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UPPER OHIO VALLEY

HISTORICAL REVIEW



Inside:

- Doughboy Reborn
- Wheeling Writers
- Walter Reuther
- Old Pike Origins
- History Teaches Empathy

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UPPER OHIO VALLEY HISTORICAL REVIEW



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UPPER OHIO VALLEY HISTORICAL REVIEW

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Founded by the Wheeling Area Historical Society in 1968, the **UPPER OHIO VALLEY HISTORICAL REVIEW** is the only publication of its kind in the northern panhandle of West Virginia. Dedicated solely to local history topics, it has become a treasured publication and valuable tool for studying and learning about our geographic area. Wheeling National Heritage Area Corporation (WNHAC, later Wheeling Heritage) continued the tradition, editing and publishing the **REVIEW** from 2010-2018. Ownership of the **UOVHR** publication was transferred in the second half of 2018 to the Ohio County Public Library in Wheeling.

UOVHR content has historically included articles, transcribed documents, book reviews, and accounts of the economic, political, social, and cultural history of the greater Wheeling area contributed by historians, researchers, and scholars.

OCPL is honored to publish the **UOVHR** and continue this great tradition for years to come.

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On the Cover



Welcome Home:

Wheeling’s Doughboy is Back and Better Than Ever

by Seán P. Duffy

In 1918, American soldiers —“Doughboys,” as they were known— filled training facilities like Virginia’s Camp Lee in preparation for entering the European conflict that would one day be termed “World War I.”

But our Doughboys were already at war with a microscopic enemy – a deadly H1N1 virus misnamed “Spanish Flu.” By the end of that fateful year, influenza would claim some 45,000 American soldiers (many before they completed basic training), nearly as many as the 53,000 killed in the trenches of France.

In a gut punch of cosmic déjà vu and pathogenic coincidence, the effort to restore Wheeling’s “The Spirit of the American Doughboy” monument was severely hampered by just the second global pandemic in the century since the First World War.

Our Doughboy, affectionately nicknamed “Lester” after real Wheeling Doughboy Lester Scott, a mule team driver killed in action by German artillery [see Archiving Wheeling’s podcast, “From Camp Lee to the Great War” soundcloud.com/archiving-wheeling/from-camp-lee-to-the-great-war-full-version], was shipped to Detroit in November 2019 to be restored by veteran conservator Giorgio Gikas and his crew at Venus Bronze Works. The plan was to work on Lester over winter and

have him back at Wheeling Park in time for a Memorial Day 2020 re-dedication, 89 years after the original dedication of Memorial Day, 1931. But then, of course, another sinister virus called COVID-19 started causing delay after frustrating delay.

Venus Bronze Works had also been in the process of creating a monument to one of Detroit's most famous movie stars, an 11-foot tall bronze statue of the cyborg, RoboCop. But just as that project neared completion, COVID-19 struck, followed in late May and June by the George Floyd protests. As statues were pulled down across the nation, the idea of dedicating a Robocop monument amid the chaos seemed inappropriate. So RoboCop and the Wheeling Doughboy rode the storm out together in the Venus Bronze Works studio.

For Lester, spring plans turned to summer plans, which turned to Veteran's Day plans, which turned to late November plans. Finally, on Friday, December 4th, 2020, the Wheeling Doughboy was escorted by van back to his home at Wheeling Park by metal fabricator and Venus Bronze Works associate Jay Jurma.

Jurma, who did a lot of work on Doughboy's new Springfield rifle (the original having disappeared decades ago), noted that part of Robocop came back to Wheeling. "The firing pin rod was cast in leftover Robocop bronze and then lathe turned and knurled," Jurma said. The idea of Lester the Doughboy and RoboCop being metal-blood-brothers is pretty cool trivia to learn, but the source of another rifle part was particularly appropriate.

"I assembled part of the receiver from heavy copper pipe that I had been dragging around along with other fittings since my grandfather died and left them to me in the early 80s," Jurma shared. "He was a master plumber and a great mechanic and taught me to repair and build many things. He was coincidentally also in the U.S. Army during the First World War, which I remembered while using his materials on the Doughboy."

Lester's valiant restored look and patina were the result of several processes. First, old cracks and attempted repairs from the past were soldered and ground. Dents were removed and the missing barbed wire was replaced. Though the original rifle featured a fixed bayonet, for safety reasons, only the handle of the bayonet was fabricated and in-

stalled on top of the sheath on the backpack. The statue was blasted with glass beads to remove old paint, then detergent to remove corrosion and years of dirt, then an array of chemicals to achieve a patina with respect for his natural, weathered patina accumulated over the years. Next, a corrosion inhibitor was followed by three different coats of wax protective coatings.

Meanwhile back in Wheeling, the monument's old, broken concrete pad was removed while a new water drainage system, a new stone wall, and new walkway were built in front of the monument by Savage Construction. Plants were added by Top-Notch Landscaping, and the granite pedestal was cleaned by Gallagher Monuments. Finally, lights were added in front of the monument.

Now, thanks to the generosity of numerous individuals and foundations, Lester the Wheeling Doughboy is back on his pedestal and looking sharp, ready to vigilantly guard the park grounds for another century.

A formal re-dedication ceremony led by Wheeling's American Legion, Post 1, was held on Memorial Day, May 31, 2021, 90 years after the original dedication at Wheeling Park.

The Wheeling Doughboy Restoration Committee is: Margaret Brennan, Sean Duffy (Chair), John Hargleroad, Kevin Duffin, Bob Joseph (Post 1, American Legion), Nat Goudy, Erin Rothenbuehler, and Wheeling 4th Ward Councilman Ty Thorngate.

For more on the Wheeling Doughboy see www.ArchivingWheeling.org.

Cover: The Wheeling Doughboy as he looked on the sunny morning of May 31, 2021. The wreath, created by Wheeling's Barbara Pirhalla, included red poppies.



Lester and RoboCop ride out the storm together at the Venus Bronze Works studio in Detroit.

UPPER OHIO VALLEY HISTORICAL REVIEW

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Readers:

Two years is a long time. Too long.

That's how much time has passed since our last issue, Volume 41, Number 2, the "Special Pandemic Issue" published Spring 2020 at the beginning of our long, COVID-19 nightmare. What can we say? We're very sorry for the delay.

But the road to Volume 42 has been a rocky one, beset with staff medical issues, major staff changes, and a continuing global pandemic. Nevertheless, we are back, and we think you will be quite satisfied with this new, comeback issue of the Upper Ohio Valley Historical Review. It's packed with informative, well-researched articles by fine writers and scholars, including George Fetherling, Jeffrey Mason, Billy Joe Peyton, and Dan Bonenberger.

Many of these articles were written for special events that have come and gone, such as the 200th anniversary of the construction of the National Road, the 50th anniversary of Walter Reuther's death, and the rededication of the "Spirit of the American Doughboy" monument at Wheeling Park after a grueling and long-delayed restoration. But the history they record and interpret remains relevant and engaging.

We hope you enjoy Volume 42, Number 1 of the Upper Ohio Valley Historical Review as much as we enjoy getting back on track to keep this proud and important tradition going.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Seán Duffy". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Seán Duffy, Editor

Wheeling and Its Writers

by George Fetherling



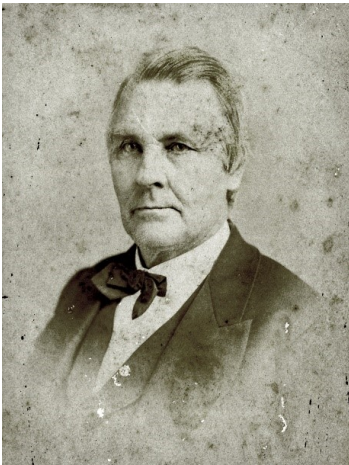
L to R: George Fetherling, Sean O’Leary, Marc Harshman, and Keith Maillard at the first Wheeling Arts Fest, Ohio County Public Library, 2011.

It’s a simple truth that Wheeling in recent years has produced three important and imaginative authors whose work is both local and international: Sean O’Leary, Marc Harshman, and Keith Maillard. But in earlier times, the city and its near neighbors were not without writers who were either famous or at least infamous. Among these were one of the most outrageous figures ever to live in Wheeling. William H. Chaney was a mountebank and fraudster from the state of Maine, who made his living as an astrologer, fake mystic, and all-round crackpot. A New England minister characterized him as “one of the Devil’s unaccountables.”

Chaney met a man in Maine, who for some strange reason called himself “Dr. Wheeling.” The good doctor was a practitioner of phrenolo-

gy, the pseudo-science (very pseudo) so popular in the mid 19th century. It consisted of inspecting bumps on people's skulls to deduce the nature of their personalities, talents, and weaknesses. Chaney wrote many ludicrous pamphlets and at least one whole book and at length became editor of one of Maine's newspapers. He used his editorial position there to stir up seething hatred of Roman Catholics. The campaign was so intense that a local Jesuit priest was attacked by a Chaneyite mob, stripped naked in the streets, and tarred and feathered.

In the 1840s, Chaney decided to remove to New Orleans, taking passage on a flatboat in Pittsburgh. But he came down with malaria, and the boatman put him ashore in Wheeling. Chaney stayed here for a while, working as an editor at one of Wheeling's many odd and now-forgotten newspapers. Astonishingly, he also became a Wheeling lawyer. Mind you, in the 1840s youngish lawyers were mostly self-taught through reading such books as Sir William Blackstone's *Commentaries on the Laws of England*. Chaney left Wheeling in the early 1850s and returned to Maine, where he edited a newspaper in the town of Ellsworth. From there he fled from place to place, crossing the country. In all, he had six common-law wives in six different cities, most of whom were troubled and ill-treated. Each of them seemed to bear a child with him. Chaney ended up in San Francisco. One of his children, born there in 1875, was first called John Chaney but later changed his name to Jack London—who became one of the world's most famous novelists and storytellers.

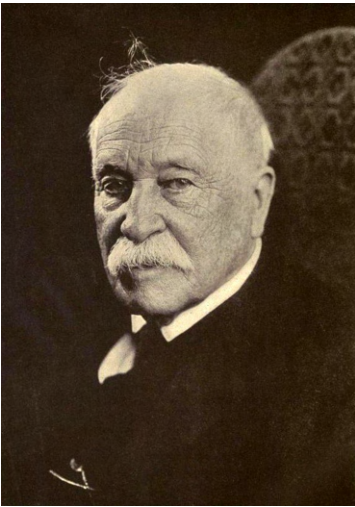


William Cooper Howells. Public domain image. Circa 1890s.

Then there was William Cooper Howells, a Welshman by birth who moved to Wheeling where he worked as a printer after learning the trade in Alexander Campbell's printing shop in Bethany. He then began an editorial career on *The Virginia Statesman*, a Wheeling paper, and later, in the 1820s, founded two publications of his own, *The Gleaner* and *The Eclectic Observer*. Neither was successful.

In 1831, Howells printed an eccentric crypto-socialist book entitled *The Rise*,

Progress and Downfall of Aristocracy for its author, a local crank named William Mathers, who promised to pay for the books on delivery, but didn't. As a result, poor Howells went bankrupt and moved to Ohio to work in the abolitionist movement (while Mathers, for his part, tried unsuccessfully to create a utopian colony in Illinois—and then disappeared). In later years, when James A. Garfield was President, Howells was made a US consul in Canada, first in Quebec City and later in Toronto. He was so popular there that, in a unique event, the Canadians successfully petitioned Washington to give him a second term. He and his daughter ran a salon for Canadian writers and artists, both English-speaking and French-speaking ones. He retired from the State department in 1883 and died in 1894. His posthumous memoir, a little gold mine of Upper Ohio Valley lore, was called *Recollections of Life in Ohio*, surely one of the most boring book titles in the history of publishing.



W. D. Howells, *North American Review*, July 1920.

Most fervent readers of late 19th-century American literature recognize the name William Dean Howells, the Martins Ferry native who was William Cooper's son and also one of the country's most popular novelists and critics. He had a long life: 1837 to 1920. He was the editor of the *Atlantic Monthly* and the dear friend and advisor of Mark Twain. The son said his father was "not a very good printer, not a very good editor, but he was the very best man I have ever known."

Wheeling's Rebecca Harding Davis was born in 1831 and died in 1910. In other words, she was of the same generation as William Dean Howells, though Howells had not yet become the editor of the *Atlantic Monthly* when her most important piece of writing was published there in 1861. It was *Life in the Iron Mills*, a brave piece of early realist fiction about the wretched lives of Wheeling's iron workers and their wives. She lived near the Centre Market and wrote widely for *The Intelligencer* (my alma mater) and produced

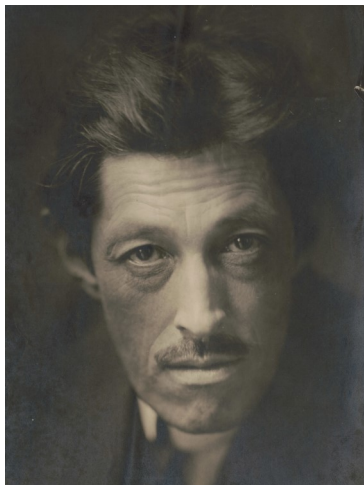


Rebecca Harding Davis.
Wheeling Hall of Fame image.

many other works, though none matched *Life in the Iron Mills*. For decades it languished but was resurrected from comparative obscurity in the 1970s, when it was hailed, quite correctly, as an important feminist classic. The late writer Tillie Orsen, an important figure in the movement, brought the work back into print but made an embarrassing error in her introduction: she stated that that the National Road runs north and south. (Davis's son, by the way, was William Randolph Hearst's favorite dashing war correspondent, Richard Harding Davis, a staunch rival of Jack London.)

A highly controversial female writer of an earlier generation was Mrs. Frances Milton Trollope, an English gentlewoman (born 1779, died 1863). She wrote a long shelf of books and, what's more, was the mother of the famous novelist Anthony Trollope. Despite all that, she found herself in financial straits in London. As a result, she came to America and opened a shop in Cincinnati called Mrs. Trollope's Bazaar. She believed that she could instill English etiquette and taste in the crude ruffians of the Ohio frontier. A disaster, of course. On her way home, she spent time in Wheeling where she recorded her hatred of America's democracy, its slavery, its table manners, and its bleakness. She wrote: "I do not remember in England to have seen any spot, however near a coal mine, so dyed in black as Wheeling...."

Of course, many other writers have simply stopped by Wheeling for very short visits. For example, Mark Twain gave a highly successful performance in the 1870s at the Opera House at Twelfth and Market, where the Laconia Building now stands. Walt Whitman was fired from his newspaper job on the *Brooklyn Eagle* because he was considered too sympathetic to the South. So he set out to get a job on the New Orleans *Crescent*. Enroute he arrived in Wheeling on the steamboat *St. Cloud* but stayed only one dark night and never saw Wheeling in the daytime. (Footnote: He was let go by the *Crescent* for being too sympathetic to the North! You can't win.)



Sadakichi Hartmann in 1913.
Library of Congress.

You may not be familiar with the bizarre figure of Sadakichi Hartmann, whose name correctly suggests that he had a Japanese mother and a German father. This caused him difficulties in his old age during the Second World War, when the US government couldn't decide in which camp he should be interned. He remained free by somehow convincing the authorities that he was actually a Native American "Indian." He was a bohemian poet, artist and playwright who had once campaigned to raise funds to assist the elderly Walt Whitman but spent the money on himself instead. He once

played Fu Manchu in a silent movie. Later he became a member of John Barrymore's Hollywood coterie. He was well known in Montparnasse and Greenwich Village, and wrote a two-volume history of American art that was a standard reference for generations. He arrived in Wheeling, apparently in the Depression years, to give performances and gouge the locals. Our playwright Tom Stobart owned a watercolor that Hartmann probably traded to a Wheeling resident in exchange for a meal or a bed for the night.

One of my grade school teachers in the 1950s told us how Carl Sandburg passed through Wheeling in the 1920s, reading his poetry and singing the folksongs he had collected during his travels. She was aghast to see that he wore a length of rope as a belt to hold up his trousers. Thirty years after Sandburg stopped by she was still shocked—shocked!—at what she had seen.

In the short period either side of the First World War, the most successful author in Wheeling was the patrician lawyer Melville Davisson Post, a native of the Clarksburg area who chose to practice law in Wheeling. He lived in the Fort Henry Club, which directly faced his law office from the west side of Chapline Street. In later years the latter building housed a bail bond business. Post was an aristocrat who rode to hounds and all that sort of thing. His mystery novels and stories

dealt with either a rural Appalachian sleuth called Uncle Abner or else an urban lawyer named Randolph Mason. The Abner books have not aged well, but the Mason tales have held up better, each one turning cleverly on some obscure point of law not known to laypeople. This format became quite popular. One story in particular involves an ingenious con job at a fancy Wheeling jewelry store. Post had a large public following and was once said to be the highest paid writer in the *Saturday Evening Post's* stable of regulars. Given the fact that his fiction deals with lawyers who solve crimes, he can fairly be thought of as one of John Grisham's predecessors. He died in 1930 when he was sixty-one. That was the same age at which the Wheeling area's next well-known novelist, Davis Grubb, died in 1980.



Davis Grubb. E-WV.

Grubb was born in Moundsville where his family had lived for decades and did quite well for themselves. For example, they owned a bank. A fascinating document entitled *The Wheeling Blue Book* lists the prominent wealthy families in or near Wheeling, giving their affiliations, allegiances, university ties, businesses, club memberships, and eligible offspring charged with maintaining the bloodline. From this book we learn that the Grubbs were members of the Fort Henry Club. The *Blue Book* was published in only one year, 1929, for there would be no sequels once the stock market crashed that October.

The family lost their home. Echoes of hardship are a standard component of Davis Grubb's novels, especially the ones in which he gave Moundsville the fictional name Glory (in the same way that Keith Maillard, in his own novels, creates a town called Raysburg out of the actual Wheeling). In short, Davis Grubb was a hard-working novelist (and visual artist) but at times had to turn to jobs in radio or advertising. Two of his books, *Night of the Hunter* and *Fools' Parade*, were made into Hollywood films. His book *Voices of Glory* isn't most people's favorite, but it certainly is mine.

In Wheeling as in so many other American cities, some serious writing sprang from journalism now and then. One worthwhile example is J. Sumner Stone's *Essays and Letters*, published in 1939 with an introduction by H.C. Ogden. Stone was both a physician and a clergyman. His book begins: "Like the Apostle Paul, when speaking of Tarsus, his birthplace, I am given to boasting when writing about Wheeling." His name is now forgotten, in contrast to two Wheeling figures, husband and wife, who were top writers at *The New Yorker* magazine where they set records and undertook a great deal of the extraordinary reporting with which the weekly is associated. Philip Hamburger was born in Wheeling in 1914, ten years before the magazine began publishing. He worked for it for almost six decades, pausing only during the Second World War to do government work in Washington between serving as a war correspondent in the European theater. Put another way, *The New Yorker* began publishing in 1924 and in all that time has had only five editors, so far. Hamburger worked under all of them. His journalism, and his books as well, ranged widely, from music and film criticism to civic and national politics. He covered 14 presidential inaugurations, beginning with Franklin Roosevelt's first one. He wrote beautifully. He died in 2004, age eighty-nine.

In 1942 Hamburger married a fellow *New Yorker* writer and author named Edith Iglauer, who also had connections to Wheeling. She grew up in Cleveland where her family operated the city's principal department store, but she spent every summer in Wheeling, as a guest in a house connected to the L.S. Good family (but not in the Good Mansion that is now a wine shop). The two families thus had business and familial ties. By the time I spoke with her about 15 years ago, she could no longer remember the house clearly but said it was on or near Thirteenth Street.

She and Hamburger divorced in 1966 and in 1973 she went to Vancouver, British Columbia, on a writing assignment. In time she moved farther up the Pacific Coast and married the owner of a commercial fishing boat. She wrote a book about their lives together that became an international bestseller and a TV movie. Her other husband was a trucker in the lumber business in the far north. Iglauer wrote copiously on Canada for American readers while also teaching the Canadians about America. Her biggest reporting job was already underway in 1972, when she

completed a long and massively detailed and keenly explained series about the construction of the World Trade Center in New York. She later returned to the subject after a terrorist planted a bomb there in 1993. This was followed of course by the loss of the Twin Towers on September 11, 2001. She was the expert whom the other journalists immediately ran to, for she knew every aspect of the buildings, including the tiniest engineering details. Iglauer died February 12, 2019. She was 101.



James McHenry Jones. Ca. 1903.
W.V. State University.

An important local author and educator, James McHenry Jones (1858-1909), was, to put it mildly, a leading figure in the city's (and indeed the whole state's) African American community. For sixteen years he was the principal of what originally, right after the Civil War, had been called "the Lincoln Common School of Wheeling," which he oversaw between 1882 and 1898. He was also an instrumental figure in the West Virginia Colored Institute near Charleston.

In the 19th century many fraternal groups were formed around particular religious denominations, professions, ethnicities or political interests. Jones was responsible for the growth of Black organizations and projected his mission to increase their acceptance in the white population. He was an active Republican of the Abraham Lincoln kind. He was a leader in the Order of Odd Fellows, which, like another such group, the Knights of Pythias, had an African-American branch in Wheeling. Jones was a fixture in Wheeling's Black Odd Fellows and represented that body at an international conference in Great Britain.

In 1896 he published his only novel, *Hearts of Gold*. It was not an angry book despite passages about lynchings and convict labor. It was a high-minded and healing piece of writing, depicting life in the local Black community about which very few white citizens were intimately

familiar. In 2010, the West Virginia University Press decided to republish it but discovered that apparently only eight copies still survived [*Ed. Note*: one of which is housed in the Ohio County Public Library Archives]. So WVU plowed on and rescued it by bringing it out again. It is now available online as well.

I end with a story about Pearl S. Buck (1894-1973), author of *The Good Earth* and many other works of fiction, most of them about China. Even though she was born in Hillsboro, in Pocahontas County in extreme southern West Virginia, she grew up in a remote part of China where she helped her parents run an unsuccessful Presbyterian mission. She was fluent in Chinese and lived within Chinese culture. She wrote that for years she never saw water come out of a faucet—until she eventually visited the big city, Shanghai. For a long period in the 1920s and 1930s, rural China was overrun by local warlord armies, fighting one another and foraging. As a child, Buck once had to dig a hole in the vegetable garden to bury what few valuables her family had. Years later she remembered a story her mother had told her, about how—long ago, back in the US—she too had to bury the silverware —on hearing the news that the Confederates were coming.

This has nothing to do with Wheeling per se, but it reminds us that Pearl S. Buck was, let us say, the first West Virginian (and in those times, one of the very few women) to win the Nobel Prize in Literature.

George Fetherling is a well known and wide-ranging novelist, poet, cultural commentator, and visual artist who was born and reared in Wheeling but has lived and worked (and been published in) many other countries.

Walter P. Reuther Remembered 50 Years After His Death



by Jeffrey W. Mason (originally written in 2020)

In a quote that looks like it could have been lifted from the speech of any number of Democratic candidates running to unseat President Donald J. Trump in 2020, Walter P. Reuther in 1967 argued that, “Profit sharing in the form of stock distributions to workers would help to democratize the ownership of America’s vast corporate wealth which is today appallingly undemocratic and unhealthy.”¹

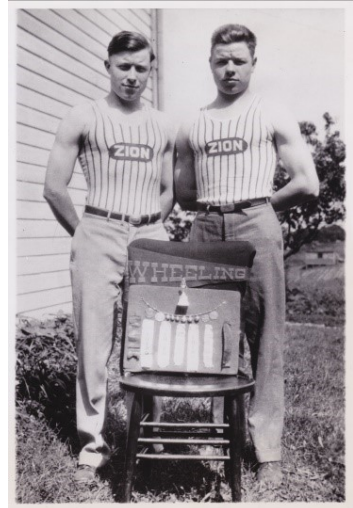
One of the most notable labor leaders, human rights advocates (and participant in Civil Rights-era protests including the March on Selma in 1965), peace activists (and opponent of the Vietnam War ²), and anti-nuclear spokesmen of the 20th century was silenced when Walter Philip Reuther, the charismatic and forceful president of the United Auto Workers, along with his wife and a number of friends and colleagues, perished in a tragic plane crash near Pellston, Michigan, 260 miles northwest of Detroit around 9:30 p.m. on May 9, 1970 as the party was enroute to the union’s recreation and educational center at Black Lake, just 25 miles from where the accident happened.³

Reuther, the red-haired son of German socialist Val Reuther and his wife Anna (Stocker) was born, the second of five children, on September 1, 1907 in Wheeling, West Virginia, an Ohio River town and early nineteenth century challenger to mighty Pittsburgh as a future dominant regional industrial center in this part of the country.⁴ In the decades that Reuther was growing up, workers at Wheeling Corrugating

Company provided assistance to Pittsburgh steelmakers that built the lock doors for the Panama Canal.⁵ Wheeling's name led its later city promoters to construct signage that proclaimed, "Welcome to the Friendly City" to offset the Lenape native people's gruesome definition of 'Weelunk' as "place of the skull" jammed onto a pole near where Wheeling Creek intersected the river.⁶

But Reuther's important legacy as an auto worker and strong union leader is symbolic of the historic cultural image of millions of American automobiles *wheeling* freely down the highways and byways of a land where even the common man or woman can pick up roots and re-settle anywhere that road will take them – a byproduct of our many American freedoms, both political and of course economic, that Reuther and countless others helped strengthen and expand, some of which even now are at grave risk.

As a young sophomore at age 16, the athletic center on his church's basketball team left Wheeling High School on Chapline Street and by the age of 20 moved forever away from his birth town and the adoring sentiments of several admiring young females, such as this writer's mother, Mary Hartlieb, who once revealed to me that she had a crush on Walter Reuther.⁷ So he left Wheeling and his family's home on Bethlehem Hill, bound for a higher paying job in Detroit with Ford, but only after learning the craft of becoming an expert tool and die maker in the auto industry. Those that knew him then noted that his work habits were top notch, so much so he was referred to as a perfectionist.⁸



Walter Reuther and brother Roy during Wheeling High School days. 1920s. WALs Archive.

In 1932, however, the Great Depression took its toll. Ford laid him off, but Reuther always maintained he was fired for his overly transparent socialist organizing activities.⁹ But Reuther read in the newspaper how Henry Ford made a killing by selling for \$40 million (which equals over a billion of today's dollars), outdated Model A automobile assem-



(NY17-NOV.1)RUSSIAN PAPER USED THIS PHOTO IN ATTACK ON WALTER REUTHER-This phot

Walter (center) and Victor (far right) in the Soviet Union. WALS Reuther Archive.

bly kits as well as blueprints and machinery to the Soviet Union.¹⁰ Thousands of Americans had already travelled there to work in building up Soviet industry and after reading glowing reports of life there (stories spread of a Stalingrad tractor factory where a 23 year old American earned \$250 a month compared to \$140 at Ford's in Detroit, along with rent-free housing, a maid, 30 days of paid vacation a year and free passage to the U.S.S.R.).¹¹ So, Reuther and his brother Victor travelled there and went to work in the auto plant at Gorky where they toiled from 1933 to 1935.¹² Meanwhile President Roosevelt's administration formally recognized the Soviet Union diplomatically after nearly two decades of U.S. rejection of the Bolshevik Revolution.

When they left to return to America, Walter wrote, "...the atmosphere of freedom and security, shop meetings with their proletarian industrial democracy; all these things make an inspiring contrast to what we know as Ford wage slaves in Detroit. What we have experienced here has reeducated us along new and more practical lines."¹³ Reuther's publicized quote on his experiences in the Soviet Union may have branded him a communist Red, but in later years he left the Socialist Party and spoke out against the abuses of Stalin and the Soviet system saying that, "American labor rejects the communist concepts of the class struggle."¹⁴

When he got back to Detroit he took a job with General Motors. Later he was elected president of an influential auto workers' union local group and with his brothers, Victor and Roy, he led several sit-down strikes in 1937 and 1940, became president of the United Auto Workers in 1946 (holding that post until his death), and helped found the Americans for Democratic Action organization in January 1947 along with other anticommunist liberals including Eleanor Roosevelt, Hubert Humphrey, John Kenneth Galbraith, and Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.¹⁵ By 1949, he was an outspoken supporter of the New Deal Coalition to strengthen labor unions, raise wages, and give union leaders a greater voice in state and national Democratic politics.¹⁶

C. Wright Mills described the UAW as a “‘Grass Roots’ Union With Ideas” and Reuther himself realized how historically significant it was calling it “the vanguard of America,” and “the architects of the future.”¹⁷ The Wheeling-born labor leader was just 33 in 1940, but he was already a union official and the leader of almost a quarter million workers who labored at General Motors, an industrial behemoth that *Fortune* magazine identified as “the world’s most influential industrial unit in forming the life patterns of the machine age.”¹⁸ During the Second World War, GM, with Reuther aiding the effort by his service on the War Production Board,¹⁹ would account for ten percent of the nation’s manufacturing capacity that became a big part of the Arsenal of Freedom that helped defeat Nazism.²⁰

But union work wasn’t for the faint-hearted. The industrial moguls like the Carnegies, Rockefellers, and auto tycoons like William Durant (General Motors), Walter Chrysler, and Henry Ford, the Big Three automakers, left no stone unturned, legal or extralegal, in trying to prevent the unionizing of their workers and later in punishing the union’s rank and file and its leaders with as harsh and brutal treatment as they could get away with. One example of many occurred on May 26, 1937 in what would later be called “The Battle of the Overpass,” when Reuther and other United Auto Workers organizers began passing out flyers encouraging Ford’s workforce to unionize.²¹ A photo opportunity with a Detroit News photographer on an overpass near the Ford River Rouge Plant where a sign read “Ford Motor Company” became the scene of a bloody physical assault when the automaker’s hired security guards or “goons” beat up every union man they could get their hands on, includ-

ing Walter Reuther and organizer Richard Frankensteen.²²

During his life, Reuther had to endure many more attempts to shut him up or even end his days on this mortal coil. In April of 1938, two masked gunmen broke into his home and tried to kidnap him, but a dinner guest slipped out of the house and called police, who arrested the men, but they were acquitted by a jury packed with Ford supporters.²³ Ten years later on April 20, 1948, Reuther was hit with a shotgun blast through his kitchen window, and due to the chest and arm injuries suffered from that attack, he was never able to recover full use of his right arm and hand.²⁴ In 1949, the Reuthers had two more close calls. In May of that year, individuals identifying themselves as Detroit policemen responded to a complaint of a barking dog at Victor Reuther's house. A night later, after Walter's brother had given the dog to family friends, someone entered his residence and shot Victor in the head causing him to lose part of his right eye and part of his jaw.²⁵ Later in December of 1949, there was an attempt to bomb the UAW headquarters in Detroit, but despite appeals by Reuther and other union officials, neither the Detroit Police nor the FBI followed up on finding the perpetrators.²⁶ Almost twenty years later in October of 1968, Reuther and his brother Victor were almost killed in a small private plane as it approached Dulles Airport in Virginia, but luckily the pilots of the aircraft saw that the altimeter was inexplicably malfunctioning and adjusted their descent at the last second to avoid a disaster.²⁷

Some even speculate that his untimely death may have been more than a happenstance or an act of God. His own brother, Victor, interviewed many years after the fatal crash noted that, "I and other family members are convinced that both the fatal crash and the near fatal one in 1968 were not accidental."²⁸ Did the powers that be decide to shut him up once and for all? After all, others in the limelight of that decade of the Sixties who rocked the boat: JFK, Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Robert Kennedy, met an early demise, and the idea that all of them and Reuther too died by unfortunate and unusual circumstances or accidents seems to buck the odds. Those that make these assertions argue 'Name another decade when so many world shakers in one nation died in so short a period of time, all because of mysterious anomalies of history, unrelated to those who held unprecedented political and economic power and benefited significantly from their deaths.' Those that make

these claims perhaps believe that this man referred to as a troublemaker or even the phrase “the most dangerous man in Detroit,” took his concern for America’s future too far, for he may have angered the White House, and even the entire military-industrial-congressional-intelligence complex with his opposition not only to the Vietnam War, but the entire Cold War era nuclear arms race.²⁹

While many believe that Reuther’s fatal plane crash in May of 1970 in the rain and fog was simply weather-related, others point to the National Transportation Safety Board report that the plane’s altimeter was missing parts or had bogus or incorrectly installed ones.³⁰ But still others note that even today with the unfortunate death of Kobe Bryant, private air flight is still inherently a somewhat risky business.

In 1952, Reuther was elected president of the Congress of Industrial Organizations and within three years he was a key player in the merger with the American Federation of Labor to form the AFL-CIO with George Meany heading the new organization with Reuther as his lieutenant.³¹ But the two strong-headed individuals clashed so antagonistically that Reuther and the UAW left the AFL-CIO in 1968, forming the Alliance for Labor Action with the Teamsters.³² In the 1960s, he marched with Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers in Delano, California and also strongly showed his support for the Civil Rights movement by participating in the August 1963 March on Washington led by Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr.³³ Reuther also marched in Selma, Alabama on March 21, 1965, with thousands of others, two weeks after Alabama State Police and local law enforcement officers attacked and injured dozens of African-American civil rights protesters, including John Lewis near the Edmund Pettus Bridge. The Republican candidate for president in 1964, a staunchly conservative Barry Goldwater, once declared Reuther “a more dangerous menace than the Sputnik or anything Soviet Russia might do in America.”³⁴

The Wheeling native had a quick and agile wit, as illustrated by an incident that occurred at a Cleveland, Ohio auto plant in 1954. While showing Reuther the new automated production lines at the plant, a Ford executive challenged him by asking, “How do you plan to get these boys to pay your union dues, Walter?” He quickly replied, “How do you plan to get them to buy your cars?”³⁵

In a Labor Day speech in 1966, Reuther presented a strong case for utilizing rapid technological advances not for war but for improving the human condition: “The question that challenges the wisdom and the sense of human solidarity of the whole human family is the overriding question: To what purpose do we commit the potential power of the 20th century technological revolution? Do we harness the potential power to the madness of nuclear war or can we build a rational and responsible world community and harness the rising star of science and technology to man’s peaceful purposes? The 20th century technological revolution has no ideology and it has no morality. We must bend it to man’s peaceful purposes or we shall perish.”³⁶

In another speech, Reuther proclaimed, “The people of the whole world are the prisoners of the Cold War and the insanity of the escalation of the nuclear arms race. And that’s why I believe America has the responsibility for providing both the political and moral leadership to try to move the world out of this prison of the Cold War and the arms race towards reductions in the levels of armament because I believe that in the long run, peace is the only condition of human survival.”³⁷

To commemorate his life, Walter Reuther’s name appears on I-696 in Metro Detroit as the “Walter P. Reuther Freeway.”³⁸ It also was used in naming a hospital and several school buildings in Michigan and elsewhere. He was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom posthumously in 1995 by President Bill Clinton and made *Time* magazine’s list of the 100 most influential people of the 20th Century.³⁹ A statue was dedicated in his honor in October of 2006 standing between the Wheeling Civic Center [WesBanco Arena] and the historic Suspension Bridge just a few yards from the Ohio River in the town he was born in.⁴⁰

Additional Quotes by Walter P. Reuther

“There is no power in the world that can stop the forward march of free men and women when they are joined in the solidarity of human brotherhood.”⁴¹-Walter Reuther, 1970

“There is no greater calling than to serve your fellow men. There is no greater contribution than to help the weak. There is no greater satisfaction than to have done it well.”⁴² -Quote engraved on Reuther’s statue in downtown Wheeling

“We live at a time of great change and great challenge but of equally great opportunity. Never before has the future been so pregnant with both the destructive threat of war and the bright promise of peace, for the same scientific and technical know-how that provides us with the H-bomb and the ballistic missile also provides us with...the new tools of economic abundance. Working together with these new tools provides us with an unprecedented opportunity to extend the frontiers of human progress and to advance the cause of human betterment.”⁴³ -Walter Reuther, 1958

“There’s a direct relationship between the ballot box and the bread box, and what the union fights for and wins at the bargaining table can be taken away in the legislative halls.”⁴⁴ -Walter Reuther, 1970

“...We fight for civil rights to make them universal...civil rights and human freedom are indivisible...you can be free only as your neighbor is free...We want an America in which every child has educational opportunity, an America in which every citizen has equal job opportunity, equal rights to the use of all public facilities, the right to live in a decent neighborhood in a decent house.”⁴⁵ -Walter Reuther’s remarks at the 78th Annual NAACP Convention, June 26, 1957

Copyright 2020 Jeffrey W. Mason, a published author and adjunct professor of history and political science, born in Wheeling, attended old Wheeling High School on Chapline Street (same school Walter Reuther attended, of course), graduate of West Virginia University (BA, MA in history) now living 25 miles south of Washington, DC in Waldorf, Maryland.

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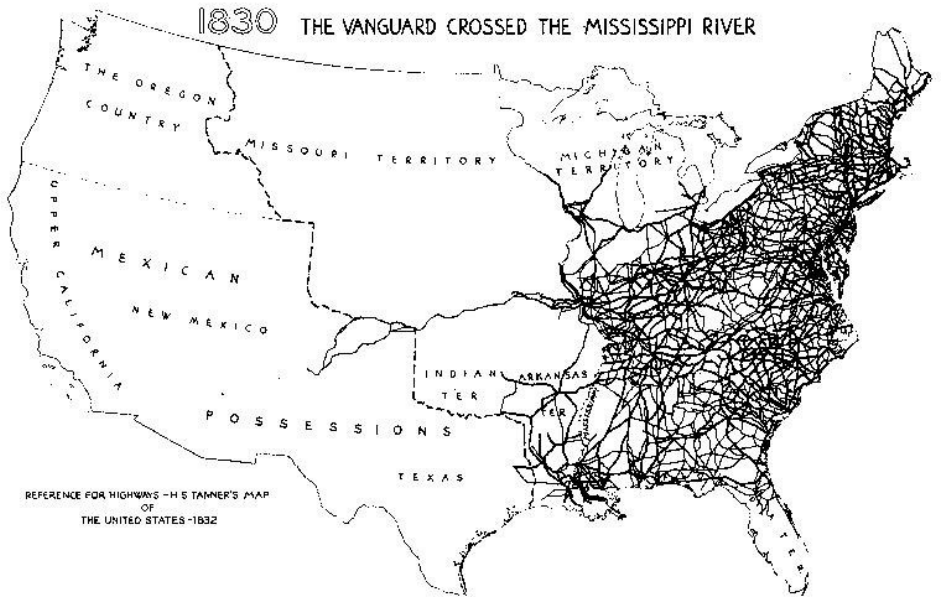
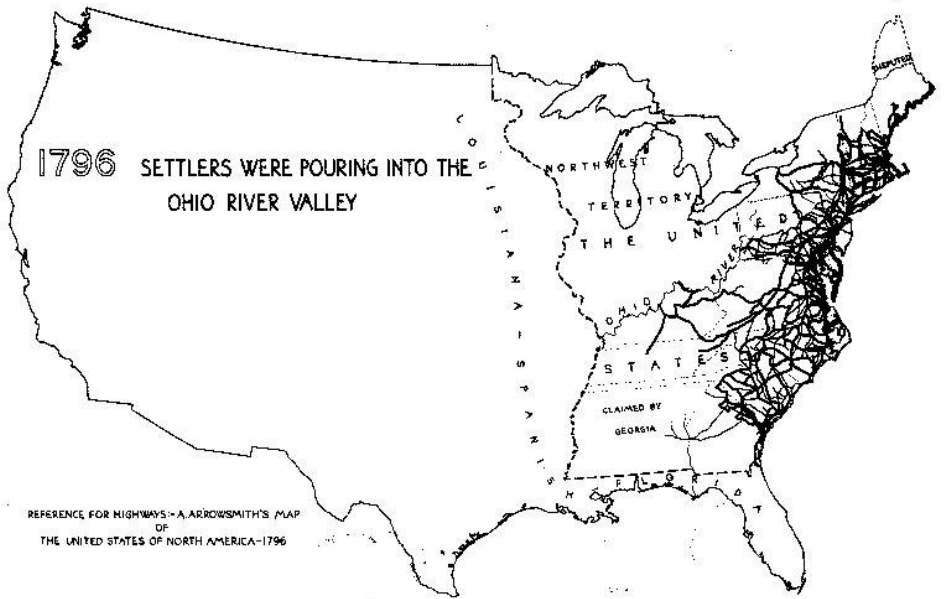
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PHOTOGRAPH
BY SEAN DUFFY



Walter Reuther Statue, Wheeling Heritage Port.



Few roads led to the nation's interior prior to 1800.

Adapted from A. Arrowsmith's 1796 "large map" (courtesy of the author)

Surveying and Constructing the National Road, America's First Interstate Highway

by Billy Joe Peyton

Our nation's history has been profoundly impacted by the transportation systems that evolved over time. Historically, the Appalachian Mountains presented a formidable barrier to settlement for a century and a half after the founding of Jamestown. Once settlers reached the interior, brutal conflicts with Native Americans continued until the Treaty of Greenville in 1795. Afterwards, people began streaming into the Northwest Territory. Few improved roads breached the region at the time, which sparked interest in developing a safe and reliable transportation nexus to bond far-reaching sections of the United States.

By 1800, roads were little more than cleared dirt paths that deteriorated with each passing season. Responsibility for construction and repairs typically fell to local governments that lacked the money and interest, a situation that resulted in feeble maintenance efforts at best. Most states had not yet built "improved" (i.e., stone-paved and finished) roads by the early 1800s, nor had they completed systematic repairs to existing routes. Even important colonial passages, such as Braddock's Road across Maryland and Pennsylvania, had been reclaimed by nature. Still, political leaders recognized the importance of developing an integrated transportation network to connect the eastern seaboard with the "western waters." Within the context of an early nineteenth century internal improvements movement, the federal government endeavored to construct the nation's first interstate highway.

Laying Out a Route

Despite the deplorable state of existing roads, westward migration soared between 1790 and 1810 as the population soared from 3.9 million to 7.2 million during the period. With expansion came opportunities to extend commercial markets. Migration into the Upper Ohio Valley provided an irresistible opportunity for the federal government to become involved with internal improvements. In 1802, Congress approved the Ohio Statehood Enabling Act that created a "two percent fund," whereby two percent of the proceeds from the sale of public

lands in Ohio were set aside for building roads “to and through” the state.¹ Establishment of what appeared to be a reliable funding source made it possible for the federal government to begin planning a national road to link the eastern and western waters.²

Building a substantial roadway over the Appalachians would be a difficult task, but one that made sense for the growing nation. In 1805, the U.S. Senate Committee on Internal Improvements debated potential locations before settling on a preferred corridor by process of elimination. The committee disqualified routes that ran north of Philadelphia and south of Richmond, because the two percent act specified that federally funded roads must strike the Ohio River at some point contiguous to the state of Ohio. Likewise, an all-Virginia route proved impractical because it would enter Ohio in the sparsely populated extreme southern part of the state.³

In reality, Ohio residents had the most commercial intercourse with Baltimore and Philadelphia, which considerably narrowed prospective routes. Pennsylvania had already commenced building a road westward from Philadelphia. Maryland was engaged in highway construction westward from Baltimore, though not interested in building a road beyond the Appalachians; consequently, the Committee on Internal Improvements felt that intervention in either state’s efforts would “produce mischief instead of benefit.” After weighing its options, on December 18, 1805, the committee submitted its recommendation for a federal route to begin at Cumberland, Maryland, on the north bank of the Potomac River. From there it would extend to the Ohio River, striking the western waterway at a “most convenient place on the easterly bank of said river, opposite to Steubenville and the mouth of Grave Creek, a little below Wheeling, (West) Virginia.”⁴

On March 29, 1806, Thomas Jefferson signed into law the Cumberland Road Act to “Regulate the Laying Out and Making a Road from Cumberland, in the State of Maryland, to the State of Ohio.”⁵ The president held jurisdiction over the project, including the right to select a board of road commissioners and to accept or reject their recommendations, to adopt measures to secure the consent of states through which the road passed, and to exercise control over construction, administration, and finances. Later authority granted him the right to appoint a superintendent of construction and repairs.⁶

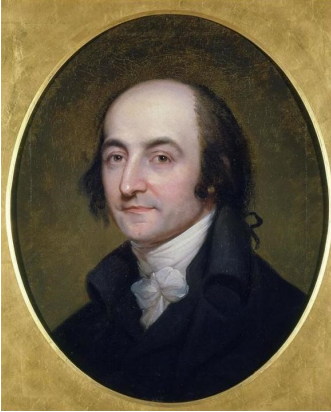
The president chose Joseph Kerr, Thomas Moore, and Elie Williams as commissioners to layout the road. Kerr was a surveyor and U.S. Senator from Ohio, and Moore was an engineer and inventor from Maryland. Chief Commissioner Elie Williams, from Hagerstown, Maryland, served as a colonel in the Revolutionary War and commissary to General “Light-Horse” Harry Lee during the Whiskey Rebellion; his experience with internal improvements began in 1797 on the Baltimore Turnpike.⁷ To round out their team, the commissioners hired Josias Thompson as surveyor and Arthur Rider as vaneman, along with two chainmen and a “packhorse man with horse.” Wages for the surveyor totaled three dollars per day plus expenses, while the chainman and marker each earned one dollar per day plus expenses.⁸

The team’s goal was to find the optimum overland route between Cumberland, Maryland, and the Ohio River in (West) Virginia. As specified in the 1806 Cumberland Road Act, four “governing objects” guided their work: (1) find the shortest distance between navigable points on the eastern and western waters, (2) reach the Monongahela River at a point that maximized potential for portaging to the surrounding country, (3) terminate on the Ohio River where it would combine river navigation with road transportation for future growth of lands north and south, (4) locate the shortest road with the most benefits. Upon completion, the president would receive a detailed report containing total distance, topography, elevations, markers and monuments, and estimated expense.⁹

Expedition members took to the field on September 6, 1806. Moving west from Cumberland, they made daily forays into the unspoiled countryside of Western Maryland, Pennsylvania, (West) Virginia, and Ohio. Often accompanied by knowledgeable locals who offered suggestions on the best possible ground, the group stayed in hostelries or with local residents. Progress was slow at the outset, until Arthur Rider assumed the role of second surveyor on September 22.¹⁰

In the first week of October, the team reached Fayette County, Pennsylvania, to scout around Washington and Brownsville. They spent the remainder of the month exploring in Western Pennsylvania, and much of the first two weeks of November around Wheeling in search of an appropriate terminal point on the Ohio River. The first measurable snow of the season fell in late November, followed by a second snow-

fall that forced a halt to operations on December 6. Williams, Moore, and Kerr then retired to Cumberland where they made plans to submit an interim report. They instructed Josias Thompson to prepare “a compleat [sic] & comprehensive map of all their work,” then the men departed Cumberland to finalize their journal, report, and plat for presentation to President Jefferson.¹¹



The nation’s longest serving Treasury Department Secretary (1801-1814), Albert Gallatin, provided financial and construction oversight for the National Road project (public domain image by Rembrandt Peale. Credit: Independence National Historical Park).

they suggested crossing the mountains and hollows obliquely, which would require considerable hillside digging but preclude the need for costly cuts and fills. To the men, “nothing short of a firm, substantial, well-formed, stone-capped road can remove the causes which led to the measure of improvement.”¹²

Expedition members expected to resume fieldwork in the spring of 1807. However, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania refused to approve the proposed alignment because it did not pass through either Washington or Uniontown, seats of government for Washington and Fayette counties, respectively. President Jefferson supported the route as recommended by his commissioners based upon their four governing objectives, and he resisted pressure to alter it for political expedi-

ency. Treasury Secretary Albert Gallatin took a practical approach to the impasse, considering it more important to “remove local and state opposition” to this “national object of great importance, particularly as a bond of union” than to adhere strictly “to first, though correct impressions.”¹³ Gallatin implored the president to alter the route: “the county of Washington, with which I am well acquainted, having represented it six years in Congress, gives a uniform majority of 2000 votes, in our favor, and if this be thrown, by reason of this road, in a wrong scale, we will infallibly lose the State of Pennsylvania, at the next election.”¹⁴ Pennsylvania lawmakers eventually agreed to allow the route to pass through their state provided it include both Uniontown and Washington, which it ultimately did.

With progress delayed due to realignment issues, the project suffered another setback on November 29, 1807, when “an imperious call from the private concerns of Commissioner Joseph Kerr compelled him to return home.” History reveals few details of Kerr’s abrupt departure.¹⁵ Whatever the reason, he did not return. Meanwhile, team members spent much of 1807 establishing the new location in Pennsylvania, which added a peculiar dogleg to the route but shaved four miles off the old Braddock’s Road. By year’s end, they had successfully completed “the location, gradation and marking of the route from Cumberland to Brownsville, Bridgeport, and the Monongahela river.”¹⁶

The third and final season’s fieldwork took place in the summer of 1808 without Joseph Kerr, whose earlier departure left the team short-handed during the critical final phase. Nevertheless, the stalwart crew led by Williams and Moore located and marked the route to Brownsville, Pennsylvania, which signified the westernmost limits of Congressional approval at the time. Their efforts culminated in a final report transmitted to President Jefferson on August 30, 1808. It called for a continuous highway running from Lot #1 in Cumberland, in a more-or-less westward line along the general alignment of, but not precisely on, Braddock’s Road, to the summit of Laurel Mountain east of Uniontown. The thoroughfare followed a northwesterly line through Uniontown and Brownsville, where it crossed the Monongahela River and proceeded north by west through Washington before taking a southwestward arc to its terminus on the Ohio River at Wheeling, (West) Virginia. The proposed Cumberland Road would extend 131 miles through three states.

Building and Repairing the Road

In its authorizing language for the Road, Congress specified a roadway of raised stone, earth, or gravel and sand that measured four rods, or sixty-six feet, of cleared width with a maximum grade of five degrees (8.75 per cent).¹⁷ Contracts typically specified grubbing out stumps and leveling the roadbed to thirty feet in width. Fill, where needed, prohibited the use of stumps, logs, or wood, and workers needed to construct watercourses if not already present.¹⁸ Road construction would be “in the style of a stone-covered turnpike.” Requirements necessitated a generous sixty-six foot right-of-way, with a roadway to be “nothing short of well constructed” with “completely finished conduits” to render it passable at every change of season and in all types of weather. Commissioners estimated construction costs at around \$6,000 per mile, excluding bridges over principal streams. While this would have been high for a common unimproved thoroughfare, the Cumberland Road was anything but common.¹⁹

As proposed, the National Road would traverse some of the most ruggedly scenic ground in the eastern United States. From Cumberland, it snaked over Big and Little Savage, Little Meadow, and Negro mountains in Maryland, then Laurel Hill and Chestnut Ridge in Pennsylvania—peaks ranging between 2,500 to 2,800 feet in elevation. The road then passed over gentler terrain between Brownsville and Washington, Pennsylvania, where it took “as straight a course as the country will admit to the Ohio, at a point between the mouth of Wheeling creek and the lower point of Wheelen [sic] Island.”²⁰

Management of contracts and finances on the project rested with the U.S. Treasury Department under the auspices of its secretary, Albert Gallatin, while a local superintendent awarded contracts, disbursed funds, provided on-site supervision, and maintained correspondence with Washington. One perplexing question is why the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, whose officer corps included the best-qualified West Point trained engineers, did not participate in the project. The reason is simple, if somewhat obscure. Military engineers had no authority to work on civil engineering projects prior to passage of the General Survey Act on April 30, 1824. The act authorized the president to use army engineers to survey civilian road and canal routes “of

national importance, in a commercial or military point of view,” and to employ any engineers “in the public service which he deemed proper.” The act would almost immediately affect the Cumberland Road.²¹

In early 1811, the federal government hired David L. Shriver, Jr. as superintendent of construction. A Cumberland native, Shriver held the superintendent’s post for nearly a decade before his selection as a commissioner to survey the western extension of the Road. On May 8, 1811, Shriver awarded Henry McKinley the contract to build “Section 1” of the highway, totaling two miles and 246 perches (2.77 miles) at \$21.25 per perch.²² By late 1812, contractors had completed much of the first ten miles. Meanwhile, the U.S. had entered the War of 1812 versus Britain, a conflict that diverted scarce resources and created a labor shortage that hampered construction for several years. As a result, work on the next eleven miles began in 1812 but did not finish until nearly three years later. By late 1815, the government had awarded contracts on the first forty-five miles of road to a distance six miles west of Smithfield, Pennsylvania.

Construction resumed at a rapid pace in 1816. Authorities issued contracts in Pennsylvania to the (West) Virginia line by the following spring, with the exception of a segment from Washington to Brownsville, Pennsylvania. Mail service began between Wheeling and Washington, D.C. in 1818, although sections of the road around Wheeling still lacked a finished coat of stone. The final construction contract in (West) Virginia was let in 1820, with all work on the project subsequently completed to the Ohio River the following year.²³

An army of anonymous Irish laborers built the National Road.²⁴ Burly axmen felled all trees within the sixty-six foot right-of-way, followed by choppers, grubbers, and burners who removed and disposed of stumps, snags, and debris. Oxen and horses strained against heavy chains to remove massive stumps that once anchored the old-growth forests, a process that could take weeks in heavily timbered sections. Laborers grubbed out roots by hand while pick-and-shovel crews cut the hillsides, filled the hollows, and hauled away excess earth and rock.²⁵ Finally, with all advance preparations complete, the graders, stone crushers, and pavers mobilized to lay the roadbed. Frenzied activity dominated the landscape, as area residents turned out in large numbers to view the spectacle. One Pennsylvania farmer described workers



Workers building a section of macadam road on the Boonsboro Pike east of Cumberland, Maryland, ca. 1825 (courtesy Library of Congress).

descending “a thousand strong, with their carts, wheel-barrows, picks, shovels, and blasting tools, grading those commons, and climbing the mountainside, leaving behind them a roadway good enough for an emperor to travel over.”²⁶

Workers certainly deserve praise for their outstanding contributions; however, the roadway itself did not embody cutting-edge technology. In fact, one construction superintendent described it as nothing more than a prepared “bed, or channel” of the prescribed width and about one foot deep. Inside the channel, according to the source, a base layer of stone topped by a second layer together formed a mostly even surface. He observed that the large base stones were set edgewise, and laid “promiscuously” with attention paid only to balancing the thickness of the pavement and firmness of the surface. A six-inch layer of smaller stones, broken and sized to pass through a three-inch iron ring, covered the substrata.²⁷ Albert Gallatin described the roadway as being “covered with a stratum of stones twelve inches thick, all the stones to pass

through a three-inch ring.”²⁸ At ground level it looked fine, but proved little more than an excavated ditch filled with rocks of varying sizes that rapidly deteriorated under heavy traffic and moisture.

Total expenditures for the original 131-mile Cumberland Road exceeded \$1.7 million, an average of about \$13,000 per mile, more than double the \$6,000 per mile estimate given by Elie Williams, Thomas Moore, and Joseph Kerr. Oddly, construction in the mountainous Cumberland to Uniontown segment averaged \$9,745 per mile, while the expenditures for the less rugged Uniontown to Wheeling portion equaled \$16,000 per mile. An investigation resulted in a finding of reckless extravagance and too liberal contracts awarded on the western end, which led to Josias Thompson’s firing as construction superintendent on the Brownsville to Wheeling segment.²⁹

From the day the National Road opened, heavy traffic and the elements began to destroy it. Because the excavated roadbed lay below ground level, drainage ditches could not keep water from seeping into it. Excess moisture kept the foundation wet, forcing bottom stones down in summer and heaving them up in winter. As a result, the top layer of pavement disintegrated under the weight of heavy wagons that cut narrow ribbons into the roadbed, forming deep ruts in places. Once the pride of a nation, a National Road in disrepair presented a serious hazard to travelers, and a huge embarrassment for the federal government, which had invested a large sum of public money in it.

In 1822, President James Monroe vetoed the Cumberland Road Bill that would have implemented a comprehensive plan for improvements and tolls to pay for them. Monroe said that the Constitution made no provision for the federal government to be involved in such projects, and that they were a matter for state governments. In the absence of a comprehensive funding bill, Congress subsequently approved annual appropriations for repairs totaling over one million dollars between 1829 and 1835. During the period, the Corps of Engineers supervised a complete overhaul of the road east of the Ohio on the macadam plan.³⁰ After finishing repairs, the federal government handed over ownership of the road to the three states through which it passed for operation as a turnpike.³¹ Completion of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad to Wheeling in 1852 ended the “palmy days” of the Pike and transformed it into a

local farm-to-market route. America's most celebrated overland highway languished as a poorly maintained local passage until the automobile ushered in an era of rediscovery in the twentieth century.

Landmark Bridges

Contractors built a number of impressive bridges over rivers and streams.

In 1816, Baltimore resident Uriah Brown observed an especially noteworthy specimen: "the Bridge over the Little Crossings of the Little Youghegany [sic] river is positively a Superb Bridge."³² Abraham Kerns and John Bryson erected the superb Little Crossings Bridge between 1814 and 1817, which included an 80-foot masonry arch, the largest ever erected in the nation at the time. Measuring over 300 feet long and 50 feet high, the venerable bridge with its graceful arch still stands just east of Grantsville, Maryland.³³



The majestic Great Crossings Bridge over Big Youghiogheny River contained a 90-foot masonry arch (partially obscured by trees in left of photo), the largest ever erected in the U.S. at the time (RPPC, Author's collection).

Obviously impressed with the span over Little Youghiogheny River, Uriah Brown encountered an even grander specimen 16 miles to the west at Somersfield, Pennsylvania. There, he encountered Great Crossings Bridge over the Big Youghiogheny. Upon seeing it he noted, "they

have Commenced the erection of the Bridge over this River, [and] no doubt from the specimen of the work already on the road, but this Bridge will be a superb & Magnificent Building.”³⁴ Indeed, the bridge is a magnificent 375-foot long triple-span structure erected between 1815 and 1818 by the contracting firm of Kinkead, Beck, and Evans. It contains two lesser masonry arches of 60 and 75 feet, respectively, plus a massive 90 feet arch that eclipsed Little Crossings Bridge as the nation’s longest masonry arch. Thomas B. Searight described the spectacle:

At Somerfield the road crosses the Youghiogheny River over a large, handsome and substantial bridge, three hundred and seventy-five feet in length, with three symmetrical arches, and appropriately named by old pike boys the Big Crossings. A large dressed stone in the wall of this bridge above the surface of the road, and near the eastern end, bears the inscription: ‘Kinkead, Beck & Evans, builders, July 4th, 1818.’ The day of the month, the anniversary of Independence, is given because on that day the bridge was finished, and the occasion was celebrated with great eclat. The inhabitants of the mountains for miles around, male and female, old and young, with old-fashioned banners and old-fashioned music, turned out in great numbers, inspired by that genuine patriotism which characterized the early period of our country’s independence...³⁵

Great Crossings Bridge still stands beneath the waters of Youghiogheny Lake. During periods of abnormally low water, the bridge emerges to present a dramatic spectacle.

In retrospect, the original 131-mile road from Cumberland to Wheeling represents the first attempt to form a tangible bond and thus minimize sectional differences between our citizens living on opposite sides of the Appalachian Mountains. No other nineteenth century highway has played a larger role in the growth and development of the United States than the Cumberland Road—known at various times throughout history as the National Road, Uncle Sam’s Road, The National Pike, Great Western Road, or simply the Road.

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Extra Bridges for Lydia? The National Road Controversy from the Potomac to the Ohio, 1806-1818

by Dan Bonenberger



Figure 1. Portrait of Lydia Boggs Shepherd courtesy Oglebay Institute. Sketch of Moses Shepherd from *The Old Pike*, 1894.

The legend has been told countless times, how Lydia Boggs Shepherd (Figure 1), heroine of the Ohio Valley frontier, convinced powerful Kentucky Senator Henry Clay to route the United States National Road through Wheeling instead of Charlestown (Wellsburg). The National Road was the country's first great federal works project, so the stakes were high. Cities along the road, especially those at major river ports, were bound for prosperity. Lydia's husband Moses (Figure 1), so the story goes, was *given* the contract to build sections of the road through northwestern Virginia. Moses built two extra bridges “for Lydia” so that the road passed right through their land and near the front door of their Georgian mansion. In 1820, they erected a monument to Clay in expression of their gratitude. Then over the next two decades, the Shepherds fought unsuccessfully to get the federal government to pay for the unnecessary bridges (Fetherling 2008; Stein 1992; Javersak n.d.). Shepherd Hall (now called Monument Place, Figure 13) and the 1817 stone arch bridge stand today as tangible reminders of this great story from Wheeling’s colorful past (Figure 2).

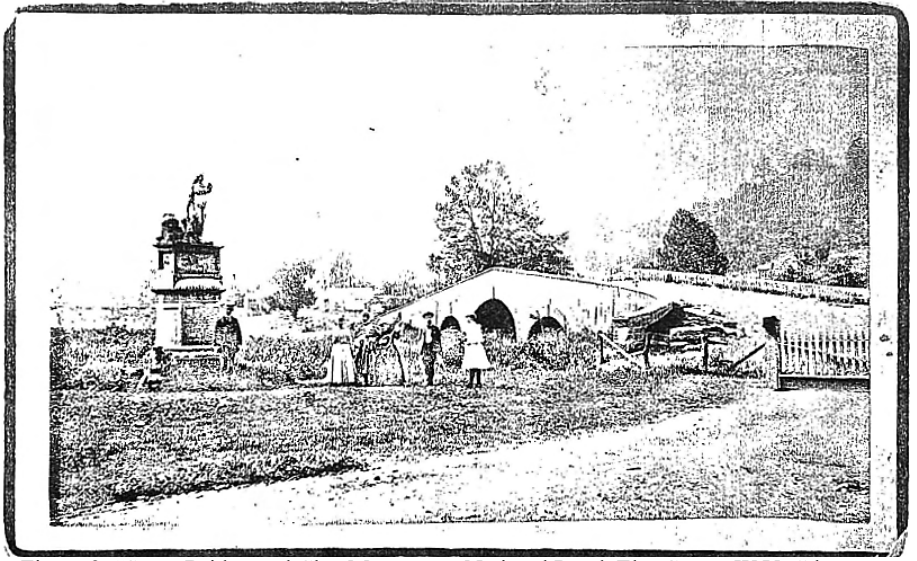


Figure 2. "Stone Bridge and Clay Monument, National Road, Elm Grove, W.Va." by Kimmins. Date unknown.

The story is intriguing and sounds plausible, but I had never seen the evidence. So one day, while working on a project to restore the National Road mile markers in West Virginia, I drove U.S. 40 (the highway that presently runs along the same route) from Wheeling out toward Triadelphia and stopped at the Bella Via restaurant to investigate. This is where one of Shepherd's three-arch stone bridges once spanned a branch of Wheeling Creek (Figure 3). Here at the mouth of Peter's Run, the National Road crossed an S-bridge from the north bank of Wheeling Creek to the south bank, toward Shepherd Hall, instead of taking a more direct northwest route toward Wheeling. If the S-bridge and Elm Grove Bridge were unnecessary, as the legend goes, then the road would have to stay on the north side of the creek. Following this alternative route to the end of Avenue A, I discovered that the floodplain gives way to a steep bank rising out of the creek for 50 to 100 feet. The path was blocked. As it turns out, the only way the National Road could have stayed north of the creek here was a diversion several miles up the steep and narrow valley of Peter's Run, surmounting a large hill before winding back down the other side to finally reach present-day Woodsdale. Such a route would have been considerably longer, steeper, and more difficult to travel than the one supposedly made for Lydia. The absence of a northern route into Wheeling is important, but alone proves little, especially if the road should have been

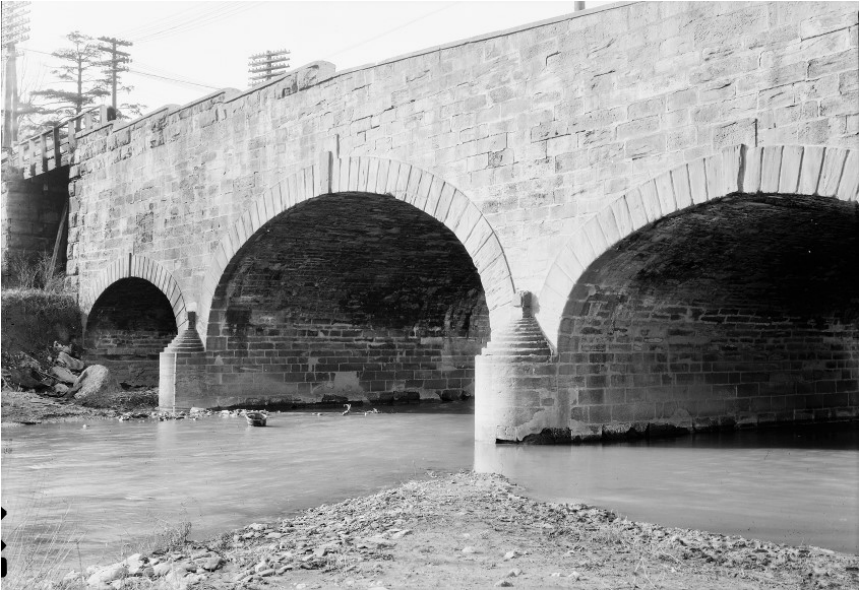


Figure 3. Bridge on Old National Trail, Wheeling, Ohio County, WV. Historic American Buildings Survey Collection. HABS WVA, 35-WHEEL, 1--4. Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division.

built to a different port on the Ohio. If there is evidence that Henry Clay handed the Shepherds the contract, then it also may have been possible that they manipulated it for their own gain. Archival evidence, such as the original specifications for the road, survey notes and maps, federal contracts, official reports, and personal letters, help shed light on these questions.

Selecting Wheeling as National Road Terminus

The notion that Wheeling was given the National Road terminus over Charlestown due to the influence of Kentucky Senator Henry Clay goes back almost two hundred years. The people of Charlestown argued passionately for the road's Ohio River terminus. After losing the struggle, they complained vehemently and fought for years to slander and discredit their rivals that located and built the road into Wheeling. They lost their first battle in December 1806, when President Jefferson's commissioners tasked with determining the location of the National Road, reported that the best route was from Cumberland to Brownsville and on to Wheeling by "as straight a course as the country will admit" (Moore, et al. 1807; Thompson 1807; Figure 4).

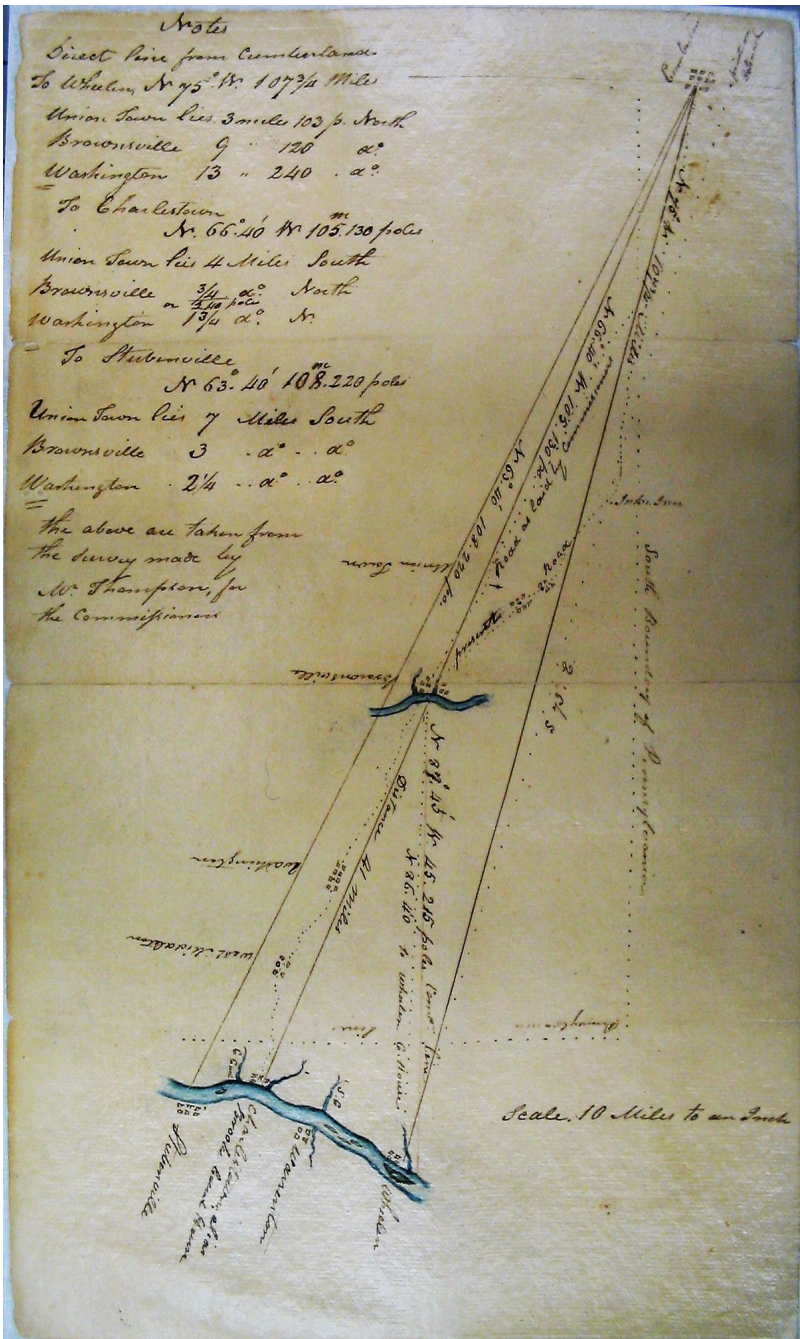


Figure 4. Thompson Josias. 1807. Diagram showing direct lines and distances from Cumberland to Wheeling, to Charlestown, and to Steubenville. Scale 10 miles to an inch. NARA Roads 343 Flat.

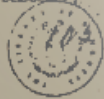
Then the legislature of Pennsylvania intervened in 1807, successfully arguing that the road had to go through their state's county seats (Uniontown and Washington) or they would not allow it to pass through Pennsylvania at all. Charlestown interests were given new life, since compared to Wheeling, Charlestown's Ohio River port was nine miles closer to Washington, Pennsylvania. To understand why Wheeling was selected as the terminus, one must go back to the purpose of the road and parameters set up for its construction. The commissioners appointed by Jefferson in 1806 to examine and select a route for the road had a simple goal: connect with the best *navigable* points on the eastern waters (Potomac) with those of the western waters (Ohio River and tributaries), while keeping the path as short and flat (less than 5 degrees inclination) as possible. These specifications are detailed in the Act of Congress that authorized funding for the road (U.S. House 1805).

Navigation was a huge priority. There were no railroads or major canals yet, and roads in the United States were largely unimproved in 1806. Most transportation and commerce moved along water by boat, the primary means for moving goods and people. Lewis and Clark had just returned from their voyage of discovery, but the way to the West from Washington was blocked by the Appalachian Mountains. The notes from the commissioner's fall 1806 survey include numerous soundings taken on the Ohio River between Steubenville and Moundsville during the first two weeks of November. The commissioners concluded that Wheeling was a much better terminus because numerous rapids on the river south of Charlestown would interfere with navigation (Williams, et al. 1806). Although this data could have been manipulated, it is confirmed by an independent letter to Thomas Jefferson three years earlier. The author of the letter to Jefferson was none other than Meriwether Lewis, onboard the keelboat that had been built for the upcoming expedition across the continent. Enroute to rendezvous with William Clark, and opposite Marietta, Ohio, he wrote: "This place is one hundred miles distant from Wheeling, from whence in descending the water is rather (sic) more abundant than it is between that place and Pittsburgh...." (Lewis to Jefferson 1803, Figure 5). In other words, river navigation was good below Wheeling, but rather difficult above it, especially during dry seasons. Therefore, Charlestown's location above Wheeling made it an unacceptable terminus for the National Road, and Wheeling the clear choice.

MS. A. 9. 1. 13

On board my boat opposite Marietta

September 15th 1808.



Dear Sir,

I arrived here at 7 P.M. and shall pursue my journey early tomorrow. This place is one hundred miles distant from Wheeling, from whence in descending the water is rather more abundant than it is between that place and Pittsburgh, inasmuch that I have been enabled to get on without the necessity of employing oxen or horses to drag my boat over the riffles except in two instances, tho' I was obliged to cut a passage through four or five bars, and by that means pass them: this last operation is much more readily performed than you would imagine; the gravel of which many of these bars are formed, being small and lying in a loose state is readily removed with a spade, or even with a wooden shovel and when set in motion the current drives it a considerable distance before it subsides or again settles at the bottom; in this manner I have cut a passage for my boat of 50 yards in length in the course of an hour; this method however is impracticable when driftwood or clay in any quantity is intermixed with the gravel; in such cases horses or oxen are the last resort; I find them the most efficient sailors in the present state of the navigation of this river, altho' they may be considered somewhat clumsy.

I have the honour to be with much respect

Your Obedt. Servant

Thomas Jefferson

President of the U.S.

33208

Meriwether Lewis, Capt. U.S. Army

Figure 5. Meriwether Lewis to Thomas Jefferson. 1803.

The commissioners also noted that Wheeling was the superior transport hub *into* Ohio. The eventual extension of the National Road through Ohio was a foregone conclusion, since the enabling legislation for the new state generated funds for this purpose through land sales. Wheeling was already the eastern terminus of Zane's Trace, the main land route across the Ohio frontier and into Kentucky (Williams et al. 1806).

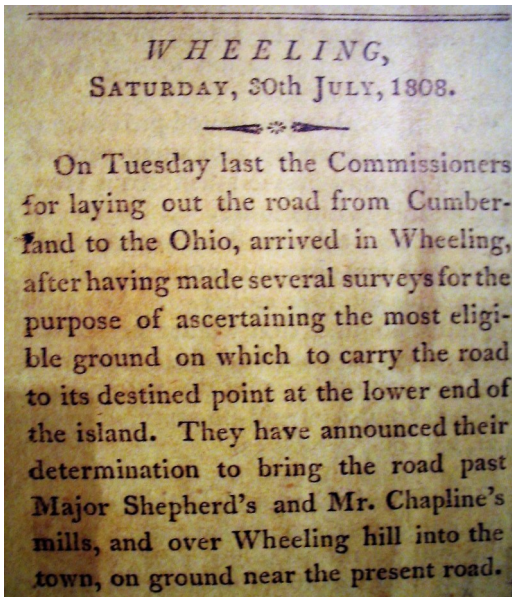


Figure 6. Wheeling news article of 1808 reports National Road to be routed through Shepherd's land, over Wheeling Hill into Wheeling.

In fact, the eastern portion of Zane's Trace later provided the basic route for the National Road's extension into Ohio, when constructed in the late 1820s. Beyond this circumstantial evidence, there is also physical evidence that the road was slated to cross the Shepherd property even before Henry Clay's rise to power. After the final phase of surveying, a Wheeling newspaper reported in 1808 that the commissioners had designated the road to go not only to Wheeling, but to pass through Moses Shepherd's

property on its way there (Figure 6). Thus the evidence suggests Wheeling was rightfully selected as the National Road terminus in 1806, and the route was to pass through the land of Moses Shepherd. Given that the road had to cross the creek at least once, the legend of Lydia's extra bridges appears less plausible. Despite this evidence, other sources about the construction of the road reveal that there is more to the story.

The Rise and Fall of Josias Thompson

Construction of the road west of Cumberland, Maryland got underway in 1811 under the superintendence of David Shriver, Jr., the son of prominent Maryland politician David Shriver, Sr. The progress of the United States Road, as it was officially called, was painfully slow across Maryland. After five years, the road had not even made it 38 miles to the Youghiogheny River. Labor shortages due to the War of 1812 were blamed, yet when discussions turned to completing the remaining 90 miles to the Ohio, Shriver suggested that a second superin-

tendent should be hired for a “Western Division,” since it would be impossible for one man to cover so much ground simultaneously. Overseeing this grand federal experiment was a job with little thanks and a seemingly endless line of people questioning the route and the integrity of the man in charge. The new job was offered to Elie Williams, one of Jefferson’s three commissioners for locating the road (1806-08), but he declined and nominated Josias Thompson for the position. Thompson, after all, had served as the chief surveyor to the three-man commission back in 1806-08. If any man possessed ample knowledge of the task and terrain, it was Thompson, who had been intimately involved with the project since its beginnings (Peyton 1999).

Thompson was hired as the Superintendent of the Western Division in 1816, and under his leadership things moved rapidly. In January 1817, contractors were selected for the portion from Wheeling to Washington, Pennsylvania and by the end of the following year, the entire length of road was complete — more than 30 miles. It had taken Shriver more than five years to construct a similar length from Cumberland. Things appeared to be progressing smoothly in the west, but all was not well. Eastern Division superintendent David Shriver suggested that Thompson was corrupt. The allegation was disclosed to Congress through a report of the Secretary of the Treasury in 1818. The facts seemed simple and clear: the Western Division (Brownsville to Wheeling) would cost more per mile to build than the Eastern Division. Yet the Eastern Division had had to conquer the highest mountains and the roughest terrain. Had Josias Thompson conspired with Shepherd and other contractors to raise the cost of the road for their own benefit by building excessive bridges, culverts, and retaining walls? Thompson was ordered to reduce masonry costs immediately and then dismissed as superintendent in the fall of 1818, while a commission was formed to look further into the matter (U.S. House 1818; Peyton 1999).

Josias Thompson Revisited

Thompson maintained his innocence and settled near Wheeling on land he had purchased in 1817 along the National Road about a mile east of the S-bridge. He was elected the first mayor of the town of Triadelphia, operated a tavern, and lived there until his death (Boyd 1954). Historic documents suggest that Josias Thompson may have been wrongly accused due to a personal grudge and dismissed from his position as super-

Cole Elie Williams
Dec^r 23 1816

I propose to contract with the United States for Mason work on the National Road between Alexandria and Wheeling, as follows I will make and complete the two large bridges below the forks of little and Middle Wheeling each of which are to be arches of 100 feet chord and Twenty feet wide at \$10630 each and the two bridges over little Wheeling at Bentleys each of 73 feet arches and Twenty feet wide at \$9371 each I will also make and complete all other bridges Culverts and other Mason work at and be between the last foot of Wheeling Hill and Alexandria and find all materials at \$3 1/2 per perch and furnish the same as the Road Contractors may be ready to fill up the abutments.

Moses Shepherd

Figure 7. Moses Shepherd letter to Elie Williams. December 23, 1816. Bid for stone-work on Western Division of National Road (NARA).

intendent, based on circumstantial evidence. First, the bids for the road in Virginia reveal that Shepherd was the lowest of three bidders for the masonry (stone) work at \$3.25/perch. He also had the lowest bid for construction of the Elm Grove Stone Arch Bridge at \$10,630 vs. \$16,000 and the S-bridge at \$10,630 vs. \$15,000 (Thompson 1816; Shepherd to Williams 1816; Figure 7). Although there were surprisingly few bidders for the masonry work, the evidence suggests that the contract was not given to Shepherd at all. The bids were open for six weeks and Moses Shepherd won his National Road masonry contracts by submitting the lowest bid. By all accounts, Thompson cooperated with the investigation and was never charged with a crime. The commission (that had been formed to look into the allegations of wrongdoing) recalculated the masonry and estimated a slightly lower value on the western masonry contracts. According to testimony in the Congressional Record, however, all contractors except Shepherd (who had the

largest contract in the Western Division) were eventually paid at the rates calculated by Thompson (U.S. Senate 1838).

Thompson was also reprimanded for changing the route in the fall of 1816 without asking for permission from the Treasury Department. Apparently, the road was supposed to stay on the ridge west from Alexandria (now West Alexander) into (West) Virginia, much like Interstate 70 does today, and descend down to Wheeling Creek to meet the present road somewhere between Elm Grove and Roney's Point. Thompson's new "Creek Route" avoided a steep grade and the problem of landslides that reportedly occurred each spring but were not obvious during the fall surveys of 1806-08 (Steenrod 1818). Moreover, rerouting was nothing new. Pennsylvania's legislature successfully maneuvered the route of the National Road to go through its county seats and Superintendent David Shriver, Jr. made numerous changes to the route. Instead of following the route laid out by Josias Thompson and the Commissioners, Shriver modified the path so it would go through the established settlements in Western Maryland and directly past the houses of many prominent citizens (Figure 8). Alarmed by this in 1816, the U.S. Secretary of the Treasury, A.J. Dallas, asked Josias Thompson to examine the Maryland reroute. Thompson reported that Shriver had added at least two miles to the Commissioners' route and this change kept the road in Maryland unnecessarily for an extra six or seven miles as seen in Figure 8 (Thompson to Dallas 1816). It seems likely that word of Thompson's letter to Dallas got back to Shriver, who was understandably sick of people second-guessing his work. After all, Pennsylvania had manipulated the route so it went through existing settlements. In this context, Shriver's implications of price-gouging may be seen as retaliation against his western rival.

Taking a closer look, the statistics used by Shriver in his accusation against Thompson were related to price per mile. Remember that David Shriver had elongated the route by at least two miles, and although this cost the government more money, it lowered the *cost per mile* since it passed over easier terrain. Compared to Shriver's meandering route through Maryland, the Western Division had to pass through Washington, Pennsylvania, which meant that it could not follow the natural contours of the land. Thus, there would be a much greater need for bridges, culverts, and retaining walls. In his report to Congress accounting for the costs of the Eastern Division, Shriver conveniently omitted details

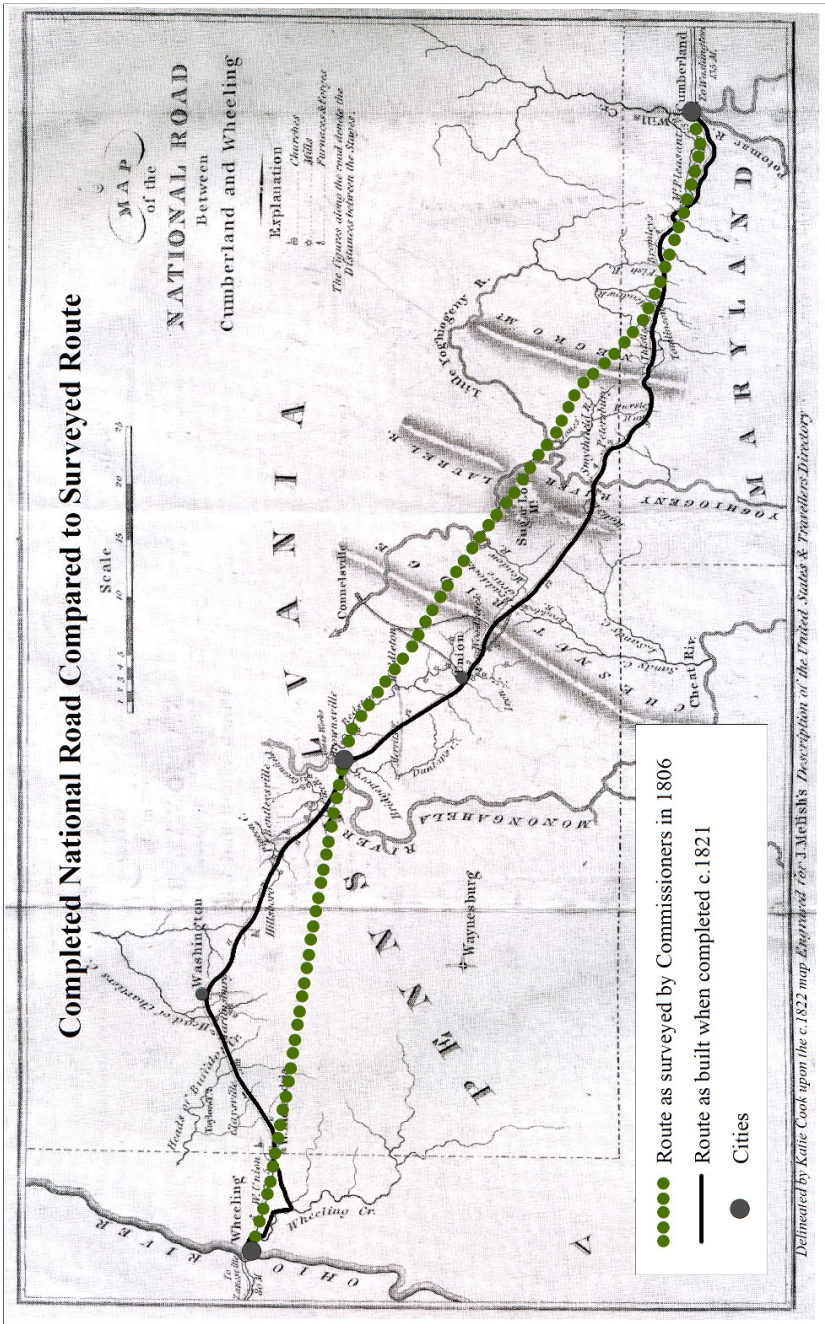


Figure 8. Katie Cook, 2021. Completed National Road Route Compared to Original Survey. Delineated by Katie Cook 2021 upon the J. Melish's c.1822 map of the National Road.

of almost all of his masonry contracts. In contrast, Thompson's report included the cost and size of every single bridge, culvert, and sidewall, adding substantially to the perception that the Western Division had excessive stonework (Thompson 1818).

Even before construction began, the commissioners had warned Congress about the fallacy of “flat” western terrain being cheaper to build upon. Stone was abundant in the mountains of Western Maryland, so it was cheap if not free for the eastern contractors. In contrast, throughout the Western Division, stone was much more scarce, and added considerable expense for the contractors. In addition, the Creek Route from West Alexander was clearly more expensive, as it would require numerous bridges and culverts, which would cause the cost per mile to escalate further. Although this added to the perception of impropriety on the western end of the road, the other states had changed their local route to a much greater extent and with no repercussions. In contrast, the change in the route as built through (West) Virginia is almost imperceptible when compared to the route surveyed and laid out by the Commissioners in 1806 (Figure 8).

Shepherd's Bridges and Route Through Elm Grove

The notion of extra bridges for Lydia likely came from oversimplification and fading memories about details of the events. Despite rumors of impropriety by the Shepherds and Thompson and the legend of the extra bridges, the evidence to date appears circumstantial. There was a delay in some payments for contracts in the Western Division after Thompson's dismissal. By 1820, Shepherd had been paid about \$289,000 of his \$329,000 contract. He received an additional \$7,640 in 1828, when all of the Western Division contracts were finally settled (U.S. Senate 1838). Moses Shepherd, however, felt dishonored, and petitioned Congress for full payment according to his contract in the mid-1830s, an effort that was carried on by representatives of the Shepherd estate until 1878, fully sixty years after the work was completed! In 1834, Virginia Senator (and future U.S. President) John Tyler, suggested that Shepherd had come to Congress “for justice,” having not been fully paid “according to Thomson's (sic) measurement” (U.S. Senate 1834). Although he was unsuccessful in his bid for full remuneration, and even Tyler voted against the act, Shepherd's petition provides an itemized list of expenses that had been disallowed (Table 1).

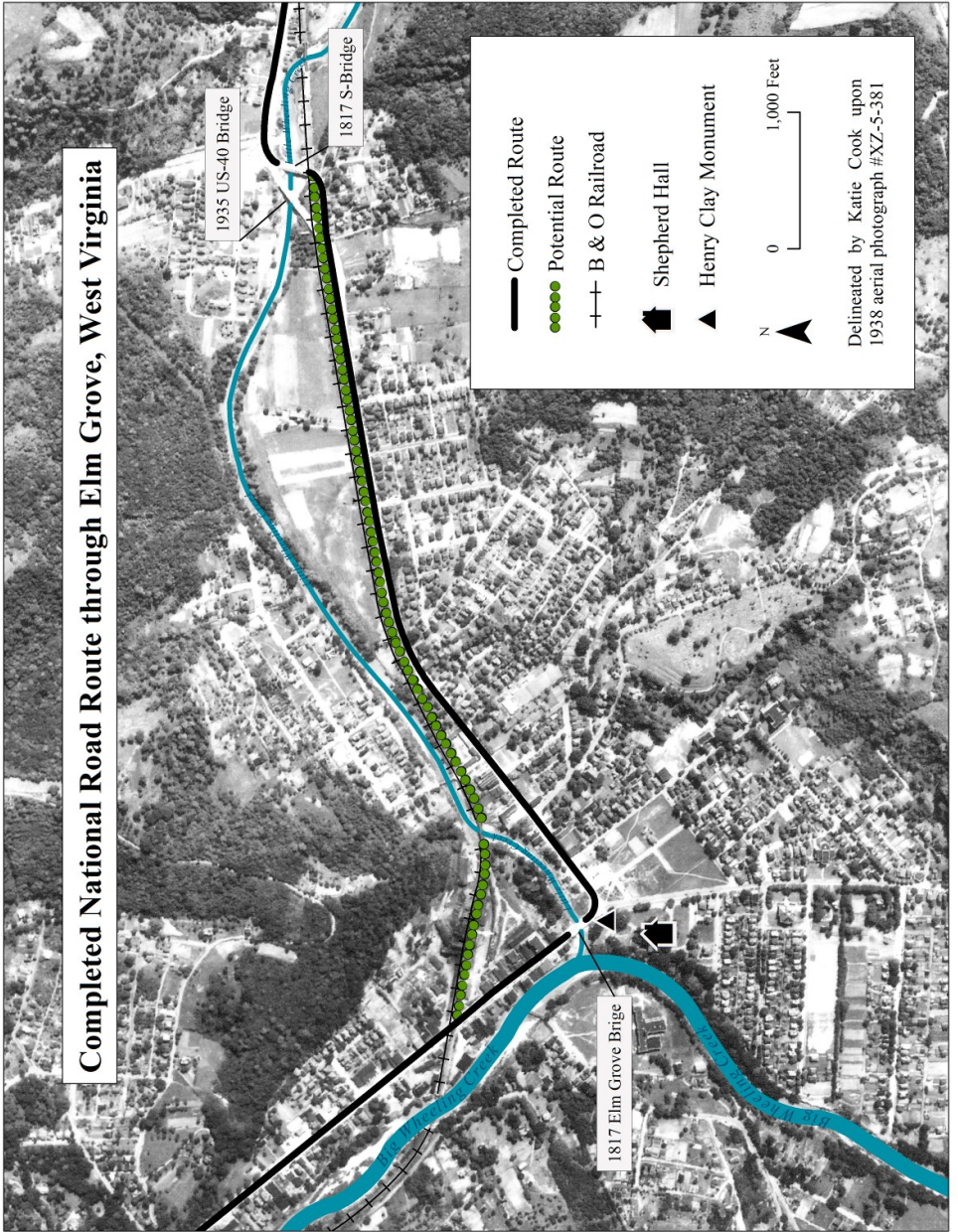


Figure 9. Katie Cook. 2021. Completed National Road Route through Elm Grove, West Virginia. Delineated upon 1938 aerial photograph #XZ-5-381.

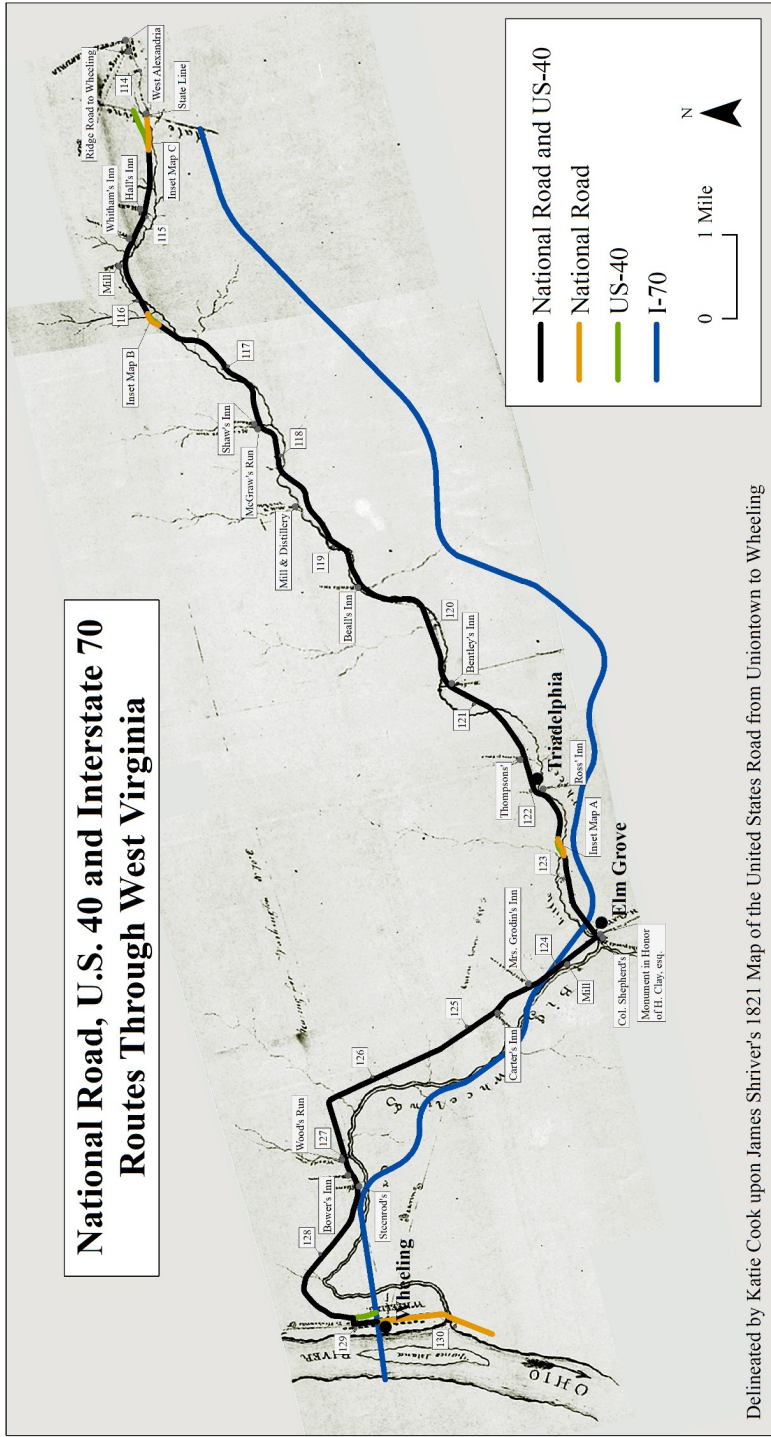
1712 feet of coping @ \$2 per foot	\$3,424
Increased distance of road	\$406
Wing wall & culvert near Shepherd Hall	\$378.60
Walls built by order of superintendent	\$445
Repairs to "Broken back" bridge	\$961
Hugh Smith's work on Stewart's Bridge	\$32
Amount owed @ 3.25 per perch	<u>\$21,683.34</u>
Total	\$27,327.94

Table 1. Itemized expenses in An act for the relief of Moses Shepherd (U.S. Senate, 1836).

The largest expense on the list was the perches of stone estimated by Superintendent Thompson versus the recalculation by the commissioners, a total of \$21,683. Another \$3,424 was for 1,712 feet of heavy coping (cap) stones. Most significant is what is not listed; there are no unpaid bridges. Shepherd was paid over \$300,000 of the \$329,000 contract. The Elm Grove Stone Arch Bridge and the S-bridge had been justified and were paid in full. The perception of impropriety, however, would not go away. Shriver's price-per-mile data affected the commissioners, the Congress, and remained in the minds of Wheeling citizens, in large part because the Shepherds and their heirs would not let it go, raising it in the public consciousness periodically as the estate fought for justice, even when no one was alive that witnessed or could explain the injustice (U.S. House 1875). Likewise, the rerouting of the National Road, which local lore associates with the "extra bridges," actually had occurred on the east end of the county.

The record does reveal, however, that Moses Shepherd made a little adjustment of his own to the route. He admitted as much to Congress. If Lydia got the National Road rerouted, it was just enough to put the road a little nearer to her doorstep. As Shepherd explained, it amounted to only 38 to 50 poles (200 to 300 yards). This number is verified by the Historical Geographic Information System (HGIS) created to produce the maps in this paper, which suggests the reroute lengthened the road by about 258 yards (Figure 9). Whatever the exact distance, it is miniscule in comparison to the extra miles in Maryland and Pennsylvania. In retrospect, however, this slight change had a profound impact on Wheeling's history. Not only did it provide the Ohio Valley with a charming legend of political corruption associated with the first large public works project in the United States, but it also served as a force to

National Road, U.S. 40 and Interstate 70 Routes Through West Virginia



Delineated by Katie Cook upon James Shriver's 1821 Map of the United States Road from Uniontown to Wheeling

Figure 10a. Katie Cook. 2021. National Road, U.S. 40 and Interstate 70 Routes Through West Virginia. Delineated upon James Shriver's 1821 Map of the United States Road.

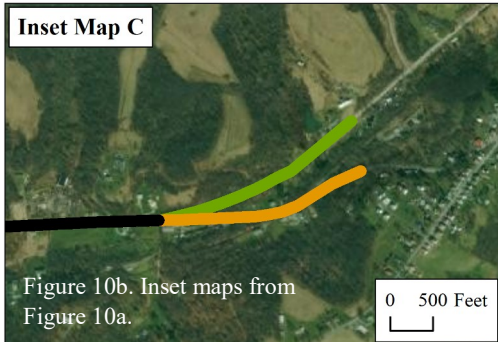
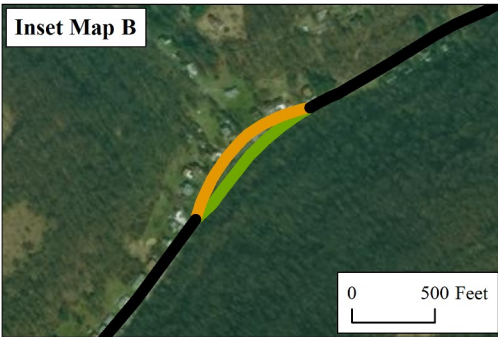
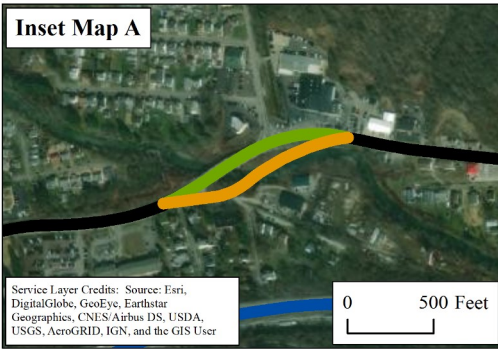


Figure 10b. Inset maps from Figure 10a.

save the stone arch bridge from falling victim to twentieth-century advances in transportation technology.

With the slight extension of the road, Shepherd also created a right angle in its course. Otherwise, the road would have followed the hypotenuse, crossing the stream via a second S-bridge 150 yards to the east on the more direct “potential” route seen in Figure 9. Because the Elm Grove Stone Arch Bridge stands at an intersection with a traffic light, motorized vehicles on U.S. Route 40 have to slow down or stop. In contrast, because of the greater speed of rural traffic, the S-bridge at Peter’s Run was replaced twice (c.1935 and c.2000).

As the National Road was improved and transformed into U.S. Route 40 in the

1930s, Maryland bypassed great sections of its original route. By the 1960s when Little Crossings Bridge was named a National Historic Landmark, much of the original road was fading into the landscape, a series of disconnected dead-end road segments that in many cases were deeded back to adjacent landowners. A similar phenomenon occurred in southwestern Pennsylvania. Yet in West Virginia, more than anywhere else along the original National Road, the alignment remains remarkably true (Figure 10a). Aside from a few small improvements, our National Road still exists as U.S. 40, and even those small segments that

were bypassed are still used. The Elm Grove Stone Arch bridge remains the only original National Road bridge in use on U.S. Route 40 between Cumberland and Wheeling.

This investigation into the surveying and routing of the National Road to the Ohio Valley has revealed important insights into one of the first great federal projects of the United States and how it was manipulated for state, local, and personal interests. The project roused resentment among the states that would not benefit directly, and among citizens in Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Virginia whose communities were bypassed. It spurred rivalries between and among the states and bitter debate over its route. Perhaps as a result, other National Roads that were surveyed and routed in the mid-1820s, such as those between Washington, D.C. and New Orleans and another from Washington, D.C. to Lake Ontario, were never built. The original National Road was extended west from Wheeling across Ohio and Indiana in the late 1820s and 30s, but construction ended abruptly in Vandalia, Illinois in 1837, due to a squabble between Illinois and Missouri over the Mississippi River terminus. It turns out that the first National Road would be the last. It would take a hundred years and the proliferation of the automobile before the United States was ready for a national road system.

Over the years, the details were forgotten and the story of the road's controversial route and construction into Wheeling grew to mythical proportions. Rather than the result of a political favor, the evidence suggests that Wheeling was rightfully selected as the terminus on the Ohio and that Moses Shepherd got his National Road contracts by submitting the lowest bid. The two large stone bridges he built were justified, and his change in route was minimal. Thompson, who had been largely forgotten in the legend, played a huge role in the surveying, routing, and construction of the road. His rerouting of the road was much more substantial than Shepherd's, but minor compared to what happened in the other states. Stonework in the Western Division was excessive and expensive, but this is partially the result of scarcity of stone and demands of the route. This is not to say that the Shepherds and Thompson were without fault; further research is needed to probe deeper into the details of the route, contracts, payments, and claims. The basic evidence evaluated to this point suggests that the perception of wrongdoing was exaggerated and largely based on innuendo.



Figure 11. Stone sidewalls west of Elm Grove along the original alignment of the National Road.



Figure 12. "Sidewall" built at the junction of 7th and Market in Wheeling.

Given the international significance of the National Road, it is remarkable that its details have not been investigated more intensively. Much remains to be learned about the commissioners, contractors, and superintendents, and the people that lived on and traveled along this great road. Further research will uncover new stories and knowledge about how the road came to be, but should also focus on identifying and preserving the physical remnants of this historic masonry work – the stone bridges, culverts, and sidewalls that still exist (Figure 11), but are often hidden from view and neglected.

Current rehabilitation work on the Elm Grove Stone Arch Bridge and restoration of the National Road “sidewall” built at the junction of 7th and Market in Wheeling (Figure 12) are positive signs. Today and in the future, however, we must insist that such work be completed in a way that reflects the international significance of America’s first interstate and the pride and skill of the surveyor, masons, and others who brought it to the Ohio Valley.

Dr. Dan Bonenberger is a cultural geographer and preservationist who uses digital heritage technologies to identify, record, interpret, designate, preserve, and manage historic cultural resources. His research focuses on the commonplace, such as dwellings of the poor, working class, and various social groups, and their regional prevalence. Bonenberger received his Ph.D. in Geography and M.A. in History from West Virginia University and is Professor of Historic Preservation at Eastern Michigan University.

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Figure 13. Monument Place (Shepherd Hall). *The Art Work of Wheeling, West Virginia*. Gravure Illustration Co., 1904. Part 2. OCPL Archives.

Fort Necessity National Battlefield

by Hilary Miller

Located along the National Road in Farmington, Pennsylvania, sits Fort Necessity National Battlefield. This National Park Service site relates the history of the French and Indian War and its opening battle, which took place July 3, 1754. The event was also the first battle, and first surrender, for George Washington, then a 22-year-old officer in the Virginia Regiment and loyal British subject. One year later, Washington again passed through the area—this time as an aide-de-camp to Major General Edward Braddock. French and Native American forces defeated Braddock's army near present-day Pittsburgh. Braddock was mortally wounded and died one mile west of Fort Necessity. He was buried in the middle of the road, later known as the Braddock Road.

Half a century later, construction began on the National Road, the nation's first federally funded highway, which closely followed the Braddock Road and passed by the site of Fort Necessity. The Mount Washington Tavern, built around the 1830s, was a stagecoach stop near the battlefield that served passengers from the Good Intent Stage Line. When use of the National Road declined with the advent of the railroad, the tavern became a private residence.

Fort Necessity National Battlefield preserves the site of the 1754 encounter as well as the location of a skirmish that took place prior to the battle, a site known today as Jumonville Glen. The park also comprises portions of the Braddock Road, including Braddock's grave, and the National Road-era Mount Washington Tavern.

A visit to the park begins at the visitor center, the Fort Necessity-National Road Interpretive and Education Center, which can be accessed from the main park entrance off of the National Road, today US Route 40. Visitors can view the 19-minute park orientation film and explore exhibits that cover the history of the French and Indian War and the National Road. A 300-yard walk from the visitor center leads to the battlefield and reconstructed fort. During the summer months, park staff offer guided walks to the fort. Soldier life programs and his-

toric weapons demonstrations are presented as staffing permits. Special programs, such as military encampments, are often held during the summer.

At the Mount Washington Tavern, visitors can take a self-guided tour of the building to see how a stagecoach stop operated in the National Road era. On the third weekend in May, the tavern comes alive during the annual National Road Festival held along the road in Pennsylvania.

Fort Necessity also offers five miles of hiking trails, areas for picnicking, and, for younger visitors, a history-themed playground.

The visitor center is open daily from 9:00am to 5:00pm and park grounds from sunrise to sunset year-round. [*Ed. Note:* please call to confirm, as this piece was written prior to the pandemic.]

The Mount Washington Tavern is open 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. seven days a week from May 1 through October 31.

Jumonville Glen, located seven miles from the visitor center, is open May 1 through October 31. For more information, contact Fort Necessity N.B. at 724-329-5512 or visit the park website at www.nps.gov/fone.

Hilary Miller is a Park Ranger for Friendship Hill National Historic Site and Fort Necessity National Battlefield.



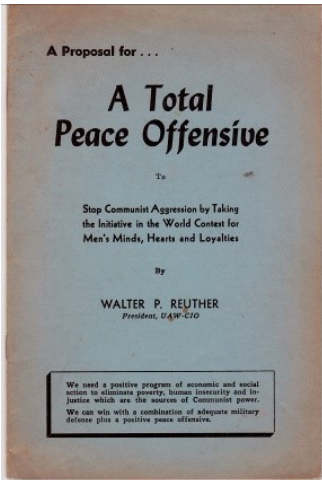
Special Project:

Civic Empathy Through History

As members of the Heinz History Center Affiliates (HCAP) program, the Ohio County Public Library and the Wheeling Academy of Law & Science [WALS] Foundation both have the honor of representing West Virginia and the Upper Ohio Valley region by partnering with the Heinz Center for a project entitled, “Civic Empathy Through History.”

This project bring together a network of sites throughout our region that create engaging experiences to build empathy and serve as the foundation for civic engagement. A part of the Grable Foundation’s Tomorrow Grants program, the project will highlight stories and artifacts across Affiliate sites that show how people have taken action to make positive impacts on their communities. Through developing the skill of empathy, visitors will be empowered to see the ways that people have historically been involved in civic action and how they can be involved in the present.

Each site will identify a story of civic empathy, and convey that story using an object, artifact, or book. As they explore each story, visitors will be encouraged to take some form of civic action.



A SEAT AT THE TABLE

The WALS Foundation’s story will tie Wheeling’s history of industrial jobs and labor unions, including the Reuther family, to the Jobs First Agenda, the foundation’s plan to create a nonpartisan, grass-roots philosophy of action based on fairness that can facilitate the pursuit of a just economic life for all Americans.

The featured document is a 1950 booklet written by UAW-CIO President and Wheeling native, Walter P. Reuther entitled, “A Proposal for...A Total Peace Of-

fensive.” This booklet provided a strategy to give people hope that they could live without poverty and inequality. Reuther believed that by em-

powering the powerless, people would be less attracted to anti-democratic types of government such as Communism, the most feared anti-democratic system during the Cold War. Reuther believed that authoritarianism thrived when citizens were fearful, hopeless, and desperate. He designed his plan for social justice to fight authoritarian systems by giving people good jobs, treating them fairly, and inviting them to have a seat at the table to bargain for their futures.

Wheeling's citizens need a better understanding of their own history and how it affects the present. Wheeling needs jobs, especially in fields with promise for the future, including infrastructure improvements and green energy. The city needs policies that will stimulate hope and optimism and motivate young people to stay in town. Developed by the WALSH Foundation, the "Jobs First Agenda" is based on the philosophy of Walter Reuther. It outlines measures to preserve democracy and combat tyranny by eliminating economic and social injustice and providing equal opportunities for all citizens.

◀ **JUSTICE & CANDOR** ▶

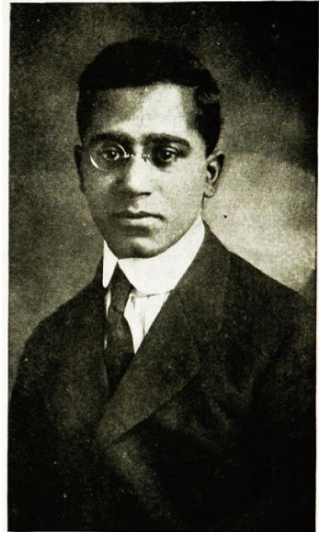
The Ohio County Public Library's proposal will feature an address delivered over WWVA radio on February 9, 1936, by Harry H. Jones, Wheeling's only practicing African American lawyer at the time. The address was entitled, "Wheeling's Twentieth Man."

In it, Jones pointed out that, "About one out of every twenty persons living in Wheeling is of African descent. This twentieth man is not a new comer nor an alien, for his ancestors were settled by force in Virginia one year before the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock... Justice and candor require attention to the handicaps suffered by Wheeling's twentieth man... The three pressing major injustices endured by our local colored people have to do with school facilities, jobs and recreation."

Jones went on to describe an entirely distinct black community – one with its own doctors, dentists, restaurateurs, shopkeepers, hairdressers,

and even funeral directors. Wheeling in 1936 was actually two cities, side-by-side but completely separate. And black people were not welcome in white Wheeling. This was Wheeling under Jim Crow: separate, but decidedly not equal.

In his remarks, Jones continued, “The group, as a whole, has been barred from employment in our local factories, mills, shops, and stores. The group generally has been restricted to personal and domestic service and coal mining...A reading of the ‘job want’ columns of our local papers will verify this complaint of discrimination. Apparently, the test is COLOR of the worker; not his or her training, experience and character...”



Portrait of Harry H. Jones, “The Crisis” magazine, NAACP, Vol. 19, 1920.

A 1931 employment survey conducted by the City of Wheeling found — much in accordance with Jones’s speech — that The Elm Grove Mining Company employed an impressive 300 (of 700 total — almost 43%) black men, while most other companies employed few to none, some companies plainly stating, “We do not employ colored people.”

Jones also pointed out in his address that, “The only public school in the city which colored children may attend is Lincoln. It was built forty-three years ago as an eight-room elementary school, to house about 252 pupils. Today, it furnishes accommodations for 494 pupils...”

Drafted by newly empowered Democrats, West Virginia’s 1872 constitution included Article XII, Section 8, which decreed, “White and colored persons shall not be taught in the same school.” This language would remain in the state’s constitution until 1994, and even then, 42% of the state’s population voted to keep it.

Jones also lamented in his speech that, “For amusements and recreation, our local colored group is restricted to one theater; one inadequately provided and inaccessible playground; a branch of the Y. W. C. A., and a temporary recreation center provided by Federal funds. This is a hard-

ADDRESS DELIVERED BY HARRY H. JONES OVER RADIO STATION
W W V A, WHEELING, WEST VIRGINIA, ON PROGRAM OF RACE
RELATIONS SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 1936 - TIME 7 MINUTES.

"WHEELING'S TWENTIETH MAN."

Ladies and Gentlemen:

About one out of every twenty persons living in
Wheeling is of African descent. This twentieth man is not
a new comer nor an alien, for his ancestors were settled

ship not only felt by the adults, but also by the children.”

In 1954 West Virginia’s response to a questionnaire issued to states by the U. S. Supreme Court noted that the state had no Jim Crow laws and was not aware of any such prior laws in the statutes. But whether by code or custom, for African American people in Wheeling, the Jim Crow kind of thinking meant separate everything — from restaurants and movie theaters to beauty parlors, skating rinks, and playgrounds — even libraries.

This neglectful and shameful past has heavily impacted the present. Wheeling continues to struggle to create an integrated, diverse community. But it is our belief that by close examination of these artifacts (and others as found and accessed at the Ohio County Public Library), civic empathy can be realized and, through “justice and candor” – as Jones called for in 1936 – equality and equity can be achieved.

The Ohio County Public Library is one of fifteen History Center Affiliates Program members that are participating in the “Civic Empathy through History” project as funded by The Grable Foundation. This project will feature the story of “Wheeling’s Twentieth Man” and many others. Please be sure to visit the History Center’s website in the summer of 2022 for more information.

The History Center Affiliates Program, HCAP, is a membership-based network that allows local and regional historical societies, museums, educational institutions, libraries, and history-minded organizations access to museum professionals and best practice standards through the Senator John Heinz History Center.

“CIVIC EMPATHY THROUGH HISTORY” Sites:

Battle of Homestead Foundation, P.O. Box 339, Homestead, PA 15120

Beaver County Historical Research & Landmarks Foundation, 1235 3rd Ave, Freedom, PA 15042

Donora Historical Society and Smog Museum, 595 McKean Ave, Donora, PA 15033

Duncan & Miller Glass Museum, 100 Ridge Ave, Washington, PA 15301

Fayette County Cultural Trust - Connellsville Canteen, 139 West Crawford Avenue, Connellsville PA 15425

Green Tree Public Library, 10 W Manilla Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15220

Meyersdale Public Library, 210 Center St, Meyersdale, PA 15552

Ohio County Public Library, 52-16th Street, Wheeling, WV 26003

Preservation Pittsburgh, 1501 Reedsdale St #5003, Pittsburgh, PA 15233

Quecreek Mine Rescue Foundation, 140 Haupt Rd, Somerset, PA 15501

Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill Archive, 129 DePaul Center Road, Greensburg, PA 15601

Western Allegheny Community Library, 181 Bateman Rd, Oakdale, PA 15071

Westmoreland County Historical Society, 809 Forbes Trail Rd, Greensburg, PA 15601

Wheeling Academy-Law & Science (WALS) Foundation, 1413 Eoff Street, Wheeling, WV 26003

Zelienople Historical Society, 243 S Main St, Zelienople, PA 16063

This project of 15 Senator John Heinz History Center Affiliates is supported by a Tomorrow Grant from The Grable Foundation. To learn more please visit visithei.nz/CivicEmpathy.

To find out more about HCAP or to apply for membership for your organization, please contact Robert O. Stakeley, History Center Affiliates Program (HCAP) Manager, at rostakeley@heinzhistorycenter.org or (412) 454-6359.



SENATOR JOHN HEINZ
HISTORY CENTER
IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION



UPPER OHIO VALLEY HISTORICAL REVIEW

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UPPER OHIO VALLEY
HISTORICAL REVIEW

