>

In the late 1850s the bridge over the canal at Williamsport was probably repaired. On August 6, 1858, the Board ordered the Superintendent of the Williamsport Division to repair the canal bridge at Williamsport “as soon as possible.” The bridge referred to here was probably the one which was located near the main basin, rather than the Lock 44 pivot bridge.<sup>271</sup>

By the end of the 1850s, the canal company was in serious trouble. All during the 1850s the several Boards had been strongly criticized for mismanaging the canal. The press of Western Maryland criticized the Board because of the many “interruptions” to navigation during the 1850s. Eventually the leaks at Dam 4 and dam 5 became so bad until the Board was forced to let contracts for the construction of two new dams in 1856 and 1857 respectively.<sup>272</sup> In 1857 a series of floods struck the canal. These disasters, according to Sanderlin’s history of the canal, “all but wrecked the company financially.” Through “a new device” called “toll certificates,” the “directors were able to raise funds to repair the canal and to continue for awhile the work on the new dams.” By the end of 1859, however, the company was on the verge of bankruptcy.<sup>273</sup>

The canal company underwent another complete reorganization in 1858. It was probably at this time that Andrew K. Stake of Williamsport received his first prominent position with the canal company.<sup>274</sup> In April of 1858 Andrew K. Stake replaced Lewis G. Stanhope as Superintendent of

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<sup>269</sup> *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, I, 205; K, 21, 42, 246–247. See also Embrey to President and Board of Directors, May 4, 1858, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.; and Embrey to President and Board of Directors, February 26, 1861, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co. The ruins of the early twentieth-century carpenter shop and store was shown to me by long-time resident of Williamsport, George “Hooper” Wolfe. According to Wolfe, the building probably stood until just before the close of the canal. Interview with George “Hooper” Wolfe, March 9, 1979. The records of the canal company, however, suggest that the building was still standing as late as 1927. See General Manager to Lane, September 24, 1927, Correspondence of the Office of Trustees.

<sup>270</sup> *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, I, 100. See also Embrey to President and Board of Directors, May 2, 1863, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

<sup>271</sup> *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, K, 43. If the Board had been referring to the Lock 44 bridge, the Board would probably have made some reference to “Lock 44.”

<sup>272</sup> *Cumberland Miners’ Journal*, July 8, 15, 22, 30, 1853. For continued criticism, see *Cumberland Telegraph and Maryland Mining Register*, May 24, 1855, June 19, 26, 1856. For the letting of contracts for the new dams, see Sanderlin, *The Great National Project*, page 210. Dam 4 was completed in the Spring of 1861. Work on Dam 5 was interrupted by the Civil War. See Bearss, “War Comes to the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal,” XXIX: 167.

<sup>273</sup> Sanderlin, *The Great National Project*, pp. 211–212.

<sup>274</sup> Scharf’s *History of Western Maryland* disagrees with my conclusion concerning Stake. According to Scharf, Stake was first appointed to “a responsible position on the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal” in 1840. Scharf also says

the Williamsport Division. At the same time, the veteran Elie Stake was removed from the position of Collector of Tolls at Williamsport. Elie Stake was replaced by John A. Richards.<sup>275</sup>

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Stake served as General Superintendent of the canal from 1854–56. See Scharf, *History of Western Maryland*, II: 1054.

<sup>275</sup> *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, K, 8, 193. Stanhope was not actually removed from the canal. He was appointed to the position of Superintendent of the Hancock Division, where he remained until September 3, 1858. On that date he resigned in order to accept a contract to complete the new Dam 5. See *Ibid*, K, 54–55. Long-time canal man John G. Grove was appointed to the position of General Superintendent of the canal in April 1858. See *Ibid*, K, 6.

## CHAPTER 7

### Williamsport and the Canal During the Era of the Civil War, 1860–1865

The 1860 census revealed that Williamsport had actually lost some of its population during the decade of the 1850s. In 1850 the population of the town had been 1,091. By 1860 the population had dropped to 1,016. Therefore, the decade of the 1850s had not been a very good decade for population growth in Williamsport. The lack of population growth was undoubtedly due to the poor performance of the canal during the 1850s.<sup>276</sup>

When Williamsport entered the decade of the 1860s, the Canal Company was on the verge of bankruptcy. Another political reorganization of the Company occurred in 1860. At Williamsport, John A. Richards was removed from the position of Collector of Tolls in June 1860. The company's records do not reveal who replaced Richards in that position. Earlier, in May 1860, Andrew K. Stake, who had been Superintendent of the Williamsport Division, was made Acting General Superintendent of the Canal. Stake held this position until his resignation in August 1861 because of ill health.<sup>277</sup>

According to Sanderlin's history of the canal, the coming of the Civil War only worsened the financial and physical condition of the canal. This was especially true "during the first two or three years" of the War. Being situated on the border between the two opposing forces, the canal was often "occupied and/or destroyed by the opposing forces."<sup>278</sup>

Although Abraham Lincoln won the presidential election of 1860, he had not been the choice of the people of Western Maryland. The people of Washington County gave their votes primarily to John Bell of the Constitutional Union Party and the John C. Breckinridge of the southern wing of the Democratic Party. Bell received 2,567 votes in Washington County while Breckinridge received 2,475. Stephen Douglas, the candidate for the northern wing of the Democratic Party, received only 283 votes in the county. Lincoln received only 95 votes. In the Williamsport Election District, Lincoln received only 15 votes. The plurality of votes cast for Bell suggest that a large segment of the county supported the preservation of the Union, but were opposed to what they considered to be extreme solutions to the sectional problems facing the nation. On the other hand, the almost equal vote for Breckinridge suggests that a large segment of the county was quite sympathetic to the southern cause. A small number of votes cast for Douglas and Lincoln suggests that few of the residents of the county shared the northern view in the sectional controversy.<sup>279</sup>

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<sup>276</sup> Superintendent of the Census, *Ninth Census, Volume I: The Statistics of the Population of the United States, Embracing the Tables of Race, Nationality, Sex, Selected Age and Occupations* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1872), p. 164. The population of Williamsport in 1860 was made up of 875 whites and 141 blacks. In 1860, Williamsport's neighbor, Hagerstown, had a total population of 3,623.

<sup>277</sup> Sanderlin, *The Great National Project*, p. 209. See also *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, K, 181, 193, 254.

<sup>278</sup> Sanderlin, *The Great National Project*, p. 212.

<sup>279</sup> Williams, *History of Washington County, Maryland*, I: 304.

It is quite easy to understand why the people of Washington County voted as they did in 1860. The county had close economic and kinship ties with the nearby counties in Virginia. In addition, Maryland, like Virginia, was a slave state. Although Washington County's slave population had been declining since 1820, there were still 1,435 slaves in the county in 1860.<sup>280</sup> On the other hand, Washington County had strong economic and kinship ties to the neighboring Pennsylvania counties. Hagerstown and Williamsport had particularly strong economic ties with Chambersburg.

Virginia withdrew from the Union on April 17, 1861. By the beginning of May, the residents of Washington County found themselves between two opposing armies. Northern troops were encamped at Chambersburg, while a sizeable Confederate force controlled Harpers Ferry. In May, the people of the county began to form volunteer companies loyal to the Union. About the same time, a number of Washington County men crossed over into Virginia to join the Confederate forces.<sup>281</sup>

The volunteers who were organized at Williamsport were known as the "Union Guards." They were under the command of a Captain Kennedy. On May 20, about 1,000 Confederate troops gathered on the Virginia side of the river opposite Williamsport. Captain Kennedy stationed sentinels at Lemen's Ferry<sup>282</sup> in order to prevent the passage of supplies and information to the Confederates. On June 1, a small body of Confederates temporarily seized the ferry. There was a brief exchange of gunfire between the Union Guards and the Confederates, but neither side suffered any injuries. Reinforcements were summoned from Sharpsburg, Clear Spring and Hagerstown; but the Confederates departed the next day for Martinsburg.<sup>283</sup>

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<sup>280</sup> Scharf, *History of Western Maryland*, II: 974. Williamsport had probably always had a small slave population. General Otho Holland Williams owned at least one slave while living in Baltimore, and there were probably slaves at Springfield Farm. Williams' third son, Edward Greene Williams, apparently had slaves at Springfield Farm in the 1820s. According to Williams' *History of Washington County, Maryland*, Edward Greene Williams was able to reclaim a fugitive slave in 1824. In 1831 Mrs. Ann Williams, the widow of Edward Greene Williams, released "her slave Sarah aged 43 to William VanLear of Washington County to be no longer a slave but a servant for a term of years." At that time both Ann Williams and her slave Sarah were living in Baltimore. Sarah was transferred to VanLear for the sum of \$100. She was to be freed after she had worked for VanLear for four years. William VanLear later became Vice President of the Williamsport Colonization Society which was formed in November 1834. The other vice president of the society was C. A. Warfield. The president of the society was John T. Towson. The object of the society was to deport emancipated blacks (but not against their will) back to Africa. The release of the slave Sarah to VanLear may have been related to VanLear's work in the Colonization Movement. In 1820 there were 119 slaves in Williamsport and 73 free blacks. By 1850 the town had 41 slaves and 181 free blacks. The slave population of the town in 1860 is not known, but the total "colored" population of the town in 1860 was 141. See Merritt, *Calendar of the General Otho Holland Williams Papers in the Maryland Historical Society*, pp. 119, 133, 167, 289. See also Scharf, *History of Western Maryland*, II: 1225; Williams, *History of Washington County, Maryland*, I: 227, 251; Bill of Sale, Ann Williams to William VanLear, June 6, 1831, in Washington County Land Records, Liber MM 485, folios 485–486; and United States Superintendent of the Census, *Ninth Census, Volume I: The Statistics of the Population of the United States Embracing the Tables of Race, Nationality, Sex, Selected Ages and Occupation*, p. 164.

<sup>281</sup> Williams, *History of Washington County, Maryland*, I: 308.

<sup>282</sup> One source claims that this ferry belonged to the Light Family (the descendants of Peter Light) during the war. See newspaper clipping with article entitled "George Washington Used It [;] Famous Names in American History Turn Up in Facts about Old Ferry," *Hagerstown Morning Herald*, June 4, 1970, in Williamsport Vertical Files, Western Maryland Research Room, Washington County Free Library, Hagerstown.

<sup>283</sup> Williams, *History of Washington County, Maryland*, I: 309.

The first Washington County resident to die because of the sectional dispute did not fall on the field of battle, but rather at the hands of a Williamsport mob. De Witt Clinton Rentch was the twenty-four year old son of a wealthy farm family who lived near Tilghmantown. On several occasions Rentch had expressed his sympathy for the southern cause. Many believed that he would eventually join the southern army. On June 5, 1861, Rentch was in Williamsport to conduct some business for his father at Gruber's and Schnebly's store. After completing his business at the store, he was invited to take tea at the home of one of the merchants. On his way back to the store, Rentch was approached by a young group of Union sympathizers and warned to leave town. Rentch did not think that he was in any danger, so he went back into the store to smoke a cigar. Soon a large mob of Union sympathizers marched up in front of the store leading Rentch's horse and ordered Rentch to get out of town. Rentch mounted his horse, but exchanged hostile words with the mob. He apparently had a pistol and some eyewitnesses claimed that he fired at a man who was holding the horse. Regardless of who fired first, Rentch was soon struck in the head with a stone and shot through the heart by someone in the crowd. For awhile after his death many residents of Williamsport expected a Confederate attack to avenge the murder. The expected attack, however, never came about.<sup>284</sup>

The first northern troops arrived at Williamsport on June 15, 1861. These troops were the vanguard of Major General Robert Patterson's Department of Pennsylvania. They were under the general command of General Cadwallader. Among these troops were Captain Doubleday and his company, and Governor William Sprague with his company from Rhode Island. These troops came down the Greencastle Road into Hagerstown and then continued out to Williamsport. They had crossed the river at Williamsport and were continuing on towards Martinsburg when they received new orders to return to Washington County. After they had recrossed the river, some set up camp at Williamsport while others proceeded back to Hagerstown.<sup>285</sup>

In the meantime, Brigadier General Joseph E. Johnston, who had assumed command of the Confederate troops at Harpers Ferry, received news of the federal advancement towards Williamsport. He decided to retreat from Harpers Ferry and carry his troops to Winchester. Before leaving Harpers Ferry, however, he sent some of his men to wreck the canal between Harpers Ferry and Williamsport. This was the first serious assault upon the canal during the War.<sup>286</sup>

General Patterson finally ordered his troops to cross the Potomac at Williamsport on July 2. Patterson's object was to guard General Johnston's forces in the Shenandoah Valley while General Irwin McDowell marched from Washington to attack General Beuregard's Confederate forces near Manassas Junction. Johnston, however, was able to elude Patterson and join Beuregard at Manassas Junction on July 21. The combined Confederate forces held off the Union attack and eventually caused the Union Army to retreat in disarray back to Washington.<sup>287</sup>

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<sup>284</sup> Ibid, Rentch was the nephew of Anthony William Price of Hagerstown. During the 1830s Price had been a member of the board of directors of the canal company.

<sup>285</sup> Ibid, I: 310–311.

<sup>286</sup> Bearss, "War Comes to the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal," XXIX: 157.

<sup>287</sup> Ibid, XXIX:157–158. See also Williams, *History of Washington County, Maryland*, I: 312–313. According to Williams, Patterson's army first tried to cross the Potomac at Dam 4 but found that the water was too deep. The army then proceeded to cross at Williamsport. After the Battle of First Manassas, Patterson's command was redesignated as the Department of the Shenandoah. Patterson was soon removed and replaced by Major General Nathaniel Banks.

In early July 1861, heavy rains caused more damage to the canal. By August 26, however, all the damage had been repaired and the canal was once again opened from Georgetown to Cumberland. On August 19, General Banks (who had replaced Patterson) had ordered the First Maryland Infantry under Colonel Kenly to establish a post at Williamsport and guard the river and canal in that vicinity.<sup>288</sup>

During the early months of the war there were many military arrests for disloyalty throughout Maryland. In the summer and fall of 1861 several arrests were made in Hagerstown. One of the persons arrested was Dr. Charles Macgill. He was arrested by Captain Waltermeyer of the First Maryland in Late September and was taken to Colonel Kenly's headquarters at Williamsport. The next day he was rushed north and confined to a fort in Pennsylvania.<sup>289</sup>

In October 1861, the Thirteenth Massachusetts and the Twelfth Indiana Regiments arrived in Williamsport to relieve the First Maryland troops. The Thirteenth Massachusetts had orders to guard the river from Harpers Ferry to Oldtown. The Twelfth Indiana posted units at Williamsport, Dam 4, Dam 5 and Sharpsburg. The First Maryland Regiment left Williamsport on October 16 to join General Banks at Dranesville.<sup>290</sup>

In November heavy rains again caused some damage to the canal. The damages, however, were not very extensive and by early December the canal was again opened from Cumberland to Georgetown.<sup>291</sup>

When the canal reopened in December, General Stonewall Jackson became determined to put the canal out of operation for good. Jackson decided to focus his attack upon the leaking rubble dam (Dam 5) above Williamsport. Jackson's troops first attacked the dam with cannon on December 7 and 8, but failed to damage the structure. A company of Colonel Samuel H. Leonard's Thirteenth Massachusetts Regiment was guarding the dam on the 7<sup>th</sup>. Their rifles, however, were not of sufficient range to have much effect on the Confederates on the other side of the river. Another company of the Thirteenth Massachusetts Regiment came up from Williamsport with Enfield rifle-muskets and was able to cause the Confederate gunners, infantry and cavalry to retreat to higher ground on the 8<sup>th</sup>. The next day the Confederates attempted to dig a ditch around the southern abutment of the dam. The water which would be diverted into the ditch, would erode the earth around the abutment and thus cause the abutment to collapse. After completing the ditch the Confederates felt confident that the destruction of the dam was assured. Then they withdrew to Winchester. The work of the Confederates, however, was in vain. The level of the river was falling. Soon the water passing into the ditch "diminished to a trickle and then ceased."<sup>292</sup>

Shortly after the Confederate attack on Dam 5, General Stone of the Union Army was ordered to assume "military supervision of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal." All officers in command of

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<sup>288</sup> Bearss, "War Comes to the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal," XXIX: 158–159, 162.

<sup>289</sup> Williams, *History of Washington County, Maryland*, I: 317.

<sup>290</sup> *Ibid*, I: 318. See also Bearss, "War Comes to the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal," XXIX:162, 169.

<sup>291</sup> Bearss, "War Comes to the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal," XXIX:164–166.

<sup>292</sup> *Ibid*, XXIX:167–170. See also Williams, *History of Washington County, Maryland*, I: 319.

pickets along the canal were directed to assist canal company authorities in improving and preserving the canal.<sup>293</sup>

On December 17, 1861, General Stonewall Jackson came to Dam 5 to personally supervise its destruction. During the night, the General sent a fatigue force to quietly tear away the dam's crib. The federal troops who were guarding the dam did not detect the fatigue party at work until daybreak on the 18<sup>th</sup>. They immediately opened fire but were driven back by Confederate artillery on the opposite hill. The Union forces soon received reinforcements and together these forces were able to cause the fatigue party to retreat from the dam. About this time, Colonel Kenly and the First Maryland Regiment were ordered by General Banks to march back to the Williamsport area to aid in the defense of Dam 4 and Dam 5. Kenly reached Williamsport on the 19<sup>th</sup>. Kenly guessed correctly that the Confederates would attack Dam 5 again, so he moved his troops out of Williamsport and set up camp at Four Locks about two miles above Dam 5. General Jackson put his fatigue party to work on Dam 5 again on the night of the 19<sup>th</sup>. Despite Union gunfire, the fatigue party continued to tear at the dam's crib until 3 p.m. on the 20<sup>th</sup>. Around that time, General Jackson felt that an adequate-sized breach had been made in the dam, so he retired to Winchester. The work of Jackson's men, however, was again in vain. Although damaged, Dam 5 remained intact.<sup>294</sup>

The coming winter of 1861–62 put an end to military activities along the canal. Parts of the canal, however, were kept opened during the winter to take advantage of this period of quiet along the canal.<sup>295</sup> The Williamsport Division of the canal was apparently closed for part of the winter of 1861–62. It had been prepared for boating, however, as early as February 16, 1862.

On March 5, 1862, Jacob B. Masters, Superintendent of the Williamsport Division reported “that the portion of the canal between [Dam] No. 4 & 5” had “been in order for Boating since the 16<sup>th</sup> of Feb.” On February 7, “Lieut. Balcock of Bank's Division,” had instructed Masters “to put the Canal in order as soon as possible in order to pass some Boats down.” Masters had passed the boats down on the 16<sup>th</sup> of February.<sup>296</sup>

During the lull in the fighting, it appeared that life had just about returned to normal on the canal. Some of the canal people at Williamsport were apparently in a light mood. Lewis Cheney, the keeper of Lock 44, informed the Board on January 27, that the storehouse “occupied by Henry Ensminger, on the side of Lock 44” had become “a nuisance.” According to Chaney, Ensminger was “selling Liquor” at the storehouse, and drunken persons were “in danger constantly of drowning.” In fact certain persons had already drowned in the area.<sup>297</sup>

In early March 1862, the news reached Washington that the Confederate ironclad, the Virginia (Merrimac) had defeated two federal warships in Hampton Roads. Secretary of War, Stanton,

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<sup>293</sup> Bearss, “War Comes to the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal,” XXIX: 170.

<sup>294</sup> Ibid, XXIX: 171–175. See also Williams, *History of Washington County, Maryland*, I: 319. In early January 1862, Jackson made one final effort to permanently disrupt the canal. This time he intended to capture Hancock and disrupt the canal at that place. This plan also did not work. See Bearss, “War Comes to the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal,” XXIX: 176–177. See also, Williams, *History of Washington County, Maryland*, I: 319.

<sup>295</sup> Bearss, “War Comes to the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal,” XXIX:177; XXX:436.

<sup>296</sup> Masters to Spates, February [March] 5, 1862, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

<sup>297</sup> Cheney to President and Board of Directors, January 27, 1862, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

was frightened by the news. He reasoned that the Virginia would be able to move unmolested up the Potomac and shell the capital. On March 9, he ordered that obstructions should be placed in the Potomac in case the Virginia should sail towards Washington. The War Department immediately seized about one hundred canal boats and moved them down to the Navy Yard. At the Navy Yard the boats were filled with gravel. The plans were to sink the boats near the mouth of the river to prevent entrance by the Virginia. Fortunately, however, news reached Washington on March 10 that the new Union ironclad, the Monitor, had dueled successfully with the Virginia on the 7<sup>th</sup> at Hampton Roads. Although neither ship had been damaged, the Virginia eventually withdrew from the battle. After the crisis concerning the ironclads was over, the War Department continued to hold the seized canal boats. In fact, the military officers were still moving boats down the canal after the crisis had ended. John Wolfe, for example, reported on March 10 that he had seen “103 canal boats mostly without cargoes” pass Williamsport “under control of military officers, and destination unknown.” Wolfe said that thirty-seven of the seized boats were from Cumberland “and the bal[ance] from other points this side [of Cumberland].”<sup>298</sup>

In March 1862, the federal troops that had been guarding the canal at Dam 5 and Dam 4 crossed the river at Williamsport and joined the rest of General Bank’s army which was headed for Winchester. The prolonged presence of the troops in and near Williamsport had probably resulted in great financial benefits to the town’s merchants.<sup>299</sup>

On April 21, 1862, the Adjutant General of the United States ordered that all canal property that had been seized by the War Department in early March should be returned to the canal company. In response to this order, federal troops turned over forty boats to canal officials. Canal President Alfred Spates was informed at this time that the other boats that had been seized had been taken to aid the battle of Fredericksburg and would probably not be returned.<sup>300</sup>

In the meantime, the traffic on the canal had increased despite the heavy loss of boats to the Union Army. Many old boats were probably repaired and put into operation during the spring. On April 22, for example, Charles Embrey of Williamsport requested the Board to grant him “the privilege of constructing a Dry Dock on the Williamsport Level, above Lock 44, with the use of water to Float Boats in & out of the Dock.” Ten years earlier, on June 5, 1852, Embrey had been given permission to erect stocks for the repair of boats on this site.<sup>301</sup> The site was located on Embrey’s “private property, at the mouth of a Ravine.” During “heavy rains” the ravine would deposit “large quantities of sediment” in the canal. The canal company had to have the deposits removed each year. Embrey planned “to Run a Trunk under the Canal to Carry off, not only the water from the Dock but also what passes down the ravine.” Once this was done, the canal company would be “relieved of the expenses of removing the deposits.” Superintendent Masters rec-

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<sup>298</sup> Bearss, “War Comes to the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal,” XXX: 437–438. Also Wolfe to Ringgold, March 10, 1862, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

<sup>299</sup> Williams, *History of Washington County, Maryland*, I: 319, 323. See also Bearss, “War Comes to the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal,” XXX:438–439.

<sup>300</sup> Bearss, “War Comes to the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal,” XXX: 440–441. See also Copy of General Orders, No. 44 attached to letter from Spates to Ringgold, December 5, 1863, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

<sup>301</sup> See footnote 11, in Chapter 6, of this study report.

ommended that Embrey be granted permission to build the dock. On May 5, 1862, the Board formally granted Embrey permission to build the dock.<sup>302</sup>

During the final week of April 1862, the canal was again damaged by heavy rains. Charles Embrey, who was perhaps the leading shipper at Williamsport at that time, was highly upset by the damage done on the levels immediately below Dam 4. He expressed his displeasure in a letter to a Board member on April 26. According to Embrey, this was about “the 7<sup>th</sup> high water within the last 18 months.” After each of these floods, he had received “the unwelcomed and astonishing news that the planks at the Stop Lock [at] Dam 4 had either not been put in or if put in had gone out.” During the most recent flood “Several of the planks gave way, and the Rushing Water” had “done its usual work.” In “some places” the rushing water had filled the canal bed with silt and in other places it had washed “away the Embankment.” Embrey did not believe company officials when they announced that the repairs would take only two weeks. If history could be used as a guide, the repairs could probably not be completed in less than four weeks. The constant interruption of navigation was ruining the canal trade. The “great Flour Trade that the Canal” had once carried, had now been lost. Two-thirds of that trade had been taken over by the railroads. The “Millers” were all saying that the canal could not be relied on “for 10 days at a time,” so they were “compelled to seek some more reliable channel of Transportation.” Embrey believed that “two-thirds of the Interruption[s] to Canal Navigation” were caused by the problems “at Dam No. 4 or at the Stoplock.” He urged the Board to “appoint a committee to investigate this matter and see if some means” could “be devised” to “effectually resist the weight of [the] water” at the stoplock.<sup>303</sup>

The repairs to the canal were completed in early May. Soon after the repairs were made, however, heavy rains again struck the canal on May 14. Dam 5 received considerable damage during the flood. Temporary repairs were soon made, however, and there was no interruption to navigation.<sup>304</sup>

In the meantime, General Stonewall Jackson had begun his series of successful campaigns in Virginia. He defeated a Union force at McDowell on May 8. On May 23 he defeated Colonel Kenly’s First Maryland Regiment at Front Royal. Two days later he defeated Banks’ army at Winchester. After their defeat at Winchester, Banks’ troops retreated towards the Potomac. On May 26, most of them crossed over into Maryland at Williamsport. They apparently used the ferry and then marched over the canal bridge. On May 28, two squadrons of cavalry from Jackson’s army approached Williamsport from the Virginia side of the river. The Union artillery at Williamsport opened fire and forced the Confederates to retreat.<sup>305</sup>

By June 4, 1862, General Banks was again ready to cross over into Virginia. Heavy rains, however, delayed the movement of his troops, and it was June 8 before the last of his units crossed at

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<sup>302</sup> Embrey & Son to President and Board of Directors, April 22, 1862, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co. See also *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, K, 291–292. For an account of how the canal trade increased in the Spring of 1862 (after the settlement of the boatmen’s strike), see Bearss, “War Comes to the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal,” XXX: 441.

<sup>303</sup> Embrey & Son to Dellinger, April 26, 1862, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co. See also Bearss, “War Comes to the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal,” XXX: 441.

<sup>304</sup> Bearss, “War Comes to the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal,” XXX: 442.

<sup>305</sup> *Ibid.*, XXX: 442–443. See also Williams, *History of Washington County, Maryland*, I: 323–325.

Williamsport. The heavy rains at this time also disrupted navigation on the canal. On June 5 Superintendent Masters of the Williamsport Division informed the Board that repairs on his division would take “about ten days.”<sup>306</sup> The canal was not completely repaired, however, until July 24. The canal continued to be plagued by problems in August. On August 4, a leak at Dam 6 delayed navigation. A dry spell which occurred in early August also delayed navigation because of a lack of sufficient water in various parts of the canal. These continuing problems caused one canal official to state in early August that there had “been no real through navigation on the canal this year.”<sup>307</sup>

General Lee’s Army of Northern Virginia entered Washington County in early September 1862. Lee’s army crossed the canal at White’s Ford in Frederick County on September 5. They then marched north to Frederick where they set up camp. On September 9, General Lee ordered Generals Jackson, McLaws and Walker to take their troops and capture the federal garrison at Harpers Ferry. With the federal garrison at Harpers Ferry eliminated, Lee could be able to supply his army from the Shenandoah Valley. General Jackson took his troops across Light’s Ford at Williamsport on September 11. McLaws crossed Pleasant Valley and positioned his army on Maryland Heights overlooking Harpers Ferry. Walker had intended to destroy the Monocacy Aqueduct and then cross the river at Cheeks Ford. He was eventually forced, however, to cross at the Point of Rocks. The combined forces eventually closed in on Harpers Ferry and forced the 11,000 federal troops under Colonel Dixon Miles to surrender on September 15.<sup>308</sup>

In the meantime, the remainder of Lee’s army had proceeded up the Boonsboro Pike towards Hagerstown. By this time General McClellan’s Army of the Potomac was following close behind Lee’s army. Lee directed General D. H. Hill to use five thousand troops to delay McClellan at Crampton’s and Turner’s Gaps at South Mountain. In anticipation of Hill’s coming struggle at South Mountain, Lee dispatched General Longstreet with reinforcements on the night of September 13. McClellan’s army made contact with Hill’s small force on the morning of September 14. When Longstreet arrived in the afternoon, Hill’s small force was locked in a hopeless struggle against the massive federal army. Lee was notified of the situation, and at nightfall Longstreet and Hill received orders to retreat to Sharpsburg. Hill and Longstreet arrived at Sharpsburg on the afternoon of September 15. On the same day General Lee brought the main body of his army down from Hagerstown on the Sharpsburg Pike. General Jackson hurried from Harpers Ferry by way of Shepherdstown and joined Lee at Sharpsburg on September 16. On the next day the Battle of Antietam was fought.<sup>309</sup>

Soon after the Battle of Antietam had begun, General McClellan ordered Captain Charles H. Russell’s First Maryland Cavalry to ride to Williamsport and burn the canal bridge and destroy the Conococheague Aqueduct. This action was taken in order to prevent Lee from escaping by way of Williamsport. When Russell’s cavalry arrived in Williamsport, they found that the town was being occupied by Pennsylvania militiamen. According to Historian Edwin C. Bearss, Russell’s men proceeded to destroy the “pivot bridge at Lock 44.” The cavalrymen must also have

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<sup>306</sup> Masters to Ringgold, June 5, 1862, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

<sup>307</sup> Bearss, “War Comes to the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal,” XXX: 445–446.

<sup>308</sup> Ibid, XXX: 449–451. See also Williams, *History of Washington County, Maryland*, I: 330–331.

<sup>309</sup> Ibid.

destroyed the main canal bridge which was located near the main basin.<sup>310</sup> The Pennsylvania militiamen soon joined the cavalymen in the destructive activities. The Pennsylvanians organized demolition teams and proceeded to burn eleven boats. Russell's cavalry tried to destroy the aqueduct but were unable to do any significant damage to the structure. The cavalry eventually returned to Antietam, and the Pennsylvanians withdrew from Williamsport to Hagerstown.<sup>311</sup>

After the Battle of Antietam, the main body of General Lee's battered army retreated across the river near Shepherdstown. In his retreat, Lee tried to create a diversion by having General "Jeb" Stuart's cavalry and General Wade Hampton's brigade cross the river at Williamsport. Upon reaching Williamsport, Stuart's cavalry found that the canal bridges had been destroyed. The cavalry went to work and in a short time were able to open a road under the Conococheague Aqueduct. Before leaving Williamsport, Stuart's cavalry burned one canal boat and damaged the keeper's house at Lock 44.<sup>312</sup>

After Lee's army had retreated across the Potomac, canal officials began to assess the damage that had been done to the canal. On September 22, Superintendent Masters reported that the people of Williamsport had been "cut off from the outside world" from September 6 through September 21. Thus he had not been able "to send or receive anything by mail since the 6<sup>th</sup> of Sept." The damage done to his division "by the recent military operations" would amount to \$2,000 in addition to "the loss of eleven Canal Boats burnt." According to Masters, "the most serious" damage had been "the burning of the Lock Gates" at Lock 44. He believed that all of the damages on the Williamsport Division could "be repaired in a week's time." On October 3, Henry S. Miller, the Collector of Tolls at Williamsport, informed the Board that the eleven boats that had been burned by the Pennsylvania militiamen had been loaded with coal. The coal, however, had "not all burned" because "a large number of the Citizens put out the fire after it had burned several days." General John R. Kenly<sup>313</sup> had taken possession of all the unburned coal, except for three boat loads. One boat load had been destined to be received by "a man" who lived in Williamsport. The other two boat loads had been "used by Mr. Embrey" who was "also a citizen of" Williamsport.<sup>314</sup>

Some other noncanal-owned property was also destroyed at Williamsport during the military operations of September 1862. A mill which was owned by Shoop and Lefevre at Lock 44 was burned on September 17. The destruction of this mill probably occurred at the same time that Union troops burned the lock gates at Lock 44. On February 12, 1863, the Board passed the following order relative to the mill:

That Shoop & Lefevre be allowed an abatement of water rent at their mill at Lock 44, from the 17<sup>th</sup> of September 1862, when their mill was destroyed by fire, and that said water lease be terminated.<sup>315</sup>

<sup>310</sup> Although Bearss does not mention the canal bridge near the main basin, it also was apparently burned.

<sup>311</sup> Bearss, "War Comes to the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal," XXX:451.

<sup>312</sup> Ibid, XXX:451–452.

<sup>313</sup> Colonel Kenly had been made a "Major General of Volunteers" after his participation in the Battle of Front Royal. See Williams, *History of Washington County, Maryland*, I: 323.

<sup>314</sup> Masters to Ringgold, September 22, 1862, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co. See also Miller to Ringgold, November [October] 3, 1862, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

<sup>315</sup> *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, K, 323. I believe that this mill was probably the same mill that had been owned first by Joseph Hollman and later by Benjamin F. Hollman. According to Scharf's *History of*

Some buildings in the area of the main basin may have been destroyed in September of 1862. On May 2, 1863, Charles Embrey informed the Board that the two warehouses which he held at that time (May 2, 1863) were “the only ones that” were still standing in the basin area. All of the others had “been Burned.”<sup>316</sup>

The damage to the canal at Williamsport and elsewhere had been repaired by mid-October of 1862. On October 12, Superintendent Masters informed the Board that he would need “about \$500” extra “to pay in full” for the repair of Lock 44 and for the removal of the “eleven burnt Boats.” The “laborers” had been “promised the money for their work,” and were now expecting to be paid. On October 23, Thomas Charlton of Williamsport reminded the Board that he and his “black boy (Henry Clemmens)” were due to be paid a total of \$654.15 for work on the canal. Charlton was apparently also engaged in shipping. He was willing to have the amount due to himself and Clemmens deducted from the tolls over “the next two years.”<sup>317</sup>

Although the canal had been repaired by mid-October 1862, the continuation of the dry spell prevented the resumption of through navigation from Georgetown to Cumberland. On October 12, Superintendent Masters wrote from Williamsport that the water on the Williamsport Division was “still too low for loaded Boats.” His men were “working on the Dam” and the water was rising slowly because of their work.<sup>318</sup> The rains finally came during the second half of October, and the river began to rise. By early November, however, there was a major leak at Dam 5. The water on the Williamsport level became so low that it could not float loaded boats. All loaded boats coming down the canal had to stop at the dam. The Board became dissatisfied with Superintendent Masters’ handling of the leak and ordered Superintendent Hasset of the Hancock Division to handle the problem. On November 10, Hasset informed the Board that his workmen had nearly repaired the leak. By November 17, the leak had been repaired and through navigation was resumed.<sup>319</sup>

During the remainder of 1862, the canal at Williamsport was not the scene of any major military activity. There were isolated Confederate raids across other areas of the canal, but the canal was not damaged. The major war activity had now moved east towards Fredericksburg, and shippers and boatmen tried to take advantage of the relative quiet. At the end of December, Superintendent Masters informed the Board “that the Williamsport Division” had “been in good Boating order during the month of Dec.” The “only detention” to navigation had been caused by “ice.” He had been running an ice breaker “each day from WmSport down to the Guard Lock at [Dam] No. 4 and back.” The citizens of Williamsport, according to Masters, were complaining “for the want of a Bridge across the Canal at this place.” The “former one” had been “burnt by the Military of the U. S. in September and . . . nothing [had] been done since to replace it.” Masters had

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*Western Maryland*, Samuel Lefevre was associated with a “Mr. A. Shoop” in the operation of a “Saw-Mill and planing mill.” See Scharf, *History of Western Maryland*, II:1231.

<sup>316</sup> Embrey to President and Board of Directors, May 2, 1863, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co. Embrey did not say when the other structures had been burned.

<sup>317</sup> Masters to Ringgold, November [October] 12, 1862, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co. See also Charlton to Ringgold, October 23, 1862, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

<sup>318</sup> Masters to Ringgold, November [October] 12, 1862, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

<sup>319</sup> Bearss, “War Comes to the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal,” XXX: 457–458.

“repaired a road” that ran “under the Aqueduct for temporary purposes.” This road, however, could not be used during periods of high water.”<sup>320</sup>

The Williamsport Division of the canal remained open to navigation until the end of January 1863. On January 10, Superintendent Masters reported that he was “still keeping the canal open.” No loaded boats had passed down the canal in “4 days.” A “number of empty boats,” however, had been passed up the canal. On February 2, Masters reported that he had kept the Williamsport Division “in navigable order during the month of Jan.” Since there had been only a “few Boats running” in January, he “did not keep the ice breaker running after the middle of the month.” Instead, he had used the ice breaker only when “a boat” wanted “to pass over the division.” The water had now “been drawn off” of the division, and Masters would “proceed to take out the Bars” as soon as the weather got better. Masters also informed the Board that he had “commenced to build a bridge over the Canal” at Williamsport. A “number of the citizens on the Virginia side” had agreed “to furnish . . . most of the timber.” Masters promised that he would have the bridge “Built at as little expense as possible.”<sup>321</sup>

By mid-March 1863, the Williamsport Division of the Canal had been reopened for Spring navigation. On March 17, Superintendent Masters reported that the canal was “in good order” and boats appeared “to be moving down freely.” Masters also reported that the bridge over the canal at Williamsport was finished and could now “be crossed with wagons etc.” It needed a railing, however, “to keep stock etc. from getting off the sides.” Masters planned to have the railing installed as soon as possible. The bridge had been built at a cost of “about \$450.” The timber had been “given” to the company, and “a great deal of the iron” had been taken “from the old bridge.” A “new Bridge of the same dimensions” as the old bridge would have cost about \$850. Competent judges believed, however, that the new bridge was “the strongest and most durable Bridge that” had “been over the Canal” at that place.<sup>322</sup>

By the end of March, the canal trade had begun to slowly increase. The main basin area at Williamsport, however, was still not a very busy place. The only shipper with facilities in the main basin area was Charles Embrey. On March 31, Joseph H. Farrow requested that he be granted permission to use a piece of ground adjacent to the basin. The portion of land which Farrow desired to use was situated on the “east or berm side of the canal.” It ran “south from the basin two hundred and twenty-four feet and” included “the berm bank for that distance.” Farrow planned to “permanently improve” the site, and he promised to use the site “exclusively for purposes of

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<sup>320</sup> Masters to President and Board of Directors, December 31, 1862, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co. This was obviously the same road that had been opened by “Jeb” Stuart’s troops in September. See Bearss, “War Come to the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal,” XXX: 452. This road, however, was probably a very old one. At one time it may have run along the bank of the creek from the end of Water Street down to the junction of the river. This is purely conjecture, however, because I have found no documentary evidence of the existence of this road before 1862.

<sup>321</sup> Masters to Ringgold, January 10, 1863, ltrs. Recd., C & O Co. See also Masters to President and Board of Directors, February 2, 1863, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co. The bridge referred to here was undoubtedly the one that had stood near the main basin of the canal at Williamsport.

<sup>322</sup> Masters to Ringgold, March 17, 1863, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

transportation.” On April 9, the Board voted to lease Farrow the land he desired. The lease was to last for ten years and Farrow was to pay an annual rent of thirty dollars.<sup>323</sup>

The day after the Board had granted Farrow permission to use land adjacent to the basin, it tried to spell out exactly what portion of the company’s basin land was to be used by Charles Embrey. For some time Embrey apparently had been using some of the company’s land rent free. The Board now ordered Embrey to pay an annual rent of thirty dollars (commencing from January 1, 1863) “on such portion of the company’s land in his occupancy.” In the future Embrey was to confine his occupancy to “only such portion” of the company’s basin land that lay “west of his warehouse.” If Embrey refused to abide by the orders of the Board, the Superintendent of the Williamsport Division was to seize the canal property that was being occupied by Embrey.<sup>324</sup>

Charles Embrey was quick to reply to the Board’s orders of April 9 and 10. On April 18, he complained to the Clerk (of the canal company) that the Board’s recent grant of land to Joseph Farrow would greatly interfere with the interest of his company. He planned to send a formal communication to the Board at its next meeting. In order to prepare his formal communication he needed to see Mr. Farrow’s application for land near the basin. Embrey therefore requested the Clerk to send him a copy of the application.<sup>325</sup>

On May 2, Embrey sent his long communication to the Board relative to the orders of April 9 and 10. Along with the communication he also submitted a copy of the Board’s order of April 16, 1859, which had permitted him to “Lease a Lot for a Wharf.” In his communication, Embrey presented two basic arguments in opposition to the Board’s orders of April 9 and 10. Embrey’s first argument was directed against the Board’s order which required him to pay thirty dollars per annum for the property that he presently held. Embrey concluded that the Board must not have known that he was already being charged thirty dollars per annum in accordance with his lease of 1859. Embrey’s second argument was directed against the Board’s order that he confine his occupancy to canal land west of his warehouse. If he was to abide by this order he would have to vacate the only other house which stood in the basin area. The house in question was the old unfinished warehouse which had originally belonged to Anderson and Lyons. John M. Stake had informed the Board in September 1848 that he had “bought out Mr. J. H. Anderson’s portion of the unfinished warehouse” and desired to move the structure “down upon the edge of the Basin at the south east corner.” Stake had promised to “have an Office for the Collector of Tolls finished off in” the house. On September 14, 1848, the Board had voted to let Stake move the structure.<sup>326</sup> Embrey now informed the Board that he had purchased the house from Elie Stake.<sup>327</sup> He admitted that “a portion” of the house might “be on the Company’s Ground.” He argued, howev-

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<sup>323</sup> Farrow to President and Board of Directors, March 31, 1863, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co. See also *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, K, 327–328. Farrow later became a well-known druggist in Williamsport. He also served as a town commissioner and as a state senator. See Scharf, *History of Western Maryland*, II:1227.

<sup>324</sup> *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, K, 331.

<sup>325</sup> Embrey & Son to Ringgold, April 18, 1863, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

<sup>326</sup> Stake to President and Directors, September 4, 1848, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co. See also *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, H, 203; and footnote 50 and 51 in Chapter 5 of this study report.

<sup>327</sup> Elie Stake was apparently a relative of John M. Stake. Embrey said that after the house had been moved to near the basin, an office had indeed been finished off for the Collector of Tolls. The Collectors still used the office “when it suited their convenience.” See Embrey & Son to president and Board of Directors, May 2, 1863, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

er, that it was still unfair for the company to order him “to vacate the premises” so “that Mr. Farrow might be accommodated.” Embrey also suggested that Farrow’s letter of application had not been clear on exactly how the site was to be used. Farrow had apparently told Embrey that he wanted the ground “for the purpose of Opening a Coal yard” and not for “Transportation.” Embrey felt that Farrow could easily open a coal yard between the house and the basin. According to Embrey, Farrow would have “100 feet between the House and the Canal Basin” which would be “amply sufficient for a coal yard.” The house which Embrey was being ordered to vacate was of major importance to his business. According to Embrey, only two houses were still standing in the basin area. Embrey stated the importance of the two houses in the following manner:

The two Houses that we Occupy are the only ones that Stand on the canal at this place, the rest all having been burned. These two Houses do not afford us sufficient room to accommodate the Trade offered for Transportation. We have been compelled to refuse produce offered this spring for the want of room to store it. Under the circumstances will you through the Lease to Farrow take from us one of the two Houses causing loss both to us & the Company, . . . [?]<sup>328</sup>

Embrey’s long letter was taken up by the Board on May 7. The Board, however, was not moved by his passionate appeal. After reading the letter, the Board passed the following resolution: “Resolved—That the Board believe they understand the facts in relation to the pretensions of Charles Embrey & Sons to the land and warehouse at Williamsport occupied by them, and do not deem it necessary to take further action in the matter.”<sup>329</sup>

In early May 1863, Superintendent Masters reported on April 21 “a part of Williams’ Culvert one mile east of” Williamsport had been washed out. Repairs, however, had been made in about seven days, and the division was now in good order.<sup>330</sup>

In early June 1863, General Lee again decided to take the War into enemy territory. Most of his army left the Fredericksburg area in early June, crossed the Blue Ridge Mountains and moved up the Shenandoah Valley. General Hooker, who was now in command of the Army of the Potomac, marched his army in a parallel direction with Lee’s Army, but on the opposite side of the Blue Ridge. Eventually two brigades of Confederate cavalry crossed over into Maryland at Williamsport. General Jenkins’ cavalry crossed at Williamsport on June 15. General Longstreet’s cavalry crossed at Williamsport on June 25. After crossing into Maryland, the Army of Northern Virginia converged on Hagerstown. For a short time General Lee’s Headquarters were on the Williamsport Pike near Halfway. By June 27, however, Lee was in Chambersburg, and in early June he was battling against General Meade at Gettysburg.<sup>331</sup>

On July 4, Lee’s defeated army retreated back into Washington County, Maryland. Soon after the battle, heavy rains made it impossible for the Confederate Army to ford the river at the usual crossings, such as at Williamsport. Because of the heavy rains, General Lee dispatched his engineers “to select a new line of battle covering the crossing of the Potomac at Williamsport.” As the Confederates retreated they formed a battle line which stretched “from a point on Frederick

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<sup>328</sup> Ibid. Embrey did not say when the other structures were burned.

<sup>329</sup> *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, K, 333–334.

<sup>330</sup> Masters to President and Board of Directors, May 2, 1863, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

<sup>331</sup> Williams, *History of Washington County, Maryland*, I:347–348. See also John D. Hicks, et. al., *The Federal Union: A History of the United States to 1877*, 4 ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1964), pp. 662–663.

Bryan's farm a mile northwest of Hagerstown, all the way to Falling Waters on the Potomac below Williamsport; a distance of 12 miles." The Federal Army was stretched in a parallel line "beginning not far from [the] Funkstown turnpike road near Hagerstown and extending southward almost along the Sharpsburg road."<sup>332</sup>

While Lee's army waited for the high waters to recede, General Meade decided to entrench his army rather than attack. Several skirmishers, however, did occur in the county. Finally, on the night of July 13 General Lee's army crossed back over into Virginia. Part of this army crossed the river at Williamsport, while another part crossed at Falling Waters.<sup>333</sup>

During the brief period between the Confederates' retreat from Gettysburg and their crossing of the Potomac, considerable damage was done to the canal. On August 4, 1863, Superintendent Masters informed the Board that he had been unable to send a report for the month of June because "this section of [the] country" had recently been "occupied by the Rebels." According to Masters, "the damage done by the rebels to the canal" consisted of the following:

. . . the tearing down to the bottom of the canal the 4 corners of the aqueduct, an aggregate space of 74 feet, all of the coping & railing was thrown down into the creek & partly destroyed, an opening in one of the arches was made nearly the width of the aqueduct & 6 or 10 feet wide. All the gates at Lock No. 44 was [were] burnt & two course[s] of the lock wall thrown into the Lock. There was [were] 4 roads made through the banks of the canal on this division which did no damage except the expense of remaining the material.

The repair crews were already at work on the aqueduct and the work was "progressing as fast as possible." Masters said that he would have "it rebuilt with masonry as high as the water mark, or as far as the stone on hand" would "rebuild it." The "other repairs on" the division would "also be done by the time the aqueduct" could "be finished." Masters expected to have all the work done by August 8. He believed that "the damage done by the rebels" would "not fall much short of \$5,000."<sup>334</sup>

On September 2, Masters informed the Board that "the damage done to the canal by the Rebels &c was repaired by the 8<sup>th</sup> of Aug as to admit . . . water . . . into the Canal on this division." Since "that time the canal" had "been in navigable order." The water at Dam 5, however, was falling fast, and Masters feared that soon fully loaded boats would not be able to pass between Dam 5 and Lock 41. His force had worked on the dam the previous week and had been able to slow the leakage. The level of the water, however, was continuing to fall. He had made arrangements with Mr. Stake to get his force to work on the dam as soon as possible.<sup>335</sup>

During the winter of 1863–64 a sizable number of Federal troops were stationed at Williamsport.<sup>336</sup> Therefore, the canal at Williamsport received little Confederate harassment from September 1863 through the spring of 1864. By mid-1864, however, the Confederates had become convinced that the majority of the people living in the counties of Western Maryland were loyal to the enemy. The Confederates therefore began to raid Western Maryland just as Southern

<sup>332</sup> Williams, *History of Washington County, Maryland*, I: 348–349.

<sup>333</sup> *Ibid.*, I: 349–354.

<sup>334</sup> Masters to president and Board of Directors, August 4, 1863, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

<sup>335</sup> Masters to president and Board of Directors, September 2, 1863, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

<sup>336</sup> Williams, *History of Washington County, Maryland*, I: 354.

Pennsylvania had been raided earlier. In early July General McCausland's cavalry crossed the river at Shepherdstown and later occupied Hagerstown. He threatened to burn Hagerstown unless the citizens delivered \$20,000 plus clothing in one hour. Fortunately, the citizens were able to meet the demands and the town was spared the fate that would soon befall Chambersburg.<sup>337</sup>

In late July, McCausland started on another raid. This time, his target would be Chambersburg. His cavalry left General Early's encampment at Martinsburg on July 26 and reached the Potomac opposite Williamsport on the same day. The next day McCausland crossed the Potomac at McCoy's Ferry and set up camp at Clear Spring. The following day he left for Chambersburg. After burning Chambersburg, he retreated through McConnellsville to Hancock and then followed the National Pike towards Cumberland. He was eventually able to recross the Potomac at Oldtown.<sup>338</sup>

In the meantime, General Ramseur had entered Williamsport on July 29. Despite several skirmishes, he was able to hold the town until after General McCausland had crossed back into Virginia. While Ramseur was holding Williamsport, General Breckenridge crossed over at Williamsport and proceeded down to the College of St. James. General Ramseur finally recrossed Williamsport on August 6.<sup>339</sup>

In mid-August there was more military activity at Williamsport. For a brief period, General Fitzhugh Lee's cavalry stationed themselves on the banks of the Potomac opposite Williamsport and exchanged fire with the Federal troops stationed on the opposite side.<sup>340</sup>

On August 20, Superintendent Masters informed the Board of the "troubles" that had recently been occurring at Williamsport. There was general "confusion" all along the Williamsport Division. Business was constantly being suspended. On that very day (as well as the previous day) all of his men had "quit work on ac[coun]t of a report that the rebels were near." On two occasions the rebels had taken "provisions, from the Boats" and had also taken "Blankets." They had also "damaged the aqueduct, and made a considerable breach in the Canal." Masters hoped to be able to put water back into the Williamsport Division by the 25<sup>th</sup> if there was no more interference from the Confederate raiders. He also advised the Board that a Mr. Brown was "anxious to complete his work," but could not do so because the military would "not permit any crossing of the river."<sup>341</sup>

According to Sanderlin's history of the canal, the month of August 1864 "saw no through navigation at all." The mere rumor of an impending raid was enough to make the boatmen tie up at the nearest wharf and seek shelter. The Confederate raids along the canal apparently continued into September. Despite the raids of 1864, however, the canal's total trade was slightly higher in 1864 than it had been in 1863.<sup>342</sup>

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<sup>337</sup> Ibid., I: 354–357.

<sup>338</sup> Ibid., I: 357.

<sup>339</sup> Ibid.

<sup>340</sup> Ibid.

<sup>341</sup> Masters to Ringgold, August 20, 1864, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

<sup>342</sup> Sanderlin, *The Great National Project*, pages 217, 221. The canal trade rose from a low of 126,793 tons in 1862 to 265,847 in 1863 and 290,772 in 1864.

By late October 1864, the canal at Williamsport was probably pretty much back to normal again. Charles Embrey apparently considered the time was right to press his claim to the basin property that had been leased to Joseph H. Farrow back in 1863. In a letter dated September 30, Embrey had written to Board member, Mr. Wation, to complain “that the lands leased to Mr. Farrow” were not in fact “owned by the Company.” The Board took up his letter on October 20 and decided that the land in question had been acquired by the company from Ann and Mary Williams. The Board then ordered the Clerk to furnish Director Wation with copies of the deed. A survey would also be made of the property if Director Wation felt that it was necessary to settle the dispute.<sup>343</sup>

The dispute, however, continued. The warehouse and basin lot which Charles Embrey had been leasing since 1847 actually belonged to Mary Smith Williams White, the daughter of Edward Greene Williams. The Williams’ family home, Springfield Farm, had been used as a campsite by the Union Army and had probably suffered some damage. Because of the War, Mary White and her husband, Reverend John Campbell White, decided to sell their holdings in Williamsport and make New York their permanent home.<sup>344</sup> Therefore, on November 19, 1864, Charles and Theodore Embrey purchased the warehouse and lot (No. 223) from the Whites for the sum of \$2,500.<sup>345</sup> After they had purchased the warehouse and lot, the Embrey’s claimed that they actually owned a part of the basin itself.

On December 6, 1864, Joseph Farrow informed the Board that the land which had been leased to him in 1863 had originally been a part of the “lots” which were used to form the basin. The Board took up Farrow’s letter on January 12, 1865, and referred it to Director Wation.<sup>346</sup>

On February 18, Charles Embrey again informed the Board that the land leased to Farrow did not belong to the company. Embrey now argued, however, that he had title to the land. He was willing, however, to grant the canal company a portion of the land “without any charge.” Embrey’s letter was taken up and then tabled on February 23.<sup>347</sup>

Following the winter of 1864–65, the canal at Williamsport was probably reopened on schedule in late February or early March of 1865. As soon as the canal was opened, however, heavy rains damaged the Williamsport Division. On March 6, Superintendent Masters informed the Board that “all of the upper or North side of the Williamsport Aqueduct” had fallen “into the creek, except [for] the two corners repaired in 1863.” There “had been a crack” in the aqueduct “for the last 6 or 8 years,” and Masters believed that the “blasting by the Rebels, and the severe freezing weather this winter” had “caused it to give away.” The river had covered two levels of the canal, but no significant damage had been done. Masters said that “in the absence of other instructions”

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<sup>343</sup> *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, K, 403.

<sup>344</sup> Unrau, unpublished *HSR, The Cushwa Warehouse*, p. 23. According to Unrau, the Whites sold Springfield Farm to Charles Humrichouse for \$16,000 on April 8, 1864.

<sup>345</sup> Deed from John Campbell White, Trustee, to Charles M. and Theodore Embrey, November 19, 1864, in Washington County Land Records, Liber IN 19 (64), folios 20–21. For other lands within Williamsport which were sold by the Whites, see White’s Addition to Williamsport in appendix K.

<sup>346</sup> *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, K, 412–413.

<sup>347</sup> *Ibid.*, K, 418.

he would “proceed at once to put in a wooden trunk” at the aqueduct. He could not, however, give “an exact estimate of the time” it would take to repair the aqueduct.<sup>348</sup>

On March 17, Masters reported that his workmen had just “finished the aqueduct.” It was “now undergoing a sure test” because both the river and creek were “very high.” The river was already “over all the levels” of the Williamsport Division, but Masters could not tell what damage it had already done.<sup>349</sup>

On March 28, Masters sent the Board a description and sketch of the repair work that had been done on the Williamsport Aqueduct. He believed that the work was “strong” and would “last a long time with a little repair.” He made no reference, however, to the condition of the rest of the division.<sup>350</sup>

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<sup>348</sup> Masters to Ringgold, March 6, 1865, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

<sup>349</sup> Masters to Ringgold, March 17, 1865, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

<sup>350</sup> Masters to Ringgold, March 28, 1865, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

## CHAPTER 8

### Williamsport and the Canal in Operation, 1865–1889

By mid-1865, the canal at Williamsport was apparently operating smoothly. The practice of political patronage returned to the canal immediately after the end of the War. In July 1865, the old Board was ousted and a new Board elected.<sup>351</sup> It was around this time that Charles Embrey & Son decided to again press their claim to the basin land that had been leased to Joseph Farrow in 1863. On August 23, Embrey wrote the new President (of the canal company) a long letter. He explained that his claim had been pending “before the Former Canal Board” at the time that “the New Board was Elected.” He now wished to “have the matter revived.” He begged the President, however, to grant him a personal interview before the matter was taken up by the new Board. He suggested that the President should let him know when he [the President] would again be in Hagerstown so that the two of them could meet and discuss the matter. Embrey then proceeded to state the nature of the problem in the following manner:

. . . We own Ground over which the Canal passes which the Company has no Title to. We will give the Co. a Deed to the Ground free of charge Except cost of Deed & Survey. What we wish is to have Lines that mark the separation between us & the Co. We wish to Build Walls around the Basin [and] cannot do it until the Lines are marked.

It should be noted that Embrey stated in the above quotation that he wanted to “Build Walls around the Basin.” This indicated that no walls had been erected around the basin prior to this time.<sup>352</sup>

On September 14, Embrey’s letter was taken up by the Board and then tabled.<sup>353</sup> On December 8, 1865, Charles Embrey and Son notified the Board that the basin at Williamsport needed to be cleaned out. The Embreys apparently still claimed ownership of part of the basin because they also recommended “that a committee of the Board confer with them relative to lands of the Company.” The Board took up the Embreys’ letter on December 14. The “President and Director Wation were appointed a Committee” to confer with the Embreys. The records of the canal company do not reveal how the dispute was finally settled.<sup>354</sup>

Between 1865 and 1869 the canal company received several applications for privileges along the canal at Williamsport. On September 11, 1865, Harry grovel requested that he be allowed to “use an inlet at the canal near Williamsport.” The Board referred his letter to the Superintendent of the Williamsport Division.<sup>355</sup>

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<sup>351</sup> *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, K, 431. Between 1865 and 1870 there were at least “four changes in canal administration.” See Sanderlin, *The Great National Project*, p. 224.

<sup>352</sup> Embrey & Son to Snively, August 23, 1865, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

<sup>353</sup> *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, K, 449.

<sup>354</sup> *Ibid.*, K, 465. Harlan D. Unrau claims that the dispute was settled when the Board obtained “a judgment in the Washington County Courts in December 1865 supporting the canal board’s position that it possessed a clear title to the property from Ann and Mary Williams.” See Unrau, unpublished *HSR, The Cushwa Warehouse*, p. 24. I was unable to find any reference to this judgment in the records of the canal company.

<sup>355</sup> *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, K, 447.

On November 9, 1865, the Board received a letter of application from Shoop and Lefevre. Before the War, these two men had operated a mill at Lock 44. Their mill was destroyed by fire in 1862. Shoop and Lefevre were now applying for a new land and water lease at Lock 44. Their application was tabled.<sup>356</sup>

On November 23, 1865, A. J. Potts informed the Board that he had erected a “feed store at Lock 44” and was contemplating “other improvements; such as a hay shed.” Since he had erected the store “at a considerable expense” he urged the Board to grant him “a lease for a term of (at least) Ten Years.” Along with his letter of application, Potts submitted a petition of support which was signed by nineteen citizens who were “doing business on the canal” at Williamsport.<sup>357</sup> Potts was apparently granted a lease, but within a short time the store was leased and then purchased by other persons.

In early 1866, the Board for some unexplained reason, decided to grant Shoop and Lefevre permission to build a “store” or “storehouse” at Lock 44.<sup>358</sup> Shoop and Lefevre declined the grant which the Board had offered them. After the grant had been refused by Shoop and Lefevre, Issac Sharpless requested that the same grant be given to him. The Board immediately voted to give Sharpless permission to build a store “under the direction of the Superintendent of the Williamsport Division.” His lease was to “continue during the will and pleasure of the Board,” and he was to pay an annual rent of thirty-six dollars.<sup>359</sup>

Although Issac Sharpless had been granted permission to build a store at Lock 44, he probably never proceeded to build the store. Since A. J. Potts already had a store at Lock 44, Sharpless apparently arranged to take over Potts’ lease sometime before 1867. On January 5, 1867, Theodore Embrey and his brother<sup>360</sup> reminded the Board that they had previously made an application to take over the lease on A. J. Potts’ store at Lock 44. They informed the Board that they had now “purchased the store at said place heretofore granted to Issac Sharpless.” (The Embreys probably had purchased only an interest in the store.) They requested that the lease which had been granted to Sharpless be transferred to them. The Embreys also presented a letter which had been signed by Issac Sharpless. Sharpless requested that his grant be transferred to “T. Embrey & Bro.” The Board accepted the Embreys’ request on January 10.<sup>361</sup>

Although Theodore Embrey & Brother had purchased an interest in the store at Lock 44 and had received a lease from the canal company, they apparently decided to let someone else occupy the store. On February 6, Benjamin Long notified the Board that he had made arrangements with

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<sup>356</sup> Ibid., K, 458.

<sup>357</sup> Potts to President and Board of Directors, December 8 [November 23] 1865, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co. For a copy of Potts’ letter and petition showing the signatures of the nineteen other citizens who were doing business on the canal at Williamsport in 1865, see Appendix N.

<sup>358</sup> *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, K, 469. It should be remembered that in November 1865 Shoop and Lefevre had asked for a new land and water lease presumably to start a new mill. It is possible, however, that they may have also included a request to open a store.

<sup>359</sup> Ibid., K, 475.

<sup>360</sup> These were the sons of Charles Embrey. Embrey apparently had six children. One of the sons, Theodore, entered his father’s business as a partner in 1855, after which the firm was known as Charles Embrey and Son. See Scharf, *History of Western Maryland*, II: 1225. By 1867, the sons apparently had a firm of their own called “T. Embrey & Bro.”

<sup>361</sup> *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, L, 3.

Theodore Embrey and Brother and with A. J. Potts to occupy the store at Lock 44. Therefore, on February 14, the Board passed the following resolution: “Resolved—That the assent of the Board be given to Benjamin Long to occupy the storehouse at Lock 44 on the terms of the original grant to A. J. Potts, under transfer made by said A. J. Potts and T. Embrey & Bro.”<sup>362</sup>

At the end of the War, the canal had been in desperate need of repair and other improvements. Therefore, between 1865 and 1869 the Board ordered the commencement of several projects to repair and improve the canal. On September 14, 1865, the Board ordered that a dredging machine be procured for the Hancock and Williamsport Divisions.<sup>363</sup> On December 8, 1865, Charles Embrey and Son wrote the Board a letter requesting “that the basin at Williamsport be cleaned out.”<sup>364</sup> On January 11, 1866, the Board directed the Superintendent of the Williamsport Division “to have the basin of the canal at Williamsport cleaned out.” The Board also ruled that “parties” with interest in the basin should “be required in the future to keep it in [good] condition.”<sup>365</sup>

On January 12, 1866, the Board ordered the Engineer and General Superintendent to “have the bridge over the canal at Williamsport . . . restored in a suitable manner as early as practicable.” The order said that the bridge had been “recently displaced.” It did not, however, say how the bridge had been displaced.<sup>366</sup>

On December 18, 1867, the Board ordered “that a suitable home for the keeper of Lock No. 44” should “be built under the direction of the President.” It should be remembered that the last order relative to the erection of a house at Lock 44 had been issued by the Board on December 8, 1848. Available canal company records do not reveal whether or not a house was built immediately after the order of 1848, and the order of 1867 does not say that an earlier house was to be replaced. It is likely, however, that a lockhouse had been built sometime before the Civil War. According to Edwin C. Bearss, a lockhouse at Lock 44 was damaged by “Jeb” Stuart’s cavalry after the Battle of Antietam. On the other hand, no documentation has been found to show that the Board’s order of 1867 was immediately carried out.<sup>367</sup>

In 1869, the Board authorized the repair of the Williamsport Aqueduct. Board members Coudy, Grove and Gorman were appointed to supervise the project.<sup>368</sup>

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<sup>362</sup> Ibid., L, 6. In 1871 “Theodore Embrey & Bro.” were being charged thirty-six dollars per annum to lease what was referred to as a “Feed Store on Lock 44.” See Ledgers for House, Land, and Water Rent Accounts, Vol. I:181, C & O Co.

<sup>363</sup> *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, K, 446.

<sup>364</sup> Ibid., K, 465. The Embreys were apparently still claiming part of the basin, because they also requested “that a committee of the Board confer with them relative to lands of the Company.” The President and Mr. Wation were appointed as a committee to meet the Embreys. See also footnote 4 in Chapter 8 of this study report.

<sup>365</sup> Ibid., K, 469–470.

<sup>366</sup> Ibid., K, 502. Appendix K indicates that the Salisbury Street bridge had been erected in 1867. Therefore, the Salisbury Street bridge may have replaced the bridge referred to above.

<sup>367</sup> Ibid., L, 66. For the old order of 1848, see footnote 52 in Chapter 5 of this study report. The only other thing that can be said with certainty about the present lockhouse at Lock 44 is that it was standing at the time of the 1889 flood. See Second Report of Receivers, June 9, 1890, “Exhibit A,” in C & O Canal Restoration Group files, Seneca, Maryland. For Bearss’ reference to Civil War damage at Lockhouse 44, see footnote 37 in Chapter 7 of this study report.

<sup>368</sup> *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, L, 174.

In the meantime, the administration of the canal had undergone another shakeup in 1866. It was at this time that Andrew K. Stake of Williamsport was first elected to the Board of Directors. As a result of the change in administration, Joseph V. L. Ensminger replaced Henry S. Miller as the Collector of Tolls at Williamsport.<sup>369</sup>

Another political shakeup in the administration of the canal apparently occurred in 1869. At Williamsport, Ambrose D. McCardle was named to replace William Covel as the keeper of Lock 44.<sup>370</sup>

In 1869, officials of the Cumberland Valley Railroad began to consider the possibility of running that railroad from Hagerstown through Williamsport. Officials of the Cumberland Valley began negotiations with canal company officials in early January. The railroad officials planned to make “connection with the canal at Williamsport” and then extend the line to Winchester.<sup>371</sup> According to one source, a survey was actually made through Williamsport. Railroad officials, however, decided against that route because of the high prices sought by the landowners at Williamsport. Therefore, a route was adopted which would cause the line to cross the canal about two miles below Williamsport.<sup>372</sup>

By 1870, Williamsport had a total population of 1,283. The town had therefore experienced some population growth during the decade of the 1860s. The increase, however, had not been great. The town had had a total population of 1,016 in 1860.<sup>373</sup>

The period from 1870–1889 has been called the “Golden Age of the Canal.”<sup>374</sup> This period was a fairly prosperous one for Williamsport and for all the towns along the canal. Some well-known business enterprises were started at Williamsport during this period. There were not, however, any dramatic increases in the town’s population during this period.

In 1870 another political shakeup occurred in the administration of the canal company. At this time, James C. Clarke was elected President. According to Sanderlin’s history of the canal, the election of Clarke “marked the beginning of the most stable and prosperous period in the history of the waterway.” Clarke continued the repair and improvement program that had been initiated by canal officials immediately after the close of the Civil War. Clarke’s administration also continued the “payments on the long-term debts of the company.” During his two-year administration the canal trade rose to record levels.<sup>375</sup>

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<sup>369</sup> Ibid., K, 509, 514.

<sup>370</sup> Ibid., L, 147.

<sup>371</sup> Ibid., L, 131. See also Williamsport Chamber of Commerce, *Williamsport and Vicinity Reminiscences*, p. 56.

<sup>372</sup> The CVRR was completed to the canal below Williamsport in 1872. See Williamsport Chamber of Commerce, *Williamsport and Vicinity Reminiscences*, pp. 56–57. The CVRR connection with the canal below Williamsport is shown in Appendix E.

<sup>373</sup> Superintendent of the Census, *Ninth Census, Volume I: The Statistics of the Population of the United States, Embracing the Tables of Race, Nationality, Sex, Selected Age and Occupation*, p. 164. In 1870, there were 1,077 whites and 206 colored persons in Williamsport. By this time Williamsport’s population had fallen far behind that of Hagerstown. In 1870 Hagerstown had a total population of 5,779.

<sup>374</sup> Sanderlin, *The Great National Project*, p. 226.

<sup>375</sup> Ibid., pp. 226–229.

In the hope of expanding canal trade, the Clarke administration also continued to encourage officials of the Cumberland Valley Railroad to extend their line to the canal. By August 1871 Cumberland Valley officials had begun construction of their canal and river bridges two miles below Williamsport. By 1872 the railroad line was opened to the canal. The Clarke administration also continued to encourage officials of the Western Maryland Railroad to extend their line from Hagerstown to Williamsport.<sup>376</sup>

In 1872 there was another political reorganization of the administration of the canal company. In June, Clarke was replaced as President by Arthur P. Gorman. The new President, however, continued the policies of his predecessor. It was during Gorman's administration that the canal company "reached the zenith of its prosperity and influence."<sup>377</sup>

Gorman, like his predecessor, continued to encourage officials of the Western Maryland Railroad to extend their line to the canal at Williamsport. It was during Gorman's administration that the Western Maryland reached Williamsport. According to Scharf's *History of Western Maryland*, "the first passenger train" arrived in Williamsport on November 27, 1873. It carried the officials of the railroad and a number of important guests. The officials and guests were on an inspection of the line preparatory to its formal opening. Among the guests was Canal President Gorman. The Western Maryland line to Williamsport was officially opened on December 17, 1873. Scharf has written the following account of the celebration which followed the completion of the line:

. . . At three o'clock in the afternoon of December 17, 1873, a train of six handsomely-decorated passenger-coaches arrived in town from Baltimore. The cars contained a distinguished party, including Governor William Pinkney Whyte, a deputation from the City Council of Baltimore, the officials of the road, and a number of invited guests. The party had been met at Union Bridge by a reception committee comprised of the following: Wm. H. Beard, burgess of Williamsport; E. McCoy, assistant burgess; Charles Ardinger, Lewis Wolf, Theodore Embrey and Joseph H. Farrow, Town Council; Alonzo Berry, S. S. Cunningham, James Findley, John L. McAtee, Robert Lemon, Jesse Thompson, John Buchanan, Jos. Buchanan, Issac Gruber, Henry Grosh, and Samuel Lefevre.

The arrival of the train was announced by the ringing of church-bells and other demonstrations of welcome. Business in the town had been suspended, flags were floating from every window, and the train was met at the terminus, near the canal, by a canal-barge, decorated with garlands, drawn by six mules, with bannerettes hanging from every part of the harness. The boat contained a band of music. When the four or five hundred visitors had alighted, Attonrey-General Syester delivered an address of welcome, at the conclusion of which a procession was formed, and the guests were escorted to the public school-house, where a banquet had been prepared, under the direction of Mrs. John Ensminger, Mrs. John Long and Mrs. Jacob Masters, Alonzo Berry, S. S. Cunningham, Joseph Motter, John Ensminger, Matthew McClanahan, A. J. Hanning, Jacob Masters, Daniel Syester, Joseph Erwin; and Dr. William Booth. At the table Mr. Beard, the burgess of Williamsport, extended the guests a hearty welcome, to which Governor Whyte responded, saying that he had been early associated with the scenes and inhabitants of the town. Mr. Syester proposed the health of the officials of the canal, to which Mr. A. P. Gorman, the president of the board of directors, responded. President Rieman, when asked to reply to the toast "The Western Railroad" called upon Hon. J. K. Longwell to respond, which he did. Hon. Montgomery Blair replied to the toast, "The President of the United States." The toast, "To the city of Baltimore" was responded to by Mr. Joseph S. Heuisler. After dinner Governor Whyte

<sup>376</sup> Ibid., pp. 233–234. See also *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, L, 431. For the completion date of the line, see Williamsport Chamber of Commerce, *Williamsport and Vicinity Reminiscences*, p. 57.

<sup>377</sup> Sanderlin, *The Great National Project*, p. 229.

and a number of other gentlemen visited the houses of Issac Motter, C. W. Humrichouse, Alonzo Berry, James Findley, and J. L. McAtee, at which places they were handsomely entertained. At five o'clock the excursionists re-embarked, and the train went back to Baltimore.<sup>378</sup>

Because of the tremendous increase in the canal trade during the 1870s, Williamsport became fairly prosperous. New business sprung up along the canal, and the older businesses received new life.

During this decade, Victor Cushwa became an important business figure in Williamsport. Cushwa was originally from near Clear Spring. In 1860, he moved to Williamsport and purchased a tannery which had been owned by Isaac Motter. Cushwa operated the tannery until 1870. In that year he sold the tannery and became general manager of the Washington County Leather Manufacturing Company in Hagerstown. He remained in that position until 1872.<sup>379</sup>

In March 1873, Cushwa was engaged in the coal trade in Williamsport. On March 11, he filed a claim with the canal company asking to be compensated for damages done to his boat, the "Mary & Anna." The Board accepted his claim on August 8. In October he requested the Board to reduce the "toll on coal from Cumberland to Williamsport."<sup>380</sup>

By early 1874 Cushwa had entered a partnership with Charles Embrey & Son. On April 15, 1874, the Board received a letter from "Embrey & Cushwa" asking for a reduction of the toll on coal shipped from Cumberland to Williamsport.<sup>381</sup> For the remainder of the 1870s Embrey and Cushwa carried on a bustling business in coal, cement, salt, plaster and fertilizers.<sup>382</sup> Victor Cushwa eventually became the sole owner of the firm in 1880.<sup>383</sup>

Several new businesses were established along the canal at Williamsport during the 1870s. In 1873 Edward P. Steffey and James Findlay established the coal and lumber firm of Steffey and

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<sup>378</sup> Scharf, *History of Western Maryland*, II:1230–1231. See also Williams, *History of Washington County, Maryland*, I:403. According to Sanderlin's history of the canal, the extension of the Western Maryland to the canal did not cause the trade increase that had been expected by the promoters of the extension. Canal officials later felt that the expansion of trade did not materialize because the Western Maryland had failed to acquire "adequate terminal facilities at Baltimore." From 1873 to 1903 the railroad's western terminus was at Big Pool above Williamsport. See Sanderlin, *The Great National Project*, Pp. 234, 273–274.

<sup>379</sup> Williams, *History of Washington County, Maryland*, II:1008–1011. Cushwa held the position of general manager of the Washington County Leather Manufacturing Company until that company was destroyed by fire in March 1872.

<sup>380</sup> *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, M, 101, 120, 128. Harlan D. Unrau claims that Cushwa "entered into an informal partnership with Charles M. Embrey & Son" as early as 1872. See Unrau, unpublished *HSR, The Cushwa Warehouse*, p. 25.

<sup>381</sup> *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, M, 155. On November 26, 1875, Charles and Theodore Embrey deeded Cushwa one-half interest in their business firm. At that time the holdings of the Embrey firm included lots nos. 218, 222–229, and 239–241 in addition to various improvements which were located on some of these lots. The most important improvement was the warehouse on lot 223. See Unrau, unpublished, *HSR, The Cushwa Warehouse*, p. 27. According to Scharf's *History of Western Maryland*, Charles Embrey retired sometime in 1874 and left his share of the business to his son. Charles Embrey died in 1878. See Scharf, *History of Western Maryland*, II:989, 1047.

<sup>382</sup> For a description of the firm in 1877, see *An Illustrated Atlas of Washington County, Maryland: Compiled, Drawn and Published from Actual Surveys by Lake, Griffing & Stevenson* (Philadelphia, 1877), p. 39, or see Appendix O: Map of Williamsport (1877) taken from *An Illustrated Atlas of Washington County, Maryland*, (1877), p. 39.

<sup>383</sup> Deed, Theodore and Irene Embrey to Victor Cushwa, July 9, 1880, in Washington County Land Records, Liber 79, folio 579.

Findlay.<sup>384</sup> The company's coal yard and office was located on the berm side of the canal immediately above the little basin near Lock 44. An 1877 map of Williamsport shows that a line of the Western Maryland Railroad ran down to the firm's coal yard.<sup>385</sup> The firm of Steffey and Findley continued over into the twentieth century.

The firm of Darby and Rice was also probably established along the canal at Williamsport during the 1870s. Although this firm is not mentioned in the extant records of the canal company for the 1870s, it is listed on an 1877 map of Williamsport. In 1877 Darby and Rice were listed as “forwarding agents and dealers in flour, grain and feed.” At this time the firm made use of Embrey's and Cushwa's wharf at the main basin. The Darby Grain Mill, which eventually stood immediately below the Steffey and Findlay coal yard, does not appear on the 1877 map.<sup>386</sup> By 1880 F. H. Darby had probably become the sole owner of the firm.

Isaac Gruber probably established his saw and planing mill near the little basin at Williamsport during the 1870s. Although this firm is not mentioned in the extant records of the canal company, it is listed and identified on the 1877 map of Williamsport. In 1877 Gruber's office was located on lot 18 in Howard's Addition to Williamsport. His steam saw mill was a large structure situated on lot 2 (also in Howard's Addition) immediately below and adjacent to the Steffey and Findlay Coal Yard. Gruber's lumber yard was situated on lots 16 and 17 in Howard's Addition.

In 1877 Gruber's firm was known as “The Potomac Steam Saw and Planing Mill.” Gruber was listed as being a “manufacturer and dealer in doors, sash, blinds, mouldings, window frames &c.” It is not known exactly how long the firm remained in operation.<sup>387</sup>

In 1879 the firm of Embrey and Cushwa apparently established a grist, plaster and saw mill near the main basin. In February of 1879, the Canal Board directed the President to lease the firm one

<sup>384</sup> Williams, *History of Washington County, Maryland*, I:622–624; 1140. According to one long-time resident of Williamsport, the Steffey and Findlay building was not torn down until after the 1936 flood. Interview with George “Hooper” Wolfe, March 9, 1979.

<sup>385</sup> *An Illustrated Atlas of Washington County, Maryland (1877)*, p. 39. See also Appendix O. Steffey had purchased lot no 4 from Charles and Theodore Embrey on January 1, 1865. It is now known when Steffey purchased lot no. 3. See deed, Charles and Elizabeth Embrey and Theodore and Irene Embrey to Edward P. Steffey, January 1, 1865, in Washington County Land Records, Liber IN 19 (64), folio 49.

<sup>386</sup> *An Illustrated Atlas of Washington County, Maryland (1877)*, p. 39. See also Appendix O.

<sup>387</sup> According to one source, Issac Gruber purchased his mill from William Steffey in 1866 and eventually entered into a partnership with John Witner. See Williamsport Chamber of Commerce, *Williamsport and Vicinity Reminiscences*, p. 101. I believe that the above source must have meant that Gruber purchased the mill from Edward P. Steffey, who was the son of William P. Steffey. See Williams, *History of Washington County, Maryland*, I:1140. Edward P. Steffey purchased lot 4 in Howard's Addition in 1865. See Deed, Charles and Elizabeth Embrey and Theodore and Irene Embrey to Edward P. Steffey, January 1, 1865, in Washington County Land Records, Liber IN 19 (64), folio 49. Steffey's coal yard later occupied lots 4 and 5. It is quite possible that Steffey may have once owned most of the lower lots in Howard's Addition. Another source has mistakenly stated that Gruber's mill was “located on the west side of the Williamsport Basin between the abutment of Aqueduct No. 5 and the Embrey and Cushwa warehouse.” This source also states that Charles M. Embrey and Son had originally owned the mill and had leased it to Gruber in 1866. The source also maintains that the mill was eventually leased to John M. and George A. Miller in 1879. See Unrau, unpublished *HSR, The Cushwa Warehouse*, p. 29. The 1877 map of Williamsport clearly identifies Gruber's mill, office and lumber yard as being near the little basin just above Lock 44. Therefore, Gruber's mill could not have been the mill which Embrey and Cushwa leased to the Miller brothers in 1879. Another source maintains that Mr. DeFrehn rented the Gruber mill around 1878 and began to manufacture chairs. Within a short time, however, the new enterprise failed. See Williamsport Chamber of Commerce, *Williamsport and Vicinity Reminiscences*, p. 100.

hundred and twenty inches of water to run the mill. The water was “to be drawn from the Canal at some point east of [the] Williamsport Aqueduct.” The lease was to last for a term of fifty years, and the firm was to be charged one hundred dollars per annum during the first five years of the lease, and one hundred and twenty dollars per annum during the remaining forty-five years. On June 4, 1879, Embrey and Cushwa leased their mill to John M. and George A. Miller. The Miller Lumber Company is still in existence today, although it is now in another location.<sup>388</sup>

During the 1870s some other interesting events occurred at Williamsport. In March of 1874, the Williamsport Town Council gave Embrey and Cushwa the right to use “all that part of Water Street and [the] West End of Potomac Street adjoining their property.” The firm, however, was ordered to keep a road open “for wagons behind and east of their warehouse.”<sup>389</sup> In 1879, the present wrought iron bridge was erected over the canal at Williamsport by Wendel Bollman.<sup>390</sup> On April 15, 1876 Andrew K. Stake, a longtime associate of the canal company, passed away. Stake was a native and resident of Williamsport. In addition to his long association with the canal company, Stake had served in the state legislature “during the sessions of 1850, 1860 and 1874.”<sup>391</sup> At the time of his death, he was a member of the canal company’s board of directors. On April 18, the Board passed the following resolution concerning his death:

Whereas, this Board has heard with deep regret of the sudden death of Col. Andrew Kershner Stake of Washington County, one of the Directors of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Company, and whereas, the deceased has been connected with the said company as officer, Director and by other relations for many years, and has in these various positions discharged faithfully his duty to the company and to the State of Maryland.

Therefore, Resolved, That it is fitting that this Board should publicly express its sense of his merit and fidelity, as an officer of the said Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Company, and express its sympathy with the family of the deceased, in their great loss.

Resolved, that these proceedings be entered upon the Minutes of the Company, and that a copy of these resolutions, duly authenticated shall be sent by the Secretary to the family of the deceased.<sup>392</sup>

In November 1877, Williamsport and all the Potomac Valley witnessed the greatest flood that had ever been recorded up to that time. This flood “left the canal almost a total wreck.” In the vicinity of Williamsport, both Dam 4 and Dam 5 were seriously damaged. The Cumberland Valley Railroad Bridge across the Potomac below Williamsport was completely washed away. The damage within the town of Williamsport, however, was not great. Embrey’s and Cushwa’s warehouse suffered little damage. On the north side of the aqueduct, however, Mr. S. Culbertson “lost between forty and sixty thousand feet of lumber.”<sup>393</sup>

<sup>388</sup> Gorman to Embrey and Cushwa, January 21, March 12, 1879 and Gorman to Stanhope, March 12, 1879, Ltrs. Sent, 1879–81, C & O Co. See also *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, N, 76; and Lease, Victor Cushwa to John M. Miller and George A. Miller, June 4, 1879, in Washington County Land Records, Liber 78, folio 143.

<sup>389</sup> “Minutes of the Town Council of Williamsport, Maryland,” March 17, 1874. Beginning in the 1870s the town officials of Williamsport were sometimes referred to as the Mayor and Town Council. The term Burgess and Commissioners, however, were also still used.

<sup>390</sup> Harlan D. Unrau, unpublished, *HSR, The Bollman Bridge at Williamsport, Maryland*, (Seneca, Maryland: NPS, 1977), pp. 5–7.

<sup>391</sup> Scharf, *History of Western Maryland*, II:1054.

<sup>392</sup> *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, M, 257.

<sup>393</sup> Scharf, *History of Western Maryland*, II:1201–1202. See also Sanderlin, *The Great National Project*, pp. 241–242.

The repair of the canal was begun immediately after the flood, and the canal was able to open only one month later than usual in 1878. By the late 1870s, however, the canal trade was on the decline. The decline had actually begun before the flood of 1877. The nationwide depression which had gripped the country since the Panic of 1873 finally reached the canal in 1876. A boatman's strike which lasted from June through August of 1877 almost brought the canal trade to a standstill. The flood of 1877 had brought an early end to the boating season for that year. The canal trade increased very slightly in 1878 and declined again in 1879.<sup>394</sup>

By 1880 the town of Williamsport had a population of 1,503. The population of the town had therefore increased only slightly during the fairly prosperous decade of the seventies.<sup>395</sup>

In 1880 the partnership between Embrey and Cushwa came to an end. In July 1880, Victor Cushwa acquired full ownership of the Embrey and Cushwa basin properties. Immediately afterwards, Cushwa changed the name of the firm to "Victor Cushwa."<sup>396</sup> Since the firm of Embrey and Cushwa had recently obtained a fifty-year water lease for their new grist, plaster and saw mill, Cushwa apparently asked the Board to issue a new lease to the firm of "Victor Cushwa." The Board complied with Cushwa's request on September 22, 1880.<sup>397</sup> In 1888, Cushwa formed a new partnership with his son and son-in-law. The name of the firm then became "Victor Cushwa and Sons."<sup>398</sup>

Although Theodore Embrey ended his partnership with Victor Cushwa in 1880, he continued to be involved in business on the canal. In August 1882, he asked the Board to extend his lease on the storehouse at Lock 44.<sup>399</sup> The Board complied with his request on October 11. On the same day the Board also granted Embrey and Stanhope permission to build a wharf on the canal company's land near the main basin in Williamsport.<sup>400</sup>

By 1880, F. H. Darby had become the sole owner of his grain firm. About this time the mill that had been owned by Issac Gruber was torn down. On the site of the mill Darby built a new flour mill and changed the name of his firm to the "Undine Milling Company."<sup>401</sup> In September 1880 Darby sought to have the canal company's telephone line connected to his office. In 1883, Darby sought to lease a portion of the berm bank at Williamsport.<sup>402</sup>

<sup>394</sup> Sanderlin, *The Great National Project*, pp.238–243; 307–308.

<sup>395</sup> Superintendent of the Census, *Population of the United States by Minor Civil Division as Returned at the Eleventh Census, June 1, 1890* (Washington: United States Census Printing Office, 1891), Maryland Section, p. 2. See also Superintendent of the Census, *Ninth Census, Volume I: The Statistics of the Population of the United States Embracing the Tables of Race, Nationality, Sex, Selected Age and Occupation*, p. 164.

<sup>396</sup> Deed, Theodore and Irene Embrey to Victor Cushwa, July 9, 1880, in Washington County Land Records, Liber 79, folio 579. See also Unrau, unpublished, *HSR, The Cushwa Warehouse*, p. 31; and Scharf, *History of Western Maryland*, II:1225.

<sup>397</sup> *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, N, 121–122.

<sup>398</sup> Unrau, unpublished, *HSR, The Cushwa Warehouse*, p. 31.

<sup>399</sup> It should be remembered that "Theodore Embrey & Bro." had purchased an interest in A. J. Potts' storehouse back in 1866 or 1867. See footnotes 10, 11 and 12 in Chapter 8 of this study report. See also Ledger for House, Land and Water Rent Accounts, Vol. 1:181, C & O Co.

<sup>400</sup> *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, N, 190, 198, 201, 224, 232, 233.

<sup>401</sup> Williamsport Chamber of Commerce, *Williamsport and Vicinity Reminiscences*, p. 100.

<sup>402</sup> *Ibid.*, N, 121,218. The canal company had completed the installation of a telephone line along the waterway by October 1879. See Sanderlin, *The Great National Project*, p. 246. The firm of Embrey and Cushwa had applied for a

Sometime during the 1880s, Mr. DeFrehn started another chair factory<sup>403</sup> along the canal at Williamsport. This chair factory was located in the abandoned Culbertson lumber mill north of the aqueduct. Mr. S. Culbertson, who had operated the mill during the 1870s, had suffered a great loss of lumber during the 1877 flood. Culbertson went out of business sometime after the flood. Mr. DeFrehn's chair factory was eventually forced out of business by the flood of 1889.<sup>404</sup>

During the 1880s the town of Williamsport continued a slow pace of development. In 1887 the Williamsport Cemetery and Memorial Association of Washington County, Maryland, was organized and chartered.<sup>405</sup> The purpose of this organization was to care for the historic Riverview Cemetery overlooking the Potomac. General Williams and other members of the Williams family were buried at Riverview. Therefore, the cemetery was always an important landmark in the town. As the years passed, however, the cemetery apparently did not receive proper maintenance.<sup>406</sup> The organization of the cemetery association coincided with the one hundredth anniversary of Williamsport. In 1888, the association purchased a part of lots 29 through 38 in White's Addition to Williamsport. This land was acquired from Victor Cushwa, Edward P. Steffey, and James Findlay.<sup>407</sup>

During the 1880s the canal trade continued to decline. The years 1880, 1881 and 1883 were good years for the canal, but overall the decade of the 1880s saw a drastic decline in the canal trade.<sup>408</sup> According to Sanderlin's history of the canal, the "last decade" of the canal's "independent existence" (the 1880s) was characterized by "trade stagnation, financial depression, physical deterioration, political interference and outside intrigue." Sanderlin concludes that "the heyday of the canal had definitely passed."<sup>409</sup>

As is well known, the great flood of 1889 sent the canal company into bankruptcy. This was the worst flood recorded in the history of the Potomac Valley up to that time. The confluence of the Potomac and Conococheague was like a large lake. The Cushwa Warehouse was flooded, but the structure did not receive any significant damage. On the other hand, the DeFrehn Chair Factory was badly damaged, and the owner was forced to end his business at Williamsport. The Miller

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connection to the canal company's telephone line as early as August 1879. See Gorman to Embrey and Cushwa, August 28, 1879, Ltrs. Sent, 1879–81, C & O Co.

<sup>403</sup> It should be remembered that around 1878 DeFrehn had started a chair factory in Issac Gruber's mill which was located near the little basin above Lock 44. This factory was in operation for only a short time.

<sup>404</sup> Williamsport Chamber of Commerce, *Williamsport and Vicinity Reminiscences*, pp. 53–54, 100.

<sup>405</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62. See also broken "Riverview Cemetery" plaque at entrance to cemetery.

<sup>406</sup> Williamsport Chamber of Commerce, *Williamsport and Vicinity Reminiscences*, p. 62.

<sup>407</sup> Deed, Victor Cushwa, Mary Cushwa, Edward P. Steffey, Elizabeth A. Steffey, James Findlay and Ann H. Findlay to "The Williamsport Cemetery and Memorial Association of Washington County," November 16, 1888, in Washington County Land Records, Liber 92, folios 464–465. The cemetery has been drastically enlarged since the 1880s. Except for the association's acquisition of parts of lots 29–38 in White's Addition, I was unable to discover how the cemetery obtained its present size. A longtime resident of Williamsport maintains that much of the land now enclosed within the gates of the cemetery had been unclaimed public lands during most of the nineteenth century. Therefore, people were simply buried on the unclaimed land thus extending the size of the original cemetery. Interview with 85-year old George "Hooper" Wolfe, March 9, 1979. For a view of the size of the original cemetery, see Appendix P: Map of Williamsport (this is a drawing of the original 1787 map) drawn by S. S. Downin in 1876, recorded in Washington County Land Records, Liber 75, folio 719.

<sup>408</sup> Sanderlin, *The Great National Project*, p. 308.

<sup>409</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 248.

Brothers Lumber Mill near the Cushwa Warehouse was flooded, but not seriously damaged. About \$3,000 worth of lumber, however, was washed away.<sup>410</sup>

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<sup>410</sup> Williamsport Chamber of Commerce, *Williamsport and Vicinity Reminiscences*, pp.53–54. See also Unrau, unpublished, *HSR, The Cushwa Warehouse*, p. 35; and Sanderlin, *The Great National Project*, p. 256. Steffey and Findlay, and F. H. Darby also survived the 1889 flood.

## CHAPTER 9

### Williamsport and the Final Years of the Canal, 1890–1924

In 1890 Williamsport's total population was only 1,277. This figure represented a decrease of 226 or 15.04 percent since the census of 1880. Williamsport had therefore fallen far behind its neighbor, Hagerstown, which now had a population of 10,118.<sup>411</sup> Williamsport probably lost some of its population because of the 1889 flood. The flood destroyed the livelihood of many boatmen all along the canal. In August 1889 a Hagerstown newspaper noted that many boatmen were leaving the Potomac Valley. All of the towns that had depended to a great extent upon the canal for their prosperity, probably suffered because of the flood.<sup>412</sup>

The 1889 flood left the canal “a total wreck.”<sup>413</sup> Soon after the extent of the damage was known, the residents of Western Maryland began to debate the future of the canal. The residents of towns along the canal generally felt that the waterway should be fully restored. On the other hand, Western Marylanders who lived in towns removed from the influence of the canal, such as Hagerstown, argued that that portion of the canal above Williamsport should be sold to the Western Maryland Railroad so that it could compete with the Baltimore and Ohio for the coal trade.<sup>414</sup> There was also talk that perhaps the West Virginia Central or the Pennsylvania Railroad would be interested in using the canal for a railroad down the towpath.<sup>415</sup>

Support for the restoration of the canal, however, soon began to gain momentum. Even some of the most outspoken critics of full restoration began to moderate their tone.<sup>416</sup>

The directors of the canal company, however, soon admitted that they could not raise the necessary funds to repair the canal. Since the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company had become the majority holder of both the 1878 and 1844 bonds, it was now in a position to decide the fate of its longtime rival. The railroad company decided to restore the canal in order to prevent a forced sale which might have resulted in the purchase of the canal by a competing railroad. The Baltimore and Ohio petitioned the Washington County Circuit Court and the District of Columbia Court to appoint receivers for the canal company. Both courts accepted the railroad's petition. Receivers were appointed “under the mortgage of 1844 to restore and operate” the canal.<sup>417</sup>

Receivers for the canal within the District of Columbia were appointed by the Supreme Court of the District of Columbia on January 28, 1890. The appointees were Henry C. Winship and Victor Cushwa of Williamsport. On March 3, 1890, Judge Alvey of the Washington County Maryland

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<sup>411</sup> Superintendent of the Census, *Population of the United States by Minor Civil Division as Returned at the Eleventh Census, June 1, 1890*, Maryland Section, p. 2. In 1880 Williamsport had a population of 1,503, while Hagerstown had a population of 6,667.

<sup>412</sup> Sanderlin, *The Great National Project*, p. 258.

<sup>413</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 257.

<sup>414</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 260.

<sup>415</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 261–262.

<sup>416</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 262–263.

<sup>417</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 263–266.

Circuit Court appointed three receivers for the canal within Maryland. These receivers were Robert Bridges, Richard D. Johnson and Joseph D. Baker.<sup>418</sup>

One of the first tasks of the receivers was “to ascertain and report to the Courts” exactly what property the canal company owned in Maryland and the District of Columbia. On June 9, 1890, the receivers reported that the canal company owned the following properties in and near Williamsport:

- Lot 136 - East of Aqueduct Williamsport Chair Factory, abandoned; water rent per annum was \$200.00.
- Lot 137 - East of Aqueduct, Victor Cushwa; rent for first five years \$100.00 per annum remaining 45 years per annum \$120.00
- Lot 138 - On towpath side Collector's house, Company's.
- Lot 139½ - Darby's Mill below bridge, partly on Company's land, berm side, rent not known.
- Lot 140 - Leased to Stanhope & Embrey, abandoned.
- Lot 141 - On 6 mile level several acres land, house damaged; rent not known.<sup>419</sup>
- Lot 142 - Lock house in fair order [Lockhouse at Lock 44].
- Lot 142½ - Storehouse, F. H. Darby & Sons; rent per annum \$36.00
- Lot 143 - Leased to Charles Embrey & Sons, now F. H. Darby; rent per annum \$36.00
- Lot 144 - Several acres, believed to be Company's land, in possession of Bopps estate; rent unknown.
- Lot 145 - On towing path near Lock, frame building Company's Collector's Office and Carpenter Shop.<sup>420</sup>

The receivers soon admitted that the amount of money required to repair the canal would probably never be repaid from the anticipated income from the canal. Therefore, Judge Alvey of Washington County Circuit Court decided to issue a sale order. In the meantime, however, the receivers changed their minds about the repair costs and let it be known that they were ready to begin restoration of the waterway. Eventually Judge Alvey ordered the sale of the canal, but then “suspended it on the condition that the trustees of 1844 [the Baltimore and Ohio] promptly restore the canal.”<sup>421</sup>

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<sup>418</sup> Second Report of District Receivers, April 21, 1890, and Second Report of Maryland Receivers, June 9, 1890, in C & O Canal Restoration Group files, Seneca, Maryland. The location of these manuscripts will be cited hereinafter as Report of Receivers. Victor Cushwa served as a receiver or trustee for the canal company from 1890–1900. See *Portrait and Biographical Record of the Sixth Congressional District, Maryland* (Chicago: Chapman Publishing Company, 1898), pp. 535–536.

<sup>419</sup> This land was located either above or below Williamsport.

<sup>420</sup> Second Report of Receivers, June 9, 1890, “Exhibit A.” According to George “Hooper” Wolfe, longtime resident of Williamsport, the Carpenter's Shop was located on the berm bank at Lock 44. Interview with George “Hooper” Wolfe, March 9, 1979.

<sup>421</sup> Sanderlin, *The Great National Project*, p. 266. The sale order was issued on October 2, 1890.

The canal was not fully restored until September 1891. According to Sanderlin's history of the canal, "the canal trade recovered quickly, but was unable to expand beyond the low averages of the eighties."<sup>422</sup>

The court order which allowed the Baltimore and Ohio to restore the canal, also required that the canal show a profit each year. In order to technically fulfill the requirements of the court, the Baltimore and Ohio created a "shadow corporation" called the Chesapeake and Ohio Transportation Company. This company immediately signed a contract with the canal receivers in 1894. The contract specified that the transportation company would provide boats to carry on the coal trade as long as the receivers were able to keep the canal in good working order. The transportation company also "guaranteed the canal company an annual profit of \$100,000." Since the canal was able to technically show a profit, the railroad was able to "postpone indefinitely" the Court's "order for the sale of the canal." In February 1894, the Court ratified the contract that had been made between the receivers and the transportation company. At the same time, the grace period under Judge Alvey's order for the sale of the canal was extended until 1901.<sup>423</sup> In 1901, the grace period under Judge Alvey's order for the sale of the canal was extended until January 1, 1906. In late 1905, it was ordered to be automatically "extended from calendar year to calendar year" as long as the canal continued to technically show a profit.<sup>424</sup>

In the meantime, the town of Williamsport was slowly becoming a suburb of Hagerstown. In 1896, the first trolley line in the county was built from Hagerstown to Williamsport. The power house which first furnished the electricity for this line was built in the rear of Victor Cushwa and Sons' Warehouse at Williamsport. The power house furnished electricity for the trolley line for only a few years. It was soon replaced by a larger power house which was erected in Hagerstown. The original power house, however, is still standing behind the Cushwa Warehouse.<sup>425</sup>

Sometime near the end of the 1890s, the town of Williamsport erected an electric light plant. This building is still standing on North Conococheague Street. According to one source, this facility was used for about twenty years.<sup>426</sup>

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<sup>422</sup> Ibid., p. 267.

<sup>423</sup> Ibid., pp. 267–268. The contract between the receivers and the transportation company was eventually modified "to provide merely that the canal be guaranteed its expenses." In reality, however, "at no time after 1890 did the canal operate profitably." See Ibid., p. 267.

<sup>424</sup> Court Decree of December 27, 1905, filed in Canal Cases, Circuit Court for Washington County, Hagerstown, Maryland. The location of these manuscripts will be cited hereinafter as Canal Cases. See also Sanderlin, *The Great National Project*, pp. 268–269. Sanderlin says that in 1901 the grace period was extended to December 31, 1905. The 1905 decree, however, says that in 1901 the grace period had been extended to January 1, 1906.

<sup>425</sup> For a more in-depth account of the power house, see Edward D. Smith, unpublished, *HSR, Williamsport Power House* (Denver: NPS, 1977).

<sup>426</sup> Williamsport Chamber of Commerce, *Williamsport and Vicinity Reminiscences*, page 108. See also undated newspaper clipping with article entitled "Landmark in Williamsport Due to Vanish Before Long," in Ellen Ardinger Zeller's *Scrapbook* located in Williamsport Vertical Files, Western Maryland Research Room, Washington County Free Library, Hagerstown; and an undated article and advertisement entitled, "Williamsport, Maryland, in Brief, and its Progressive Citizens" attached to this study report as Appendix Q. The above sources do not agree on the date of the building's construction. The Chamber of Commerce publication says the building was erected in 1897, while the article in Mrs. Zeller's *Scrapbook* says the building was constructed around 1890. The undated article and advertisement entitled, "Williamsport, Maryland, in Brief, and its Progressive Citizens" was widely circulated in the late 1890s and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. It was actually an advertisement, and was used on the back of S. C. Goddard's business stationery. This article said that the electric light plant was under construction and would be completed and in

By the late 1890s full prosperity had apparently returned to Williamsport. Two important new businesses contributed to the town's prosperity during the late 1890s. In 1896, Victor Cushwa started the Conococheague Brick and Earthenware Company. The brick plant was located west of the Conococheague on the site of the present-day Cushwa brick operation.<sup>427</sup> In 1897, W. D. Byron founded the W. D. Byron and Sons' Tannery in Williamsport. The Byron Tannery added significantly to the town's prosperity. In the early years of its operation, the firm provided jobs for 150 men.<sup>428</sup>

According to one source, during the late 1890s, Williamsport had "2 weekly newspapers, 4 general stores, 1 grain store, 1 drug store, 1 undertaking establishment, 1 clothing store, 3 livery stables, 1 jeweler, 4 barber shops, 1 hotel, 2 harness shops, 2 coal dealers, 3 physicians and 2 justices of the peace." The town also had at least three lumber dealers, one tannery, one grain mill, one carriage and wagon maker, one laundry, one boarding house, one baker and Confectioner, one house and sign painter, and one bank.<sup>429</sup>

Some fairly significant events occurred at Williamsport during the 1890s. During the Spring of 1894 "General" Jacob S. Coxey's Army of unemployed persons passed through Williamsport on its way to Washington. Coxey was a Populist/Greenbacker from Ohio. During the nationwide depression which followed the Panic of 1893, Coxey urged Congress to establish a road building program in order to put the unemployed back to work. He also urged Congress to establish a program whereby local governments could obtain loans to sponsor local public works projects. His army of the unemployed which passed through Williamsport in the spring of 1894 was to be a "living petition" to Congress. The march attracted great attention, but the ideas behind the march were not taken seriously at the time. Ideas which were very similar to Coxey's, however, were taken seriously during the great depression of the 1930s.<sup>430</sup>

In July 1897, "Battery Hill" was officially dedicated. During the early months of the Civil War General Doubleday had established his artillery on this hill overlooking the Potomac. One of the speakers at the dedication ceremony in 1897 was Judge Louis Emory McComas, a native of Williamsport.<sup>431</sup>

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operation by September 1899. I am therefore inclined to accept 1899 as the date of construction. Additional support for the 1899 construction date can be found in the "Minutes of the Town Council of Williamsport." On March 8, 1899, the Council appointed supervisors for the Electric Light Plant. The Electric Light Plant should not be confused with the Williamsport Power House. The former was constructed around 1899 to furnish electric lighting for the town. The latter structure (the Williamsport Power House) was erected in 1896 to provide power for the county's first trolley line.

<sup>427</sup> David K. Cushwa III, ed., *In Commemoration of 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary 1872–1972 of Victor Cushwa and Sons, Inc* (Williamsport: D. Cushwa, 1972), p. 1.

<sup>428</sup> See article and advertisement entitled, "Williamsport, Maryland, in Brief, and its Progressive Citizens" attached to this study report as Appendix Q.

<sup>429</sup> *Ibid.*, see Appendix Q.

<sup>430</sup> George "Hooper" Wolfe, *I Drove Mules on the C & O Canal* (Dover, Delaware: Dover graphics Associates, 1970), p. 78. See also John D. Hicks, et. al., *The American Nation: A History of the United States From 1865 to the Present*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1965), p. 151. The marchers reached Williamsport via the canal from Cumberland.

<sup>431</sup> "Souvenir Program 47<sup>th</sup> Annual Volunteer Fireman's Convention Cumberland Valley Fireman's Association and Williamsport Volunteer Fire Company Inc., Williamsport, Maryland., August 19<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>, 1948," p. 20, in Williamsport Vertical Files, Western Maryland Research Room, Washington County Free Library. Judge McComas

By 1900 Williamsport had a population of 1,472. The population had therefore increased by only 175 since the census of 1890.<sup>432</sup> Williamsport's growth was no doubt retarded because of the town's continued dependence on the canal. During the last three decades of the nineteenth century, Williamsport had failed to attract a significant number of modern industries that were not dependent on the canal. In short, Williamsport had failed to attract industries that would bring new job opportunities.<sup>433</sup>

In the meantime, the receivers and the Baltimore and Ohio's shadow corporation, the Chesapeake and Ohio Transportation Company, had continued to keep the canal open. In 1902, the receivers, in conjunction with the Consolidation Coal Company (also a subsidiary of the Baltimore and Ohio), moved to establish complete control of freight rates by organizing the Canal Towing Company. This new company was to supply "the boats, teams, and equipment" as well as set up "a regular schedule for the boatmen to follow." The principal article transported over the canal was coal,<sup>434</sup> and "over 99 per cent" of it was provided by the Consolidation Coal Company. Therefore, after 1902, coal owned by the Consolidation Coal Company was shipped over the canal in boats owned by the coal company and operated by its subsidiary, the Canal Towing Company.<sup>435</sup>

The Canal Towing Company established regularity and efficiency on the canal. On the other hand, it also brought an end to the era of the rough independent boatman. Many of the independent boatmen had been irregular and not accustomed to schedules. They had also been dependent on high freight charges to enable them to pay their overhead expenses and still make a profit. The Canal Towing Company was able to cut freight charges. The independent boatmen were therefore unable to stay in business. In addition, the Canal Towing Company generally avoided hiring the rough individualistic boatmen. The company's boats were uniform, numbered (rather than named), and were run on a regular schedule.<sup>436</sup>

During this period at least three firms in Williamsport served as middlemen for the canal's coal trade. Victor Cushwa and Sons, Steffey and Findlay, and the A. C. Gruber Company were all middlemen at Williamsport. Steffey and Findlay and Cushwa and Sons were also lumber dealers.

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was only the second person from Washington County to ever serve in the United States Senate. The other person was William Hamilton of Hagerstown. See Williams, *History of Washington County, Maryland*, I:410–415, II:981.

<sup>432</sup> Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910: Population by Counties and Minor Civil Divisions, 1910, 1900, 1890* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1912), p. 224. In 1900 Williamsport's neighbor, Hagerstown, had a population of 13,591.

<sup>433</sup> The exact opposite occurred in Cumberland. From the late 1860s through the 1920s Cumberland was able to attract modern industries that were in no way tied to the operation of the canal. See Edward D. Smith, unpublished *HSR, Cumberland Maryland* (Seneca, Maryland: NPS, 1978).

<sup>434</sup> Other articles transported during this period were: "lime, building materials [especially lumber but also bricks] and some flour." See Sanderlin, *The Great National Project*, pp. 268–271.

<sup>435</sup> *Ibid.* The coal was brought from the mines to Cumberland over the Cumberland and Pennsylvania Railroad which was also owned by the Baltimore and Ohio. The Consolidation Coal Company also had its own wharf at Cumberland. See *Ibid.*, p. 271.

<sup>436</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 269.

Cushwa and Sons also manufactured brick, plaster and cement.<sup>437</sup> Other businessmen at Williamsport occasionally shipped or ordered merchandise which was transported over the canal.<sup>438</sup>

In 1901, the canal trustees (receivers) granted a lease to Victor Cushwa and Sons and Steffey and Findlay for a large coal wharf. According to the lease, the wharf was located “on the berm side of [the] canal between [the] Undine Milling Co’s Mill and [the] C & O Canal Carpenters Yard, formerly leased to Stanhope and Embrey.” The trustees for the canal company reserved “the right to occupy” a space at the lower end of the wharf “for storing lumber etc. for canal purposes.” The lease was to last for one year at fifty dollars per year.<sup>439</sup>

Some other rather important events occurred at Williamsport during the first decade of the twentieth century. F. H. Darby’s grain mill along the canal was destroyed by fire in 1904.<sup>440</sup> In 1907, the Savings Bank was started in Williamsport.<sup>441</sup> Also in 1907, a movement was started to have a bridge constructed across the Potomac at Williamsport. The Washington Berkeley Bridge Company was organized in 1907 and in the summer of 1908 work was begun on the bridge. On December 16, 1908, however, a part of the unfinished bridge gave way and hurled fourteen workmen into the river. Many of the workmen were killed and others were seriously injured. No further work was done on the bridge until the spring of 1909. The bridge was opened to traffic and dedicated on August 10, 1909.<sup>442</sup>

When the Washington and Berkeley Bridge was opened, the ferry which had operated since the eighteenth century finally became obsolete. The new bridge was operated as a “toll bridge” for some time.<sup>443</sup>

By 1910, the population of Williamsport was 1,571. This represented an increase of only ninety-nine since the census of 1900.<sup>444</sup>

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<sup>437</sup> See Random Letterheads in Appendix R: taken from Ltrs. Recd. by the Chesapeake and Ohio Transportation Company and by the Canal Towage Company, 1900–1915.

<sup>438</sup> See letterheads in Appendix R.

<sup>439</sup> Lease, Joseph Bryan, John K. Cowen and Hugh L. Bond, Jr., Trustees to Victor Cushwa and Sons and Steffey and Findlay, January 1, 1901, in Leases and Other Records, C & O Co.

<sup>440</sup> Wolfe, *I Drove Mules*, p. 63.

<sup>441</sup> Williamsport Chamber of Commerce, *Williamsport and Vicinity Reminiscences*, pp. 41–43. Since the old Washington County Bank was still in operation, Williamsport now had two banks. The Savings Bank was forced to close in late 1931, but was reopened in the summer of 1932.

<sup>442</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 57–62. See also photograph with the title: “Photo of Dedication of Washington and Berkeley Co. Bridge, 1909,” in Williamsport Vertical Files, Western Maryland Research Room, Washington County Free Library, Hagerstown. For a map which shows the right-of-way and land owned by the bridge company, see Appendix S: Property Map and Right-of-Way of Washington and Berkeley Bridge Company taken from Plat Files, Washington County land Records, Washington County Courthouse, Hagerstown.

<sup>443</sup> Williamsport Chamber of Commerce, *Williamsport and Vicinity Reminiscences*, p. 52. See also *Hagerstown Morning Herald* article entitled, “George Washington Used It [:] Famous Names in American History Turn Up in Facts about Old Ferry,” June 4, 1970, located in Williamsport Vertical Files, Western Maryland Research Room, Washington County Free Library, Hagerstown. For reference to the bridge being a “toll bridge,” see Preston to Nicholson, September 16, 1922, Ltrs. Recd., Correspondence of the Office of Trustees. The last person licensed to operate the ferry was Mrs. Eliza V. Ardinger. She apparently operated the ferry with the assistance of her sons. Her husband, Charles A. Ardinger, had been licensed to operate the ferry before his death.

<sup>444</sup> Bureau of the Census, *Thirteenth Census of the U.S. 1910: Population by Counties and Minor Civil Divisions, 1910, 1900, 1890*, p. 224. By 1910, Williamsport’s neighbor, Hagerstown, had a population of 16,507.

Victor Cushwa and Sons continued to be the dominant middlemen in the canal's coal trade at Williamsport. In April 1909, Victor Cushwa had turned over all of his interests to his sons and son-in-law.<sup>445</sup> In 1912, the Cushwa sons took steps to expand their operations even more. Cushwa and Sons already owned parts of lots 41 and 42 along Commerce Street.<sup>446</sup> On October 12, 1912, Victor M. and David K. Cushwa asked the Town Council of Williamsport to sell or lease to the Cushwa firm that part of the Public Square which was situated west of the Western Maryland Railroad line. The Town Council of Williamsport eventually decided to lease (rather than to sell) the Cushwa firm that portion of the Public Square mentioned above.<sup>447</sup>

Victor Cushwa and Sons continued to expand and improve their facilities near the main basin and on the Public Square. In 1915, the Town Council of Williamsport allowed the firm to maintain a well on the town's property near the Washington and Berkeley Bridge. In 1916, Cushwa and Sons and George L. Nicolson, General Manager of the Canal, each agreed to give the town \$200 to construct a sewer to carry the water from Commerce and Potomac Streets into Conococheague Creek. The water was at that time running into the canal basin.<sup>448</sup> In 1917, the Town Council of Williamsport gave Victor Cushwa and Sons permission to make certain improvements on the town's land "at the west end of Potomac Street."<sup>449</sup>

Around 1917, the Miller Brothers' Lumber Mill, which was situated next door to the Victor Cushwa and Sons Warehouse, was closed down. George A. Miller purchased his brother's interest in the mill and moved the equipment to the company's present location on Commerce Street. About the same time, John Michael Miller converted the original mill building into an ice plant.<sup>450</sup>

By 1920, the population of Williamsport was 1,615. This represented an increase of only forty-four since the census of 1910.<sup>451</sup>

The last four years of the canal's operation at Williamsport were quite eventful. In late 1920 or early 1921, John M. Miller's Ice Plant was destroyed by fire. At that time, Miller was "nearly 70 years" of age, and the loss was a "heavy blow" to him economically. He had apparently lost his only source of income. The canal's general manager, George L. Nicolson, responded sympathetically to Miller's plight. Nicolson informed Miller that the Trustees (receivers) were willing to continue his water lease. Nicolson also asked Miller to let him know the "make and size" of the

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<sup>445</sup> Unrau, unpublished *HSR, The Cushwa Warehouse*, p. 52.

<sup>446</sup> See Appendix S.

<sup>447</sup> "Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council of Williamsport, Maryland," October 12, 21, November 11, 1912, and January 13, 1913.

<sup>448</sup> *Ibid.*, May 10, 1915, and September 11, 1916. The Town Council apparently rejected the offer of \$400, but advised the parties (the Cushwas and Nicolson) that they could do the work themselves under the supervision of the town.

<sup>449</sup> *Ibid.*, March 12, 1917.

<sup>450</sup> Williamsport Chamber of Commerce, *Williamsport and Vicinity Reminiscences*, p. 54. See also National Park Service Staff Archeologist Robin Ziek's interview with Melvin Kaplan, August 20, 21, 1978, located in C & O Canal Restoration Group Files, Seneca, Maryland.

<sup>451</sup> Bureau of the Census, *Fourteenth Census of the United States taken in the year 1920, Volume I: Population 1920, Number and Distribution of Inhabitants* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1921), pp. 228–229. By 1920 Williamsport's neighbor, Hagerstown, had a population of 28,064.

wheel he had used in his ice plant. Miller sent this information to the general manager, but a new plant was apparently never established.<sup>452</sup>

In 1920 the berm parapet of the Williamsport Aqueduct gave way. A boat was apparently in the aqueduct at the time that the wall collapsed. No one, however, was injured. The berm parapet was apparently replaced by a wooden wall. The wooden wall was destroyed sometime after the canal had ceased operations.<sup>453</sup>

By 1922, the Potomac Public Service Company and one of its newly organized subsidiaries, the Williamsport Power Company, began plans to construct a large power plant on the Potomac at Williamsport. The plant was to be located just below the highway toll bridge (U.S. 11) and between the canal and the river. In September, the Potomac Public Service company began negotiations with the trustees of the canal company to obtain a right-of-way and rail crossing over the canal. On September 11, the Trustees granted the Public Service Company permission to erect a temporary track over the canal so that building materials could be carried from the Western Maryland track to the site of the new plant. At the same time the Trustees also granted the Potomac Public Service Company the right to put a power and telephone line across the canal.<sup>454</sup>

In the meantime, the Potomac Public Service Company continued negotiations with the Trustees to gain permission to erect a permanent crossing over the canal.<sup>455</sup> The Trustees finally agreed to allow the Potomac Public Service Company to erect a railroad lift bridge over the canal. During the boating season, the bridge would be lowered only when cars had to cross the canal. It was not, however, to be lowered when canal traffic would be delayed. The agreement was signed by the two parties on January 8, 1923. The agreement also dealt with the construction of the Potomac Public Service Company's dam at Williamsport. The agreement was approved by the Washington County Circuit Court on May 4, 1923.<sup>456</sup>

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<sup>452</sup> Miller to Nicolson, March 3, 7, 14, 22, 1921, Ltrs. Recd., Correspondence of the Office of Trustees. See also General Manager to Miller, March 11, 1921, Ltrs. Sent, Correspondence of the Office of Trustees; and Fitz to Miller, March 18, 1921, Ltrs. Recd., Correspondence of the Office of Trustees. These letters suggest that Miller was anxious to resume business. Local tradition, however, does not suggest that a new ice plant was ever erected near the main basin. See Williamsport Chamber of Commerce, *Williamsport and Vicinity Reminiscences*, p. 54, and Ziek's interview with Melvin Kaplan, August 20, 21, 1978.

<sup>453</sup> Luzader, *HSR, The Conococheague Aqueduct*, pp. 13–14. See also Wolfe, *I Drove Mules*, p. 111. According to Luzader, no record of any of the above incidents (relative to the aqueduct) has been found in the records of the canal company.

<sup>454</sup> Nicolson to Harris, September 11, 1922, Ltrs. Sent, Correspondence of the Office of Trustees.

<sup>455</sup> Nicolson to Harris, September 19, November 9, December 20, 1922, and January 8, 1923, Ltrs. Sent, Correspondence of the Office of Trustees. See also Harris to Nicholson, October 26, November 10, 18, December 5, 27, 29, 1922 and January 4, 9, 1923, Ltrs. Recd., Correspondence of the Office of Trustees.

<sup>456</sup> Agreement, January 8, 1923, between Herbert R. Preston and George A. Colston, Surviving Trustees of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Company, and Trustees of the Williamsport Power Company, filed in Canal Cases, Washington County Courthouse. See also Petition of Surviving Trustees for Approval of Agreement with Williamsport Power Company filed May 2, 1923, and Approval of agreement by Court, May 4, 1923, filed in Canal Cases. According to the agreement, the railroad lift bridge was to be constructed in accordance with the plat marked "Masonry Plan, C & O Canal Crossing, Williamsport, Md., December 1922," and the plat marked "Steel Plan, C & O Canal Crossing, Williamsport, Md., November 1922." These drawings appear in this study report as Appendices T and U. The dam was to be constructed in accordance with Sanderson's and Porter's plat number 511-B-14. I was unable to locate this plat. Sanderson's and Porter's blueprint number 511-S1 was probably similar to plat number 511-B-14. The blue print 511-S1 is attached to this study report as Appendix V. The specifications for the dam

On April 11, 1923, the Potomac Public Service Company sought permission from the Trustees to locate “a small steel tower and two wood poles” on the “Canal Company’s property north of Conococheague Creek” and on the “east side of the canal.” At the same time the Vice President of the Potomac Public Service Company asked the general manager of the canal to send him a “drawing or print” showing the property lines of the canal company on the north side of the aqueduct. The general manager’s reply to the above request is interesting because it sheds some light on how the canal was changing physically at that time. The general manager sent the Vice President “a pencil tracing” of the canal company’s property maps showing the area on the north side of the aqueduct. The General Manager said that “the water line in the canal on the berm side” had “changed since this map was made, the old basin having been partially filled.”<sup>457</sup> The General Manager informed the Vice President that the Trustees would more than likely agree to the Potomac Public Service Company’s request. Permission was granted in May 1923.<sup>458</sup>

In May of 1923, the Potomac Public Service Company sought permission to erect two railroad tracks on the canal company’s land opposite the power plant. One track (labeled “K” on a Potomac Public Service Company blueprint) was to be constructed on the towpath bank. The other track (labeled “I”) would be constructed below the towpath bank. A steel locomotive crane would be placed on the elevated track (“K”). The crane would be used to unload coal from boats in the canal and transfer it to railway cars standing on the lower track (“I”). The Trustees immediately granted the Potomac Public Service Company permission to construct the two tracks. The ground was granted free of charge as long as it was “used in unloading canal shipments.”<sup>459</sup>

By June 11, 1923, the railroad lift bridge over the canal at Williamsport had been completed. On that day, the Vice President of the Potomac Public Service Company sent the General Manager of the canal a photograph that had just been made of the structure.<sup>460</sup> The power plant went into operation in the summer of 1923. The railroad lift bridge was used until the flood of March 1924. The closing of the canal after the flood of 1924 made the operation of the lift bridge unnecessary. The bridge, however, was not damaged during the flood.<sup>461</sup>

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shown in blueprint 511-S1 are located in this study report as Appendix W. For the precise location of the power plant and dam, see Sanderson’s and Porter’s blueprint number 510-B-2 which is attached to this study report as Appendix X. All of the above drawings and specifications can be found in the Correspondence of the Office of Trustees, and among the letters listed in footnote 45 of this chapter.

<sup>457</sup> Miller to Nicolson, April 11, 1923, Ltrs. Recd., Correspondence of the Office of Trustees. See also Nicolson to Harris, April 13, 1923, Ltrs. Sent, Correspondence of the Office of Trustees. This basin has not been mentioned in this report because it is actually outside of the corporate boundaries of Williamsport. Several industries, however, had operated along this basin for many years. The DeFrehn Chair Factory, for example, had been located at this point. For a view of the basin in the early 1920s, see blueprint and letter, Harris to Nicolson, May 19, 1923, Ltrs. Recd., Correspondence of the office of Trustees. The letters and blueprint are attached to this study report as Appendices Y and Z.

<sup>458</sup> Nicolson to Miller, April 13, and May 21, 1923, Ltrs. Sent, Correspondence of the Office of Trustees. See also Miller to Nicolson, April 17, and May 19, 1923, Ltrs. Recd., Correspondence of the Office of Trustees.

<sup>459</sup> Harris to Nicolson, May 5, 14, 1923, Ltrs. Recd., Correspondence of the Office of Trustees. See also Nicolson to Harris, May 11, 1923, Ltrs. Sent, Correspondence of the Office of Trustees. Blueprints showing the proposed track layout at the Williamsport Power Plant are attached to this study report as Appendices A1 and A2. These blueprints can also be found among the letters listed above.

<sup>460</sup> Harris to Nicholson, June 11, 1923, Ltrs. Recd., Correspondence of the Office of Trustees. This photo appears in this study report as Plat 1.

<sup>461</sup> Harlan D. Unrau, unpublished *HSR, The Bollman Bridge* (Seneca, Maryland, NPS, 1977), pp. 11–12.

In 1922, the Trustees of the canal company considered the possibility of closing off the Bollman Bridge which had been erected in 1879. The attorney for the Trustees said that the “few people” who used the bridge would “not be especially inconvenienced by having to go around by the toll bridge [U.S. 11 bridge].” Since the ferry had ceased to operate, the Trustees no longer had a legal obligation to maintain the bridge. He felt, however, that if there was an established road for the use of the ford, “some people might have the rights” to use the bridge. The bridge was apparently never closed to traffic, but in 1922 signs were posted to warn the public that the bridge was limited to 8,000 pounds. The Trustees were no doubt concerned that the people who were working on the power plant would attempt to take heavy material or equipment over the bridge. The General Manager of the canal warned the Vice President of the Potomac Public Service Company on September 19, 1922, that the bridge was not strong enough to hold “modern trucks.”<sup>462</sup>

The main basin in Williamsport was at least partially filled-in prior to 1924. The following letter which was written by the General Manager of the canal to the Vice President of the Potomac Public Service Company in January 1924 suggests that the main basin may have been completely filled-in prior to 1924:

Jan. 9, 1924

Mr. C. M. Harris, Vice President,  
The Potomac Edison Company,  
Hagerstown, Md.

Mr dear Mr. Harris:

In reply to yours of the 7<sup>th</sup>, I am enclosing a pencil sketch of the Canal and boundaries of the Canal property between Conococheague River and the lock. The basin up near Cushwa's has been filled since the map was made, consequently the lines do not correctly represent the water line of the canal at this date. When this map was made we had difficulty in satisfying ourselves of the correctness of the lines between the cross marks and Conococheague. They have never since been put on the maps. The canal, of course, is entitled to what it occupies by possession. The property from the above mentioned line down was acquired from Ann & Mary Williams.

Very truly yours,

General Manager.<sup>463</sup>

Although the above letter suggests that the Cushwa Basin was completely filled-in prior to 1924, a 1933 map of the area suggests that at least a portion of the basin had not been filled-in by that late date.<sup>464</sup>

<sup>462</sup> Preston to Nicolson, September 16, 1922, Ltrs. Recd., Correspondence of the Office of Trustees. See also Nicolson to Harris, September 19, 1922, Ltrs. Sent, Correspondence of the Office of Trustees.

<sup>463</sup> General Manager to Harris, January 9, 1924, Ltrs. Sent, Correspondence of the Office of Trustees. The idea that the turning basin at Cushwa's Warehouse was filled in prior to 1924 is supported by several longtime residents of Williamsport. See Ziek, Interview with Melvin Kaplan and with Martin Bovey, September 3, 1978. Kaplan believes it was filled in “around 1913,” and Bovey believes it was filled in “around World War I.”

<sup>464</sup> See Appendices B1 and B2: Blueprint accompanying letter of proposal to drain stagnant water from the canal at Williamsport, December 1, 1933, taken from Mish to Nicolson, December 18, 1933, Ltrs. Recd., Correspondence of the Office of Trustees. A few words should be made here about the “little basin” which had been located just above Lock 44. No records have been found to suggest exactly when the Lock 44 basin was filled in. In a recent interview,

The flood of 1924 finally caused the permanent closing of the canal. In actuality, however, the damage done by the 1924 flood was far less than the damage that had been done in 1889. Apparently no serious damage was done in 1924 to any of the canal structures at Williamsport.<sup>465</sup>

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longtime resident George “Hooper” Wolfe was unaware that a basin had once been formed near Lock 44. The “little basin” was therefore filled in at a very early date; probably well before 1900.

<sup>465</sup> Sanderlin, *The Great National Project*, p. 277.

## CHAPTER 10

### Williamsport and the Remains of the Canal, 1924–1979

After the canal was closed in 1924, most of the waterway was left to deteriorate. Between 1924 and 1938 the general manager of the canal received constant complaints about the condition of the canal at Williamsport.

In 1928 a typhoid epidemic struck Williamsport. Mayor William D. Byron called in state health officials, and the condition of the canal was declared to be hazardous to the health of the town's residents. The unhealthy condition of the canal was caused by "a number of stagnant pools of water" which were breeding areas for mosquitoes. State health officials also complained of "a number of abandoned boats lying in the bed of the canal which" offered "refuge for disorderly persons of various sorts." The state health officials directed the general manager of the canal to take action to eliminate the objectionable conditions.<sup>466</sup>

General Manager Nicolson apparently tried to eradicate the objectionable conditions of the canal at Williamsport with as little work as possible. On October 5, 1928, he notified the Chief Engineer for the Department of Health that the objectionable conditions were being corrected. He had directed the canal's representative at Williamsport<sup>467</sup> to put kerosene oil in the stagnant pools and to keep "undesirables" off the abandoned boats. The rather half-hearted response by the general manager brought strong criticism from the Burgess and Commissioners of Williamsport. On October 18, the Burgess and Commissioners passed a resolution which was eventually sent to the Chief Engineer for the Department of Health and to the General Manager of the canal. In the resolution, the Burgess and Commissioners stated that they had heard from a reliable source that two gallons of kerosene had been poured into the canal between the aqueduct and Lock 44. They did not believe that the kerosene would "relieve the swampy and unhealthy condition of the canal." They felt that the only way the "unsightly condition" could be eradicated was "by flushing the canal during the summer month[s]." They had heard that the only part of the canal that had not already been flushed was "the 17 mile division" that ran through Williamsport.<sup>468</sup>

After Nicolson had received the resolution from the Burgess and Commissioners, he apparently decided to take steps to flush the canal at Williamsport. On October 22, he informed the Trustees of the complaints that he had received. He felt that "it would be advisable to run some water" over the Williamsport level. He said that this would have been done earlier, had there not been a small break in the canal at Charles' Mill near the head of the Williamsport level. It would cost about \$10,000 to fix the break and stop a few other leaks on the Williamsport level. Then the level could be flushed with water. It was too late, however, to do anything before the next spring.<sup>469</sup>

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<sup>466</sup> Wolman to Trustees, October 2, 1928, Ltrs. Recd., Correspondence of the Office of Trustees.

<sup>467</sup> The canal's representative at Williamsport after the 1924 flood was level walker, Frank Wine. See Lane to Nicolson, April 8, 1927, Ltrs. Recd., Correspondence of the Office of Trustees.

<sup>468</sup> Nicolson to Wolman, October 5, 1928, Ltrs. Sent, Correspondence of the Office of Trustees; and Burgess and Commissioners of Williamsport to Wolman, October 18, 1928, Ltrs. Recd., Correspondence of the Office of Trustees. See also "Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council of Williamsport, Maryland," October 12, 1928.

<sup>469</sup> Nicolson to Preston, October 22, 1928, Ltrs. Sent, Correspondence of the Office of Trustees.

After Nicolson had informed the Trustees of his desire to repair and flush the Williamsport level, he received another letter from the Chief Engineer of the Department of Health. The Chief Engineer informed Nicolson that the Department of Health felt that in addition to pouring kerosene into the canal, “the discarded boats should be removed and the canal flushed at proper intervals.” The Chief Engineer recommended that the cleanup and flushing be done that fall. Nicolson immediately notified the Department of Health that some repairs had to be made on the Williamsport level and therefore it would be impossible to flush the canal that fall. He had to rely on the local farmers to assist with the repairs and the farmers were too busy to help out in the fall. He also explained that he had already taken up the matter with the Trustees and they expected to be able to carry out the cleanup next spring.<sup>470</sup>

The Department of Health accepted Nicolson’s excuse for delaying the cleanup operations at Williamsport.<sup>471</sup> By early April of 19129, however, Nicolson still had not commenced to flush the canal. On April 5, the Chief Engineer for the Department of Health informed Nicolson that additional complaints had been received from other points along the canal. On April 15, Nicolson met with the Chief Engineer and explained his schedule for flushing the entire canal from Cumberland to Georgetown. The flushing would begin at Cumberland some time in May. The flushing was apparently conducted during the summer of 1929. In early September, however, the Department of Health again notified Nicolson that their inspectors had found “approximately 2 feet of very foul stagnant water in the canal” at Williamsport. In addition, the “old boats” had not yet been removed from the canal. The Chief Engineer for the Department of Health declared: “The existing condition of the canal is a menace to the health and comfort of the citizens of Williamsport and we must insist that it be immediately abated.” After receiving this stern warning, the boats and the stagnant pools were apparently eliminated. On September 25, Nicolson informed the Chief Engineer that he had “had the canal mowed through Williamsport” and the objectionable conditions had “been corrected.”<sup>472</sup>

In late 1933, the condition of the canal at Williamsport was again found to be a menace to the health of the town’s residents. This time, Dr. W. Ross Cameron of the Washington County Board of Public Health took steps to have the canal cleaned up. Since the Trustees were unwilling to have the canal cleaned up at the expense of the company, Cameron asked the Civil Works Administration to do the work at no expense to the company. The canal company and the Civil Works Administration agreed to this arrangement. A force of men were to be put to work on the canal between the aqueduct and Lock 44. The stagnant pools in the canal would be drained and the men would “clean up weeds, brush and debris.”<sup>473</sup>

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<sup>470</sup> Wolman to Nicolson, October 30, 1928, Ltrs. Recd., Correspondence of the Office of Trustees; and Nicolson to Wolman, November 2, 1928, Ltrs. Sent, Correspondence of the Office of Trustees.

<sup>471</sup> Wolman to Nicolson, November 9, 1928, Ltrs. Recd., Correspondence of the Office of Trustees; and Nicolson to Preston, November 10, 1928, Ltrs. Sent, Correspondence of the Office of Trustees.

<sup>472</sup> Wolman to Nicolson, April 5, 9, 18, June 14, 19, September 5, October 4, 1919, Ltrs. Recd., Correspondence of the Office of Trustees; and Nicolson to Wolman, April 8, 16, June 17, September 25, 1929, Ltrs. Sent, Correspondence of the Office of Trustees. In Nicolson’s letter to Wolman on April 16, he said that the canal had been flushed “each year” since the closing of the canal in 1924.

<sup>473</sup> Lane, Ballentine & Mish to Nicolson, December 18, 22, 1933, Ltrs. Recd., Correspondence of the Office of Trustees; and Nicolson to Lane, Ballentine & Mish, December 20, 1933, Ltrs. Sent, Correspondence of the Office of Trustees. In Lane’s letter of December 18, he enclosed a blueprint of the area of the canal to be drained. That blueprint is attached to this study report as Appendix B1. In early December 1933, The Civil Works Administration had apparently obtained permission from the General Manager to put a pipe through the breast of the lock wall at Lock

Between 1924 and 1938, the General Manager of the Canal also received complaints about the dilapidated condition of the Bollman Bridge over the canal at Williamsport. On April 1, 1929, the Superintendent of Power for the Potomac Edison Company notified General Manager Nicolson that the bridge was badly in need of repair. In fact, it was “being washed around the end so badly” that it would “soon become dangerous.” The canal records do not show that any repairs were made to the bridge because of this complaint.<sup>474</sup> The bridge survived the great flood of February 1936, and the less-serious flood of February 1937. After the latter flood, however, the canal’s representative at Williamsport, Frank Wine, informed General Manager Nicolson that the floor of the bridge was in very bad condition. According to Wine, the condition was approaching the danger point because trucks bound for the Potomac Edison Company’s plant were “hauling heavy loads over the bridge.” About this time, General Manager Nicolson directed Wine to replace the floor of the bridge. The lumber used in the bridge’s new floor was prime pine ordered from Florida. The G. A. Miller Lumber Company ordered the lumber through the Dixie Lumber Company of Hagerstown. It took about three weeks for the lumber to arrive by train from Florida. On June 13, Wine reported that the bridge floor was finished except for the placing of “props under it.” The “Potomac Edison people” were going to provide Wine with a man to help with the props. By June 23, the bridge had been completed. On that date, Wine wrote that he had also “painted the Bridge floor and Stringers on all four Sides with Creosote.”<sup>475</sup>

Between 1924 and 1938, the General Manager of the canal also received some complaints concerning persons who were causing all kinds of problems along the canal. On January 7, 1926, for example, the attorney for the canal company received a letter from a Mrs. Elizabeth Potts “complaining of a nuisance in the Company’s house at the lock near Williamsport.” The attorney informed General Manager Nicolson that he was turning the letter of complaint over to the sheriff.<sup>476</sup>

In August of 1927, General Manager Nicolson notified the company’s lawyer that a man named Burke, who lived in the company house at Williamsport, had been sent to jail for six months. Burke had apparently been “moon shining on the Canal Company’s land.” Nicolson informed the company’s lawyer that he had already “ordered Mrs. Burke out,” and had “agreed to rent the house to Mr. Fridinger.”<sup>477</sup>

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44 in order to drain the canal from the aqueduct down to the lock. See Wine to Nicolson, December 4, 1933, Ltrs. Recd., Correspondence of the Office of Trustees; and Nicolson to Wine, December 5, 1933, Ltrs. Sent, Correspondence of the Office of Trustees

<sup>474</sup> Lewis to Nicolson, April 1, 1929, Ltrs. Recd., Correspondence of the Office of Trustees; and Nicolson to Lewis, April 4, 1929, Ltrs. Sent, Correspondence of the Office of Trustees.

<sup>475</sup> Wine said that he had “found a drum” of creosote “at the lock” and had used nearly all of it on the “Bridge floor and sills.” Wine to Nicolson, March 3, 8, May 7, 10, June 13, 23, 1937, Ltrs. Recd., Correspondence of the Office of Trustees; Wine to Nicolson, undated letter, 1937, Ltrs. Recd., Correspondence of the Office of Trustees; Nicolson to Wine, March 10, April 5, May 13, 1937, Ltrs. Sent, Correspondence of the Office of Trustees; Miller to C & O Canal Co., May 24, 1937, Ltrs. Recd., Correspondence of the Office of Trustees; Hassett to Sahli, March 8, 1937, Ltrs. Recd., Correspondence of the Office of Trustees; Nicolson to Dixie Lumber Co., May 22, 1937, Ltrs. Sent, Correspondence of the Office of Trustees; Nicolson to G. A. Miller Lumber Co., May 22, 1937, Ltrs. Sent, Correspondence of the Office of Trustees; Hassett to Nicolson, May 21, 1937, Ltrs. Recd., Correspondence of the Office of Trustees.

<sup>476</sup> Lane to Nicolson, January 7, 1926, Ltrs. Recd., Correspondence of the Office of Trustees.

<sup>477</sup> The Burkes probably lived in Lockhouse 44. Nicolson to Lane, August 22, 1927, Ltrs. Sent, Correspondence of the Office of Trustees; and Lane to Nicolson, August 23, 1927, Ltrs. Recd., Correspondence of the Office of Trustees.

In October 1928, the canal company's attorney received a complaint regarding the character of a woman who had been permitted to live in "the old Collector's Office at Williamsport." The complaint, which was made by another woman who lived in Williamsport, was derogatory and probably slanderous. Fortunately, some important leaders in the town and county strongly defended the character of the woman against whom the complaint had been made and she was not forced to vacate the canal building.<sup>478</sup>

Between 1924 and 1938, the General Manager of the canal also encountered problems with individuals who intruded upon the property rights of the canal company. In 1927, for example, Edgar T. Hayman opened a quarry on what was known "as the Stake property," and began to use the canal land for an outlet. His stone was hauled from the quarry on the Stake Farm down to the canal berm. It was then hauled up a road which was located on the berm bank. General Manager Nicolson and the company's attorney tried to get Hayman to agree to pay a fifty-dollar-a-month rental for the use of the road. Hayman and his attorney, however, felt that the road was probably "an old outlet road from the Stake Farm" and was therefore an established right-of-way. Nicolson maintained, on the other hand, that although there had "been passage up and down the berm bank, on rare occasions," there had "never been a road there until Mr. Hayman built one." Nicolson heard that Hayman had spent several hundred dollars to build the road. On September 24, 1927, Nicolson informed the company's lawyer that the Trustees would insist that Hayman recognize the canal company's rights "by paying a reasonable amount for the usage of the outlet." Nicolson said that he was personally "more interested in the danger of [to] property at the Lumber Yard, Carpenter Shop and building on the lock wall, where this road" passed. "Cigarette smokers" were "careless about throwing their stumps and many fires" could be started at the canal buildings near the road. Nicolson felt that if Hayman would agree to protect the canal company "against fire loss and other damages, the rental charges" would "be very light." Sometime during the fall of 1927, Hayman finally decided to make an agreement with the General Manager of the canal. He agreed to turn over to General Manager Nicolson quarterly statements showing the number of tons of stone he had moved during each quarter. He also agreed to pay the canal company "so much per ton." On April 2, 1919, however, Nicolson informed the company's attorney that since the agreement was made, Hayman had made no quarterly reports, and had not acknowledged any of Nicolson's letters regarding the subject. The records of the canal company do not indicate whether this problem was ever resolved.<sup>479</sup>

In 1930, the General Manager of the canal received a report that a farmer who owned "land abutting the canal" at Lock 44, was "claiming that the house occupied by Zimmerly was on his land."

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tees. The canal company had only to give a five-day notice of dismissal before an occupant could be forced to vacate a canal building. The nuisance at Lock 44, which Elizabeth Potts complained of in January 1926, may have been in reference to Burke's moon shining operation. See footnote 11 of this chapter.

<sup>478</sup> Davis to Lane [?], October 30, 1928, Ltrs. Recd., Correspondence of the Office of Trustees; Wine to Nicolson, November 12, 1928, Ltrs. Recd., Correspondence of the Office of Trustees; Hawkens to Nicolson, November 13, 1928, Correspondence of the Office of Trustees; Lane to Nicolson, November 14, 17, 1928, Ltrs. Recd., Correspondence of the Office of Trustees; and Nicolson to Lane, November 19, 1928, Ltrs. Sent, Correspondence of the Office of Trustees. The old Collector's Office was located "on the towpath side of the canal" near the Bollman Bridge.

<sup>479</sup> Lane to Nicolson, April 8, July 15, 22, August 1, 18, 1927, Ltrs. Recd., Correspondence of the Office of Trustees; Nicolson to Lane, July 13, 19, August 16, 22, September 24, 1927 and April 2, 1929, Ltrs. Sent, Correspondence of the Office of Trustees.

General Manager Nicolson and the company's attorney both agreed that the company had acquired title to the land in a judgment against Ann and Mary Williams back in 1833. According to the farmer, the canal company had leased the house to one John W. Long sometime during the 1800s. On October 15, 1884, Long had mortgaged his "right, title and interest" in the house to Joseph H. Farrow. The mortgage specifically said, however, that the house was located on property belonging to the canal company. It was therefore unclear exactly how the farmer came to claim the house and land. The company's lawyer advised Nicolson to ask the farmer to state the basis or origin of his claim. The records of the canal company do not indicate how this question was eventually settled.<sup>480</sup>

On April 25, 1934, the general manager of the canal received a report that the Potomac Edison Company had probably intruded upon the canal company's property at Williamsport. According to Frank Wine, the Potomac Edison people had just completed a survey which established their boundary line almost at Lockhouse 44. The line was only "about 8 feet from the lower corner" of the house. The canal company's records do not indicate whether this line was actually in conflict with the canal company's boundaries.<sup>481</sup>

In 1936, the general manager of the canal received reports from Wine of intrusions upon the canal company's property up near Charles' Mill on the Williamsport level. An individual in that area had even gone so far as to lay claim to the towpath.<sup>482</sup>

As the canal deteriorated between 1924 and 1938, the Trustees of the canal company, and the Court, continued to claim that the waterway could easily be put into working order.<sup>483</sup> The Trustees' Annual Report of 1929 said that the Trustees had considered "opening the canal as far as Williamsport for the season of 1929, but they [the Trustees] were not able to secure any assurances that there would be sufficient traffic to justify the expense of putting the Canal in operation." The report also said that the Trustees had again considered opening the canal to Williamsport "for the season of 1930," but again they had not been able to obtain enough assurances to guarantee that the traffic would be heavy enough to justify reopening the canal. The report maintained that "the cost of putting the Canal in operation would not be great."<sup>484</sup>

In 1934, a group of Williamsport-area farmers informed the canal officials that they would fix a break in the canal above Williamsport if the canal officials would agree to water the Williamsport level. The farmers wanted water on this level so that they could water their livestock. The break in the canal was located up near Spring Culvert. General Manager Nicolson agreed to the arrangement, but the break was probably never repaired. Heavy rains, which fell in September, brought the water the farmers desired. On September 26, Frank Wine informed Nicolson

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<sup>480</sup> General Manager to Lane, July 14, 1930, Ltrs. Sent, Correspondence of the Office of Trustees; and Lane to Nicolson, July 18, 1930, Ltrs. Recd., Correspondence of the Office of Trustees.

<sup>481</sup> Wine to Nicolson, April 25, 1934, Ltrs. Recd., Correspondence of the Office of Trustees.

<sup>482</sup> Wine to Nicolson, July 25, 28, 1936, Ltrs. Recd., Correspondence of the Office of Trustees; and General Manager to Wine, July 29, 1936, Ltrs. Sent, Correspondence of the Office of Trustees.

<sup>483</sup> Sanderlin, *The Great National Project*, pages 277–278.

<sup>484</sup> *Trustees' Annual Report for 1929*, filed in Canal Cases, Washington County Courthouse.

that he had “not heard anything of those people that wanted to fix the Break in the canal.” Wine believed that the recent rains had “given them plenty of water.”<sup>485</sup>

As the canal gradually deteriorated after 1924, the general manager began to receive letters from persons who wanted parts and materials that had been left to rot or rust along the canal. On December 26, 1933, John W. Lefevre of East Salisbury Street in Williamsport asked to be allowed to use “three or four short iron rods” that had been lying on the ground near Lock 44 ever since the canal had ceased operation. General Manager Nicolson apparently asked Frank Wine for his opinion on Lefevre’s request. Wine informed Nicolson that Lefevre had been inquiring about the rods for the past two years. Wine still did not think that the canal officials should part with the rods. He felt that the canal officials still “might need them.”<sup>486</sup>

On May 24, 1935, Wine informed Nicolson that there was a sizable amount of scrap iron at the Carpenter Shop and at the company house where he had once lived. There were also about twelve or fifteen lock gates. The wood on the gates had rotted, but the iron from the gates could be used as scrap iron.<sup>487</sup>

On September 4, 1935, Wine informed General Manager Nicolson that the “gate arms and old Lumber at the Carpenter Shop at Williamsport” was “more than Half Rotten.” Wine doubted if it would be of any further use to the canal company. He therefore requested that he be allowed to use it for heating.<sup>488</sup>

Finally, in March of 1937, General Manager Nicolson directed Wine to gather the scrap iron at the Carpenter Shop at Williamsport and sell it for whatever price it would bring. On March 13, 1937, Wine informed Nicolson that he had sold the iron at “32 cts Per Hundred Pound.”<sup>489</sup>

In the meantime, the town of Williamsport was slowly changing between 1924 and 1938. In 1924, Conomac Park was founded by Bess F. Lemen. In 1927, another park, Community Park, was created by the Burgess and Commissioners of Williamsport. In 1928, the Williamsport Chamber of Commerce was organized.<sup>490</sup>

Back in 1922, the Burgess and Commissioners of Williamsport had leased a piece of ground on the Public Square to the G. A. Miller Lumber Company. At that time, Miller already had a lease on “other ground” on the square. The two leases were to expire in 1933. On January 9, 1928, the Burgess and Commissioners extended Miller’s two leases for seven years beyond their original expiration date. The two leases would now expire in 1940 rather than in 1933.<sup>491</sup>

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<sup>485</sup> Bentz to Wine, undated 1934, Ltrs. Recd., Correspondence of the Office of Trustees; Wine to Nicolson, September 4, 26, 1934, Ltrs. Recd., Correspondence of the Office of Trustees; and General Manager to Wine, September 5, 1924, Ltrs. Sent, Correspondence of the Office of Trustees.

<sup>486</sup> Lefevre to Nicolson, December 26, 1933, and Wine to Nicolson, December 30, 1933, Ltrs. Recd., Correspondence of the Office of Trustees.

<sup>487</sup> Wine to Nicolson, May 24, 1935, Ltrs. Recd., Correspondence of the Office of Trustees.

<sup>488</sup> Wine to Nicolson, September 4, 1935, Ltrs. Recd., Correspondence of the Office of Trustees.

<sup>489</sup> Wine to Nicolson, March 13, 1937, Ltrs. Recd., Correspondence of the Office of Trustees. The total amount received for the iron was \$60.56.

<sup>490</sup> Williamsport Chamber of Commerce, *Williamsport and Vicinity Reminiscences*, pages 11–12.

<sup>491</sup> “Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Council of Williamsport, Maryland” September 22, 1922 and January 9, 1928.

Back in 1913, the Burgess and Commissioners of Williamsport had leased Victor Cushwa and Sons a portion of the public square. On January 9, 1928, the Cushwa lease was extended for twelve years from January 16, 1928. The lease would now expire in 1940.<sup>492</sup>

On February 13, 1928, the Burgess and Commissioners ordered the public square area to be surveyed at the west end of Potomac Street. Following the survey, “stone markers” were to be erected to indicate the boundaries of the square.<sup>493</sup>

In 1928, a water system was installed in Williamsport.<sup>494</sup> Soon after the water system was installed, the Potomac Edison Company decided to run a four-inch water line from the Williamsport city mains to the power plant near the river. On October 21, 1929, the Superintendent of Power for the Potomac Edison Company, A. D. Lewis, informed General Manager Nicolson that the commissioners of Williamsport had already agreed to run their part of the main down to the Steffey and Findlay railway siding. At the siding, the Potomac Edison Company would connect with the city main and run their four-inch pipes under the canal to the power plant. On October 23, Nicolson informed Lewis that the Trustees would most likely grant the Potomac Edison Company permission to pass the pipes under the canal. The Trustees eventually approved the plans for running the pipes under the canal. The town of Williamsport, however, apparently ran the pipes under the canal for the power company. On June 5, 1930, Lewis informed Nicolson that the “City of Williamsport” was “ready to extend their water line across the canal at a point above the locks in line with the Williamsport [Power] Station.” Since there were several feet of water in the canal bed, Lewis requested Nicolson to have the water drained so that the city could proceed to lay their pipes. On June 9, Nicolson informed Lewis that Frank Wine had been notified that the water should be drained as soon as possible.<sup>495</sup>

In 1935, a sewage system was apparently installed at Williamsport. In June of 1934, General Manager Nicolson of the canal company informed Frank Wine at Williamsport that the sewage system would run down the towpath and across the canal. On January 8, 1935, Wine notified Nicolson that the “digging for the sewage” system would probably start the following week.<sup>496</sup>

In late February and early March of 1936, another great flood struck the Potomac Valley. A forty-foot section of Dam 4 below Williamsport was carried away by the ice jam caused by the flood. At Williamsport, the Cottrill Slaughter House (which was located on the old site of the Miller Ice House in the main basin area) was washed away. Cushwa’s Lime Storage Shed near the main basin was also washed away.<sup>497</sup>

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<sup>492</sup> Ibid., January 13, 1913, and January 9, 1928.

<sup>493</sup> Ibid., February 13, 1928.

<sup>494</sup> Williamsport Chamber of Commerce, *Williamsport and Vicinity Reminiscences*, page 108.

<sup>495</sup> Lewis to Nicolson, October 21, 1929, June 5, 1930, Ltrs. Recd., Correspondence of the Office of Trustees; and General Manager to Lewis, October 23, 1929, June 9, 1930, Ltrs. Sent, Correspondence of the Office of Trustees.

<sup>496</sup> Wine to Nicolson, June 30, 1934 and January 8, 1935, Ltrs. Recd., Correspondence of the Office of Trustees.

<sup>497</sup> Burgan to Nicolson, February 29, 1936, Ltrs. Recd., Correspondence of the Office of Trustees. See also Ziek, “Interviews with Melvin Kaplan, August 21, 1978 and with Martin Bovey, August 22, 1978,” in C & O Canal Restoration Group Files, Seneca, Maryland. John M. Miller’s Ice House had burned in late 1920 or early 1921. Sometime after the Ice House was burned, Percy Murray and Lester Cottrill had erected the Slaughter House which was washed away in 1936. The stone foundation of the Slaughter House can still be seen. For excellent aerial photographs of Williamsport during the 1936 flood, see Plats 4, 5 and 6 of this study report.

In September of 1938, the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal officially became the property of the people of the United States. Since that time, the remains of the waterway have been maintained by the National Park Service.

The town of Williamsport has experienced little population growth since 1938. In fact, the town has seen little population growth during the twentieth century. The town's population decreased from 1,775 in 1930 to 1,772 in 1940. By 1950, it had risen to a new historic high of 1,890. By 1960, however, it had slightly decreased again to 1,853. During the 1960s, the town's population finally topped the 2,000 mark for the first time in the town's history. In 1970, the population of the town was 2,270.<sup>498</sup>

Because the town has experienced little population growth during the twentieth century, it also has experienced few drastic physical changes over the years. Except for the filled-in basins, the canal at Williamsport also has changed very little during the twentieth century. Because of its great state of preservation, Williamsport remains an outstanding example of a middle- to late-nineteenth century canal town.

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<sup>498</sup> Bureau of the Census, *A Report of the Seventeenth Decennial Census of the United States. Census of Population, 1950, Volume I: Number of Inhabitants* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1952), page 20–10. See also Bureau of the Census, *1970 Census of Population, Volume I: Characteristics of the Population, Part A: Number of Inhabitants, Alabama to Mississippi* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1971), page 22–12.

## Appendices

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## Appendix A

Copy of original plat of Williams Port recorded in the Washington County Courthouse,  
May 16, 1787 in Liber E, folio 421.

[This plat is not available in this edition.]

## Appendix B

An act for establishing the temporary and permanent seat of the Government of the United States.

Be it enacted, &c., That a district of territory, not exceeding ten miles square, to be located as hereafter directed, on the river Potomac, at some place between the mouths of the Eastern Branch and Conococheague, be, and the same is hereby, accepted for the permanent seat of the Government of the United States: Provided, nevertheless, That the operation of the laws of the State within such district shall not be affected by this acceptance, until the time is fixed for the removal of the Government thereto, and until Congress shall otherwise by law provide.

Sec. 2. And be it further enacted, That the President of the United States be authorized to appoint, and by supplying vacancies happening from refusals to act or other causes, to keep in appointment as long as may be necessary, three commissioners, who, or any two of whom, shall, under the direction of the President, survey, and by proper metes and bounds define and limit a district of territory, under the limitations above mentioned; and the district so defined, limited, and located, shall be deemed the district accepted by this act, for the permanent seat of the Government of the United States.

Sec. 3. And be it enacted, That the said commissioners, or any two of them, shall have to power to purchase or accept such quantity of land on the eastern side of the said river, within the said district, as the President shall deem proper for the use of the United States, and according to such plans as the President shall approve, the said commissioners, or any two of them, shall, prior to the first Monday in December, in the year one thousand eight hundred, provide suitable buildings for the accommodation of Congress, and of the President, and for the public offices of the Government of the United States.

Sec. 4. And be it enacted, That for defraying the expense of such purchases and buildings, the President of the United States be authorized and requested to accept grants of money.

Sec. 5. And be it enacted, That prior to the first Monday in December next, all offices attached to the seat of Government of the United States, shall be removed to, and until the said first Monday in December, in the year one thousand eight hundred, shall remain at the city of Philadelphia, in the State of Pennsylvania, at which place the session of Congress next ensuing the present shall be held.

Sec. 6. And be it enacted, That on the said first Monday in December, in the year one thousand eight hundred, the seat of the Government of the United States shall, by virtue of this act, be transferred to the district and place aforesaid. And all offices attached to the seat of the Government shall accordingly be removed thereto by their respective holders, and shall, after the said day, cease to be exercised elsewhere; and that the necessary expense of such removal shall be defrayed out of the duties on imports and tonnage, of which a sufficient sum is hereby appropriated.

Approved, July 16, 1790.<sup>499</sup>

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<sup>499</sup> Taken from the *Annals of Congress* (1789–91), II: 2234–35.

## Appendix C

Message from President Washington accompanying proclamation concerning the selection of the capital.

Gentlemen of the Senate,  
And House of Representatives:

In execution of the powers with which Congress were pleased to invest me, by their act entitled “An act for establishing the temporary and permanent seat of Government of the United States;” and, on mature consideration of the advantages and disadvantages of the several positions within the limits prescribed by the said act, I have, by a proclamation bearing date this day, (a copy of which is herewith transmitted,) directed commissioners, appointed in pursuance of the act, to survey and limit a part of the territory of ten miles square, on both sides of the river Potomac, so as to comprehend Georgetown, in Maryland, and extend to the Eastern Branch.

I have not, by this first act, given to the said territory the whole extent of which it is susceptible in the direction of the river; because I thought it important that Congress should have an opportunity of considering whether, by an amendatory law, they would authorize the location of the residue at the lower end of the present, so as to comprehend the Eastern Branch itself, and some of the country on its lower side, in the State of Maryland, and town of Alexandria, in Virginia. If, however, they are of opinion that the Federal Territory should be bounded by the water edge of the Eastern Branch, the location of the residue will be to be made at the upper end of what is now directed.

I have thought best to await a survey of the territory, before it is decided on what particular spot on the northeastern side of the river, the public buildings should be erected.

Geo. Washington  
United States, January 24, 1791<sup>500</sup>

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<sup>500</sup> Message from President Washington accompanying proclamation concerning the selection of the capital; taken from the *Annals of Congress* (1791), II: 1750.

## Appendix D

An Act to amend “An act for establishing the temporary and permanent seat of the Government of the United States.”

Be it enacted, &c., That so much of the act, entitled “An act for establishing the temporary and permanent seat of Government of the United States,” as requires that the whole of the district of territory, not exceeding ten mile square, to be located on the river Potomac, for the permanent seat of the Government of the United States, shall be located above the mouth of Eastern Branch, be, and is hereby, repealed; and that it shall be lawful for the President to make any part of the territory below the said limit, and above the mouth of Hunting Creek, a part of the said district, so as the include a convenient part of the Eastern Branch, and of the lands lying on the lower side thereof, and also the town of Alexandria; and the territory so to be included shall form a part of the district not exceeding ten miles square, for the permanent seat of the Government of the United States, in like manner, and to all intents and purposes, as if the same had been within the purview of the above recited act: Provided that nothing herein contained shall authorize the erection of the public buildings otherwise than on the Maryland side of the river Potomac, as required by the aforesaid act.

Approved, March 3, 1791.<sup>501</sup>

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<sup>501</sup> Taken from the *Annals of Congress* (1789–91), II: 2340–41.

## Appendix E

Mackall Map drawn in 1896 from original deeds.

[This map is not available in this edition.]

## **Appendices F, G and H**

Profile Maps of Sections 186–188 found in Drawings and Other Records Concerning Construction, 1828–1937, C & O Co.

[These maps are not available in this edition.]

## Appendix I

Sketch map of Basin Area (1838) showing location of J. A. Magruder's Proposed Warehouse, taken from Rogers [Report] to Ingle.  
December 28, 1838, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

[This map is not available in this edition.]

## **Appendix J**

James A. Magruder, Report of G. W. Rogers  
Referred January 9, 1839 to the President,  
Wm. Gunton & Phineas Janney, in Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

[This report is not available in this edition.]

## Appendix K

Map showing “White’s Addition to Williamsport”  
drawn by S. S. Downin, October 4, 1867,  
recorded in Washington County Land Records,  
Liber 89, folio 168.

[This map is not available in this edition.]

## Appendix L

Plat of Williamsport, Md.  
drawn by S. S. Downin, August 28, 1891,  
recorded in Washington County Land Records,  
Liber 97, folio 698.

[This plat is not available in this edition.]

## Appendix M

“Map of Lots Laid off adjoining Wms. Port above Lock 44 Bounded on the West by the Ches. & Ohio Canal,”  
drawn by S. S. Downin, 1882,  
recorded in Washington County Land Records,  
Liber 81, folio 704.

[This map is not available in this edition.]

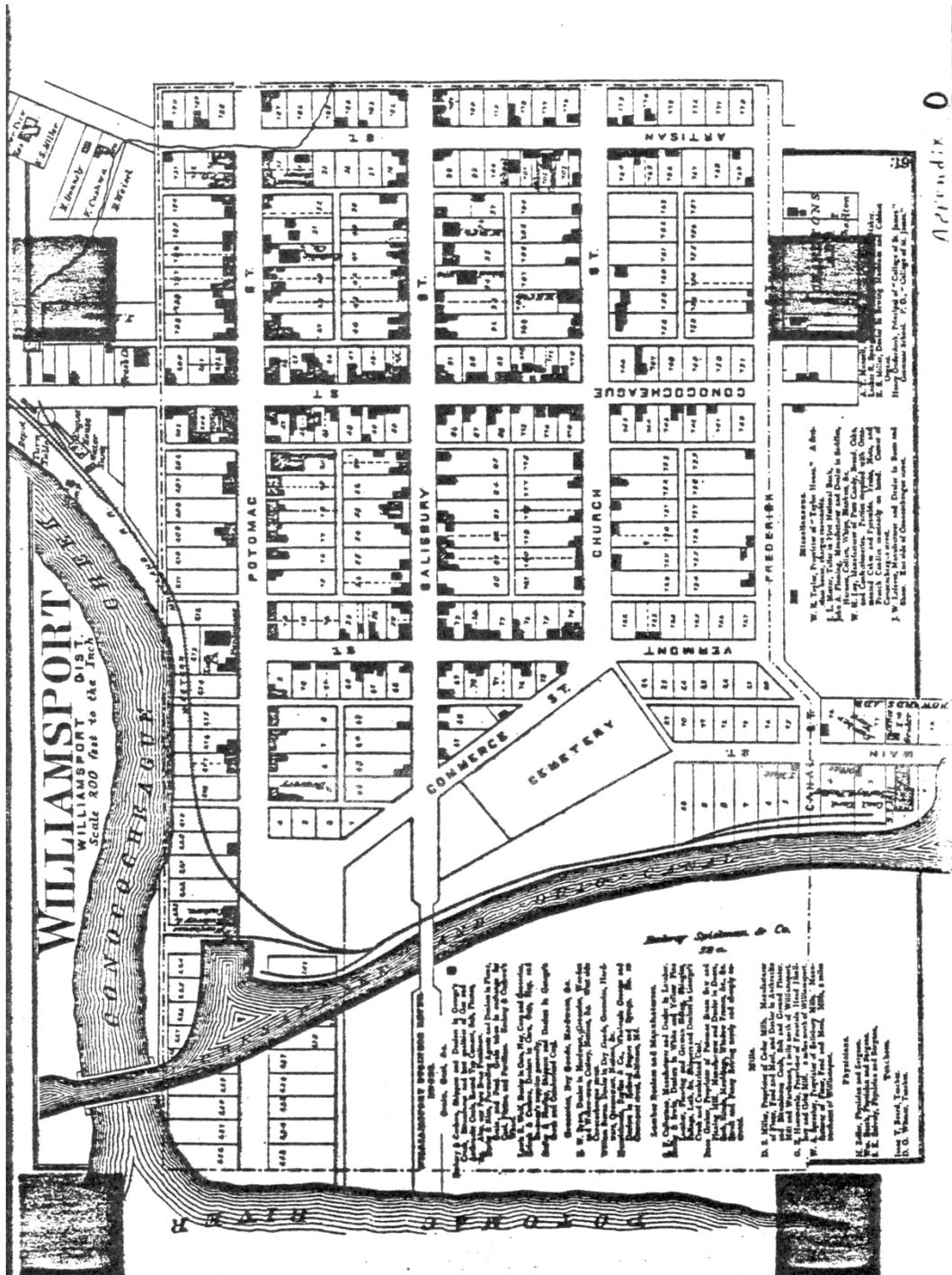
## **Appendix N**

Copy of A. J. Potts' letter and petition showing the signatures of nineteen other citizens who were doing business on the canal at Williamsport in 1865.

[This document is not available in this edition.]

### Appendix O

Map of Williamsport (1877) taken from *An Illustrated Atlas of Washington County, Maryland*, (1877), page 39.



## **Appendix P**

Map of Williamsport (this is a drawing of the original 1787 map)  
drawn by S. S. Dowin in 1876,  
recorded in Washington County Land Records,  
Liber 75, folio 719.

[This map is not available in this edition.]

## Appendix Q

Copy of article and advertisement entitled, "Williamsport, Maryland, in Brief, and its progressive Citizens," originally printed sometime in the late 1890s.

NOTE: The image of this page is not available in this edition. However a transcription of the article follows.

Williamsport, Washington country's second largest town, distant seven miles from Hagerstown, the county seat, a trolley line being operated between the two, is pleasantly situated on the north bank of the Potomac river and the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal. The Conococheague creek, a wide stream, flows through the town and empties into the river at this point. The Western Maryland, Cumberland Valley and Potomac Valley railroads and Chesapeake & Ohio canal afford us ample transportation facilities. Large quantities of coal are brought here by canal and shipped to various points by rail.

The town was founded in 1789 by Gen. Otho Holland Williams, of revolutionary war fame, for whom it was named, and incorporated in 1823. General Washington once visited the place with a view of locating the United States capital here.

Williamsport is 98 miles from Baltimore. Its population, now 2,000, has increased about 600 during the past two years, in which time some 50 houses have been erected. W. D. Byron & sons' tannery, founded here in 1897, employs 150 men and materially adds to the town's business. In addition to the industries and business houses represented by card on this sheet, Williamsport has 2 weekly newspapers, 4 general stores, 1 green grocery, 1 drug store, 1 undertaking establishment, 1 clothing store, 3 livery stables, 1 jeweler, 4 barber shops, 1 hotel, 2 harness shops, 2 coal dealers, 3 physicians and 2 justices of the peace.

The Masonic, I.O.O.F., K. of P., J.O.U.A.M., Daughters of Rebecca, and Shield of Honor secret orders have lodges here with active memberships. The town has churches of the M. E. Lutheran, United Brethren, Presbyterian and Catholic denominations of religion. It has telegraph, local and long distance telephone accommodations, an express office and a board of trade whose members consider projected enterprises on a liberal basis. An electric light plant, owned by the town, now in course of construction, will be completed and in operation by September, 1899. Our public schools are graded, two buildings being brought into requisition and seven teachers employed. The high elevation of the town makes it safe from floods and affords a view of the beautiful Blue Ridge mountains, fourteen miles distant, as well as the intervening country. The town is attractive to summer visitors and fishing parties, the Potomac teeming with black bass at this point. Williamsport is interspersed with large trees, which in the summer months furnish excellent shade. It is a healthy place and has an abundance of pure water. The assessed valuation of town property is \$363,000 and the rate of taxation 55 cents on the \$100, 25 cents having been recently added by the floating electric light bonds. Peace and order prevail here, and our citizens are extremely hospitable. The country contiguous is highly productive of cereals, fruits and vegetables. Farms are in a high state of improvement. Williamsport is a desirable residence place and contains numerous beautiful homes. We invite an investigation of our advantages and resources.

## Appendix R

Random letterheads taken from ltrs. recd.  
by the Chesapeake and Ohio Transportation Company  
and by the Canal Towage Company, 1900–1915.

[The images of letters on letterheads of various Williamsport companies are not available in this edition.]

## **Appendix S**

Property Map and Right-of-Way of Washington and Berkeley Bridge Company,  
taken from Plat Files, Washington County land Records,  
Washington County Courthouse, Hagerstown.

[This map is not available in this edition.]

## **Appendix T**

Masonry Plan C & O Canal Crossing,  
Williamsport, Maryland, Nov. 1922.

[This plan is not available in this edition.]

## Appendix U

Steel Plan, C & O Canal Crossing,  
Williamsport, Md., Nov. 1922.

[This plan is not available in this edition.]

## **Appendix V**

Sanderson's and Porter's Blueprint Number 511-S1:  
Proposed Dam across Potomac River,  
Williamsport Power Co.

[This blueprint is not available in this edition.]

## Appendix W

Williamsport Power Company Specifications for Dam across Potomac River to maintain a pool for Condensing Water Purposes.

NOTE: This is a transcription:

October 24, 1922

WILLIAMSPORT  
SPECIFICATIONS  
FOR  
DAM ACROSS POTOMAC RIVER TO MAINTAIN  
A POOL FOR CONDENSING WATER PURPOSES.

### LOCATION

The dam shall be located as shown on the Property Plan of the Williamsport Power Company herein designated as Sanderson(?) & Porter drawing #510-3-2. Low water stage of the Potomac River at this location is at elevation 325, the river at this elevation being approximately 750 feet wide, with rock bottom ranging from elevation 320 to 324.

### CONSTRUCION OF DAM

The dam shall be of concrete construction, notched in the rock bottom of the river and equipped with concrete abutments at each end. The permanent crest of the dam will be approximately 4 ft. wide, located at elevation 331, and provided with sockets for flashboards. The base of the dam shall be of sufficient width to guaranteed stability with flashboards in position to maintain a pool level at elevation 335. The flashboards shall be of an easily revocable type as it is proposed to maintain them only during periods of extreme low flow. During flood periods the dam and its abutments will be completely submerged.

## **Appendix X**

Sanderson's and Porter's Blueprint Number 510-B-2:  
Property Plan, Williamsport Power Station,  
Williamsport Power Company.

[This Blueprint is not available in this edition.]

## Appendix Y

Letters regarding the Potomac Public Service Company's request in 1923 to be allowed to locate a tower and poles on the canal company's land near the basin north of the aqueduct (see accompanying blueprint in Appendix Z).

[These letters have been transcribed below.]

[The letter below is on The Potomac Public Service Company letterhead the text of which is transcribed.]

THE POTOMAC PUBLIC SERVICE COMPANY<sup>502</sup>  
OPERATING

The Hagerstown & Frederick Railway	Northern Virginia Power Company
Potomac Light and Power Company	Waynesboro Electric Company
Chambersburg, Greencastle and Waynesboro Street Railway	

Hagerstown, Md.  
April 11<sup>th</sup>, 1923

Mr. G. L. Nicolson, General Manager  
Chesapeake & Ohio Canal,  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Sir:

Please note that we are enclosing copy of blue print indicating the location of a small steel tower and two wood poles on Canal Company's property north of Conococheague Creek and east side of the Canal at Williamsport.

If this is satisfactory with your Company, will you please give us an agreement covering the right to locate these poles and tower; also the right to trim what trees it will be necessary to trim to obtain proper line clearances.

We would also like to have a drawing or print from your office if possible indicating your property lines at this point.

Thanking you in advance for your consideration in giving us this right-of-way, I remain

Yours truly,

[C. M. Harris signature]  
Vice President.

GTT/Y  
Enclosure

<sup>502</sup> For information on the Potomac Public Service Company see the Wikipedia entry on the Hagerstown and Frederick Railway: [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hagerstown\\_and\\_Frederick\\_Railway](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hagerstown_and_Frederick_Railway).

[Appendix Y Continued]

April 13, 1923

Mr. C. M. Harris, Vice President  
The Potomac Public Service company  
Hagerstown, Maryland

Dear Sir

In reply to yours of the 11<sup>th</sup>, with blue print attached, I enclose a pencil tracing of our property map showing the aqueduct and the canal and the boundary lines just above the Conococheague River. The water lin in the canal on the berm side has changed since this map was made, the old basin having been partially filled. Also give you reference to title description in case you wish to plat it.

If you will send me a revised sketch, showing the canal lines as indicated, of the location of the pole line I will submit the matter to the Trustees, but I am sure there will be no trouble about it and if you will keep your pole line well back from the canal you can go ahead and put it up.

Very truly yours,  
[Nicolson's signature]  
General Manager.

Encl.

---

[The following is on "The Potomac Public Service company" letterhead with text as shown in the first letter above.]

April 17<sup>th</sup>, 1923

Mr. G. L. Nicolson, Generaly Manager  
Chesapeake & Ohio Canal Co.,  
Washington, D.C.

My dear Mr. Nicolson:

I beg to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 13<sup>th</sup> inst., returning blue-print which was attached to my letter of April 11<sup>th</sup>, and enclosing pencil sketch showing the aqueduct, the canal, and the boundary lines just above the Conococheague River.

I shall be glad to comply with your request, and will have revised sketch, showing the information which you desire, made up and forwarded to you promptly.

Thanking you for your interest in this matter, and with kindest personal regards, I remain,

Very truly yours  
[C. M. Harris signature]  
Vice President

CHMH:S

## [Appendix Y Continued]

[The following is on "The Potomac Public Service company" letterhead with text as shown in the first letter above.]

May 19<sup>th</sup>, 1923

Mr. C. L. Nicolson, General Manager,  
Chesapeake & Ohio Canal Company,  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Sir:

Complying with your request of recent date, we are enclosing copies of two (2) blue prints which indicate the location of a steel tower and two poles on C. & O. Canal company's property at Williamsport, north side of the Conococheague Creek.

I trust this will be sufficient information to give us an agreement covering these proposed locations.

Yours very truly,  
[C. M. Harris signature]  
Vice President

GTT/Y  
Enclosures

---

May 21, 1923

Mr. C. M. Harris, Vice President,  
The Potomac Public Service company,  
Hagerstown, Md.

Dear Sir:

I have yours of the 19<sup>th</sup> with blue print showing the location of your towers and poles on the berm side of the canal at Conocheague Creek, Williamsport.

I do not think that the Trustees would care to take so small a matter to the Court for approval, so a letter of permission is all that is necessary.

Very truly your,  
[Nicolson signature]  
General Manager

## **Appendix Z**

Blueprint (1923) showing proposed location of tower and poles by the Potomac Public Service Company on canal-company land near the basin north of the aqueduct.

[This blueprint is not available in this edition.]

## **Appendix A1**

Blueprint showing railroad track layout, Williamsport Power Station, Williamsport, Md., Sanderson and Porter Engineers, April 20, 1923.

[This blueprint is not available in this edition.]

## **Appendix A2**

Blueprint showing proposed rail road track on Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Property, Williamsport Power Station, Williamsport, Md., Sanderson and Porter Engineers, May 2, 1923.

[This blueprint is not available in this edition.]

## **Appendix B1**

Blueprint accompanying letter of proposal to drain stagnant water from the canal at Williamsport, December 1, 1933.

[This blueprint is not available in this edition.]

## Appendix B2

Letters regarding proposal of Civil Works Administration to drain stagnant water from the canal at Williamsport in December of 1933  
(see accompanying blueprint in Appendix B1).

[NOTE: Images of these letters are not available in this edition but transcriptions of them follows.]

-----  
[The following was on Lane, Ballentine, & Mish letterhead.]

TO: Mr. G. L. Nicolson, General Manager                      December 18, 1933  
C. & O. Canal Company  
Georgetown, D. C.

Dear Mr. Nicolson:

Dr. W. Ross Cameron, who is in charge of public health work in Washington County, Maryland, consulted us today as attorneys for the C. & O. Canal Company, with reference to the condition of the C. & O. Canal at Williamsport, in Washington Country, Maryland.

Under the Civil Works Administration, a number of men are being assigned to the Department of Health in order to clean up what are termed bad conditions from the point of view of health.

Dr. Cameron seeks permission from the Canal Company to put a force of men to work on the Canal between the aqueduct above Williamsport and the lock below Williamsport, to clean up weeds, brush and debris.

When the matter was submitted to the local Civil Works Administration, they thought that Dr. Cameron should make demand upon the Canal Company to clean up at the expense of the Company.

We have advised Dr. Cameron that the company would be forced to contest any such action on the part of the public health authorities, as it might lead to similar demands along the entire canal.

Dr. Cameron has now recommended to the Civil Works Administration that if the Canal Company will give permission the work will be done under the jurisdiction of the Civil Works Administration, without any expense whatsoever to the Canal Company.

He mentions also a place at Hancock, Maryland, which should be cleaned up and which he will recommend being done, if permission is granted by the Canal Company.

[Appendix B2 continued]

TO: G. L. Nicolson, General Manager      12/18/33

Dr. Cameron informs us that work of this kind, if connected with health, can be done upon private property with the consent of the owner.

We enclose herewith a blue print showing the part of the canal which it is proposed to clean up in order to protect the health of the people of Williamsport.

It is desired to begin work by Thursday of next week, if the approval of the Canal Company is given.

It seems to us that consent should be given, as there would be no expense to the Canal Company and the question as to whether the Company can be compelled to keep the canal clean and free from stagnant water will not be brought up.

Will you kindly advise us promptly concerning the matter in order that we in turn may advise Dr. Cameron and the local Civil Works Administration.

Yours very truly, Lane Ballentine & Mish  
JDM:AH

[The following was on Lane, Ballentine, & Mish letterhead.]

TO: Messrs. Lane, Ballentine & Mish,      December 20, 1933.  
Hagerstown, Maryland

Gentleman,

I have yours of December 18<sup>th</sup> enclosing blue print showing the contemplated work by the Civil Works Administration in draining the canal bed through Williamsport. I note from your letter that they contemplate the same thing at Hancock if the Canal Company will grant them permission to do the work. It has always been the desire of the Trustees to co-operate the fullest extent possible with local health authorities along the canal and I unhesitatingly say that their request is hereby granted. There is one thing I would like to say, and that is that the excavation from this ditch should be put outside of the canal section, otherwise it will be necessary for the Trustees to go to the expense of moving this dirt if piled in the bottom of the canal at this time. If it was uniformly distributed on the tow-path slope, near the top of the bank, it would be satisfactory.

Very truly yours, [Nicolson's signature]  
General Manager

[Appendix B2 continued]

TO: Mr. G. L. Nicolson, Gen'l Mgr,                      December 22, 1933  
Chesapeake & Ohio Canal Company

Dear Mr. Nicolson:

We have your letter of December 20<sup>th</sup> in answer to our letter of December 18<sup>th</sup>, concerning the work contemplated by the Civil Works Administration in cleaning and draining the canal bed at Williamsport and at Hancock in Washington County, Maryland.

We have advised Dr. W. Ross Cameron, who is in charge of the public health work in this County, that permission has been granted by the Company to do this work and we have advised him that any dirt gathered from the bottom of the canal should be uniformly distributed on the tow-path slope near the top of the bank.

Dr. Cameron has agreed that this will be done and has advised us that work at both points would be started on Wednesday of next week.

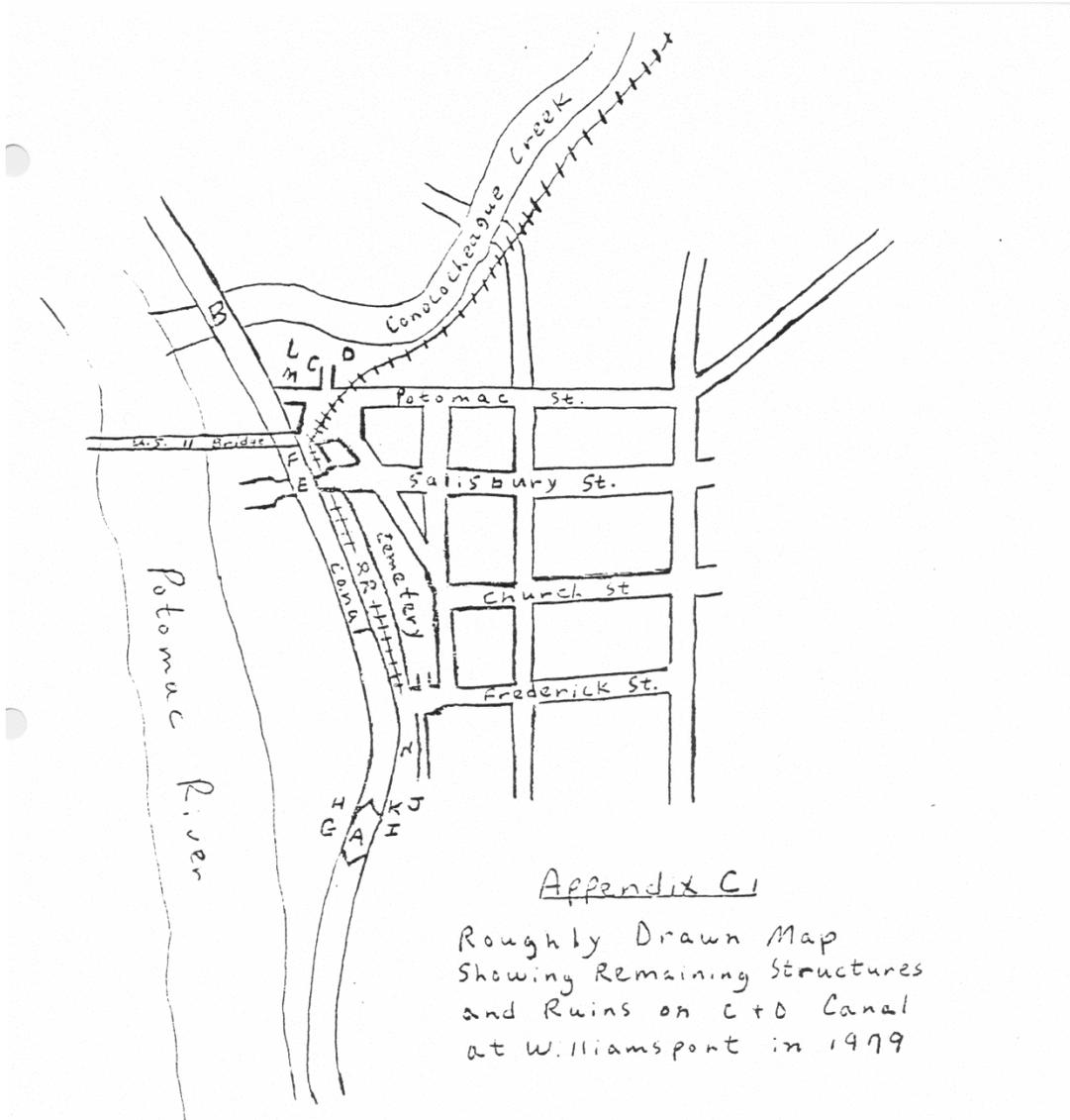
Dr. Cameron fully realizes that if dirt and debris were piled in the bottom of the canal it would make a worse condition than now exists, and we have no doubt that they will endeavor to handle this matter satisfactorily.

Yours very truly,  
Lane Ballentine & Mish

JDM:AH

### Appendix C1

Roughly drawn map showing remaining structures and ruins along C & O Canal at Williamsport in 1979.

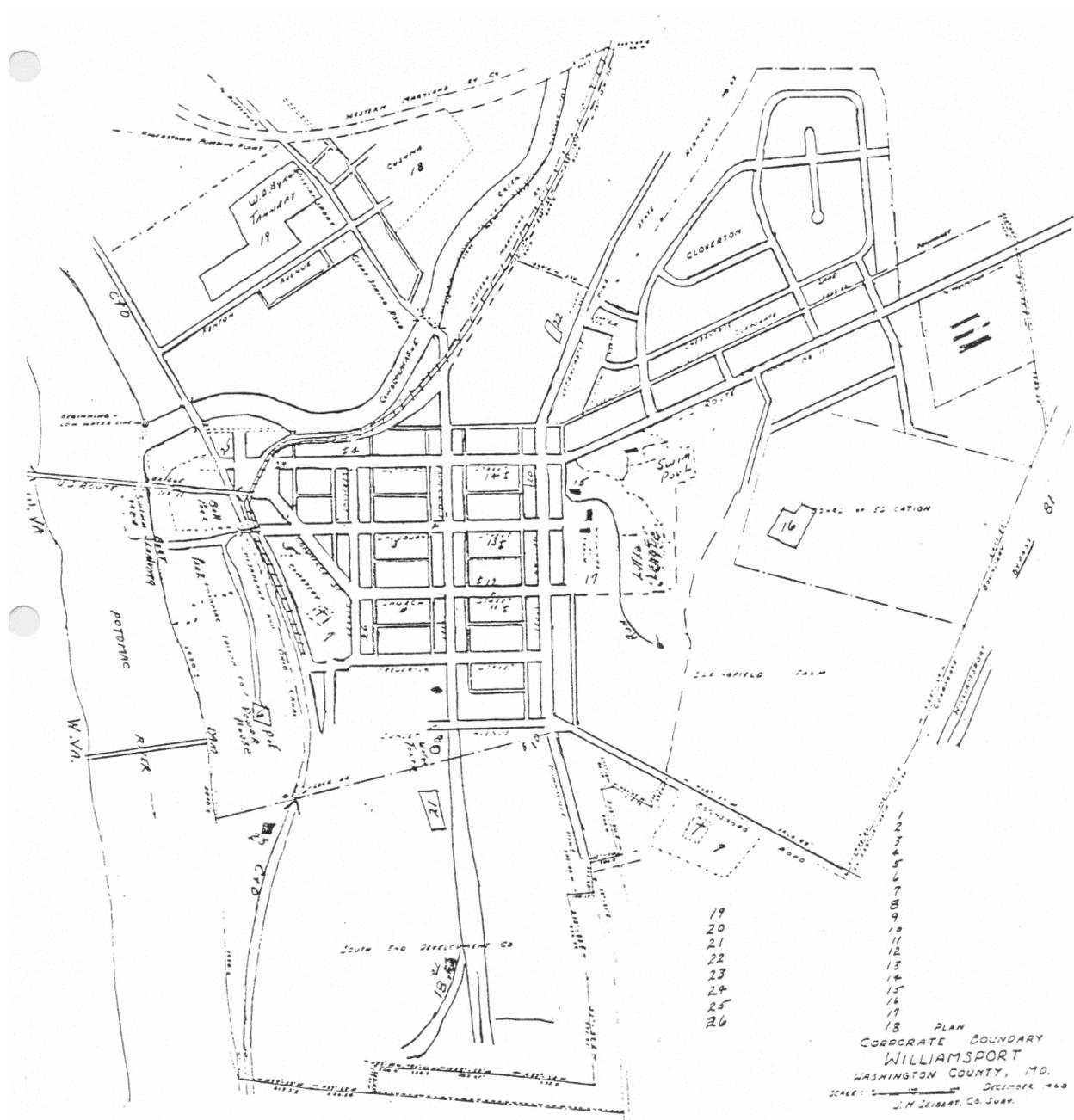


- A = Lock 44.
- B = Conococheague Aqueduct.
- C = Cushwa Warehouse.
- D = Original Williamsport PowerHouse.
- E = Bollman Bridge.
- F = Railroad Lift Bridge.
- G = Lockhouse 44.

- H = Shed near Lockhouse 44.
- I = Ruins of Carpenter Shop and Store.
- J = Creosote Stand.
- K = Stubbing Post.
- L = Foundation of Cottrell Slaughterhouse.
- M = Remains of Basin Wall.
- N = Wall near where Stearns and Findlay once stood.

### Appendix C2

Map showing corporate boundaries of Williamsport, December 1960.



## **Appendix D1**

Map dated Sept. 1926 [?] shows Stake's Addition to Williamsport.

[This map is not available in this edition.]

## **Appendix D2**

Map showing Williamsport Election District (Dist. No. 2) in 1877,  
taken from *An illustrated Atlas of Washington County, Maryland* (1877)

[This map is not available in this edition.]

**Appendix E1**

Plat of Humrichouse First Addition to Williamsport drawn in July, 1907.

[This plat is not available in this edition.]

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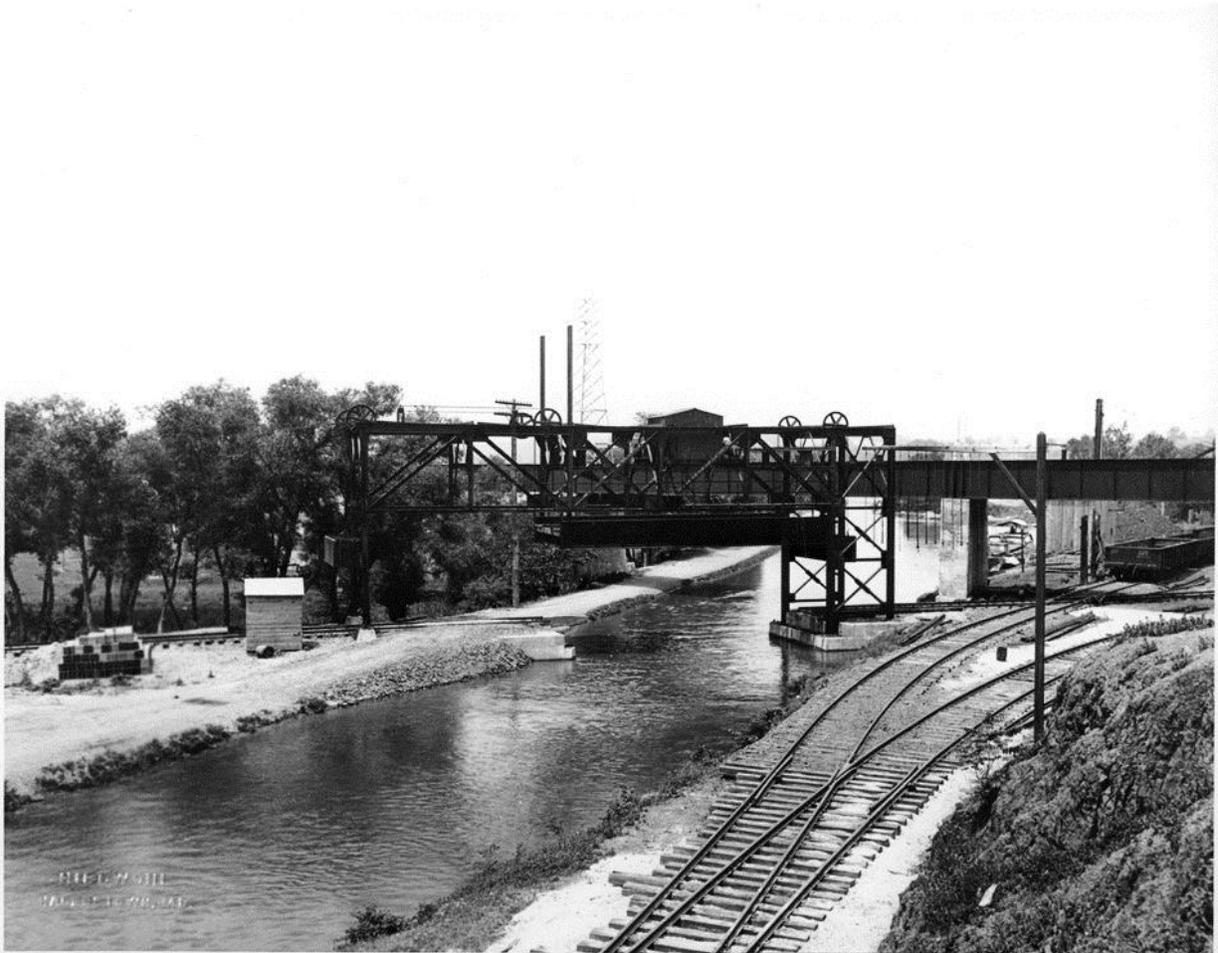
## Illustrations

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**Plat 1**

Railroad Lift Bridge shown here immediately after its completion.

Photo found in Harris to Nicolson, June 11, 1923, Ltrs. Recd., Correspondence of the Office of Trustees, in Record Group 79, National Archives.



**Plat 2**

Williamsport in 1935 before the 1936 flood.

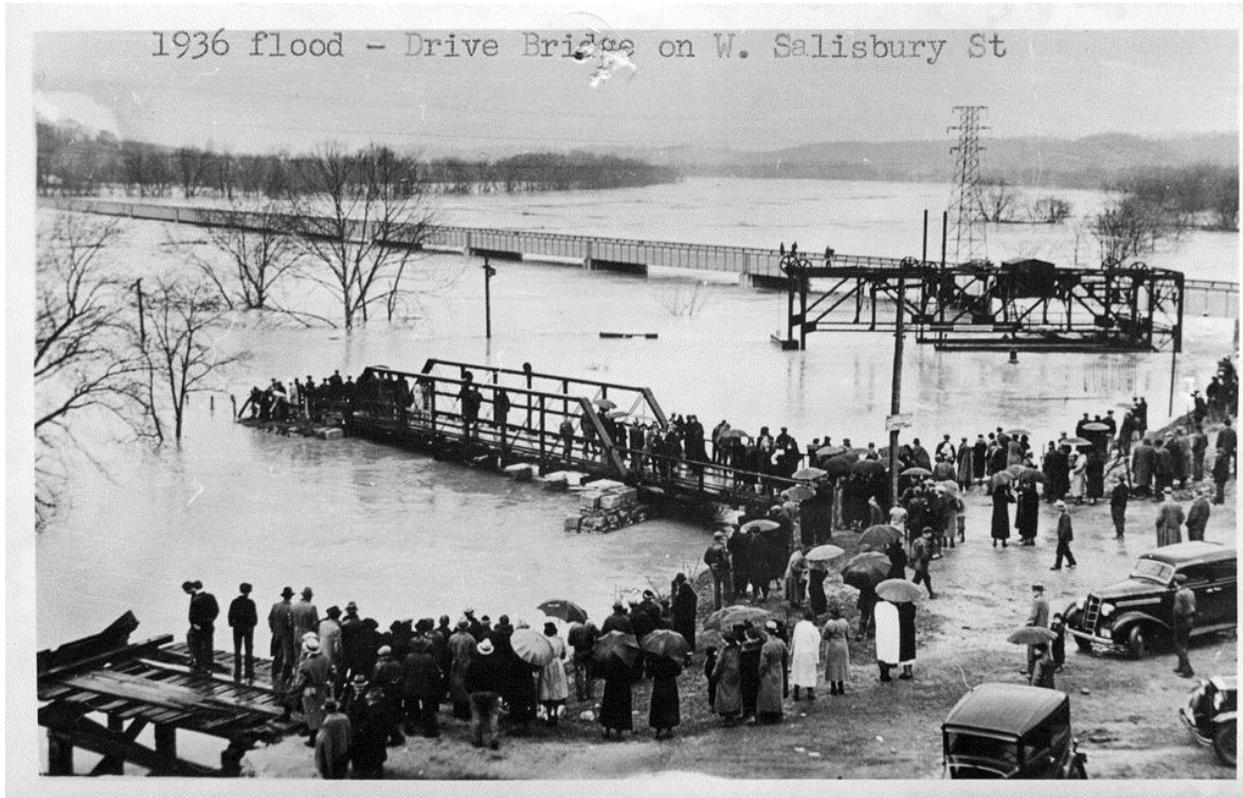
Library of Congress Collections.

[This plat is not available in this edition.]

**Plat 3**

Williamsport during the 1936 flood.

Library of Congress Collections.



**Plat 4**

Hagerstown Pumping Station above Williamsport during the 1936 flood.

Library of Congress Collections.



**Plat 5**

Williamsport during the 1936 flood.

Library of Congress Collections.



**Plat 6**

Williamsport during the 1936 flood.

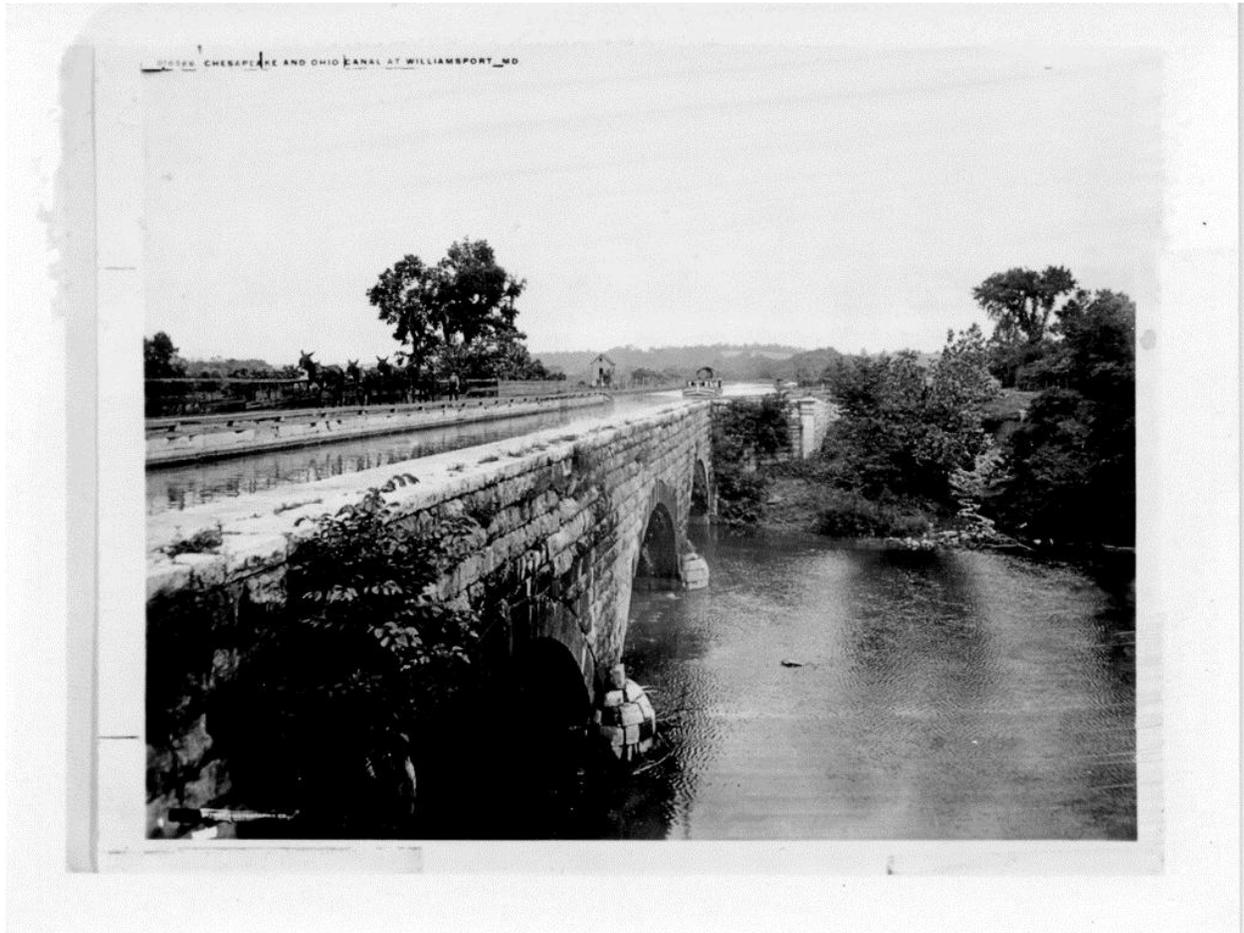
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**Plat 7**

Conococheague Aqueduct at Williamsport. Date unknown.<sup>503</sup>

Library of Congress Collections.



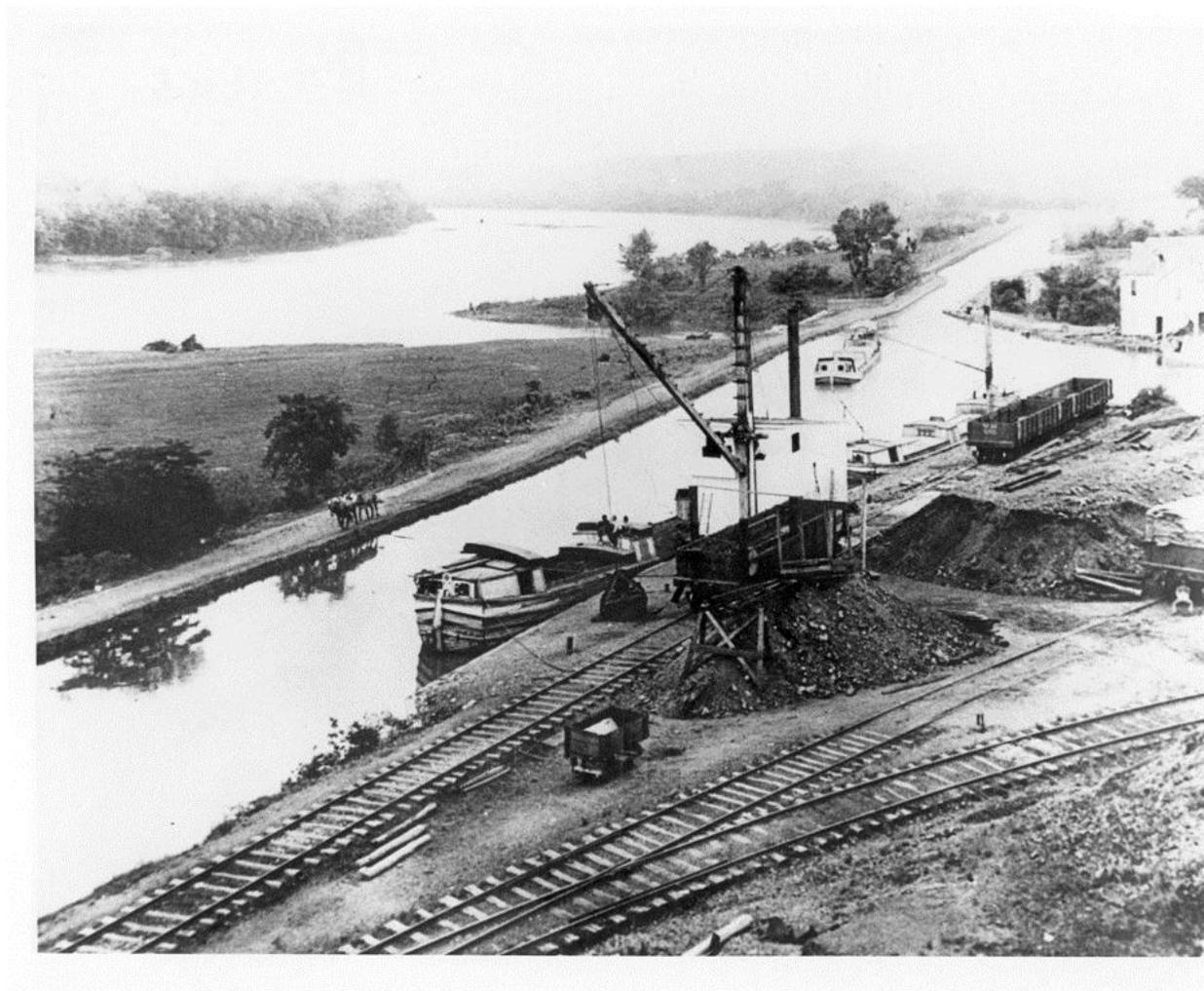
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<sup>503</sup> This image predates the collapse of the parapet wall on April 20, 1920. It was replaced with a wooden parapet. — Karen Gray, 9/29/2011.

**Plat 8**

The canal at Williamsport showing part of main turning basin. Date unknown.

Library of Congress Collections.



**Plat 9**

The canal at Williamsport showing area between the Bollman Bridge and Lock 44. Date unknown.

Library of Congress Collections.

