



ON THE NATIONAL HIGHWAY
AT CUMBERLAND

"GATEWAY TO THE WEST"

CUMBERLAND AS THE GATEWAY TO THE WEST--1875 TO DATE

Prepared by F. R. Liniger as part of his
initiation to Beta Chapter of
Tau Beta Pi

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CUMBERLAND AS THE GATEWAY TO THE WEST - TO 1875

SUMMARY

From 1875 to 1876 Cumberland felt the effects of the panic of 1873, and suffered the worst depression of its history, from which it did not fully recover until 1891 when it took on a new spirit of progress. This spirit was due to the continually increasing traffic through the city. The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, the Cumberland Road, (later to be part of the National Highway), and the Chesapeake and Ohio canal poured endless streams of traffic and freight on its way west into Cumberland. Early in 1900 two more railroads, the Western Maryland, and the Pennsylvania entered Cumberland. With the development of the automobile, the National Highway again became one of the greatest routes to the West, and more than made up for the slack, (and later) cessation of operations on the canal.

No community could stand by and watch all this wealth pass through it. Cumberland has not. Today it is the second largest city of the state of Maryland, in which millions of dollars have been invested in industries of almost all types. It has the Commission form of government and is sound financially, as well as being progressive and modern. It is a city that has taken great pride and advantage of its very fitting title; "The Gateway to the West".

CONTINUATION

Cumberland, the Queen City of Maryland, the Gateway to the West, by the year 1875 had ceased to be fartherest western terminal of any railway. In this year the Baltimore and Ohio railroad had succeeded in extending its tracks as far as Sundusky and Chicago. Also about this time, and for the first time since its completion, activities on the Chesapeake and Ohio canal began to lag. This lagging was due to the effects of the great national panic of a few years before. But by this time Cumberland had ceased to depend entirely upon the railroad, canal, and turnpike. Cumberland was already established as a permanent city with a population of about 12,000 souls. Even though the decrease in traffic along the turnpike fell off to practically nothing, causing the closing of most of the taverns and throwing not a small number of persons out of jobs, the city was not long in re-adjusting itself to the new circumstances. Because of its ideal location at the east side of the "Narrows", Cumberland became the perfect distribution point for the surrounding country, as well as a connecting point between the east and the west. Finished goods were brought to Cumberland from the east by railway and canal. Raw goods were brought into Cumberland from the surrounding country, and from here these goods were shipped into the east. Practically all westward traffic passed through this city. These are the prevailing conditions at Cumberland at the beginning of the time of this thesis.

THE CANAL

The first serious blow to cripple the traffic along the Chesapeake and Ohio canal came in the year 1877 when it was partially destroyed by a disastrous flood of the Potomac River. But immediate steps were taken to remedy the damages.

In 1878 bonds ^ugaranteed by the state of Maryland were issued by the canal company to obtain funds for rehabitating the waterway, and in a few months it was again a scene of much activity. But the growth of the Baltimore and Ohio Rail Road and the shorter time required in making deliveries to the East by the swifter going trains, was gradually diverting the carrying of coal from the canal to the railroad. However, transportation by the canal was cheaper and it always received sufficient freight to keep some boats moving in the busy season, and it never ceased work entirely until after the disastrous flood of May 31, 1889 when its banks were so destroyed that boating was abandoned for two years. Then agitation for the sale of the canal was begun.

The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad had become the chief possessor of canal securities, and this Railroad did not desire to see the canal pass into the hands of some other Railroad. Consequently the Baltimore and Ohio used its influences and had receivers applied for. The canal property passed into the hands of these receivers, who again repaired the canal and put it into operation in 1892. Since then the canal, a great factor in the establishing of Cumberland, continued to carry coal almost every season up until the early

part of 1924 when the canal was completely put out of commission by two great floods.

Thus ended the Chesapeake and Ohio canal. A waterway that had joined the "gateway to the West" to the sea. A waterway which had been a factor in the establishment of Cumberland, and for a long time a large source of business.



THE NARROWS, CUMBERLAND, MD.

67791

RAILROADS

The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad by 1875 had already expanded westward as far as Chicago, but still Cumberland remained the most important point along this Railroad. At Cumberland shops and a large rolling mill had been established. All traffic to the West on this Railway had to pass through Cumberland, likewise all traffic to the East had to pass through this point. It is needless to say that this flow of traffic was a prime factor to the welfare and progress of Cumberland, as well as giving it the renown of being one of the greatest gateways to the West.

During the nineties this railroad began casting about for a more southern route to the West, and finally decided upon branching its line at Cumberland. By following the banks of the Potomac River West from Cumberland the desired route was obtained. This branch passes through Cincinnati to St. Louis, Missouri which was made its farthestest western terminal, and is still.

Needless to say all this extension of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad increased considerably the flow of traffic through Cumberland, and has materially aided in keeping that city one of the most important gateways to the West. The importance of this city to the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad is very well expressed by W.B.Calloway, Passenger Traffic Manager, who states the following:

"Cumberland has always been recognized as the great dividing and junction point on the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. It is there that our main line from the East divides into two

main stems, one extending northwestward to Pittsburgh and Chicago, and the other operating in a southwestern direction to Cincinnati and St. Louis, Cumberland is likewise an important operating center for our company, it being the location of our division headquarters and large machine shops, both passenger and freight offices there".

The Pennsylvania Railroad early in 1900 realizing the value of Cumberland as a shipping point to the West, constructed a branch line from that city through the Narrows to Altoona, Pennsylvania where it connected with its main line to the West.

These two Railroads having realized the advantageous position of Cumberland have and still are, profited by their selection of Cumberland as a distribution point to the West.

Two other Railroads also have selected Cumberland as an important point on their lines. These two roads are namely; Western Maryland Railroad and the Cumberland and Pennsylvania Railroad. The Western Maryland extends far into the coal fields with Cumberland and other points in the East. The Cumberland and Pennsylvania Railroad runs from Cumberland through the best coal fields of the state into Piedmont, West Virginia. Cumberland to this Railroad is a very important transfer point and terminal.

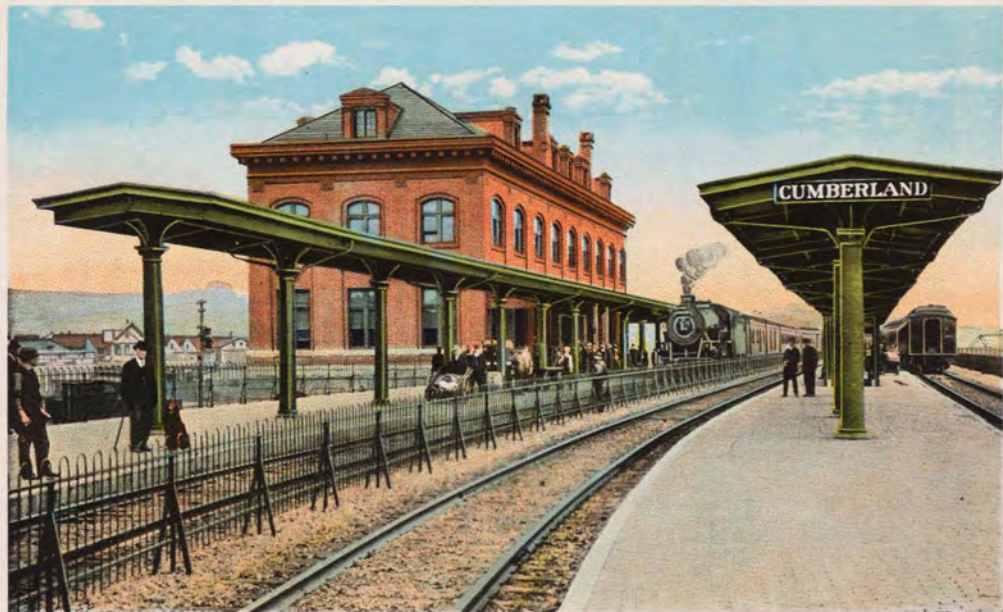
If one doubts the title "The Gateway to The West" as fitting Cumberland. Then just journey to that fair city and watch the activity of these above mentioned Railroads at that

point, and I am sure such doubts will soon dissappear.



B. & O. STATION AND QUEEN CITY HOTEL, CUMBERLAND, MD.

46652



WESTERN MARYLAND R. R. STATION, CUMBERLAND, MD.

THE NATIONAL HIGHWAY

AUTO DISTANCES

From

CUMBERLAND, MD.

	Miles
Hagerstown, Md.	64
Frederick, Md.	89
Baltimore, Md.	135
Wilmington, Del.	211
Atlantic City, N. J.	278
Philadelphia, Pa.	239
New York City	335
Chambersburg, Pa.	87
Carlisle, Pa.	119
Harrisburg, Pa.	137
Reading, Pa.	191
Gettysburg, Pa.	98
York, Pa.	127
Lancaster, Pa.	151
Washington, D. C.	140
Fredericksburg, Va.	205
Richmond, Va.	279
Norfolk, Va.	375
Martinsburg, W. Va.	84
Winchester, Va.	106
Harrisonburg, Va.	175
Staunton, Va.	200
Roanoke, Va.	290
White Sulphur Springs, Va. ...	300
Uniontown, Pa.	63
Washington, Pa.	99
Wheeling, W. Va.	132
Columbus, Ohio	259
Indianapolis, Ind.	433
Chicago, Ill.	653
Greensburg, Pa.	100
Pittsburgh, Pa.	
via Fayette City, Pa.	125
via Greensburg, Pa.	132
Cleveland, Ohio	275
Morgantown, W. Va.	91
Fairmont, W. Va.	109
Clarksburg, W. Va.	133
Parkersburg, W. Va.	218
Bedford, Pa.	31
Altoona, Pa.	69
Johnstown, Pa.	86
KEYSERS RIDGE, on National Highway, 30 miles west of Cumberland, elevation 2900 feet—Highest point east of the Mississippi River—on the National Highway.	

From 1875 until 1910 the traffic on this famous old road was almost insignificant in comparison with what it had been in former days. But with the invention and rapid development of the automobile, traffic on this famous turnpike began to pick up. So in 1910 the State of Maryland tookover the control of this highway along with all others in the state. Since then it has not known what an idle day means. Constant improvements by the state have made this highway the best road of the state,

and befitting a part of the great National Highway which is acknowledged to be the best road and most beautiful scenic route in the United States .

A fair idea of the amount of traffic passing through Cumberland to the West can be obtained from the following traffic check taken for that city's Chamber of Commerce by the Boy Scouts of Cumberland Troop 3.

On Monday, August 23, 1927, between the hours of 7:00 A.M. and 7:00 P.M. a check of traffic on all roads into Cumberland was taken. This check showed a total of 5028 cars from all but three states of the Union, and including three foreign licensed cars. Omitting Maryland cars from this total leaves 1926 cars. On the National Highway alone there were 3055 cars, which is more than half of the total. Omitting Maryland cars from this leaves 1559 foreign cars, indicating that practically all out of state cars use the National Highway from Cumberland to the West.

The real importance of these figures may best be set off by a comparison of a similar check, for the same day and time of traffic on the Lincoln Highway at Bedford. Here the check gave a grand total of all cars of 2557, of which 1805 were Pennsylvanian cars, and two of foreign license. On the Lincoln Highway alone there were 1888 cars as compared to 3055 on the National Highway, and omitting Pennsylvania cars, the Lincoln Highway showed only 614 cars, against 1559 for the National Highway with Maryland cars omitted.

Such a comparison goes far in proving the popularity of the National Highway to the West, which also means that

this traffic passes through Cumberland, thus helping to maintain that city's title of "The Gateway to the West".

Besides this traffic there are four large bus lines running through Cumberland to the West. These lines are namely: The Nevin Bus Lines, The Blue Ridge Transportation Company, The Cumberland and Westernport Bus Line, and The Mountain Stages Bus Line. The selection of the National Highway by these companies indicates that they consider this highway, as a desirous route west through Cumberland.



NATIONAL HIGHWAY THRU THE NARROWS, CUMBERLAND, MD.

108342

INDUSTRIES AND DEVELOPMENT

The progress of Cumberland has attracted many industries. One of the first to recognize the possibilities of Cumberland was the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, and immediately took as an industrial location, advantage of the same, by establishing a rolling mill there. The history of this mill represents no small part of the history of Cumberland itself.

Early in the seventies the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad had constructed a rolling mill at Cumberland, to produce rails for the westward extension of the Railroad. This rolling mill employed quite a few of the men of Cumberland, steady until the beginning of the year 1876 at which time it closed down entirely, due to the effects of the panic of 1873 on the entire country. But in 1878 there was a partial resumption of work at the rolling mill, and in the spring of 1879 the mill again resumed in full and continued working with only temporary stops for several years. But the rolling mill became a very uncertain industry because of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad changing its industrial policy and instead of operating mills and making its own rails, began buying them from other manufacturers. As a final result of this change in policy the rolling mill closed permanently, as far as the Baltimore and Ohio was concerned, in 1888. After being leased to several other companies, the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad equipped the mill for reclamation work about 1908. Since then this plant has been turning out more than a million pieces a month of reclaimed material, in the form of bar iron, nuts, bolts, etc.

Today the larger industries of Cumberland are as follows: Kelly Springfield Tire Company (\$15,000,000 plant), American Cellulose and Chemical Manufacturing Company (\$3,000,000 plant), Baltimore and Ohio, and Western Maryland Railroad shops, N. and C. Taylor Company, Tin Plate Manufacturers, Footer's Dye Works (largest in the United States), five glass works, two silk mills, four brick works, two hollow tile works, three flour mills, one steel shafting works, six lumber Manufacturing mills, etc.

The progress of Cumberland from 1875 to 1890 either in population or wealth was not significant. There were few changes in streets buildings or the general appearance of the city, and the increase in population was only 700.

But with the beginning of the nineties a new spirit seemed to take hold of the city. New plots of building lots were laid out in the southern and northern sections of the city, and enterprising young business men began a developement of local resources that put new life and hope into the population. In 1890 the Cumberland Electric Railway was organized, and put into service on the 4th of July, 1891, and at first was unable to handle all the traffic. At no time has there been any doubts as to the permanency of this company, and is still operating under the ownership of the Potomac-Edison Company, which company also operates buses, and will no doubt in the near future entirely replace the railway with buses.

From 1890 until 1900 the population increased over

5000 bringing the total to 17,128, which was the largest per cent gain in any ten years of its history. This was largely due to the development of the south Cumberland following the action of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad in making this point a terminal for two divisions of its road which necessitated the building of an immense round house, repair shops, and yard. This construction of the Baltimore and Ohio gave employment to a great bulk of the population.

Since 1900 the population of the city has been steadily increasing, and at present, including the outlying districts about to be annexed, its population is estimated at over 42,000 persons, making it the second city in size in the state of Maryland. The city has very modern and efficient water, and sewerage systems, a paid motorized fire department, a \$300,000 City Hall, and has Commission form of government. It is a modern city in every way.



LAKE GORDON, WATER SUPPLY, CUMBERLAND, MD.

82151

CONCLUSION

Cumberland, because of its location at the eastern entrance to the Narrows, one of the earliest passes over the Alleghanies, has been properly titled "The Gateway to the West".

Through this city all traffic to the West on either the National Highway or the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad must pass, and it has been due to this traffic that Cumberland has thrived and because of never ending flow of traffic the city will continue to progress but because of its rather cramped location it is doubtful if it will ever become large enough to rival the larger American cities in size or population. Still it is a progressive city, and modern in every way as is befitting a city that has been for almost two centuries, and still is; "The Gateway to the West".



BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF CUMBERLAND, MD.

112975

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