

CUMBERLAND AS THE GATEWAY TO THE WEST - TO 1875

A thesis by

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SUMMARY.

The site of Cumberland was first inhabited by the Shawawanee Indians of the warlike Algonguin groupe. They called their settlement "Cauetucuc" for the creek which ran past the town. The white, trappers renamed the town Will's Town and the creek Will's Creek.

Trappers ventured into the terriatry trading with the Indians and finally establishing a trading company known as the Ohio Company. France, realizing the value of this trade, stopped the work of the Ohio Company. Washington with a small force tried to drive out the French but was too greatly outnumbered. The Duke of Cumberland, for whom Cumberland was named, sent General Braddock to drive out the French. Braddock was not accustomed to the warefare of the savages, who were helping the French, was killed and his Army defeated. Finally Colonel Boquet was successful in taking the territory from the French.

Cumberland was incorporated in 1815 by act of the Legislature of Maryland. Which, was ammended in 1834 by a bill incorporating the town under the name and title of the "Mayor and Councilmen of the Town of Cumberland."

The Cumberland Road was constructed by the federal government. It carried many people and much money to the west

and served to harmonize and to strengthen, if not to save the Union. Changes were made in the original location of the road by the government officials. The road had much to do with the development of Cumberland and established Cumberland as one of the principal ways to the West.

The Chesapeake and Ohio Canal was constructed to provide a better means of transportation to and from Cumberland. It was not completed soon enough, however, to be as prosperous as was expected.

The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad came to Cumberland in 1842. It carried passengers to and from Cumberland for travel to and from the West on the Cumberland Road. It gave a satisfactory access to the markets of the East and was a great stimilus to the growth of Cumberland. The Cumberland and Pennsylvania Railroad went from Cumberland westward and brought coal and iron from the west to Cumberland for transportation over the Baltimore and Ohio.

All of these means and ways of transportation helped to establish Cumberland as the Gateway to the West and did much toward the establishment of future industries and helped the growth of the town.

CUMBERLAND AS THE GATEWAY TO THE WEST - TO 1875.

PRELUDE.

A ship came sailing out of the east one mid-summer morning in 1746 bringing news to the American colonies of a great battle fought on the Scottish field of Culloden, where the cause of the Stuart Pretenders had been decisively vanquished before the army of His Majesty George II.

There was rejoicing in all the colonies of Maryland who had already declared in its council for King George. Word of the victory was received in Annapolis with great rejoicing.

Many miles inland from the fashionable capitol, past the little, frountier town of Frederick, westward in that region of the colony where the white man had not as yet blazed his first rude roads, there was another town by the name "Caiuctucuc". Its inhabitants were Shawanees, members of the fierce, warlike Algonquin groupe. Their settlement was built on the shores of the noisy, little stream that gave the town that name. This creek wandered into the valley through a deep gash in the western hills, and, after flowing past the redman's wigwams, mingled its waters with those of the placid river known to the savages as the "Cohongoronta". On all sides of the Indian camp towered the high blue walls of the Alleghanies, with their trackless

forests and deep ravins, formidable barriers that they were holding in check the advance of civilization. Only the trappers in their search for furs had defied these mountain strongholds. They came often to Caiuctucuc to trade with the friendly old chief and his braves. The musical Indian names did not come readily to the rude tongues, so they chose a name of their own for the chief, his village and the creek on which they paddled their canoe; thus, Caiuctucuc became Will's Town.

The July twilight that saw Annapolis in gala attire brought only peace to the Shawanees settlement. No rumor of the battle had crossed the Alleghanies. No form of gaiety there celebrated the victory at Culloden. Yet there at the junction of Will's creek was to rise a queenly city that would perpetuate forever in its name the memory of him who has been called the "Butcher of Culloden", His Royal Highness the Duke of Cumberland.

So this is the story of how it came to pass that on the sight of that ancient Shawanee camp a frontier fort was erected and the white man, with his axe and his gun, came to break the silence of the centuries, as he laid the foundation for a noble city there in the heart of a primitive wilderness.



THE FUR TRADE.

Until 1728, nothing was known of the regions bordering the river that is today called the North Branch of the Potomac. Then the trapper, in his search for furs, began to venture farther and farther into the dense forests, following the Indian trails or paddling his canoe along streams. It was the indomitable courage, energy, and rude diplomacy of these trappers that opened up the way to trade with the savages. By 1748 this fur trade had become so important a business that some influential gentlemen joined to form a company that was chartered by the British government under the name of the Ohio Company, having among its founders Lawrence and Augustine Washington and a Colonel Cresap, who was already established at a place called Oldtown.

Five hundred thousand acres were granted between the Monongahela and the Kanawha Rivers, provided one hundred families be established in seven years, a fort established and a garrison maintained. The land was explored and a post established on the banks of the Will's Creek, where trading was done with the Indians. The Ohio Company prospered greatly.

France as a challenge, erected new forts and put forth new efforts to prevent their enemies progress. The Ohio Company was compelled to discontinue its working and the warehouse at Will's Creek was abandoned.

THE FIRST ROAD WEST OF CUMBERLAND.

George Washington was selected by the governor of Virginia to lead the force that was to regain possession of the Ohio Company's grant.

Setting out from Will's Creek, Washington followed the path marked by Colonel Cresap. Finding it scarcely more than a narrow trail through dense forests, he was compelled to travel slowly, widening the road as he advanced. It was impossible to advance more than a few miles a day. A French detachment had left Ft. Duquesne to meet Washington and surprise him from ambush. Learning of this Washington decided to surprise the enemy before they surprised him. The leader of the French was killed and the others captured.

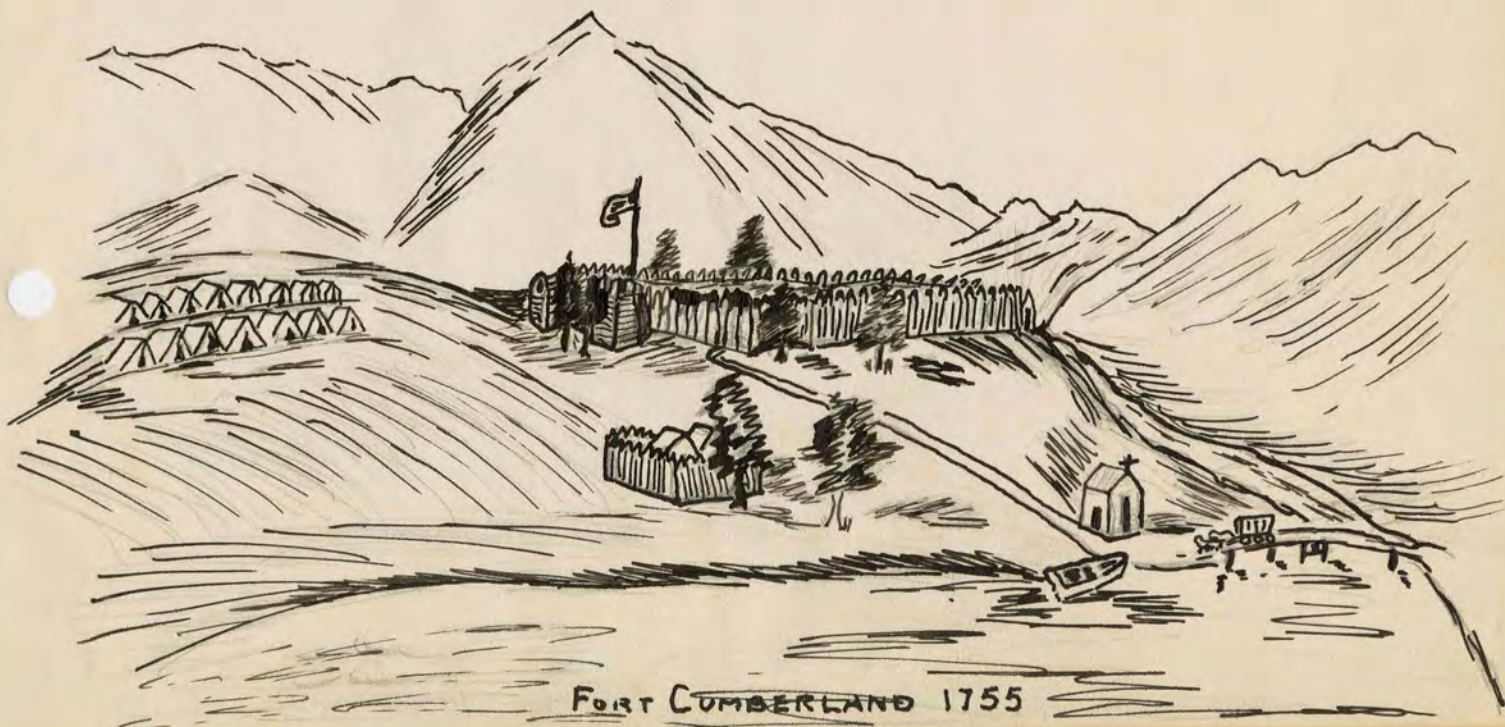
Washington hurried back to his main body of men and erected Fort Necessity where he awaited the arrival of the French whom he felt sure would avenge the previous defeat. The French arrived and so greatly outnumbered Washington's men that after nine hours fighting in the rain he was forced to surrender the fort and return to Will's Creek.

The Duke of Cumberland as Commander in Chief of the British Army sent Major General Edward Braddock to attack Duquesne.

Braddock knew nothing at all of American Warfare, despised the savages, and underestimated their ability and importance. At the suggestion of General Braddock the new fort at Will's Creek was called Fort Cumberland, for the Commander in Chief of the British Army.

Braddock's Army marched out of Fort Cumberland beneath a cloudless sky of turquoise blue. The men were in high spirits singing, joking as if they were off on a picnic but as they advanced the going became harder and their spirits fell. Shortly after noon on the seventh of July the army was surprised from ambush by the savages. Their red uniforms proved deadly targets for the Indians and the British became panic stricken when they could not see who they were fighting and fled while attempting to make the retreat as orderly as possible. Braddock was shot down and died a few days later. The men returned to Fort Cumberland. For a long time much crime was committed along the frontier since it was left undefended.

William Pitt became Prime Minister of England and his interest in American affairs was very great. He sent Colonel Boquet who drove the French from Fort Duquesne and reestablished order along the frontier.



FORT CUMBERLAND 1755

INCORPORATION OF CUMBERLAND.

Fort Cumberland continued to grow and trading become more prosperous.

The town was incorporated in January, 1815, at which time the Legislature passed an "Act to provide for the appointment of Commissioners for the regulation and improvement of the town of Cumberland, in Allegany County, and to incorporate the same.

In March 1834, a bill was passed amending the act of 1815 and providing that seven councilmen should be elected each year, and that they should elect one of their members as mayor.

The town was incorporated under the name and title of the "Mayor and Councilmen of the Town of Cumberland".



MAP OF CUMBERLAND
1806

THE CUMBERLAND ROAD

The Cumberland Road westward to Ohio was so named because Cumberland was the point officially designated as the starting point for work done by the federal government to link the East with the newly settled lands West of the Ohio river. The road was subsequently known also as the Union Pike and the National Road.

On March 29, 1806, President Jefferson signed a bill appropriating \$30,000 for a preliminary survey of a road from Cumberland, through the Narrows and across the mountains, to the Ohio river at Wheeling; construction followed as soon as practical thereafter, but was nearly stopped by the War of 1812. Work was resumed in 1816, and the road was opened to Wheeling in 1818.

While the federal government assumed authority to construct this road under the clause of the Constitution empowering it to establish post roads, the principal motive of its construction was political. It was a continuation of Washington's policy to unite the settlements west of the Allegany Mountains with the Atlantic seaboard by the strong bands of commerce.

The road carried thousands of population and millions of wealth into the West; and more than any other material structure in the land, served to harmonize and to strengthen, if not to save the Union.

From 1806 to 1838 Congress appropriated \$4,284,086.43 for the building and maintaining of the Cumberland Road. The total length of the road was about 750 miles; \$1,889,170.59 of the whole sum was spent on the road from Cumberland to Wheeling; 131 miles as marked by that many markers, some of them yet standing, over 75 years old.

An army of people lived upon the traffic that passed over the road. For 34 years the Cumberland Road was the great national highway, the principal avenue from the Atlantic slope to the Valley of the Mississippi. There was no highway of equal importance to the national road. It was the "Appian Way" of America. The people who lived along it witnessed a great procession of stages, line wagons, conestogas, horsemen, droves of cattle, sheep and swine.

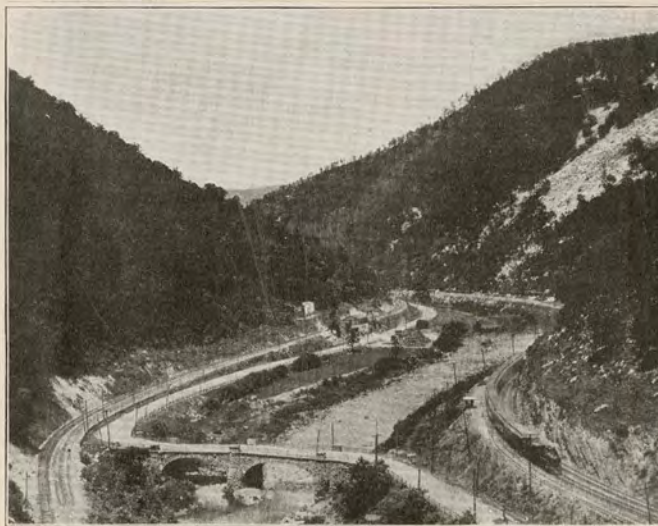


The Narrows, Will's Creek, near Cumberland (about 1855)

The first location of the road had been out Green St. and across Will's Mountain through Sandy Gap. A better route was found through the Narrows and along Will's Creek and Braddock's Run. The relocation was for six miles, and was made by General Gratiol the Chief Engineer. He estimated the cost of the relocation and various repairs at \$645,000. Travel through the Narrows route began in November, 1834.

As many as 20 stages, each drawn by four horses, were sometimes counted in a single line on the road, and from March 1 to March 20, 1849, 2586 passengers were carried on the stages. Merchandise was carried in large broad wheel wagons, protected by canvas stretched over bows, drawn by six horses. Nearly every mile of the mountains route had its wayside inn where lodging could be procured for the night.

Thus it can be seen that Cumberland was the Gateway to the West as it was the starting point for one of the greatest highways in the world.



THE NARROWS, AT CUMBERLAND.

CHESAPEAKE AND OHIO CANAL

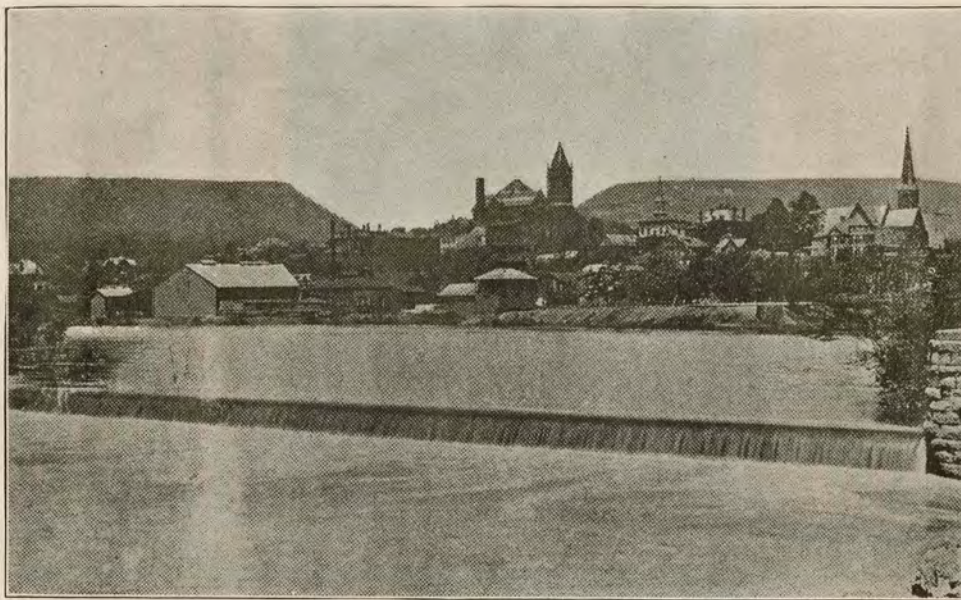
Realizing the need of better means of transportation from the east to the west, it became the general desire to substitute some better method than the pack horse or the river boat. This project took place in 1823, and the proposition was to construct a canal along the Potomac River to its Head waters and thence to the waters of the Ohio River. This scheme was brought before the legislation of the state of Maryland and met with general approval. A convention was called and a company organized known as The Potomac Company.

The Potomac Company, on the 15th of August 1828, executed a deed surrendering their charter, property, and rights to the Chesapeake And Ohio Canal Company.

It was not until June 1829, however, that a sufficient amount of stock had been taken and the company was formally organized and accepted the charter.

The first spade full of earth in the construction of the canal was removed by no less a personage than John Quincy Adams, President of the United States. The work was started in Washington and moved Westwards. Work progressed on the canal, money was plenty, and the magnificence and costliness of all the work done bear evidence of it. The traffic of the great west was the main object. But about this time attention was directed to the Cumberland coal fields, and tests and comparison were made with all other coal, and it was established

by tests at the navy yard that a pound of Cumberland coal was of smaller bulk and gave out more heat than any other soft coal. Being the only carrier of this inexhaustible supply of the best steaming coal in the world, that unnaturally made the canal people very well satisfied with the future. Finally money ran short and the progress of the canal slowed up quite a bit. The Company had trouble with their creditors and their laborers. Maryland was the only source from which money could be obtained and thus the canal was completed only as far as Cumberland.



A view of Cumberland showing dam across the Potomac which supplies water for C & O Canal.

Thursday the 16th day of October 1850, was a memorable day in history of Cumberland. That day the Canal was opened for traffic between Cumberland and Tide Water at Georgetown on the Potomac.

The completion of the work required twenty-two years and cost \$11,071,176 or \$59,618 per mile. The Canal was worth to the state all it cost because it developed the great coal mining industry of Allegany County. But as a National thoroughfare, for which it was designed, it was a bitter disappointment to its projectors, however the canal made Cumberland a center for the Westward trade.



View along the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal

RAILROADS

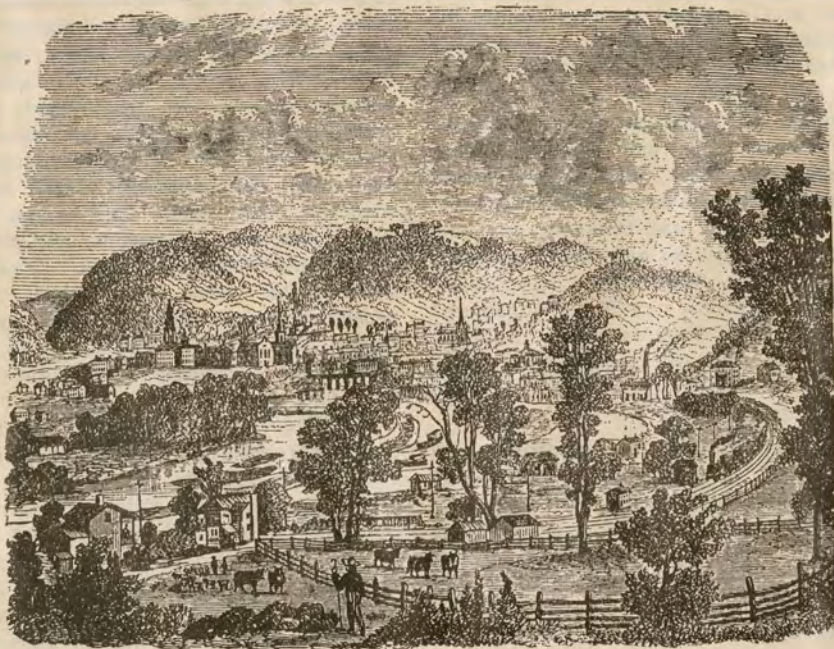
For more than ten years Cumberland was the western terminus of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. The road was opened from Baltimore to Cumberland on the first day of November, 1842, and the western extension, from Cumberland to Wheeling, was opened to traffic to Wheeling on the 10th of January, 1853. That period, when it was the terminal of the road, was a most prosperous time for the city of Cumberland.



FIRST LOCOMOTIVE, BALTIMORE &
OHIO RAILROAD.

The Cumberland Road westward was in effect the continuation of the Railroad. Eastward the wagon road was almost abandoned. The great stage lines were withdrawn and the line wagons and other vehicles, and herds of cattle, sheep, and swine from the West, stopped at Cumberland. All passengers and freight between Baltimore and other eastern points were transferred at Cumberland that west bound from cars to stages and wagons; that east bound from stages and wagons to the railroad cars. The volume of freight was so great that the railroad was not always ready to carry to its destination in the east that which the line wagons had brought from the West, and many warehouses were built along the railroad in which to

store that which was waiting transportation east and west. Great droves of hogs come from the West for shipment to Baltimore. As many as 2500 were shipped daily, and as the equipment of the road was greatly overtaxed, there would be long periods of waiting for the cars. The Canal had not yet reached Cumberland, and the opening of the railroad, giving satisfactory access to the markets of the East, was the first great stimulus to the growth of the town.



A view of Cumberland of about the year 1858. Note "William Galloway" type engine with train on right side of picture

The Cumberland and Pennsylvania Railroad runs from Cumberland through the Narrows to Piedmont, W. Va. It passes through, the valley of George's Creek, the most important coal region of Maryland. It first extends from Cumberland to Mount Savage from where it transports coal and iron to the Baltimore and Ohio Road at Cumberland. This road was completed in 1846 shortly after the Baltimore and Ohio had

reached Cumberland. The Cumberland and Pennsylvania Company was chartered in 1850.

It can thus be seen that these two railroads up to 1875 did much for the growth of Cumberland and established Cumberland as the principal way for East to West traffic.

CONCLUSION

Cumberland as the Gateway to the West was first established by the Ohio Company. The fur trade established the town and its prosperity at the time when men were pushing further West.

The Cumberland Road, while established for political reasons, did more to make Cumberland as the principal route to the west than any other thing.

The utilization of the Cumberland Road by many people moving into the fast developing West made Cumberland one of the most popular towns of the time.

The Canal and Railroad helped to develop Cumberland as an industrial center and a trading center and carried many people and much freight to Cumberland on the way Westward. Viewing all these facts it can be seen that Cumberland had much to do with the development of the West.

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