

The National Road and the Town of New Market

In 1666 the Colonial Legislative body passed Maryland's first road act that provided for overseers to build and maintain roads to accommodate horses and people afoot. To pay for this the inhabitants at the County level were taxed tobacco or labor. All roads remained under the County's jurisdiction until the State Roads Commission was established in 1908.

Maryland's first mail route began in 1695. It ran eight times a year from the Potomac through Annapolis to Philadelphia. The first widening of the roads for hauling was introduced in Baltimore County; it ran east of Baltimore to the port in Annapolis. This road is said to have been the forerunner of U.S. 40.

In 1704, the Colonial Government required all major roads (trade routes) in the Province to be widened to twenty feet. This was paid for by requiring all plantation and business owners to send all "taxable male servants" to perform the labor. Slaves were the primary labor force. Indentured servants, mainly convicts, were also used. The laws also required free black men to perform free labor. Heavy crude axes were used to clear the area and the roadbed was dug out with picks and shovels.

The first "Rolling Roads" in Maryland extended to and from Annapolis. These roads were only wide enough for "hogsheads of tobacco to be hauled to the Port and put aboard ships. Baltimore surpassed Annapolis as the main maritime center when the Germans of Pennsylvania and others shipped grain and other products out of Baltimore's port. Maryland was then, as now, the main passageway for transportation up and down the Atlantic Coast.

In 1705, the Provincial Assembly passed its first law requiring identifying road markers. The first of these were cut into trees. The next signage was wooden markers that either decayed or were carried off as souvenirs and firewood

The last area of the Province to be settled was the mountainous region of Western Maryland. The first roads were "Indian trails" that were used and expanded by the Germans of Pennsylvania. The first prominent road in this area was the Monocacy Road. It entered Maryland from Pennsylvania north of what is now Taneytown in Carroll County, ran beside and crossed the Monocacy River west of what is Frederick, it continued to Watkins Ferry, on the Potomac near what is now Williamsport in Washington County and from there to the Winchester area of Virginia. The Monocacy Road is believed to have been used as a trade route beginning in the 1720's.

When Frederick began to settle in 1745, travel along the wagon trails increased considerably. Within a few years wagon trails led out of Frederick to Baltimore, Annapolis and Georgetown because there were no navigable waterways near Frederick to move freight. One of the roads leading from Frederick ran west and east through what are now the towns of New Market, Ridgeville, Poplar Springs, Cooksville, Ellicott City and into Baltimore. This road known as the Baltimore and Frederick Road became and

would serve as the “great trade route” from more than the next two hundred years. It in fact remained part of the “Gateway to the West” until the U.S. 40 dual highway came into being in 1954.

In 1788 Nicholas Hall attempted to lay out the Town of New Market, but this venture failed. In searching the records there is a strong indication that a satisfactory agreement could not be reached between Hall and William Plummer who owned the adjoining land.

On August 1, 1792, William Plummer laid out thirty-six lots for the Town of New Market. Seven months later on January 29, 1793, Nicholas Hall laid out one hundred and thirty four lots. The Town officially began when Hall sold the first nineteen lots on June 1, 1793. These men knew the commercial value of a town standing on both sides of the Frederick and Baltimore Turnpike and therefore made that half mile section of the road the Town’s Main Street. The Town’s location, toll-free roadway and ample water supply attracted enterprising men and women to establish a place where travelers could rest, eat, shop, trade and get the latest news. The Town soon became an integral part of the trade route.

In 1799, the Town of New Market had its first hotel; it quickly but gracefully matured to an oasis of services and hospitality to the travelers and traders. The Town had churches, hotels, inns, medical doctors, a post office, taverns, blacksmith shops, nail and button factories, tanneries, dry goods and grocery stores, livery stables, wagon stands, distilleries, tailors, schools, private tutors, public wells, a fire station, and once proclaimed it now had a “House of Entertainment for the Genteel”.

The Town also dealt in the shameful, but highly profitable business of slave dealing, as well as, engaging in the lucrative indentureship programs. Slaves and indentured servants were bought and sold on an auction block erected on Main Street. The Town was able to develop quickly because of this large labor force.

Maryland not only started but also continued to improve upon the National Road. In 1805, it incorporated the Baltimore and Frederick Turnpike and mandated the building of an “all weather road” from Baltimore to Boonsboro in Washington County.

The following article appeared in a Frederick newspaper on March 21, 1805 under the heading of “Baltimore and Frederick Turnpike Road”: *“We the subscribers, appointed commissioners to receive subscriptions, for making a turnpike road from the City of Baltimore, through New Market, Frederick-Town, Middle-Town and to Boonsborough: do hereby give notice that the subscription Book will be opened at Mrs. Kimboll’s Tavern, in Frederick-Towns, on Monday the 1st day of April next, from the hour of 9 in the morning until 2 o’clock, and will continue open during the same hours the two following days unless the stock should be earlier subscribed. The stock is divided into shares of twenty dollars each, and every person must pay down one dollar on each share at the time of subscribing, not more than twenty-five shares can be subscribed on the first day by any person no more than fifty on the second.”* Commissioners: John Sebley, Harry R. Warfield, David Leory.

In 1806 Congress passed an act to establish that section of the National Road that led westward from Cumberland in Allegheny County, over the Allegheny Mountains, to the Ohio River, across the Plains of Indiana and through to near Alton Illinois almost to the Mississippi River in Missouri. The road was later extended to St. Louis, Missouri.

The Town of New Market appointed commissioners and ran lotteries to raise money to improve the Turnpike; it also bore the burdens of the problems it brought. On November 7, 1807, the following article appeared in the Frederick-Town Herald: *“Whereas the disorderly and riotous conduct of the laborers on the Turnpike road in New Market and it’s vicinity, is such, as to threaten the peace and safety of travelers and the citizens of the Town and neighborhood and whereas in several instances they have manifested a disposition to resist the civil authority, when called upon to put the law in force against some of the offenders, publick notice is hereby given, to the contractors and undertakers of the Turnpike road, in and near New Market; that if the laborers and workmen, under their directions, shall in the future disturb public peace and attempt to resist the civil officers in the discharge of their duty, the military authority will be called upon to aid and assist in putting the laws in force...”*

Signed New Market Nov. 7.

Congress let the first contract for the National Road in 1811. Some have referred to the National Road, or the “Gateway to the West” as beginning at Cumberland. This is misleading because it refers only to that section of the road that was the first and only highway built entirely by the Federal Government. The first free standing stone mile markers were placed along the National Road near Cumberland in 1815. Maryland placed their stone markers beside the road around the same time, several of these markers stand in and near the Town of New Market

As farmers and traders increasingly hauled their grain and products over wagon trails to connect to the Baltimore and Frederick Turnpike, the Town of New Market was a focal point of travel, some of which raised serious concerns. An example of this appeared in a Frederick-Town newspaper on Sept. 19, 1812 stating:

“... the subscriber means to petition the next General Assembly of Maryland for a law appointing commissioners to review and alter the road laid out ‘from near the old glass works called New Bremen, in Frederick County, to intersect the Baltimore and Frederick Turnpike Road at New Market in said county, so far as the said road passes through the land of the subscriber’”. Signed Nicholas Hall

Two wagon trails ran north and south into the Town of New Market to enter the Baltimore and Frederick Turnpike. One ran from Monrovia through the south side of Hall’s section on Eighth Alley to and across the Turnpike and continued north on Prospect Street to the “Old New London Road” (now MD 874) to Libertytown. The other trail ran north and south on the “old Quaker Road” that is Third Alley in Plummer’s Part of Town. It too ran, to and across the Turnpike and connected with Monrovia on the South, and the Old New London Road on the North.

By 1832, the large wagons of freight, stage coaches, livestock, etc., coming through the Town imposed costly hardship on the Town residents. Money was raised to

offset this through lotteries, also the Town asked the State to impose laws to assist. Maintenance of the Federally funded section of the roadway had also become such a burden to the government that it passed an act in 1832 transferring the National Road to the State. Maryland agreed to accept the road only on the condition that it would be brought into good repair before it was received and that the Federal Government would pay for and erect tollgates for the benefit of the State. Two years later Congress agreed to this.

In the Town of New Market Nicholas Hall wanted to establish toll gates, but William Plummer disagreed because he had deeded all the streets and alleys that ran through his section “for the use of the Public forever”.

It has been estimated that more than three million people passed over the Turnpike between 1820 and 1852. They included the rich and poor, the famous and infamous, the leaders and followers, the mainstreamers and the down trodden, the free and those held in bondage. Some passed over the road in wagons, stagecoaches, fancy buggies, and carriages, while some pushed carts, rode on horseback, many walked and others shuffled along in chains.

When the B & O. Railroad reached Wheeling WV in 1853, the golden years of the horse and man powered travel on the Turnpike began to pass. The first known record of the motorized age in the Town of New Market was published in the Frederick Daily News on October 25, 1899. It said an automobile had passed through, but unfortunately it had occurred after 10:00 PM and only a few people had the opportunity to see it. The era of the “horseless carriage” had arrived.

When Maryland began improved paving of the National Road, it ran to the corporate limits of the Town and stopped unless that section was given to the State. On May 19, 1914 the Town of New Market relinquished its Main Street to the State of Maryland.

The Federal Government passed an act in 1916 by which the U. S. Government and the State worked together to make good roads. By 1930 the Town of New Market had made changes to host the new form of travel. It now had gasoline pumps along Main Street. In addition to food and general merchandise, the stores now stocked tire patches, hand driven air pumps, etc. In the same year, Hahn Transportation Co., Inc. one of the largest haulers in the state began in the Town and is still in full operation today. The buggy repair shops were replaced by Stevens Auto Repair Shop, Lawson’s Car Dealership and Repair Shop. Other repair shops and businesses also lined the Road

Heavy trucks, tractors and trailers, automobiles and military convoys that moved up and down the coast passed through the Town. The traffic continued to be heavy day and night until the dual lane U.S. 40 (Interstate 70) was completed.

The present day Town of New Market is divided into five (5) distinct, continuous and adjoining sections:

- The Old Section, that includes the Historic District, situated on both sides of the National Road.

- The Wood's Addition located in the western section, on the South side of the Road.
- The Sponsellers Addition is also on the westernmost end, on the north side of the Road and bordered on the west by Boyers Mill Road. This addition blends beautifully with the Town's historic décor.
- Royal Oaks, a planned section of homes, sits on the North side of North Alley on the West side of the Old New London Road (MD874).
- Marley Gate, also a planned housing development stands on the East side of the Old New London Road and the North side of the National Road.

The old U.S. 40 Bypass, (now Interstate 70) runs the entire length of the Town on its southern perimeter. The Old New London Road bypass (MD 75) runs south and west near the easternmost section of Town and connects with the National Road and Interstate 70.

Idealists, adventurers, laborers and servants established and maintained the picturesque Town of New Market. For 210 years the Town has embraced, welcomed and withstood the necessary hustle –bustle of the National Road. It has now reached a crossroad in time where it has to align with the present, prepare for the future, while fervently preserving its proud historic past that is embedded in the fibers of this County, State and Nation.

Acknowledgements

My appreciation to Patti Morrow, Town Clerk, who took the recent photographs of scenes in Town and also typed this brief history and patiently assisted wherever possible.

Photographs were given and or loaned to the Town of New Market Historic Preservation Society, Inc., by: the late Mayor Franklin Shaw, Shirley Shaw, Bud Rossig, the late Edward "Jack" White, Martha White and Sarah Fossett all of New Market. Also Ed Hopf, Timonium, Maryland, the late Dr. Howard H. Hopkins, Baltimore, Maryland, Edgar T. Stevens, Welbourne, Florida, The Frederick County Historical Society, Fay Lee, Frederick Maryland and the Frederick News.

Researched and written by:
Kathleen Snowden

Mayors – Town of New Market

Isaac Russell.....	May 7, 1878-1880
John Smith.....	July 24, 1880-1882
Frances W. Waltz.....	August 22, 1882-1883
Edward Houck.....	April 2, 1883-1884
Frank Downey.....	May 6, 1884-1885
Edward Houck	December 15, 1885-1895
George M. Smith	May 2, 1895-1898
Thomas M. Waltz	May 9, 1898-1903
J.F. Zimmerman	May 7, 1903-1904
George W. Taylor	December 29, 1904-1907
Charles C. Ridgely	May 9, 1907-1911
Charles M. Utz.....	May 15, 1911-1914
George W. Taylor	May 19, 1914-1930
W.E. Falconer	May 17, 1930-1931
E.R. Roop	June 23, 1931-1940
Bernard Shelby	May 20, 1940-1949
Franklin Smith.....	August 29, 1949-1969
Franklin Shaw.....	May 14, 1969-1998
Richard S. Fleshman.....	May 1998-2001
Winslow F. Burhans III	May 21, 2001-Present

*Life Along
The National Road*



*In memory of the
Late Mayor Franklin Shaw
February 22, 1930-May 19, 1998*