

# CHAPTER 10

## Western Virginia in the New Nation – 1787-1850

### CHAPTER PREVIEW

#### TERMS

suffrage, abolitionist, emancipation, internal improvements, toll, turnpike, navigable, canal, steamboat, financier

#### PEOPLE

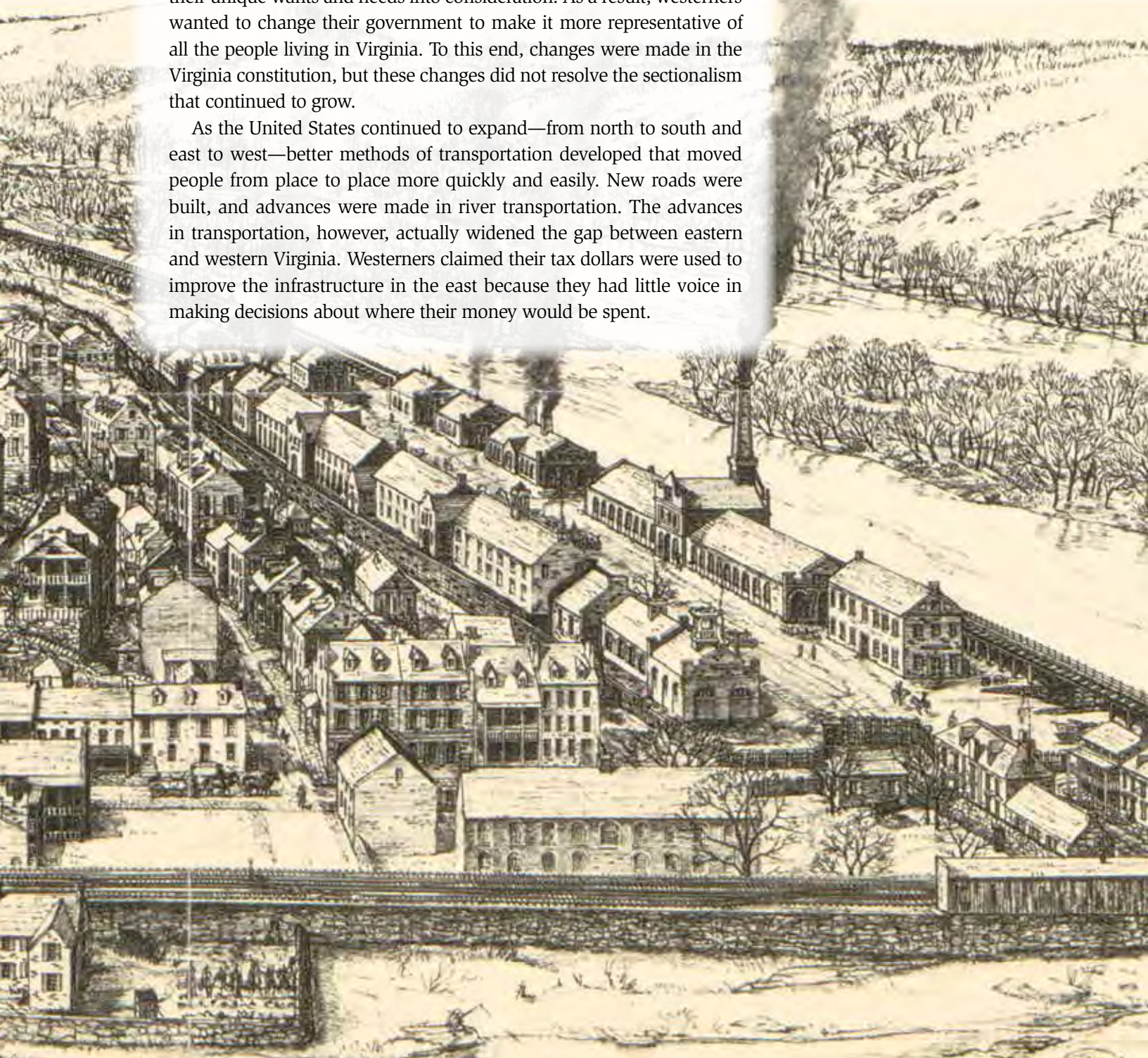
Philip Doddridge, Alexander Campbell, Lewis Summers, Nat Turner, Henry Ruffner

As you learned in Chapter 1, the new nation began with a weak national government that left the country ineffective. Even the creation of the United States Constitution could not resolve the growing sectional issues that plagued the country.

Although the country was divided between northern and southern issues, Virginia was divided between eastern and western concerns. As more people settled west of the Appalachians, differences between eastern and western Virginia grew. Westerners believed the state legislature in Richmond made laws and established policies without taking their unique wants and needs into consideration. As a result, westerners wanted to change their government to make it more representative of all the people living in Virginia. To this end, changes were made in the Virginia constitution, but these changes did not resolve the sectionalism that continued to grow.

As the United States continued to expand—from north to south and east to west—better methods of transportation developed that moved people from place to place more quickly and easily. New roads were built, and advances were made in river transportation. The advances in transportation, however, actually widened the gap between eastern and western Virginia. Westerners claimed their tax dollars were used to improve the infrastructure in the east because they had little voice in making decisions about where their money would be spent.

**Below:** The origins of Harpers Ferry can be traced to 1733, when Peter Stephens, a Pennsylvania Dutchman, settled here and began a ferry boat service, which was bought out in 1747 by Robert Harper for whom the town is named.



# SIGNS of the TIMES



## GEOGRAPHY

From 1810 to 1850, the center of population for the United States was located in western Virginia: 1810 in Harpers Ferry; 1820 in Hardy County (Wardensville); 1830 in Tucker County (Canaan Mountain); 1840 in Harrison County; and 1850 in Wood County.

## HISTORY

The United States fought a second war—the War of 1812—with Great Britain. During the war, the White House was burned by British soldiers, and Francis Scott Key wrote “The Star-Spangled Banner.”

## ECONOMICS

During this period, a loaf of bread cost \$.03, a dozen eggs cost \$.12, a pound of butter cost \$.14, and a whole chicken cost \$.15. Postage was \$.06 for up to 30 miles and \$.25 for over 400 miles. An education at Harvard cost about \$300 a year. A young factory worker earned about \$3.50 a week. An able seaman earned about \$3.00 a week. A child working in the New England textile mills made \$.07 a day.

## GOVERNMENT

Political buttons first appeared.

## EVERYDAY LIFE

**Population:** The population of Virginia in 1800 was 884,777, of which 346,631 (39 percent) were slaves. The percentage of slaves in some western Virginia counties included Berkeley, 18 percent; Kanawha, 7.1 percent; Greenbrier, 6.8 percent; Wood, 5.0 percent; Randolph, 4.7 percent; and Monroe, 4.5 percent.

**Fashions:** Moustaches became fashionable for men. The first shoes for right and left feet were introduced. After the invention of the cotton gin, cotton clothing became more popular.

**Science/Technology:** Benjamin Franklin invented bifocals. Samuel Colt designed a pistol with a revolving cartridge. John Deere invented a steel plow. Morse code was invented by Samuel F. B. Morse.

**Recreation:** Golf was introduced in Georgia and South Carolina. Hunting and billiards were popular in the South, while cricket and boat racing became popular in the North. Archery was introduced in America.

**Religion:** Mount Bethel Church was first called the Mountain Church in 1808. It became the nucleus of Presbyterian work in Hampshire County under the leadership of John Lyle. When the Reverend James Black reorganized the congregation in 1812, it was renamed Mount Bethel.

**Music:** Band music was popular, as were the songs “Bound for the Promised Land,” “Turkey in the Straw,” “Oh, Susannah,” “Drink to Me Only with Thine Eyes,” “Rock of Ages,” and after the War of 1812, “The Star-Spangled Banner.”

**Education:** Mount de Chantal was established in 1848 and incorporated as the Wheeling Female Academy in 1852.

Figure 10.1

Timeline: 1740 - 1860



# Cause and Effect

## DEFINING THE SKILL

Everything that happens does so because something makes it happen. What happens is the *effect*. The person, condition, or event that makes it happen is the *cause*. The connection between what happens and what makes it happen is called the *cause/effect relationship*.

Not all cause/effect relationships are clearly defined. As a result, it is sometimes difficult to determine the actual relationship. Often a cause can have more than one effect, and an effect can have more than one cause. At other times, an effect might not even appear in a reading for a long time.

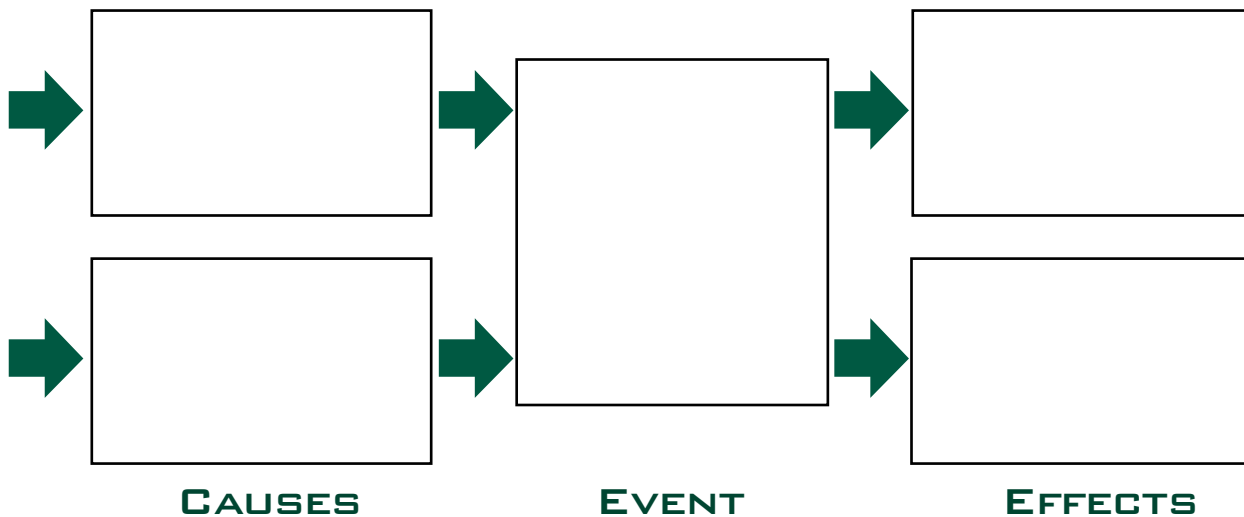
To help you recognize cause and effect, look for

- cue words or phrases such as *because, as a result of, in order to, effects of, consequently, for this reason, since, as a consequence, therefore*;
- the word *and* or a comma instead of one or more cue words;
- a longer text passage to read, because it may take several paragraphs to illustrate a cause/effect relationship.

## PRACTICING THE SKILL

In Section 1, you will read about how eastern and western Virginia began to drift apart. Geographical and political differences eventually *caused* the rift between the two sections to widen. The widening rift eventually *resulted* in the creation of the State of West Virginia.

Read Section 2 and describe how the invention of the steamboat affected western Virginia's development. You can use a graphic organizer like the one below.



## SECTION 1

# Virginia Revises Its Constitution

### As you read, look for

- reasons for Virginia’s constitutional convention of 1829;
- changes in Virginia’s constitution of 1830;
- issues that divided eastern and western Virginia;
- the purpose of the Reform Convention of 1850;
- changes brought about as a result of the Reform Convention of 1850;
- terms: **suffrage, abolitionist, emancipation, internal improvements.**

**In 1829, forty-some years after** the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia, the State of Virginia called its own constitutional convention to revise the state’s framework of government. The primary issue for the convention was discontent over the size of some counties. Some of the most outstanding political minds of early America attended the convention. The eastern part of the state was represented by James Madison and James Monroe, both former United States presidents; John Marshall, the Chief Justice of the United States; Virginia’s two senators and several of its congressmen; and other political notables. Those from the western part of the state were less famous. The three most qualified representatives were Philip Doddridge and Alexander Campbell of Brooke County and Judge Lewis Summers of Kanawha County.



**Above Left:** James Madison.  
**Above Right:** James Monroe.

## something extra!

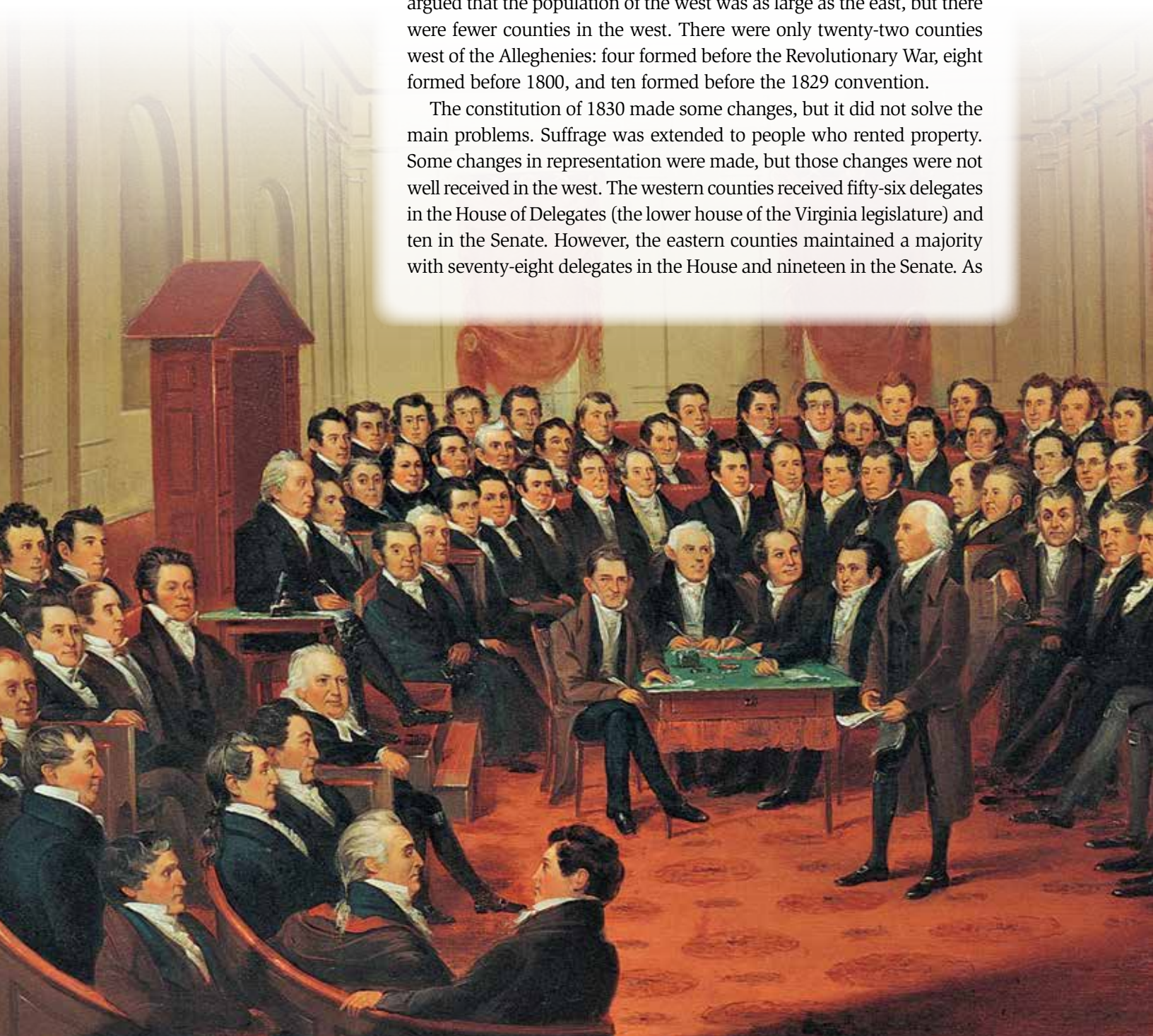


In western Virginia, the vote to ratify the 1830 constitution was 1,583 for and 8,365 against.

## The Constitution of 1830

Sectionalism was evident at the convention. Differences between east and west arose on the main issues of **suffrage** (the right to vote) and representation. Westerners wanted equal representation, suffrage for all white men, and the direct election of county officials. Easterners believed that their large number of slaves should be included in the total population count since that was permitted at the national level (under the terms of the Three-Fifths Compromise). Counting the slaves would give eastern Virginia more representatives in the state legislature. Easterners also wanted property ownership to be a requirement for voting. Westerners argued that the population of the west was as large as the east, but there were fewer counties in the west. There were only twenty-two counties west of the Alleghenies: four formed before the Revolutionary War, eight formed before 1800, and ten formed before the 1829 convention.

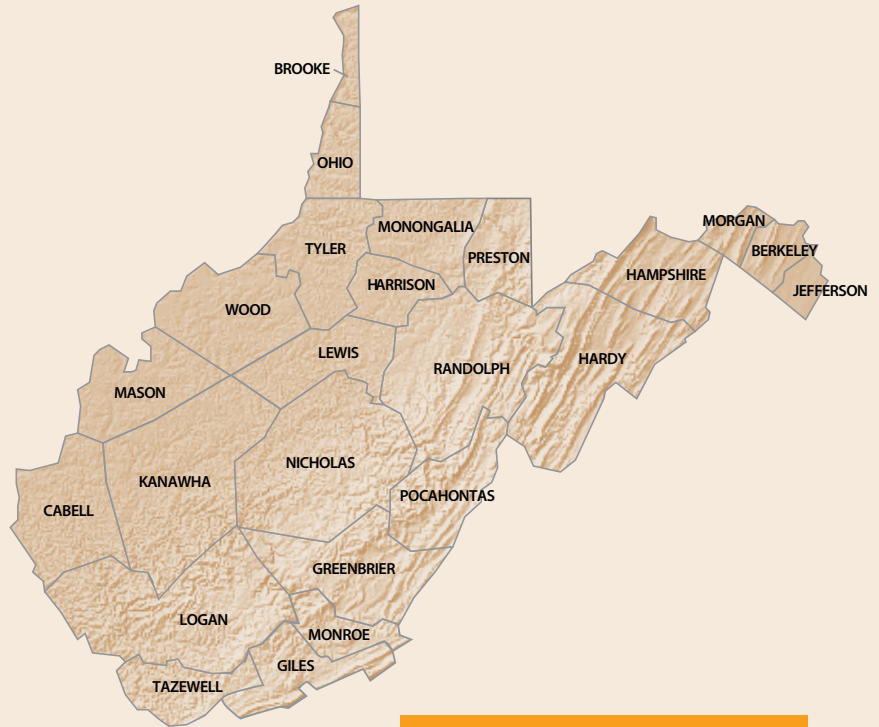
The constitution of 1830 made some changes, but it did not solve the main problems. Suffrage was extended to people who rented property. Some changes in representation were made, but those changes were not well received in the west. The western counties received fifty-six delegates in the House of Delegates (the lower house of the Virginia legislature) and ten in the Senate. However, the eastern counties maintained a majority with seventy-eight delegates in the House and nineteen in the Senate. As



a result, westerners were dissatisfied with the new state constitution.

The feelings of discontent are reflected in Brooke County's vote on the constitution. The home of Philip Doddridge and Alexander Campbell voted 100 percent *against* ratifying the document. West of the mountains, frontiersmen began to talk of separation from their eastern brothers.

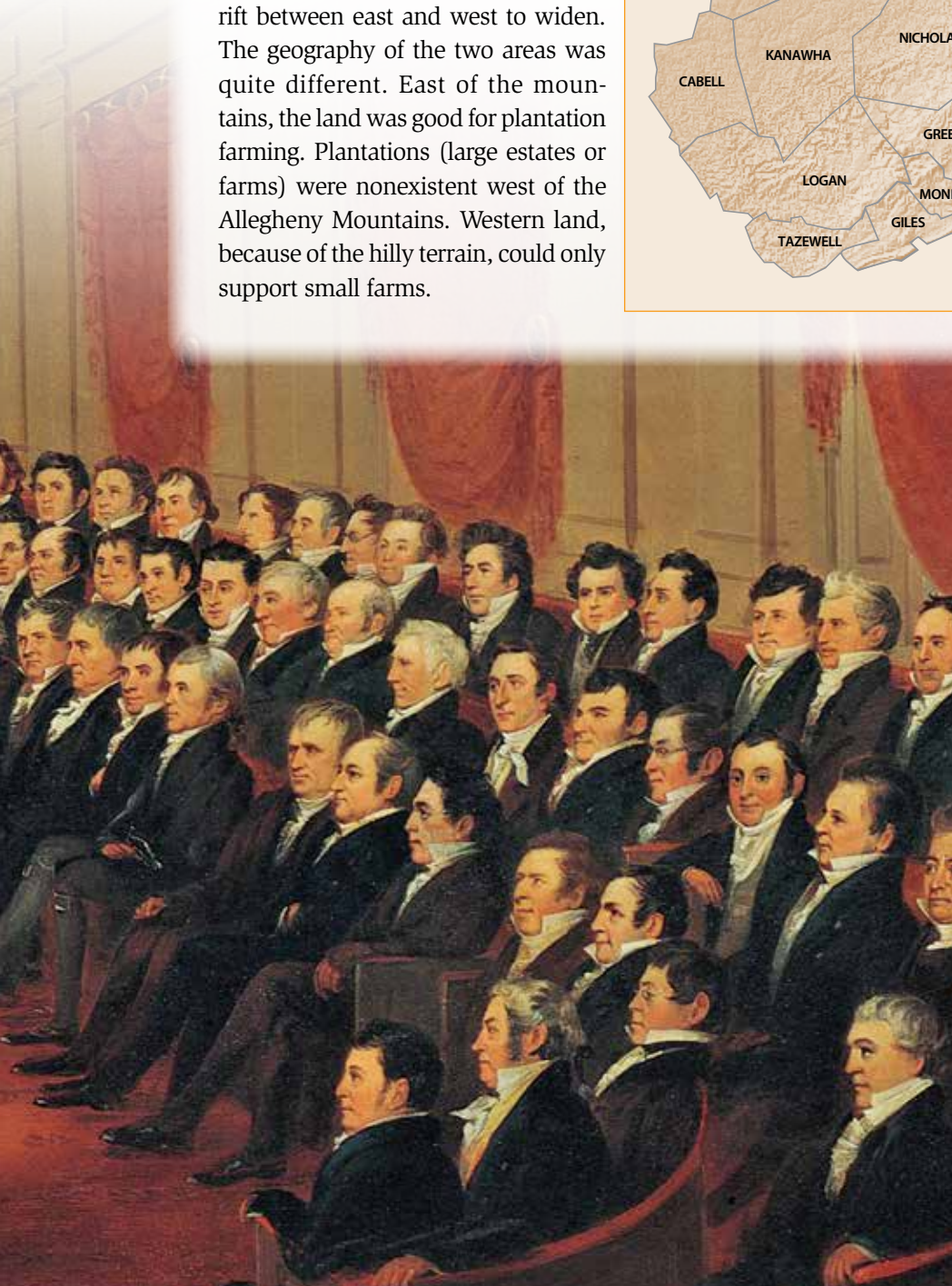
Besides ill feelings over the constitution of 1830, other factors caused the rift between east and west to widen. The geography of the two areas was quite different. East of the mountains, the land was good for plantation farming. Plantations (large estates or farms) were nonexistent west of the Allegheny Mountains. Western land, because of the hilly terrain, could only support small farms.



Map 10.1

### Western Virginia Counties, 1830

**Map Skill:** How has Hardy County changed since 1830?



**Left:** Delegates debate issues at the Virginia constitutional convention.



## Slavery Further Divides Virginia

Although slavery became more and more a factor in the division of Virginia's government, little action was taken before 1831. In that year, Nat Turner, a slave preacher from Virginia, brought the slavery issue to the forefront. Turner had been taught to read and write by the son of one of his owners, and he used this knowledge in his preaching. Turner was convinced that God wanted him to end slavery in America. To that end, he led over fifty-three fellow slaves in a revolt that began on August 22. This was the most serious incident concerning slavery up to that time in the United States. During the short-lived revolt, sixty-one whites, including Turner's owner and the owner's family, were killed. The Virginia militia put down the revolt and later hanged Turner and sixteen of his followers.

The panic caused by the revolt led to angry whites killing over one hundred innocent slaves. The states where slavery existed passed strict laws aimed at controlling the slaves. Because Turner had been a preacher, proslavery people became wary of preachers who were **abolitionists** (those who wished to end slavery).

Many westerners pushed for the **emancipation** (freeing) of the slaves. The Virginia government would not take such a step, however, because the state legislature was under the control of the slaveholders from the east. As the attacks on slavery increased, so did the defense of it. When westerners claimed slavery went against the spirit of the Declaration of Independence, easterners retorted that the founding fathers had rejected the idea of including the emancipation of slaves in the Constitution. Proslavery forces defended their position with the Bible. Abolitionists used the same Bible to point out the wrongs of slavery.

Easterners also argued that, if slavery had been profitable in the west, westerners would have favored it.

Religion too played a part in the divisions developing within Virginia. The main denomination in eastern Virginia—Episcopal—had many wealthy, aristocratic, and slave-owning members. Religious denominations in the west included Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian, Quaker, Dunkard, Mennonite, Moravian, and Lutheran. The Episcopal church supported slavery, as did some Methodist, Baptist, and Presbyterian congregations. The dissension over slavery grew, however, and in 1846 caused a split in the Methodist church. The split in effect divided the church membership along a line where the southern border of West Virginia is located today.



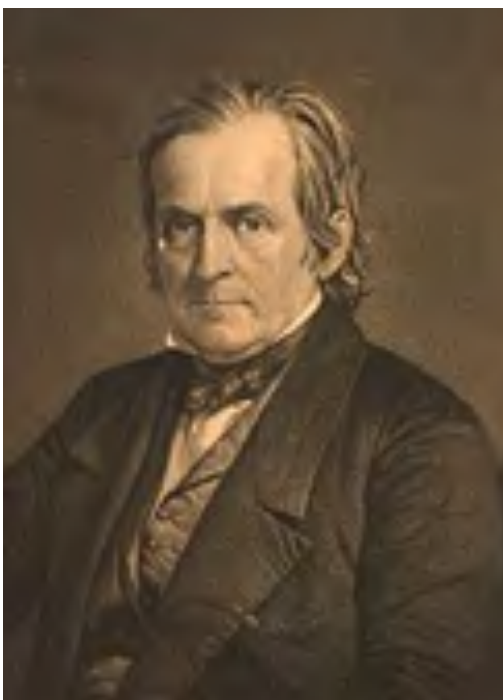
**Above:** The capture of Nat Turner.

Churches took sides, actively supporting or vehemently opposing slavery. Many ministers spoke about slavery directly from their pulpits. A story of one minister's dilemma is a good illustration of the problems faced by the churches. This minister, who opposed slavery, inherited a slave. He could not set the slave free, however, because the laws of Virginia would not allow it. The dilemma was that, if the minister did not free the slave, he would break a law of the church; if the minister did free the slave, he would break a law of the State of Virginia.

An address by Henry Ruffner reflected the feelings of many westerners about slavery. At a young age, Henry Ruffner moved to the Kanawha Valley, where his father worked in the salt industry. Ruffner became a teacher and a minister and the head of Mercer Academy in Charleston. Ruffner later went to Lexington, Virginia, where he served first as a professor and then as the president of Washington College (now Washington and Lee University).

In 1847, while Ruffner was living in Lexington, he delivered his thoughts on slavery. His speech was published as the *Ruffner Pamphlet*. In his "Address to the People of West Virginia," he took a firm stand against slavery. He believed that slavery held industry back. He declared that Wheeling and Pittsburgh should have been equal in size, but, since slavery was not allowed in Pennsylvania, Pittsburgh had become more industrialized. As a result, its population was greater than that of Wheeling. In Ruffner's opinion, western Virginia's resources of forests, iron, coal,

limestone, and salt were ideally suited to industry, and not to slave-dominated plantations. He proposed that the House of Delegates pass a constitutional amendment that would allow western Virginia to be free while the eastern tidewater would be slave. His address was well received in the west but not in the east. Throughout the United States, moderate advice such as Ruffner's was ignored.



### something extra!

Henry Ruffner's "Address to the People of West Virginia" was the result of a debate he took part in that was sponsored by the Franklin Society. The pamphlet eventually cost Ruffner his job.

**Left:** Henry Ruffner.

**Below:** Waitman T. Willey of Monongalia County was one of western Virginia’s representatives to the 1850 constitutional convention.



## The Reform Convention of 1850

The constitution of 1830 gave the Virginia General Assembly the right, after 1841, to reapportion voting districts for senators and delegates every ten years. The year 1850 was the earliest time a convention could be called for that purpose. Because the population figures of 1830 and 1840 clearly showed that the white population of the west had outgrown that of the east, westerners believed that their concerns over unequal representation would at long last be resolved. The “reform convention” would finally give westerners the chance to correct what they believed to be an injustice.

Western representatives to the 1850 convention, unlike those in 1830, had similar knowledge and abilities to those from the east. Leaders from the west included Gideon D. Camden of Harrison County, John S. Carlike of Barbour County, Charles J. Faulkner of Berkeley County, Joseph Johnson of Harrison County, Benjamin Smith and George W. Summers of Kanawha County, and Waitman T. Willey of Monongalia County. These men stood united with the other western representatives on issues, giving the west a powerful block of votes. In an important move, George W. Summers was appointed chairman of the committee on representation. Summers was an excellent speaker and a capable politician. His appointment assured westerners that needed changes would be made.

When the convention adjourned, westerners had indeed gotten much of what they wanted. They had long believed that people, not property, should be the basis for determining representation in the legislature. At the 1850 convention, the delegates decided to

no longer count slaves when determining the population for legislative representation. This resulted in westerners having 55 percent of the total representatives in the House of Delegates. The west did not gain complete equality with the east. In the state Senate, the east had thirty senators, while the west had only twenty. With the changes that were made, however, the sphere of power had begun to shift to the west.

The convention of 1850 also changed many voting regulations. The property ownership requirement was abolished. After that date, all white males who were at least twenty-one years old were given the vote. To be a little more restrictive, a capitation (head) tax was levied on every voter. Half of the money collected from the tax was to be used to support education.

**something  
extra!**

The 1850 Virginia constitution also created the position of lieutenant governor.

# The Role of Early Schools in Preserving Culture

When the early settlers moved to western Virginia, their main concern was survival. They had to clear their land, build a house, and plant a garden. They relied on the values that had been instilled in them by their forefathers—self-reliance, independence, and hard work. With no formal education system available, they taught those same values to their children. On the frontier, children became self-reliant and hard-working adults.

After a time, descendants of those early settlers, as well as local churches, became concerned about the number of people who could not read or write. Churches feared that people who could not read the Bible might forget its values (e.g., love, respect, caring). Frontiersmen also wanted their children to read and understand land deeds and write their names for legal purposes. For these reasons, communities began to build local schools.

Schools were in session from 9:00 to 4:00 each day, with an hour for lunch and two 15-minute recesses. Besides teaching the “3 Rs” (reading, ‘riting, and ‘rithmetic), schools reinforced religious and community values by using the McGuffey Readers, which had stories about honesty, courage, charity, and good manners. A lesson in respect and good manners came when the school door opened each morning. As students entered, they bowed or curtsied to the teacher and addressed him or her as “sir” or “ma’am.” Students started the school day by saying the Lord’s Prayer and reciting Bible verses. This suggests the importance of the church in settlers’ daily lives.

Students were expected to be well behaved, both at home and at school. They had to do their homework and come prepared to recite their lessons. Recitation was the main form of instruction. One grade level at a time was called to the front of the room to recite before the teacher.

During recess, students went outside to play or sit and talk. Some played team games. These outside activities taught sportsmanship and cooperation. Some schools did not allow girls and boys to play together.



## something extra!

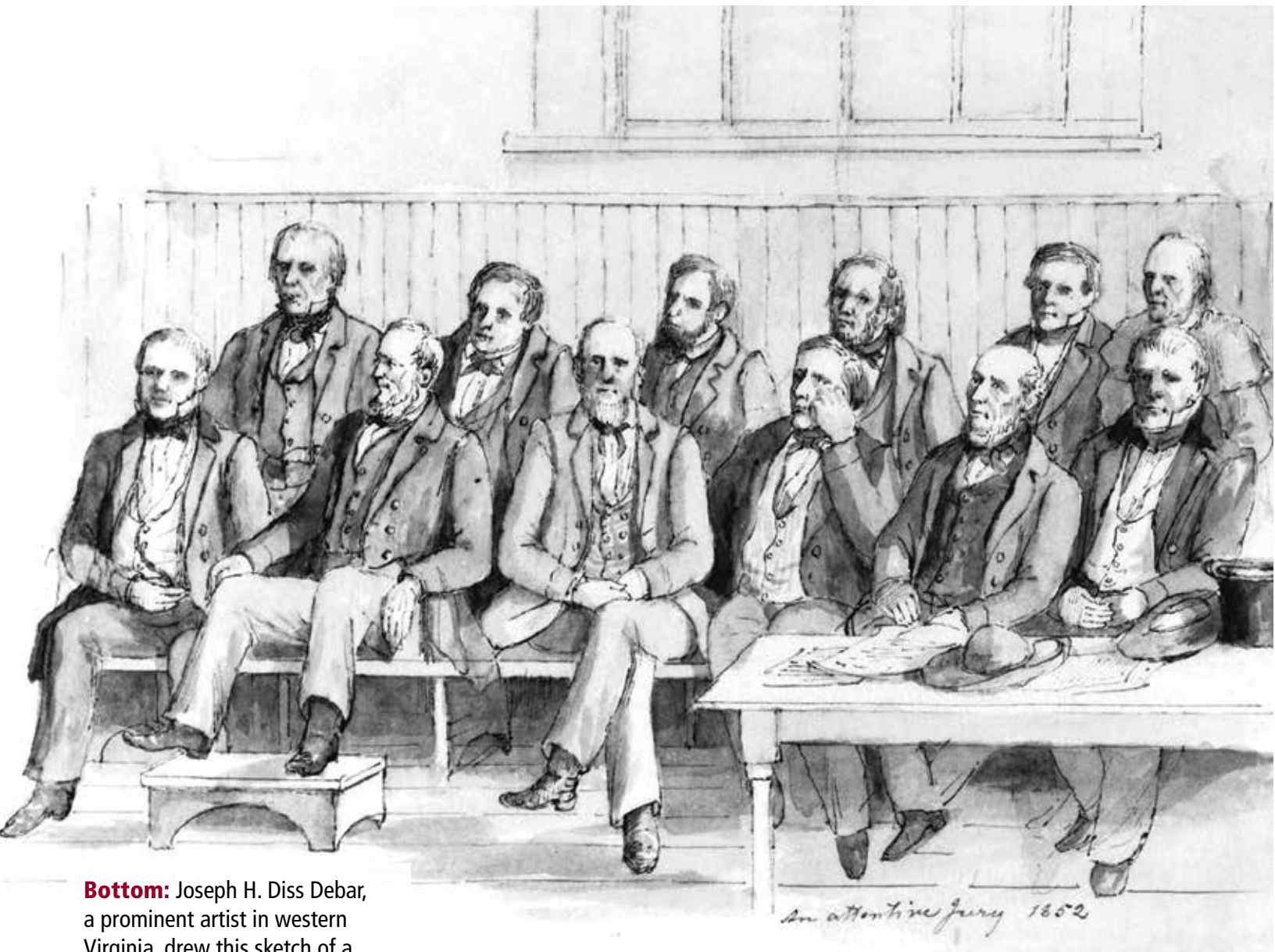


When the new constitution was submitted to the voters for ratification, it passed by a vote of 75,748 to 11,060.

In other changes, local officials were to be chosen by popular vote (the vote by citizens in an election); they would no longer be appointed. From that time on, officeholders would answer directly to the voters for their actions. The popular vote was also to be used in the elections of justices of the peace, sheriffs, county clerks, circuit clerks, judges, and the governor, whose term was increased to four years.

Changes were also made in the judicial system. Jurors (citizens chosen to serve on a jury) would no longer be selected from courthouse loungers. After 1851, jurors were to be paid and selected from the registered voters of counties.

The convention did not, however, resolve all of the issues between eastern and western Virginians. The taxation issue created another rift between east and west. All property, except slaves, was taxed at full value. Westerners complained that their tax money was being used to build

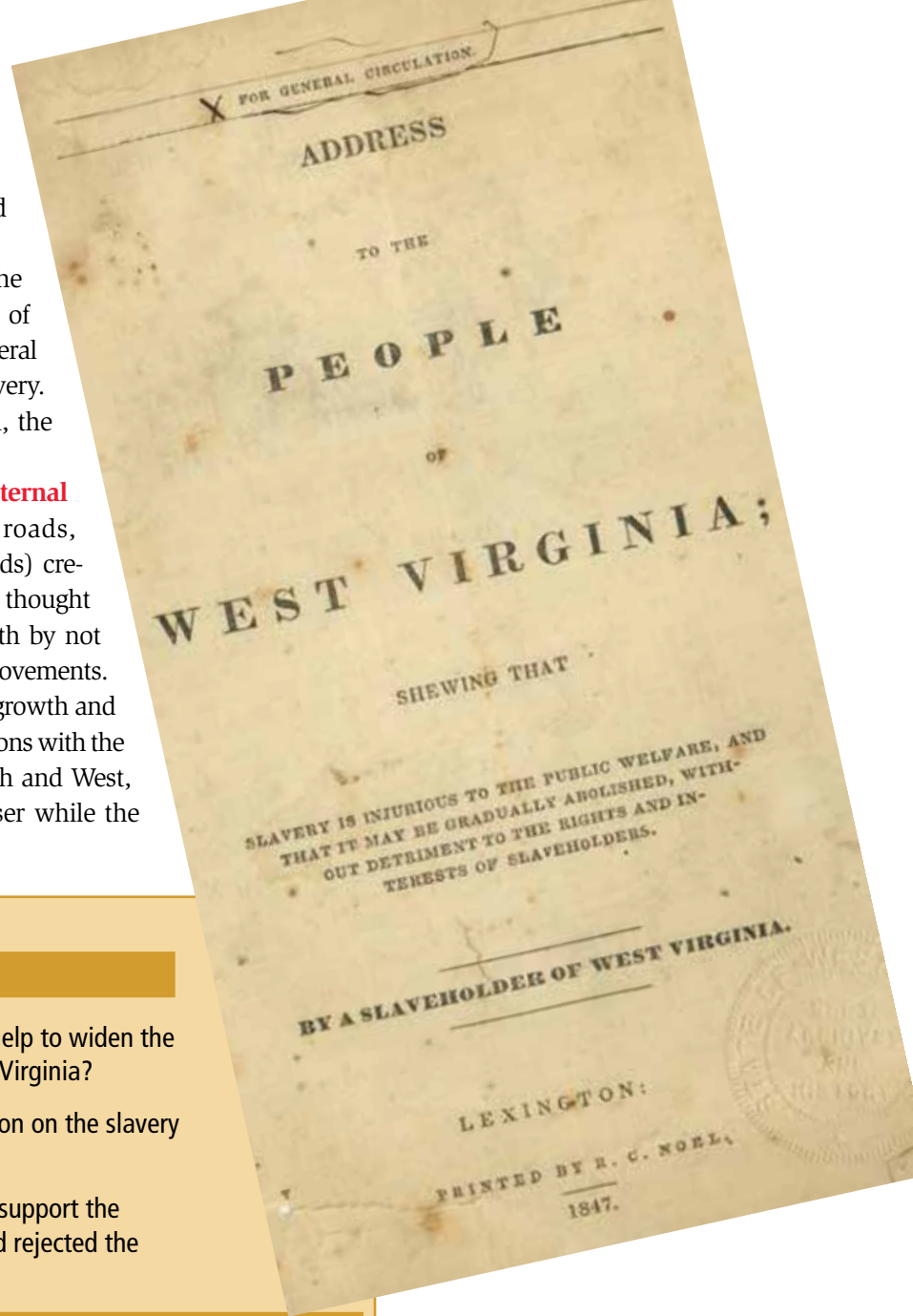


**Bottom:** Joseph H. Diss Debar, a prominent artist in western Virginia, drew this sketch of a typical jury in the 1850s.

railroads and roads in the east. In spite of not getting everything they wanted, every county in western Virginia voted for the reformed constitution.

The new constitution and events at the national level brought about a period of calmness. At the national level, the federal government postponed a fight over slavery. In the state, as throughout the nation, the slavery problem still existed, however.

In western Virginia, the issue of **internal improvements** (improvements to roads, bridges, and other transportation needs) created an ongoing argument. Westerners thought easterners were restricting their growth by not approving needed roads and other improvements. Westerners began to realize that their growth and prosperity depended on closer connections with the industrial North. As a result, the North and West, including western Virginia, grew closer while the South became more isolated.



## Reviewing the Section

### Reviewing the Content

1. Why did geographical differences help to widen the split between eastern and western Virginia?
2. What was Henry Ruffner's suggestion on the slavery issue in Virginia?
3. Why did voters in western Virginia support the constitution of 1850 when they had rejected the 1830 one?

### Using the Content

1. Pretend that you are a delegate to the Virginia constitutional convention of 1829 or 1850. Write a letter home describing your experiences.
2. Use a Venn diagram to compare and contrast the Virginia constitutions of 1830 and 1850.

### Extending the Literacy Skill

According to the information in this section, what effect did the differences between eastern and western Virginia have on the changes made to Virginia's 1850 constitution?

## SECTION 2

# Improving Transportation

### As you read, look for

- improvements in road travel;
- difficulties in river travel;
- improvements in river travel;
- types of boats used to carry people and goods;
- the impact of the steamboat on commerce and personal travel;
- the impact of the railroad on the economy of western Virginia;
- terms: **toll**, **turnpike**, **navigable**, **canal**, **steamboat**, **financier**.

**When the first hunters, trappers, and explorers** crossed the Appalachians, they followed Indian trails. These trails usually ran along ridges and the crests of mountains to avoid attacks from enemy tribes in the valleys and swampy lowlands. The trappers and explorers carried their provisions on their backs or used pack animals to carry their few possessions. When the settlers and farmers came, however, they needed better ways to move their belongings.

These needs resulted in the improvement of roads for overland travel and in the development of vehicles to make travel by water and rail possible. Each improvement opened up western Virginia to settlement as well as industrial development.

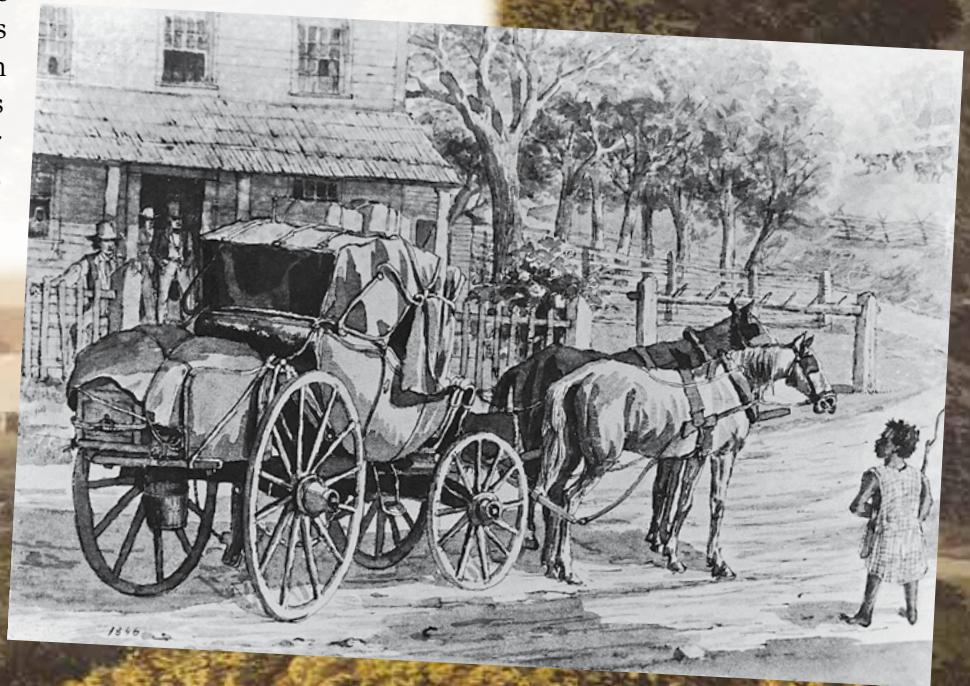
## Road Travel

It took Virginians from 1607 until almost 1750 to settle as far as the Appalachian Mountains. Settlement was slow because there were no roads on which people and their wagons could travel. The first public road in present-day West Virginia was in the eastern panhandle, running from Winchester, Virginia, to the home of Morgan Morgan near Martinsburg. Morgan planned and actually helped construct the road in 1743. Although transportation needs were being addressed in the Potomac area, it took nearly fifty years before western Virginia was joined to the eastern part of the state by good roads.

The surge of road construction between 1790 and 1840 made western Virginia accessible to further settlement. The development of the Conestoga wagon in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, helped spur both travel and settlement. The wagon was 16 feet long and 4 feet wide, and it could carry up to 8 tons of freight. Its wheels were 6-10 inches wide and sometimes had iron rims. Canvas cloth was stretched over wooden staves (strips of wood that were bent in arcs over the wagon). The ends of the wagon bed were higher than the middle to keep goods from falling out on steep hills.

something  
extra!

The Conestoga wagon was usually drawn by 4-6 powerful horses.



**Background:** Roads were made of dirt, and transportation was limited to horses and horse-drawn carriages. **Above:** Joseph H. Diss Debar sketched this early coach, which was used to deliver mail.



# Focus on Technology

## LEARNING SKILL: COLLABORATION

Work collaboratively with group members to complete a project.

## TECHNOLOGY TOOL: SEARCH ENGINES, PRESENTATION SOFTWARE

Use features of presentation software—e.g., design templates, design layouts (fonts, colors/backgrounds), animation, and graphics (inserting pictures, objects, movies, sound, charts, hyperlinks, and graphs)—to create an original product.

Use a variety of search engines and work in groups of 3-4 to create 3-5 slides illustrating one of the following topics: road travel, inns and taverns, water travel, flatboats and keelboats, steamboat travel, and rail travel. Each slide must contain a picture with text to describe it.





**Below:** Tolls from the turnpikes were needed to help fund the maintenance of the roads.

## Turnpikes

Although the Conestoga wagon was able to carry large loads, better roads were needed to make travel easier. As more roads were built, property owners were, at first, expected to keep them up. Each male was to devote a certain number of days each year to road maintenance. Maintenance included filling mudholes as well as making any other improvements to ensure that travel might be as comfortable as possible. Since few men actually made an effort to keep up the roads, the government decided that another way must be found to provide for their upkeep. The result was the establishment of a system of **tolls** (fees) that were charged those who used the roads. Money from the tolls was then used for road maintenance. Roads on which tolls were charged became known as **turnpikes** because a swinging barrier, called a *pike*, was placed across the road. When the toll was paid, the pike was turned aside to allow access to the road.

The James River and Kanawha Turnpike, also called the Midland Trail, reached the Kanawha Valley in 1790. It was then extended to the Guyandotte River in 1800. By 1809, it had become a toll road, and by 1815 it was the main route across Virginia. Today, this road follows U.S. Route 60 and some parts of Interstate 64. The original National Road ran from

### Map 10.2

#### Early Roads in Western Virginia

**Map Skill:** Which turnpike passed through Clarksburg?





Cumberland, Maryland, 430 miles to Vandalia, Illinois. The road became a major highway for moving people and commerce throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It was also one of the most significant roads to eventually become part of U.S. Route 40. Wheeling was chosen as a terminus of the road because the absence of rapids and seasonally low water in the nearby Ohio River made it easier to transfer goods from road to river transportation. Only sixteen miles of the road ran through West Virginia, but, after it reached Wheeling in 1818, that city saw significant growth and progress. Another important road, the Northwestern Turnpike, was completed from Winchester to Parkersburg in 1838. The route, still in use today as U.S. Route 50, runs through Romney, Grafton, and Clarksburg. After decades of inaction on the part of the Virginia government in Richmond, the state finally approved the Staunton and Parkersburg Turnpike, which provided access from the upper Shenandoah Valley to the Ohio River. The road extended from Staunton, Virginia, through Beverly in Randolph County, Buckhannon in Upshur County, and Weston in Lewis County. It finally reached Parkersburg on the Ohio River in 1847. The road opened up large sections of western Virginia to settlement and trade.

**Top:** There are still turnpikes in use today. **Bottom:** Country roads often fall into disrepair.

## Stopovers

Along the turnpikes and other highways, inns or taverns were built. These structures served as rest stops, providing room and board for tired travelers and pasturage for their animals. Laws regulated the prices for food and lodging in the taverns. County courts issued licenses to tavern keepers. For example, the Monongalia court approved the following charges in the late 1700s: breakfast, 33-1/3 cents; dinner, 37-1/2 cents; supper, 33-1/3 cents; lodging with clean sheets, 12-1/2 cents; pasturage for 24 hours, 12-1/2 cents.

Taverns in America were unique in that social class was not observed. Everyone ate and drank at the same table, and rooms were rented on a “first come, first served” basis, regardless of a person’s “rank” in society. Travelers might have to share a room, or even a bed, with a complete stranger. Europeans, used to a more structured social class system, believed this was carrying democracy too far. Some inns became social centers. The Greenbrier at White Sulphur Springs can trace its cultural heritage back to the inns located on the James River and Kanawha Turnpike.

The taverns also served as stopovers for stagecoaches carrying passengers, luggage, and mail across western Virginia. Stagecoaches, which came in all sizes and shapes, were more comfortable and faster than the Conestoga wagons. Starting out as little more than boxes on wheels that bounced all over the place, the stagecoaches were improved when their shape and structure were changed. They became more egg-shaped, and leather straps were placed under the coach to act as shock absorbers and give a smoother, more comfortable ride.

**Below:** The Old Stone House, formerly the Red Horse Tavern, on the Northwestern Turnpike (now U.S. 50) was built by Henry Grimes in 1827.

### something extra!



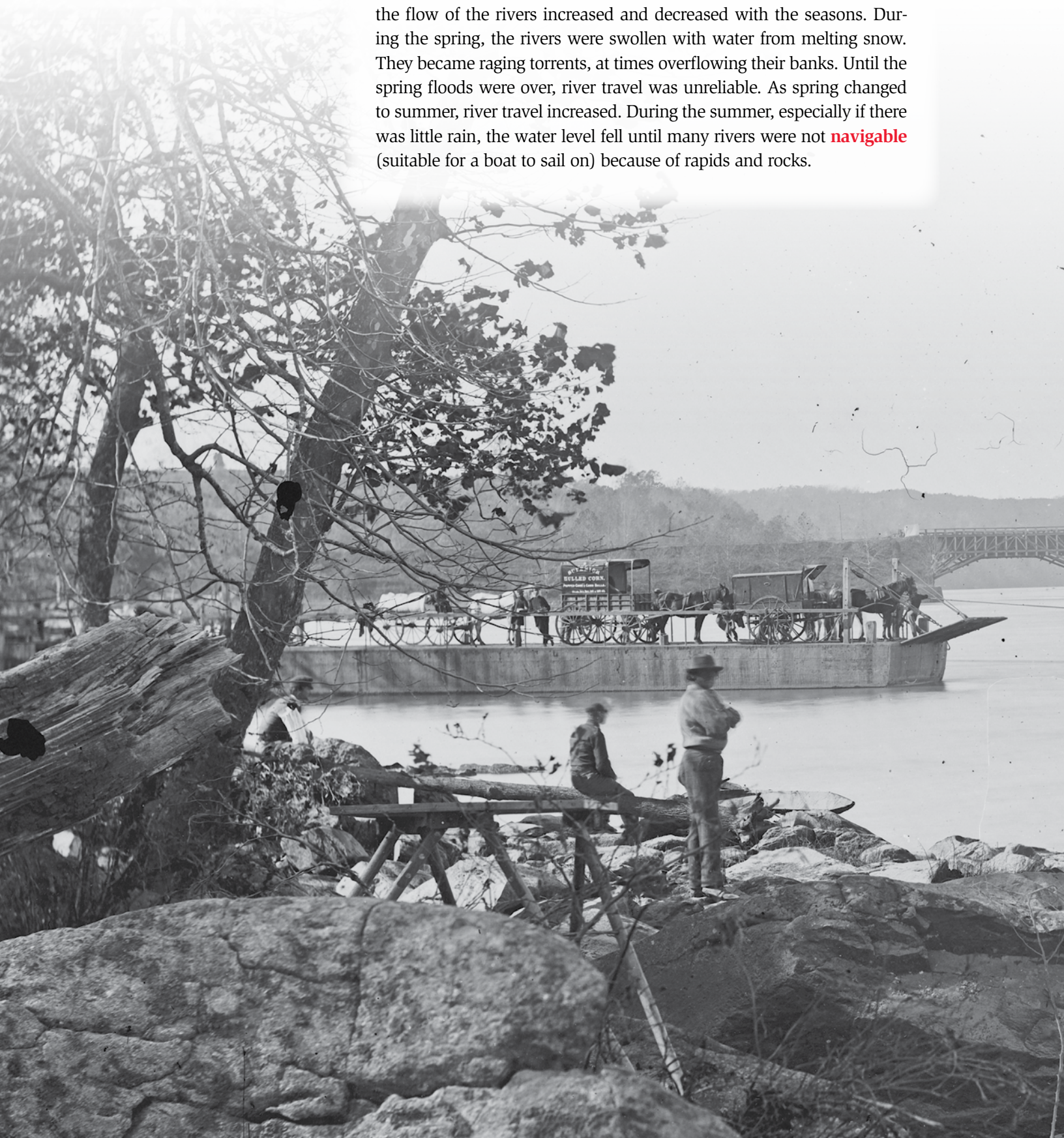
The best-known stagecoaches were called Concord stagecoaches. They were built by the Abbot-Downing Company in Concord, New Hampshire.



**Below:** Horse-and-carriages wait on the ferry platform with a railroad bridge in the background.

## Water Travel

River travel had many dangers and problems. There were no dams or reservoirs to keep the river levels fairly constant. The water level and the flow of the rivers increased and decreased with the seasons. During the spring, the rivers were swollen with water from melting snow. They became raging torrents, at times overflowing their banks. Until the spring floods were over, river travel was unreliable. As spring changed to summer, river travel increased. During the summer, especially if there was little rain, the water level fell until many rivers were not **navigable** (suitable for a boat to sail on) because of rapids and rocks.



## Ferries

The early pioneers and settlers had the problem of crossing the rivers. While fords (shallow places) and narrow bridges were used to cross small streams, ferries were the main means of crossing larger rivers. Reminders of these early river crossings can be seen in the names of places like Harpers Ferry, which was named for Robert Harper who purchased land in 1747 and operated a ferry there.

Many westerners complained about the fees and the interruptions in ferry service. Ferries did not operate at night or when water levels were high. Some, like the ferry over the Ohio at the end of the National Road in Wheeling, were not large enough to accommodate the traffic wanting to cross the river.

## Bridges

A better way was needed to transport goods across the Ohio River. Pressure on politicians and improvements in bridge-building resulted in a changeover from ferries to bridges. In 1849, after two years of construction and at a cost of \$250,000, Wheeling was connected to Ohio by the Wheeling Suspension Bridge. At about the same time, a European development—the covered bridge—began to be used by American bridge designers and builders.

**Inset Below:** The Wheeling Suspension Bridge was built in 1849. It was the longest bridge in the world at that time and the first to span the Ohio River.



# Covered Bridges

Covered bridges became more popular after 1850, when the board of public works of Virginia accepted bids for the construction of bridges on the Staunton and Parkersburg Turnpike. In Richmond, the board listened to many detailed plans for bridges before an unusual demonstration took place. Lemuel Chenoweth came forward and quickly assembled a model of a covered bridge, which he had brought on a 250-mile-long journey from Beverly in Randolph County. He placed the bridge on two facing chairs, climbed up on the bridge, walked across, climbed down, and said, "Gentlemen, this is all I have to say."

Chenoweth's impressive demonstration and low bid won him the contract. He became West Virginia's premier bridge builder. Chenoweth planned and built bridges all across the state, including one at Barrackville, crossing Buffalo Creek, and a twin-barreled bridge at Philippi. The bridge at Philippi burned in 1989. It was closed to traffic while it was being restored, and it reopened to the public in 1991. The bridge at Barrackville is still standing.

Hundreds of covered bridges were built in what is now West Virginia, but only a few remain. Many were destroyed by natural causes such as age, others by intentional destruction. In 1947, there were eighty-nine covered bridges still standing in West Virginia; forty years later, there were only seventeen. Losing seventy-two bridges in forty years equates to losing one and a half a year. Those bridges that still stand have become important examples of our heritage and still serve as important transportation routes.

**From Top to Bottom:** Barrackville Covered Bridge, Barrackville, Marion County, 1853; Carrollton Covered Bridge, Carrollton, Barbour County, 1856; Center Point Covered Bridge, Center Point, Doddridge County, 1888; Staats Mill Covered Bridge, Ripley, Jackson County, 1887; Fish Creek Covered Bridge, near Hundred, Wetzel County, 1881.



Two important covered bridges were built on the James River and Kanawha Turnpike. One of these massive bridges, 422 feet long, crossed the Greenbrier at Caldwell. The other, 480 feet long, crossed the Gauley at its mouth. Many people were hurt financially by the new bridges. Within a year of its construction, the bridge over the Gauley was burned by local ferry owners. The arsonists were caught and jailed, and the bridge was rebuilt. It was burned two more times, however, before retreating Confederate troops burned it for the last time during the Civil War.

## Canals

Another form of transportation that enjoyed a brief period of popularity was the canal. A **canal** is a waterway that joins one river or body of water to another. The federal and state governments provided over \$100 million for the building of these routes of transportation in America. Before the entire system could be completed, however, the canals were outdated.

Construction began with much ceremony on such projects as the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal. That canal followed the route of the Potomac River between Cumberland, Maryland, and Washington, DC, making it possible to transport goods from western Virginia to the eastern seaboard. Another project was intended to join the Potomac and Monongahela Rivers. However, all the projects stopped at the same barrier—the mountains. Weather caused other problems. Barges on the canals could carry tons of goods pulled by one mule, but the canals froze in winter, limiting their use.

## Flatboats

For river transportation, the early pioneers used canoes, which were little more than dugouts made from readily available yellow poplar trees. As settlements grew, however, larger and better boats were needed. Hollowed-out logs were replaced by *flatboats* (rafts guided with an oar), which soon became the preferred method of travel. Then someone found that putting 2-3-foot sides on the raft would keep the cargo safer. Sometimes a tent or cabin placed on the boat provided shelter.

These flatboats were moved by pushing poles into the river bottom. But pushing the boats upstream was difficult because of the raft's flat front and bottom. As a result, the boats usually only traveled downstream. After completing a trip, the boat's logs and timber were often used to build a shelter or cabin.

**Below:** The building of canals enjoyed a brief period of popularity. **Bottom:** This flatboat is in the Trough of the Potomac River.

something  
extra!



In 1981, all seventeen of the covered bridges in West Virginia were listed on the National Register of Historic Places.





**Bottom:** Steamboats were able to transport large groups of people and carry large cargo.

### Keelboats

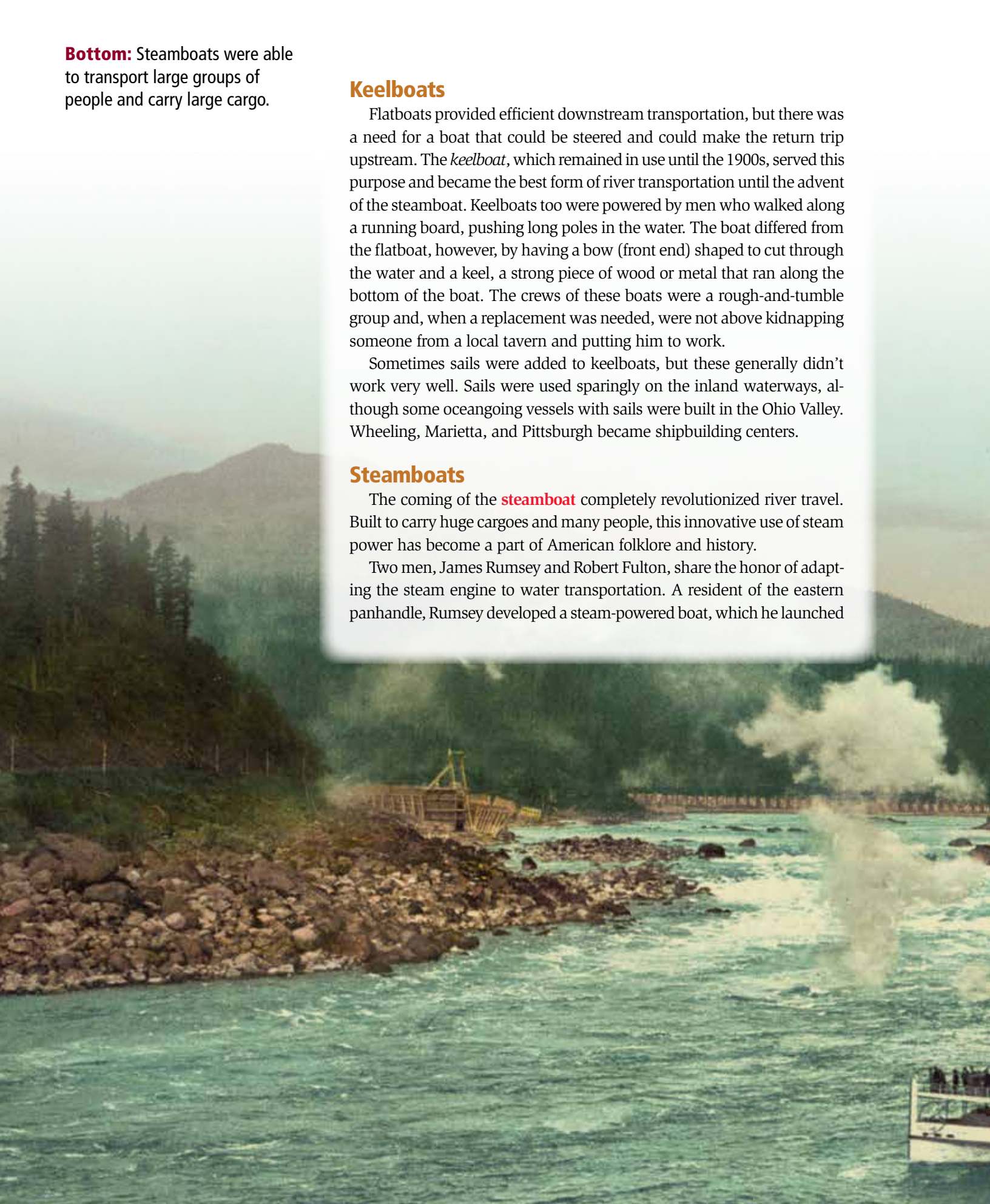
Flatboats provided efficient downstream transportation, but there was a need for a boat that could be steered and could make the return trip upstream. The *keelboat*, which remained in use until the 1900s, served this purpose and became the best form of river transportation until the advent of the steamboat. Keelboats too were powered by men who walked along a running board, pushing long poles in the water. The boat differed from the flatboat, however, by having a bow (front end) shaped to cut through the water and a keel, a strong piece of wood or metal that ran along the bottom of the boat. The crews of these boats were a rough-and-tumble group and, when a replacement was needed, were not above kidnapping someone from a local tavern and putting him to work.

Sometimes sails were added to keelboats, but these generally didn't work very well. Sails were used sparingly on the inland waterways, although some oceangoing vessels with sails were built in the Ohio Valley. Wheeling, Marietta, and Pittsburgh became shipbuilding centers.

### Steamboats

The coming of the **steamboat** completely revolutionized river travel. Built to carry huge cargoes and many people, this innovative use of steam power has become a part of American folklore and history.

Two men, James Rumsey and Robert Fulton, share the honor of adapting the steam engine to water transportation. A resident of the eastern panhandle, Rumsey developed a steam-powered boat, which he launched



on the Potomac River in 1787. Although Rumsey was the first to successfully demonstrate a steamboat, improvements to his engine required that he go to England for financial support. In 1792, before he could perfect his invention, he died.

While many people worked on the development of the steamboat, final credit goes to Robert Fulton. In 1807, Fulton demonstrated his boat, the *Clermont*, by traveling 150 miles from New York to Albany at an average speed of 6 miles per hour. It was the first successful demonstration of the practicality and endurance of the steam engine for water transportation.

One of Fulton's wealthy backers, Nicholas J. Roosevelt, saw a future for the steamboat. Roosevelt, Fulton, and Robert M. Livingston, another **financier** (one who provides the funds for an undertaking), explored the idea of building steamboats to increase trade on major rivers like the Mississippi and Ohio. In 1809, Roosevelt and his wife decided to travel by flatboat down the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers from Pittsburgh to New Orleans to see first-hand the potential of two-way steamboat travel. Roosevelt was able to see far beyond the dangers of the river and recognized the economic growth and development the steamboat could bring.

He returned to Pittsburgh and helped finance the building of the first steamboat to travel on the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers. The *New Orleans* was launched in 1811 and successfully traveled the rivers for two years until it struck a snag and sank. In spite of the fate of the *New Orleans*, river travel had entered a new era. Because of his foresight, Roosevelt has been called the "Father of Steamboat Trade."

something  
extra!



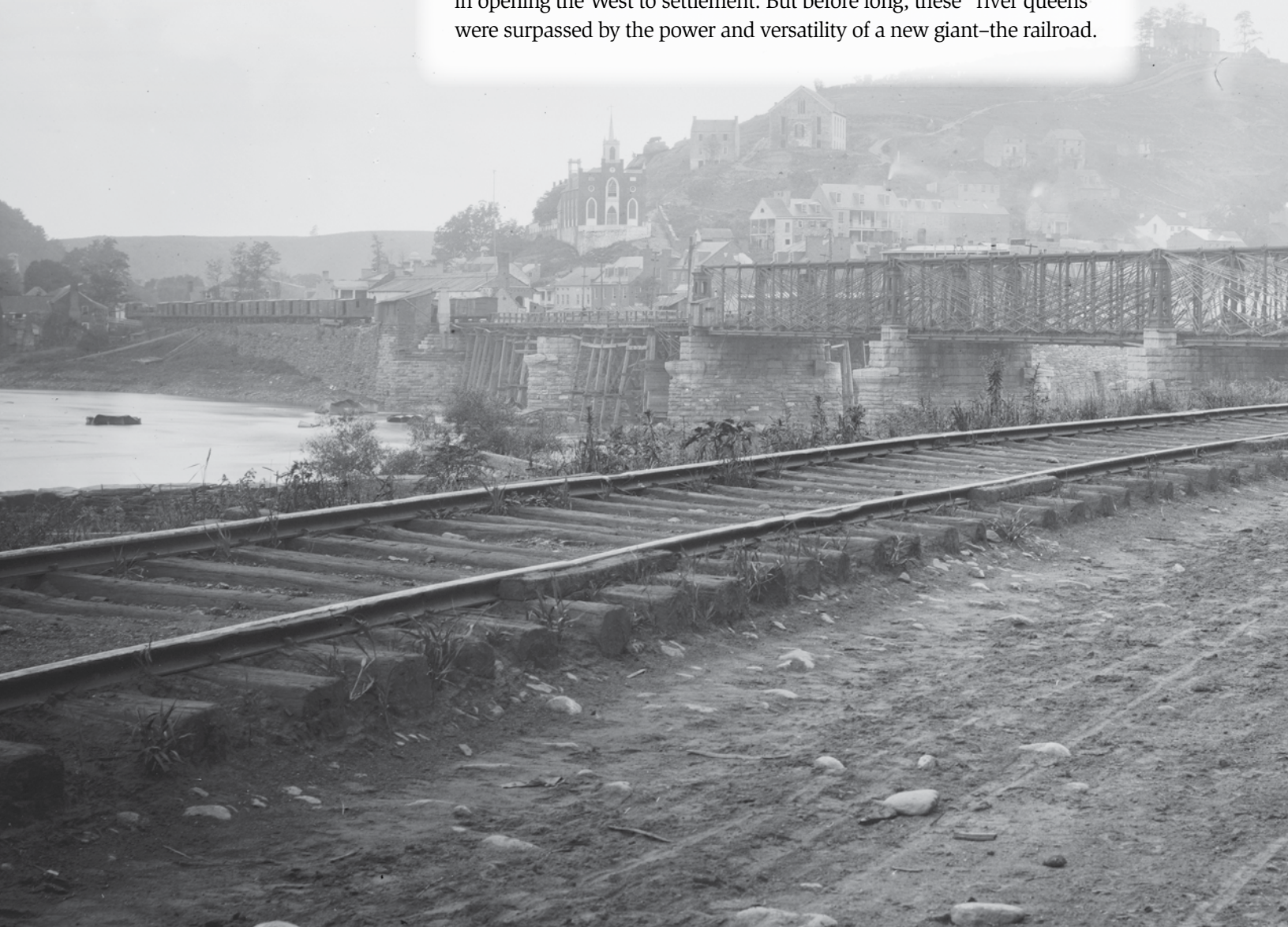
Nicholas J. Roosevelt was the great-grand uncle of President Theodore Roosevelt.



**Below:** The railway and bridge running through Harpers Ferry.

After the *New Orleans* proved that shipping goods by steamboat was profitable, other steamboats soon appeared. In 1815, the *Enterprise*, owned and operated by Wheeling's Captain Henry Shreve, made the first trip upstream from New Orleans to Louisville. The *Enterprise*, like the *New Orleans*, was built like an oceangoing vessel, with the engines and boilers (tanks where water was heated to make steam) below decks. Boats with this type of construction drew too much water to easily navigate the shallow parts of the rivers. As a result, the *Enterprise* could only make trips when the water levels were high.

Using his knowledge of river travel, Henry Shreve built another boat, the *Washington*, from the timbers of Wheeling's Fort Henry. Shreve knew that steamboat traffic stopped when the water level of the rivers was low. He built the *Washington* so the boilers and engine were on the first deck, where they created a very shallow draft. He then built a second deck over the first. The new design was the forerunner of those majestic riverboats that conjure up pictures of gamblers, fancy shows, slave trading, peddlers, preachers, and settlers. Although they played a brief part in the evolution of river transportation, these boats played an important role in opening the West to settlement. But before long, these "river queens" were surpassed by the power and versatility of a new giant—the railroad.



## Railroad Travel

Railroad travel posed many of the same problems as river travel. Early trains were drawn by horses, and railroads really did not gain importance until steam was used to power them.

Wooden rails had been in use in England for over one hundred years. Iron strips were sometimes laid on top of the wood, and horses pulled the cars. At first, the tracks were *flanged* to keep the wagons on the tracks. That is, the tracks were made with a special rim or edge to hold the wheels on the track. Later, the wheels were flanged instead of the tracks. In 1804, an Englishman, George Stephenson, built a steam locomotive that could pull 30 tons at 4 miles an hour. The progress made in England in rail travel did not go unnoticed in the United States. In 1825, John Stevens, a Revolutionary War officer, successfully ran a steam locomotive on tracks in New Jersey. After this, the railroad began to develop as a means of transportation.

## Early Steam Engines

Horses still provided power for trains when Peter Cooper unveiled his steam engine, the *Tom Thumb*. Many doubted whether his engine could make a lasting impact, but others were excited by its appearance. In 1830,

**Below:** Peter Cooper's steam engine, *Tom Thumb*, lost in a race with a railroad car pulled by a horse when a belt broke and had to be replaced.



**Top:** A horizontal steam engine provided more power and enabled trains to move through the mountains. **Bottom:** The B&O Railroad tracks wind through West Virginia and mountains that tower over 2,000 feet high.



Cooper's tiny engine was challenged to a race. The *Tom Thumb* was ahead in the race when a belt broke and had to be repaired. The horse-drawn rail car surged ahead and won the race. Many people who witnessed the race, however, foresaw the future of steam and rails.

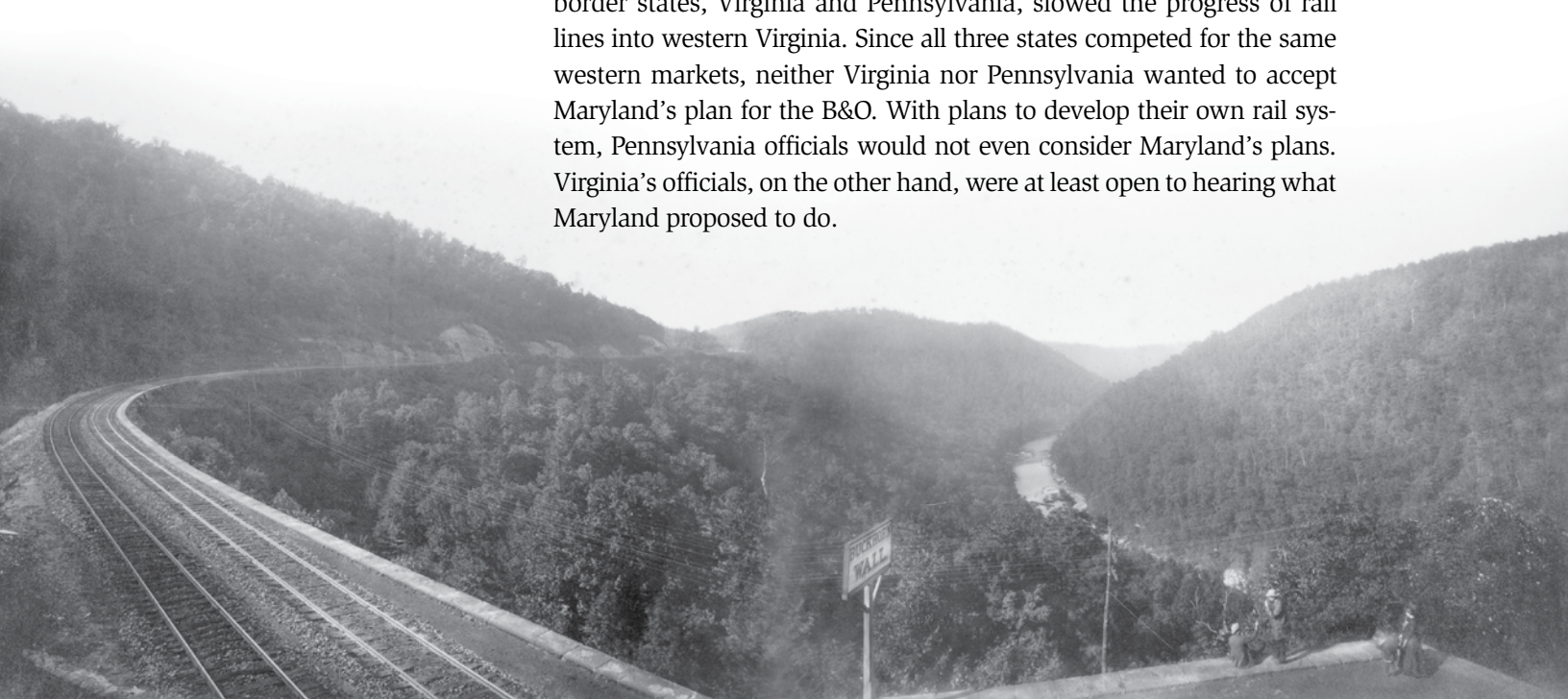
Early steam engines did not have much power until the position of the boilers was changed from vertical to horizontal, allowing boilers to become larger. In 1837, the *Lafayette* became the first horizontal boiler locomotive in America. Just as the new boiler location on steamboats allowed growth, the new horizontal boiler position on trains provided the power the engines needed to push across the Appalachian Mountains.

Locomotives became popular and successful for many reasons. Railroads did not freeze in winter like canals, nor did the steam engine require daily care like horses. Economics also played an important part in railroad development in western Virginia. Cities along the East Coast wanted the trade and markets that existed across the mountains. The desire to be first made leaders in Philadelphia, Baltimore, New York, and other cities compete for rail connections to the West.

## The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad

Before this time, Maryland had important connections to the West. The National Road and a plan to build a canal to connect the Potomac to the Monongahela held great promise for Maryland's trade with the West. The railroad, however, changed Maryland's plans. The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad had been chartered in 1827. On July 4, 1828, construction began in Baltimore on a rail line that would reach across western Virginia.

Building the B&O was not an easy task. Besides the overwhelming obstacle of the mountains, intense rivalry between Maryland and its border states, Virginia and Pennsylvania, slowed the progress of rail lines into western Virginia. Since all three states competed for the same western markets, neither Virginia nor Pennsylvania wanted to accept Maryland's plan for the B&O. With plans to develop their own rail system, Pennsylvania officials would not even consider Maryland's plans. Virginia's officials, on the other hand, were at least open to hearing what Maryland proposed to do.



It took fourteen years for the B&O to reach Cumberland, Maryland. Building was stopped when the railroad reached Virginia's border; nothing more was done for the next five years. During that time, Maryland's officials waited for Virginia's approval to cross the state border. The Virginia legislature eventually approved the charter, but it required that the rail line run north of the Little Kanawha to protect the economic interests of Virginia's coastal cities.

Construction of the railroad in present-day West Virginia began in 1848. Mountains towering over 2,000 feet had to be crossed or cut through. When it was finished in 1853, the rail line from Cumberland to Wheeling had eleven tunnels and over one hundred bridges. The most outstanding engineering marvel was the 4,100-foot tunnel at Tunnelton in Preston County. The tunnel took three years to build and was the longest tunnel in the world at the time.

## something extra!



Because the owners thought this railroad would be important to the country, they invited the only surviving signer of the Declaration of Independence, Charles Carroll, to lay the first rail.



Where to terminate the railroad was another major decision. Parkersburg and Wheeling were the main choices. Finally, Wheeling was chosen as the Ohio River terminus (the last station at the end of a railroad line), and there were plans to extend the railroad to Cincinnati. Parkersburg, not to be outdone, pushed for a terminus and won support from directors of the B&O. A branch line, the Northwestern Virginia Railroad, was chartered in 1851 to run from Grafton to Parkersburg.

When the Parkersburg charter was signed, the Wheeling line was still under construction. The last rail and spike were not driven until December 24, 1852, and the first train arrived in Wheeling with much celebration

**Above:** Building the 4,100-foot tunnel at Tunnelton in Preston County was an outstanding engineering marvel.



**Map 10.3**

## Railroads in Western Virginia, 1860

**Map Skill:** On the map, what is the western terminus of the B&O Railroad?

on January 1, 1853. The line opened for passenger and freight service on January 10. The Northwestern, finished four years later, became more important than the Wheeling line because it was a more direct route to Cincinnati and other points west.

The B&O and the Northwestern were the only railroads operating in present-day West Virginia before the Civil War. In the 1850s, connecting lines extended all the way to Cincinnati and St. Louis. The “iron horse,” as the railroad was called, rapidly conquered the land. By the 1850s, a person could travel by rail from Baltimore to Wheeling for \$8.50 in 20 hours.

The B&O played an important role, not only in the economic development of western Virginia and the nation, but also in helping the North during the Civil War. The railroad’s path had a direct effect on

the development of West Virginia’s eastern panhandle, and it helped create towns and added to the economic growth of present-day West Virginia.

Western Virginia is surrounded by natural bypasses. Few pioneers had crossed the mountains, preferring to go around the area blocked by the Appalachians. When the railroad was finished, however, there was a direct, easy route to the interior of the region. Besides bringing growth to the region, the railroad brought cultural change. Persons of many nationalities came into western Virginia to construct the railroad lines that linked mountaineers with the rest of the nation.

## Reviewing the Section

### Reviewing the Content

1. What purpose did inns and taverns serve?
2. Why were western Virginia’s rivers not navigable at times?
3. Why did easterners want railroads built in western Virginia?

### Using the Content

Write a first-person account describing a trip on an early steamboat or railroad.

### Extending the Literacy Skill

According to the information in Section 2, what effect did the ineffectiveness of the flatboat have on the development of better river transportation?

# James Rumsey

James Rumsey was born in 1743 in Cecil County, Maryland. He became a self-taught blacksmith and builder. He and his family likely moved from Maryland to Bath, Virginia, (now Berkeley Springs, West Virginia,) before the American Revolution. During the war, he fought against the British. After the war, he built houses, became a partner in a mercantile business, and helped run a boardinghouse and tavern called the "Sign of the Liberty Pole and Flag."

In September 1784, George Washington, who was not yet president of the United States, was staying at Rumsey's inn. While there, Washington contracted to have a house and stable built on property he owned in Bath. It was during this time that Rumsey showed Washington a working model of a mechanical boat he designed. The boat had a bow-mounted paddlewheel that worked poles to pull the boat upstream. Washington, who had helped establish the Potomac Company, was planning a cooperative project with

Maryland and Virginia to make the Potomac River navigable. The goal was to develop links between the Potomac, James, and Ohio Rivers via a network of roads, canals, and locks to move produce and people more quickly between the East and West. Washington was quite interested in Rumsey's boat, which he believed could be an asset to the project. For a short time, Rumsey was placed in charge of the Potomac project, but low wages and a desire to have more time to improve his own boat design resulted in his leaving the project.

Returning to his design, Rumsey concluded that the pole-boat design was too limited. As a result,

he decided to incorporate steam propulsion. After a six-month delay due to winter weather, the first test of the newly designed boat took place at Shenandoah Falls in the spring of 1786. Rumsey was disappointed when the boat performed unsatisfactorily. The pole-boat mechanism caused the paddlewheel to become disarmed and the steam pump was found to be inadequate. After some additional changes, the boat did perform satisfactorily at Shepherdstown on December 3, 1787.

Although Rumsey's successful demonstration



occurred some twenty years before Robert Fulton's demonstration of the *Clermont*, Rumsey never received the recognition that was given to Fulton, perhaps because of the system used for issuing patents. Another inventor, John Fitch, also made claim to being the inventor of the steamboat. Rumsey and Fitch were actually given patents on the same day. The feud between those two men resulted in Fitch being awarded the patent

and Rumsey going to England, where he believed he would better be able to get uncontested patents and raise funds for research. He did receive four patents before his sudden death in 1792.

Today the Rumseian Society in Shepherdstown keeps James Rumsey's accomplishments alive. In 1987, a replica of his first steamboat was constructed to celebrate the boat's bicentennial. It is housed in a small building behind the Entler Hotel. There is also a statue honoring him in Shepherdstown, and a bridge across the Potomac River to Maryland bears his name.



# Chapter Summary

## Section 1: Virginia Revises Its Constitution

- In 1829, Virginians met to revise their state constitution. Differences between eastern and western Virginia included suffrage, representation in the legislature, geographic conditions, slavery, and religion. Few of those differences were settled by the 1830 constitution.
- In 1831, Nat Turner led fellow slaves in a short-lived revolt. As a result, slave states passed strict laws aimed at controlling slaves.
- The issue of slavery increased the divide between eastern and western Virginia and between different religious denominations.
- Henry Ruffner believed slavery hindered industrial development. He called for the abolition of slavery in western Virginia.
- The white population of western Virginia outgrew that of eastern Virginia.
- Delegates to Virginia's 1850 constitutional convention included Gideon Camden, John Carlile, Charles Faulkner, Joseph Johnson, Benjamin Smith, George Summers, and Waitman T. Willey.
- Issues decided at the 1850 convention included no longer counting slaves for legislative representation purposes, abolition of property requirements for voting, election of local officials by popular vote, and selection of jurors from the list of registered voters in a county.
- After the convention of 1850, western Virginians still complained about their tax money being used for internal improvements in the east.
- Important early roads in western Virginia included the James River and Kanawha Turnpike, the National Road, the Northwestern Turnpike, and the Staunton and Parkersburg Turnpike.
- Inns or taverns, built along turnpikes and other highways, provided room and board for travelers and pasturage for their animals.
- Low water levels, water flow, and the lack of bridges made early river travel difficult.
- Ferries were the main means of crossing larger rivers, but westerners complained about the fees and interruptions in ferry service.
- The Wheeling Suspension Bridge was the first bridge across the Ohio River.
- Covered bridges came into use, but many were burned by people who were hurt financially by them, including ferry owners.
- Flatboats were replaced by keelboats, which could travel upstream as well as downstream.
- James Rumsey and Robert Fulton contributed to the development of the steamboat.
- Nicholas Roosevelt and Robert M. Livingston financed the development of the steamboat.
- The *New Orleans* was the first steamboat to travel on the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers.
- Wheeling's Captain Henry Shreve, who owned and operated the *Enterprise*, made the first trip upstream from New Orleans to Louisville.
- Railroads became more important with the advent of steam power and the innovation of the horizontal boiler.
- In 1828, the Baltimore and Ohio (B&O) Railroad began construction of a railroad line that would eventually reach across western Virginia.

## Section 2: Improving Transportation

- The first public road in western Virginia ran from Winchester, Virginia, to the home of Morgan Morgan near Martinsburg.
- Property owners were originally in charge of maintaining roads. Eventually, tolls were charged those who used the roads, and the money collected was used to maintain the roads.
- Wheeling was chosen as the Ohio River terminus of the B&O Railroad, but a branch line (the Northwestern Virginia Railroad) was later extended to Parkersburg.
- By bringing in construction workers of many nationalities, the railroad brought both growth and cultural change to western Virginia.

## Western Virginia in the New Nation – 1787-1850

### Recalling the Facts



1. Why did Virginia call for a constitutional convention in 1829?
2. Who was Nat Turner?
3. How did western Virginia's representatives to the 1829 and 1850 conventions differ?
4. Name some early roads that are still in use in West Virginia today.
5. What were the differences among flatboats, keelboats, and steamboats?
6. What changes did the railroad bring to western Virginia?

### Learning Skill



1. What suggestion would you have made to resolve the issue of representation between eastern and western Virginia?
2. How did the invention of the steam engine revolutionize transportation?
3. How does better transportation bring growth to an area?
4. Why was it difficult to improve transportation in western Virginia?

### Community Connection



With a licensed driver, take a drive along one of the roads mentioned in the chapter. Keep a journal of what you see. How might the area the road runs through today compare with the area when the road was built?

### Literacy Skill



1. Write 5-7 paragraphs explaining the growing rift between eastern and western Virginia.
2. Write a legend about a folk hero like Mike Fink, a legendary figure on the keelboats that traveled the Ohio River.

### Technology Tool



Use a search engine to research the covered bridges that were built in West Virginia. Compare their designers, locations, and dates they were built. Relate any interesting stories connected to the bridges. Prepare a poster of your favorite bridge.