

# Difficulties Made Easy

History of Travel Routes Between  
Baltimore and Cumberland



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**Difficulties Made Easy**

Written by Lorna Hainesworth

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**Lorna Hainesworth**

On The Cover

Shows the embossed seal of the Falls Turnpike Road Company, one of the seven turnpike roads that radiated out from the center of Baltimore by 1825. The slogan "Difficulties Made Easy" is very representative of the purpose for the construction and maintenance of any road. The image is taken from William Hollifield's booklet of the same title, which gives the history of the turnpikes in Baltimore City and County. The Baltimore County Historical Society published this booklet in 1978.



**Lornament Press Publication**

# **Difficulties Made Easy**

## **History of Travel Routes Between Baltimore and Cumberland**

Covering the Period 1745 through 1823

### **Introduction**

The United States was poised on the brink of splitting right down the center of the Appalachian Mountains. This rift was not being caused by any shift in tectonic plates, but rather by a shift in politics and economics. Via the Treaty of Paris in 1783, our country had achieved its independence, but difficulties were still very much in evidence. The newly acquired Northwest Territory was likely to be torn away from the original states. In 1784 George Washington said the “western settlers stand...upon a pivot; the touch of a feather, would turn them any way.” Transportation, communication and trade between Americans living east of the mountains and those living west of the mountains were virtually non-existent. What could be done to mend this potential tear? How could the country be tied together? Answer: Build a road that connects East to West.

Thomas Jefferson was also deeply concerned about a possible east-west rift that was building in the “not-so-united” United States. Settlers in the Ohio Country did not feel much kinship toward the folks living east of the Appalachian/Allegheny Mountains. Many of them had come west because they couldn’t make a decent living in the east. Frontier culture and lifestyles were very different from the way people lived in the east. Because of the ease of travel on the downstream of the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers, many felt closer to Spanish countrymen than they did to their own.

Jefferson was well aware of Washington’s desire to have roads and canals that would transport people and goods back and forth across the country. Jefferson’s Secretary of the Treasury, Albert Gallatin, urged him to encourage legislation that would allow for the creation of a national road, i.e. a road that was federally funded and was an inter-state road. The Constitution of the United State was still a relatively new document and would be tested in many ways, not the least of which was whether Congress had the authority to take on the responsibility for building roads. Out of a sense of urgency, Jefferson chose not to deal with the constitutionality of road building and road maintenance anticipating that an amendment to the Constitution would be passed at some future date.

When President Thomas Jefferson signed legislation on March 29, 1806 to create a National Road, several east coast cities sat up and took notice. That legislation was an “Act to regulate the laying out and making of a road from Cumberland, in the state of Maryland, to the state of Ohio.” It authorized the President to appoint commissioners to survey the route, which ultimately went from Cumberland, Maryland to Wheeling, Virginia (now West Virginia) on the Ohio River. This legislation also appropriated \$30,000 for the laying out and making the road. The source of this funding was the act of April 30, 1802, which was entitled, “An act to enable the people of the eastern division of the territory northwest of the river Ohio, to form a constitution and state government, and for the admission of such state into the Union, on an equal footing with the original states, and for other purposes.” This act provided for the building of roads to and though

the state of Ohio from the sale of land in that state of which two-percent was to go to interstate roads. Gallatin had been instrumental in bring about this appropriation.

In 1802, Albert Gallatin penned a most important letter that served as the financial basis for the National Road. Representative William B. Giles of Virginia was head of the House committee for statehood legislation dealing with the admission of new states into the Union. On February 13, 1802 Gallatin wrote to Giles suggesting ten percent of the proceeds from land sale in Ohio be used to fund road building to Ohio and through the state. At that time, the Enabling Act of 1802 for Ohio statehood was being considered. This act guaranteed the new state would be equal in status to the existing states and provided that proceeds from the sale of Federal lands would fund the creation of roads to and through Ohio. Gallatin's suggested 10% was reduced to 5% with 3% funding for roads wholly within the state and 2% funding for roads to and through the state. At some later point, across his copy of the letter to Giles, Gallatin wrote, "Origin of the National Road." Gallatin's support for the creation of a national road earned him the title of "Father of the National Road."

### **National Road**

Among the several cities paying close attention to the National Road legislation were Baltimore, Philadelphia, Washington D.C., Richmond and even New York. Many had heard about the abundance of natural resources on the other side of the Allegheny Mountains. This road was going to create a portage from the Potomac River to the Ohio River. No longer would the mountains stand as a barrier to commerce. The transport of things like pelts, tobacco, lumber, livestock, grain, whiskey, coal and mail from the west and the transport of people (travelers, emigrants, pioneers and settlers), mail, gunpowder, flour, nails and manufactured goods such as furniture and cloth from the east, would now be possible.

Although Richmond, Virginia and New York City didn't stand much of a chance at being the eastern terminus for the new National Road, Washington D.C. was considered quite a viable location. This city was connected to Cumberland by way of the Potomac River. Unfortunately the Potomac River is not wholly navigable and the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal was still some years into the future. On the other hand, Philadelphia had an excellent chance since a sixty-two mile long all-weather road had existed between that city and Lancaster since 1795 in the form of the Lancaster Turnpike. From Lancaster heading west was Forbes Road, which had been built during the French and Indian War and had continued to be used as settlers moved west. This road came within thirty miles of Cumberland at Bedford, Pennsylvania. However, the city with the best chance for becoming the eastern terminus of the National Road was Baltimore. Roads already existed and were being improved or were being built from Baltimore to Frederick through Hagerstown and on to Cumberland.

### **Original of Roads—Pre-History**

At one point in time, there was a virtual spider web of trails going all over the middle of Maryland. The origin of these trails can be attributed to two ancient road builders. First we have the bison and other game animals whose travels created traces, tracks and trails.

Prior to the arrival of Europeans, bison lived in great abundance east of the Mississippi River and all the way to the edge of the forests on the Atlantic coast. Bison have an uncanny ability to find the best places to ford a river or stream. Frequently they traveled along ridges where the snow was less deep and the sightlines were better. Other game animals followed in their footsteps wearing noticeable, easily followed paths into the terrain. Bison are also very capable of finding open meadows for grazing and naturally occurring salt deposits for licking. These sites were especially valuable to European settlers who kept domestic animals such as pigs, cows, sheep and horses. Indians who lived in central Maryland found the bison traces very useful as they could follow these to hunt the game that was a staple of their diet and lifestyle. Additionally, Indians created footpaths that allowed for travel from one waterway to another in the form of a portage. Other footpaths were used to travel from one place to the next for purposes of trading, fishing and relocating; and for purposes of war.

### **Origins of Two Cities**

Baltimore and Frederick developed at relatively the same time in Maryland's history. Baltimore got its start first when the Maryland colonial General Assembly created the Port of Baltimore at Locust Point in 1706 for the tobacco trade. Other ports existed in the same general area as did Baltimore, one being Joppa and another Elk Ridge Landing. Baltimore was founded in 1729 and named after Cecilius Calvert, the second Lord Baltimore and governor of the colony. Baltimore Town was merged with Jones Town in 1745. Over the next two decades it acquired nine parcels of land to become an important and substantial community on the Patapsco River. Gradually the tobacco ports of Joppa and Elk Ridge Landing became silted in and could no longer handle the large tobacco ships. Baltimore's harbor was fairly deep and dredging helped to keep it that way. By 1760, Baltimore had become the major seaport in Maryland engaged in the export of tobacco and subsequently flour and other milled or manufactured products. In 1768, Baltimore had grown sufficiently to become the county seat, a position formerly belonging to Joppa.

Daniel Dulany, a land speculator, laid out Frederick Town in 1745 with lots along Carroll Creek. By 1748, the town had grown sufficiently to become the county seat of the newly created Frederick County. The land around Frederick town was ideal for farming so settlers moved in from the southeast. These were mainly English or Irish emigrants who traveled up to Frederick Town along the Potomac River. Other settlers came from Pennsylvania along The Great Waggon Road to Philadelphia and then south to Frederick. People who moved to Frederick, which shortly became a very important market town, all arrived basically via various branches of the Monocacy Trail. This is part of what became known as the Carolina Road or the equivalent of today's US-15. The Great Waggon Road to Philadelphia continued west to the equivalent of Hagerstown and then dropped south through the Shenandoah Valley on what is today's US-11 and I-81.

### **Roads Between Baltimore and Frederick**

When we look at the map drawn by Joshua Fry and Peter Jefferson in 1751, we see no roads between Baltimore and Frederick. Joshua Fry was a surveyor and professor of mathematics at College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia. He was put in

charge of the Virginia militia just prior to the French and Indian War. In that position he was George Washington's commander. About this time, at Fort Cumberland, while awaiting Washington's return from Fort Duquesne, he fell from his horse and died. Peter Jefferson was the father of Thomas Jefferson. A surveyor and cartographer, his *Fry-Jefferson Map* of 1751 accurately depicted the Allegheny Mountains for the first time and showed the route of "The Great Road from the Yadkin River through Virginia to Philadelphia distant 455 Miles" and is later referred to as The Great Waggon Road to Philadelphia. This map was primarily of the most inhabited part of Virginia containing the whole of the province of Maryland along with part of Pennsylvania, New Jersey and North Carolina. Because the date of the map predates the survey done by Jeremiah Dixon and Charles Mason, no line is shown dividing Maryland from Pennsylvania.

To say there were no means of travel between Baltimore and Frederick in 1751, would be incorrect as we have learned that a multiple footpaths existed, some of which were eventually widened enough to accommodate a horse and small wagon. However, no road that can be worthy of the name actually existed between Frederick and Baltimore until the German settlers in Frederick built one. This occurred in 1760 and was probably intended as a post road. Getting news to the "back-country" was an extremely difficult process and was especially critical during times of crisis such as during the French and Indian and Revolutionary Wars. Postal service improved over time and some say that without the mail and newspapers in the colonies, the revolution might never have occurred. England wanted the colonists to know only what was going on in the mother country, but colonists wanted to know what was going on right here. Such knowledge led to outrages such as the first repudiation of the British Stamp Act on November 15, 1765 when the Frederick County Court decided that businesses in Frederick County need not comply with the Stamp Act and became the first official body in the colonies to oppose the Stamp Act. Four months later the Stamp Act was repealed.

Part the original route of 1760 road exists to this day and can be followed in segments through Baltimore, Howard, Carroll and Frederick Counties. Leave Frederick following the Old National Pike west through New Market to Ridgeville (Mount Airy area). From Ridgeville Road (MD-144) turn left on Ridge Road (MD-27), then right on Twin Arch Road to take a left onto Old Frederick Road. Stay on Old Frederick Road (there is a bit of jog at MD-97) to MD-32 where the name becomes MD-99. Follow Old Frederick Road/MD-99 to US-29 where the name changes to Rogers Avenue. Go .6 miles and pickup Old Frederick Road again at the traffic circle (third exit). Old Frederick Road now passed into the Hollofield Area of the Patapsco Valley State Park. Turn right at Johnnycake Road and right again at Fairbrook Road and follow it to North Rolling Road. Use North Rolling Road under I-70 to reach a segment of Johnnycake Road that runs perpendicular to North Rolling Road just after the underpass. Explore this segment and then continue south on North Rolling Road to Crosby Road. Turn left, pass under I-695 and then turn right onto the next segment of Johnnycake Road. At US-40, turn left and go about 1.5 miles to turn right on Old Frederick Road. Follow this down to where it meets Caton Avenue.

This was the location of Croft's Tavern. Somewhat more than legend has it that the change in name from Old Frederick Road to Johnnycake Road is due to the scheming of

the owner of Croft's Tavern, or the Journey Cake Tavern, which sold flat "journey cakes" that horseback riders could stuff in their coats to eat later. In 1850, he told map surveyors that the road in front of his tavern was called Journey Cake Road. The name dutifully appeared on the map—and stuck—although the name eventually changed to Johnny Cake. (This story is through the courtesy of David Wasmund, Catonsville Historical Society.) A recipe for Journey Cakes (Johnnycakes, Johnny Cakes) appears in the Colonial Williamsburg Tavern Cookbook. Rolling Road is so named because it was a path for rolling large hogsheads of tobacco from the plantation fields to the huge tobacco port at Elk Ridge Landing.

### **1771 Ellicott Brothers**

A total of three Ellicott brothers were responsible for starting what is today's Ellicott City in Howard County, Maryland. In the early months of 1771 the brothers, Joseph born in 1732, Andrew III born in 1733 and John born in 1739, came to Maryland. They were originally from Solebury Township in Bucks County, Pennsylvania and were at the conclusion of a long search for the perfect piece of land. According to Silvio Bedini, they had traveled on horseback through a good part of the middle counties of Maryland seeking a region in which cereal grains and wheat could be grown for which their mills would be utilized. They were satisfied they had found an ideal spot in a place called "The Hollow" about ten miles west of Baltimore through which flowed the Patapsco River. The Ellicott brothers were millers by trade who had achieved success in the gristmill business in Pennsylvania and wanted to expand by constructing new modern gristmills of their own design.

The Ellicott brothers purchased 700 acres, which was the majority of what they bought. Additionally, they purchased sufficient land to embrace both sides of the river for a distance of four miles. That gave them the water rights within this span. A Maryland law of 1669 permitted any man who constructed a watermill to take up to twenty acres of land on either side of the stream and hold it for eighty years. The community they built here was known as Ellicott's Lower Mills. The brothers arrived at Journey Cake Tavern (Crofts) with some equipment and several workmen. With these, they traveled on Old Frederic Road to today's intersection with Edmondson Avenue (US-40) and from there to the intersection of today's Johnny Cake and Academy Roads and US-40. From here they split off in a southwesterly direction to build the rudiments of a road that they called Ellicott's Mills Road. Continuing along they were within one mile of their destination when they encountered a place known as Devil's Elbow; a location surrounded by large boulders and steep precipices. Although a seemingly impossible task, they finally broke through the brambles, briers and rocks to arrive at a place that was uninhabited, undeveloped and seven miles up the non-navigable Patapsco River. The brothers must have had a good reason for going through all the trouble to get to this point. The reason was that here the Patapsco River flowed very rapidly and was just perfect for building millraces

In the first two months of 1771, the Ellicott brothers and their workmen built a dam and a millrace. Then they set up a sawmill using that to build temporary shelters and a stable. At the end of February, they returned to Bucks County. Their next trip to "The Hollow" would be monumental. They gathered up farming implements, tools, household items,

furniture, clothing, wagons, horses, grinding stones and anything else that would be needed to build the flourmills and grow the grain on the Ellicott's property. Finally, they gathered up their families, many mechanics and several workmen who would all contribute to the establishment of Ellicott's Mills. Initially everything was carried on wagons, in wheelbarrows or by hand to a ship at Philadelphia. Then everything was stowed onboard the ship and they traveled down the Delaware River to New Castle. Here they disembarked, reassembled their wagons, loaded all their gear and started the trek across the peninsula to Elkton. At Elkton, they again reloaded everything and boarded a ship coming down the Chesapeake Bay to Baltimore where they once again disembarked at Elk Ridge Landing. After a final reassembling of the wagons and getting everything ready to travel by land, they moved slowly along a country road up the Patapsco River until they reached Devil's Elbow. Here they found the wagons were too large to pass through so everything; including the huge, heavy, five-foot in diameter grinding stones; had to be carried in by hand using wheelbarrows. Now the real building could begin.

### **1775 Ellicott's Mills**

John and Andrew Ellicott moved their families to Ellicott's Lower Mills and were living there by 1772. In December 1775, Joseph moved his family from Bucks County to Ellicott's Upper Mills. Since the death of their father in 1741, he had served at the patriarch of the family. Joseph had been going back and forth to Ellicott's Mills, but his role as head of the family plus his duties as county sheriff kept him in Pennsylvania longer than his siblings. The place Joseph chose to locate was about four river or three land miles up the Patapsco River from Ellicott's Lower Mills, on the northwest corner where the road originally been built in 1760 by the Germans from Frederick crossed the Patapsco River. Together the Ellicott brothers and their workmen had cleared, planted and harvested several fields of wheat, built multiple mills such as flourmills, sawmills and mills to make Plaster of Paris. No doubt this was used to build houses and other buildings at Ellicott's Mills, but the Ellicott brothers had learned that it could also be used as a fertilizer to keep the soil rich or to restore depleted soil.

Since arriving in Ellicott's Mills, work had continued on Ellicott's Mills Road. This was a vital connection to Baltimore Harbor where the flour ground at the mills was transported to market. At the Upper Mills, a store had also opened, which sold goods from Philadelphia and New York that arrived at Elk Ridge Landing and then were transported upstream. A post office had been set up so that mail could be exchanged on a weekly basis. Several dwelling places had been built. Each family had its own home and there was a large boardinghouse for the mechanics and workmen. By the time of his death in 1779, Joseph had built a rather elaborate two-story house at Ellicott's Upper Mills. The house included a gallery and a large fountain that spouted water ten feet into the air was located next to the house. Joseph named his residence Fountaindale. The Ellicotts were engaged in the Revolutionary War only to the extent that Joseph's son, Andrew, joined the Elk Ridge Battalion of the Maryland militia and in 1781, the Ellicotts were visited by some French soldiers who were stationed in Baltimore and who had come to the woods to shoot small game.



## **Ellicott & Company**

Since arriving, the Ellicott brothers had been using Ellicott's Mills Road to transport their product to the ships at Baltimore. This road had never been fully adequate so another road was built, which was more direct. This road runs today through Catonsville and is known as MD-144 or Frederick Road. George Ellicott, son of founder Andrew III and the second generation to inhabit Ellicott's Mills, surveyed this road. The Ellicotts were producing so much flour that in 1783, they ended up building their own wharf at the harbor in Baltimore. The wharf was fairly large with several three-story warehouses. From here flour was shipped to Europe and all along the eastern seaboard. Eventually the road the Ellicotts had named Ellicott's Mills Road took on the name of Old Frederick Road in view of the new Frederick Road they built in 1787. These segments appear south of US-40 and are not part of the road built in 1760. At the intersection of Frederick Road and Delray Avenue, a six-mile marker and an historical sign can be seen in downtown Catonsville explaining that this was the Frederick Turnpike and that the site is located six miles from Baltimore.

In 1790, the Ellicotts built a road west of Ellicott's Mills into what is now Howard County. George Ellicott also surveyed this road thus establishing the basis for what would eventually become the Baltimore-Frederick Turnpike. George was accomplished in the science of astronomy and is credited with teaching the rudiments of astronomy to Benjamin Banneker, America's first Black man of science. The Ellicotts wanted to expand the sources for the grain that was being turned in to flour at their mills on the Patapsco River. To do this they needed to convince local plantation owners to switch from growing tobacco to growing wheat and other grains. Tobacco is a very soil-depleting plant. It sucks the nutrients out of the ground to the point that the land is rendered useless. Grain plants such as wheat, barley, rye and oats do not deplete the soil. In addition to their useful grains, the stems of these plants make straw that can be used for a variety of purposes.

Doughoregan, Charles Carroll of Carrollton's plantation, was located some six miles to the west of Ellicott City. Extremely wealthy, the Carrolls were one of the most prominent families in Maryland. Despite religious restrictions against their faith, the Carrolls, who were Catholics, had managed to involve themselves with politics, legal activities and business investments. In addition to Doughoregan, Charles Carroll of Carrollton owned a number of other properties including a mansion in Annapolis that was the family seat, a townhouse where his daughter lived in Baltimore and a plantation along the Potomac River in southern Frederick County called Carrollton from which he took his name as a means of distinguishing himself from other men who were also named Charles Carroll. Charles Carroll of Carrollton is most remembered as a signer of the Declaration of Independence. He outlived Thomas Jefferson and John Adams, who both died on July 4, 1826 to become the sole surviving signer until his death in 1832. Just a few years previously on July 4, 1828 he turned the first shovel full of dirt for the construction of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad.

Convinced that the Ellicott brothers' advice was sound, Charles Carroll of Carrollton turned Doughoregan from a tobacco-producing plantation to the growing of wheat and other grains. His lands were replenished through the use of fertilizer, which was a

revolutionary concept at the time. Given that the United States had so much land, many tobacco growers simply created new fields, after about three years, when the old ones gave out. The Ellicott brothers advocated the use of Plaster of Paris to rejuvenate tired ground. After a three-year application period, the soil was restored. Several other farmers in the area did likewise and soon wagonloads of grain were being hauled to Ellicott's Mills. As a means of getting the wagons from the fields to the mills, a road was necessary. The Ellicotts built such a road from their mills to Charles Carroll of Carrollton's plantation in 1790. No doubt, all of the roads the Ellicott brothers built were wagon roads because they had to haul flour to market, haul goods to their store and haul grain to their mills. The road to Doughoregan can be traced along what is today MD-144 from Ellicott City to approximately where this road intersects with Folly Quarter Road. Although Doughoregan Mansion still exists, no one is allowed to visit without an appointment. Trespassers will be prosecuted. Pictures, however, are available on the Internet and Google Earth shows it as a long, narrow building with a center block and a wing at each end. The house is painted a crème-color and roof is a redbrick color.

### **Roads Between Baltimore and Frederick**

Next we will consider the data shown on three maps that display some of the early road systems in Maryland. All of these maps are downloadable from the Library of Congress by searching for the cartographer's name under MAPS in the American Memory Collection. The first one, by Dennis Griffith, is his drawing of a map of Maryland in 1794. Clearly shown on this map are Baltimore, Frederick, Ellicotts and Ellicotts upper. Also two roads are seen running between Baltimore to Frederick. Since no navigable streams run between Baltimore and Frederick, roads necessarily had to come into existence. These roads run together from Baltimore to the location of Croft's Tavern and then run parallel to each other until they join again at Poplar Spring. From that point there is one road to Frederick. The more northerly route is the same as the one built in 1760 and the more southern route is the one built by the Ellicott brothers in 1787, 1790 and later.

### **Roads Between Baltimore and Cumberland**

Our next two maps are by the same cartographer nearly a decade apart. Abraham Bradley was an employee of the postal system from 1791 until 1828. He drew maps of the post roads in the United States and its territories east of the Mississippi River. The date of his original map is estimated as 1796. Bradley continued to update and produce subsequent versions his maps through the year 1825. The Library of Congress has a total of three of Bradley's maps, but without doubt he produced several more. The map he did of the post roads dated 1804 is quite a work of art. All of his maps show the mileage between postal stations (town and cities) and his 1804 map is tinted to show each state in a different color. Looking at the 1796 map, several towns including Baltimore, Frederick, Hagerstown and Cumberland are clearly visible. Drawn between them are roads that show mileage—47 miles between Baltimore and Frederick; 26 miles between Frederick and Hagerstown; and a total of 78 miles between Hagerstown and Cumberland. This matches well with modern maps. The extra ten miles to Cumberland is due to the postal road going through Oldtown. Again when looking at the 1804 map, we see the same towns, in addition this map shows a location labeled Ellicotts.

As stated at the beginning of this paper, Baltimore stood the best chance of being the eastern terminus for the new National Road when the legislation was signed in 1806 because roads already existed between Cumberland and Baltimore as exhibited on the Bradley maps. They were not the greatest roads; few were hard-surfaced, all-weather roads. Some did not take the most direct route and others had extremely steep inclines. Clearly the roads between these two locations needed to match the standards being required of the new federally funded road. The legislation for that road stated that the road was to be four rods (sixty-six feet) wide and be marked at each quarter mile and at every angle. Stumps were to be cleared from the entire roadway. The middle was to be raised using stone, earth, or gravel and sand...leaving a ditch...on either side. The elevation was not to be greater than five degrees or grades of 8.75% in today's language. Maryland needed to take action to upgrade its roads. This objective ushered in the...

### **Turnpike Era**

In Maryland the Turnpike Era began shortly after the turn of the nineteenth century. For a period of time, particularly from 1816 to 1825, so many turnpikes were being authorized and built that people referred to this period as a time of "Turnpike Fever." As quoted in Routes of Change, "turnpikes were chartered in every conceivable direction." One of the turnpikes adopted the slogan, "Difficulties Made Easy," which is a great descriptor for what turnpikes were intended to do. A list of turnpike features and their objectives is as follows:

1. Create all-weather roads—roads were to be hard-surfaced so they were useable in all types of weather conditions. Simple dirt roads were extremely dusty in times of dry conditions and were so muddy in times of wet conditions as to be almost impassible.
2. Cut transport costs—the cutting of costs was equally applicable to transporting people as well as materials and livestock. Cost would be cut by conveyances that could handle larger loads and more passengers. Wider roads meant larger herds of livestock could be guided along. As the roads were straightened and made less steep, the time necessary to get from departure to delivery was shortened.
3. Improve the economy—as the volume and frequency of commerce increased, the economy of the country was given a boost. Increased volume and decreased time led to lower costs and greater profits. More raw materials made their way east while more manufactured goods got to the consumers in the west.
4. Make money—through the feature of tolls, turnpikes were supposed to make money for the investors. Due to the need to repair the road, this objective was never realized to any great extent and profits or dividends were minimal, if at all.
5. Keep in good repair—the difficulty with making money from tolls collected for the use of turnpikes was caused mainly by the turnpikes' constant need for repair. Eventually the wheels of carriages and wagons spun off the stones comprising the surface of the roads. Road grading was necessary to restore the surface, remove washboards and ruts, and fill in potholes. Tolls were reinvested to keep the turnpikes in good repair.
6. Increase property value—when land was needed upon which to build turnpikes, many landowners freely gave up their property to the turnpike companies. Generally speaking, property values increased when a turnpike ran through or

near a person's property. Additionally, the landowner could use the road for his own purposes, i.e. to travel, transport product or acquire goods.

### **Turnpike Regulations**

The Maryland State Assembly chartered turnpikes with very strict requirements attached to each. The following is a list of regulations and some features of each:

1. Requirements for road construction—the state took its cue from the requirements included in the National Road legislation. The twenty-foot roadway had to be an all-weather surface with a road width of sixty-six feet. The incline or decline of the road was not to exceed four degrees or the equivalent of seven percent.
2. Requirements for mile markers—the road was to be marked at each mile. Mile markers were to be made of a durable material such as granite measuring five to six feet in length, one foot across and eight inches thick. The length was determined as necessary so that two-thirds of the marker would be below ground and avoid movement due to frost heave. Markings were to be consistent showing the number of miles from the location of the marker to Baltimore.
3. Toll amounts—were regulated by legislation. Different tolls were charged for different types of conveyances such as a cart, a wagon or a stagecoach. A horse and rider were one price, but a horse being led or driven was cheaper. The cost for cattle was substantially higher than for the same number of sheep or pigs. The cost for wagons got progressively less expensive as the width of the wheels increased to the point that a wagon with wheels eight inches or more in breadth could pass through the tollgate for free. Limits were placed on the amount of profit a turnpike company could make and they were allowed to pay dividends to their stockholders. As stated earlier, turnpikes were not particularly profitable and they seldom paid any dividends.
4. Road repair required—turnpike companies were required to keep their roads in good repair. If a turnpike company failed to keep a road in good repair, users could file complaints against the company and such complaints would be investigated. If the results of the inquisition found the turnpike company to be negligent in its duties, tolls could be suspended and fines levied until the road was brought into compliance with acceptable standards.
5. Fines and other punishments for non-payment of tolls—from time to time, travelers on a toll road would attempt to circumvent the tollgate and thus avoid paying the toll. This was a punishable offence and fines would be charged to anyone caught trying to use the road without paying for its use. Slaves or servants who were caught for non-payment of tolls were given whippings. Tollgates were usually located in places along the road where routes around them were difficult, if not impossible.

### **Public Turnpikes**

The General Assembly of Maryland passed a multitude of acts authorizing turnpike roads or acts that amended existing turnpike legislation. The following is just a sample of the legislation passed that related to public turnpikes. Initially the state planned to be the builder and maintainer of improved roads especially in the counties of Baltimore and Frederick. In 1787 legislation was passed authorizing three Baltimore County turnpikes

that would connect Baltimore to York in Pennsylvania and Reisterstown and Frederick in Maryland. This coincides with the year the Ellicotts surveyed and built the road from Ellicott's Mills to Baltimore through today's Catonsville. Public turnpikes were to be funded by taxes. Commissioners were appointed to supervise and oversee the making of the road and its maintenance. Tollgates were erected and mile markers were put in place. One of the biggest challenges facing public turnpikes was startup money. There was no pool of funds upon which to draw to get the necessary money for the survey and the construction materials.

In 1788, Maryland established the Convict Labor System. In the past, persons who lived along a public road were required to give some portion of their time each year to the building and maintenance of that road. Difficulties arose when people did not comply or the time for road building coincided with the time for planting and harvesting thus rendering the labor force unavailable. Convict labor was judged to be the best solution to this problem. Turnpike account books show the cost of feeding and clothing the convicts along with other road building expenses. In 1790 an omnibus road act was passed that described roads to be built from Baltimore, but in particular from every direction in Frederick. Loans were made available for building these roads and one can only suppose that the Ellicott brothers availed themselves of this money when they build the road from Ellicott's Mills to Charles Carroll of Carrollton's plantation in 1790.

By 1801, none of the public turnpikes authorized by the state assembly had been completed. At this point the responsibility for the public turnpikes was turned over to the levy courts in with the intention that this court would be the most effective source for collecting the taxes due to be paid on the roads. After a few more years, the truth that public turnpikes were a failure became abundantly clear so another approach was tried.

### **Private Turnpikes**

In 1805 legislation was passed to create private turnpike companies. This resolved the issue of startup money because investors bought stock in the company that had been authorized to build the road. That initial pool of funds could be used to buy materials, conduct surveys and pay laborers. The same regulations that had applied to the public turnpikes applied here along with those having to do with profits, dividends and non-compliance. On April 22, 1805 a company was incorporated to build the Baltimore-Frederick Turnpike. Jonathan Ellicott, Andrew III's son and George's brother, became the first president of the new turnpike company. He would serve in that position for about eighteen months.

Building the Baltimore-Frederick Turnpike progressed and by 1808 a bridge across the Monocacy River had been built. The bridge builder was a local mason named Leonard Harbaugh who completed the job at a cost of \$55,000. The bridge was a sixty-five foot long stone arch that took its name from Harbaugh's signature piece, a stone monument in the shape of a jug or demijohn at its east end for which the structure was given the name "Jug Bridge." A demijohn was a popular bulbous, thin-necked bottle that held whiskey. Rumors persist that a real jug of whiskey was planted inside the stone version. The Jug Bridge faithfully served traffic well into the automobile era until it collapsed in 1942 and

another bridge was built to take its place. The remains of the Jug Bridge abutments are still in place. The demijohn was relocated to a small park at the very end of East Patrick Street in Frederick, Maryland, a little over a mile west of its original location. The tollhouse that served this river crossing is still extant. Today this is a private residence, however the original design is clearly evident through the overhanging porch, white walls and red roof.

In 1815 the Baltimore-Frederick Turnpike was authorized to continue past Frederick through Middletown and on to Boonsboro. Other turnpikes were authorized as well such as the Cumberland Turnpike, which was incorporated in 1813. Work began in 1816 to build a road from Cumberland to the west bank of the Big Conococheague Creek. The funding for this road was very unusual. According to the Maryland State Roads Commission, banks in places like Baltimore, Hagerstown, Conococheague and Cumberland pooled their resources to create the Cumberland Turnpike. They were more or less forced to do this by the Maryland legislature. In the early nineteenth century, bank charters had to periodically be renewed. Someone noticed that all the bank charters in the state were due to expire in 1816 unless renewed. In exchange for having their charters renewed, the banks were told they would have to fund the Cumberland Turnpike. One state senator reasoned, "Who in Maryland besides the banks has that kind of money?" The banks resisted at first, but agreed to buy stock in the Cumberland Turnpike Company in exchange for an extension of their charters to 1835. Construction, which began in 1816, was completed by 1821 for a distance of about sixty miles.

Since the Cumberland Turnpike stopped at the Big Conococheague Creek, a road was needed to connect Hagerstown, about eight miles distant, to that road. The folks in Hagerstown organized the Hagerstown-Conococheague Turnpike Company in 1818 and the road was finished in 1822. It included the stunning, five-arch bridge over the creek now known as the Wilson Bridge, which was completed in 1819. One more segment was needed to make the road from Baltimore to Cumberland complete. This was the section from Boonsboro where the Baltimore-Frederick Turnpike ended to Hagerstown where the rest of the completed road began. The section was only ten miles long, but was such a barrier to traffic that a stagecoach needed five to seven hours to get through this stretch.

Once again the legislature called upon the banks to foot the bill for this last segment of the road. This time the reward would be an additional ten years applied to the charters extending them to 1845. Most of the same banks participated despite the serious circumstance caused by the Panic of 1819. The Boonsboro Turnpike Company was incorporated in 1821 and the road was finished in 1823. The road-building method used for this road was the one engineered by a Scotsman named John Loudon McAdam. This macadam or macadamized road was the first one to be built in America. McAdam knew that water was the enemy of the road. For this reason he advocated that roads be built in a convex shape with the roadbed higher than the edges and drainage ditches dug along both side of the road. Macadam roads were built in a series of layers. After the soil that forms the subgrade is cleared, graded, leveled and compacted, the first layer of stones was applied. Hammers were used to break up the stones to achieve the desired size. Preferably the first layer was of a hard durable material that that would protect the roadbed and support the traffic. The next layer of stones consists of ones that are smaller

than those of the first layer. These were layered on by the shovel-full from piles placed along the sides of the road and compacted using large rollers filled with water. Later steamrollers were used. The final layer was the equivalent of gravel or ground stone that was spread over the surface to make a smooth road that was well compacted and allowed drainage from the road into the ditches.

### **Finest Road in America**

By 1824 the road from Baltimore to Wheeling, Virginia (now West Virginia) was complete. By 1825, from the initial three turnpikes authorized in 1787, Baltimore had seven turnpikes running into it. The Baltimore and Frederick Turnpike connecting to the series of turnpike roads from Frederick to Cumberland meant that Baltimore's deep-water port and the rich farmlands of the Ohio Valley were linked. By 1830 this combination of turnpikes helped make Baltimore the second largest city in America. New York was the largest, but Baltimore had just a few more people than did Philadelphia.

Construction of the federally funded National Road had begun at Cumberland in 1811 and had reached Wheeling by 1818. With the completion of the turnpikes, uninterrupted travel was now possible for a distance of about two hundred and eighty miles. Roughly half of that distance was turnpikes and therefore, toll roads, but the other half was free. The amount of usage this road received was phenomenal. So many wagons traveled the road that the heads of one team were said to be in the back of the wagon ahead. The road was used to move people, livestock, the mail and products. Shortly after completion, the federal section of the road was beginning to need repair. Turnpikes had repair built into their character, but no provision had been made for the maintenance and repair of the National Road. This led to the National Road being turned over to the states so that eventually the entire distance from Baltimore to Wheeling became a toll road. After repairs were made to the National Road in the 1830s, Maryland could rightfully claim to have the "Finest Road in America!"

### **National Pike or National Road**

For some it is important to distinguish that part of the road, which was built by private turnpike companies, from that part of the road, which was built by the federal government. No matter whether the term National Pike is applied to the former and National Road is applied to the latter, in 2002 the entire road from Baltimore Harbor to the Eads Bridge crossing over the Mississippi River into St. Louis, Missouri was designated an All-American Road. This the highest honor the Federal Highway Administration can bestow on a road. Such designation means the road is one of the most scenic in the country, the road's features do not exist elsewhere and the road is a destination unto itself. America's Historic National Road travels through a total of six states beginning in Maryland and heading due west to include Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Ohio, Indiana and Illinois. This road is truly a national treasure and part of our precious heritage. Everyone is encouraged to get out and see the road for themselves and while doing so "May All Your Difficulties Be Made Easy."

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## Websites

<http://www.hmdb.org/results.asp?SeriesID=16> includes all of the Maryland Historic National Road wayside markers from Baltimore to Keyser's Ridge that were erected by America's Byways are shown on this website including a picture of the marker, the text on the sign, the GPS reading and related websites. The same information is included for other (older) Maryland Historic National Road markers, which were erected by the Maryland State Roads Commission

<http://nationalpike.blogspot.com/> provides mapped locations of mile markers all along the Maryland Historic National Road in 25MM segments and 5MM segments from mile marker Number 1 beginning in Baltimore through Number 125 near Cumberland, MD. After that distances are measured to Cumberland and past Cumberland to Wheeling. In all, 170 mile marker locations for Maryland are included on the map although some of the markers themselves are no longer present. Pictures of existing mile Markers are viewable by clicking bubble on map.

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