

This week – 1797 – 1857

- 1797 Finally home rule after a century of rule by the West India Co, Amsterdam, Duke of York (via NY), Wm. Penn & his appointed governors
Now: local commissioners, new streets, street names, taxes, laws...
- 1797 The Leblanc image – what we looked like, from the waterfront
- 1800 The Academy
- 1803 The C&D Canal one end proposed to be in New Castle
- 1804 Ice Piers, Latrobe & his survey
- 1809 The Arsenal
- 1824 FIRE !!!
- 1832-39 NC&FT RR built then bypassed
- 1857 Gas plant -- lets there be light
- 1857 A famous painter comes to town (Edward Moran)

Finally, Self Government

Local Improvements after the Act of 1797

- Commissioners: Prominent residents James Booth, George Read Jr., N. Van Dyke Jr. Arch. Alexander, John Crow
- Fixed the limits of the town, laid out and renamed streets, lanes and alleys (Daniel Blaney, surveyor)
- Public water pumps installed
- Market house repaired
- Regulations for curbs, sidewalks, building lines and street obstructions
- Lamp posts installed



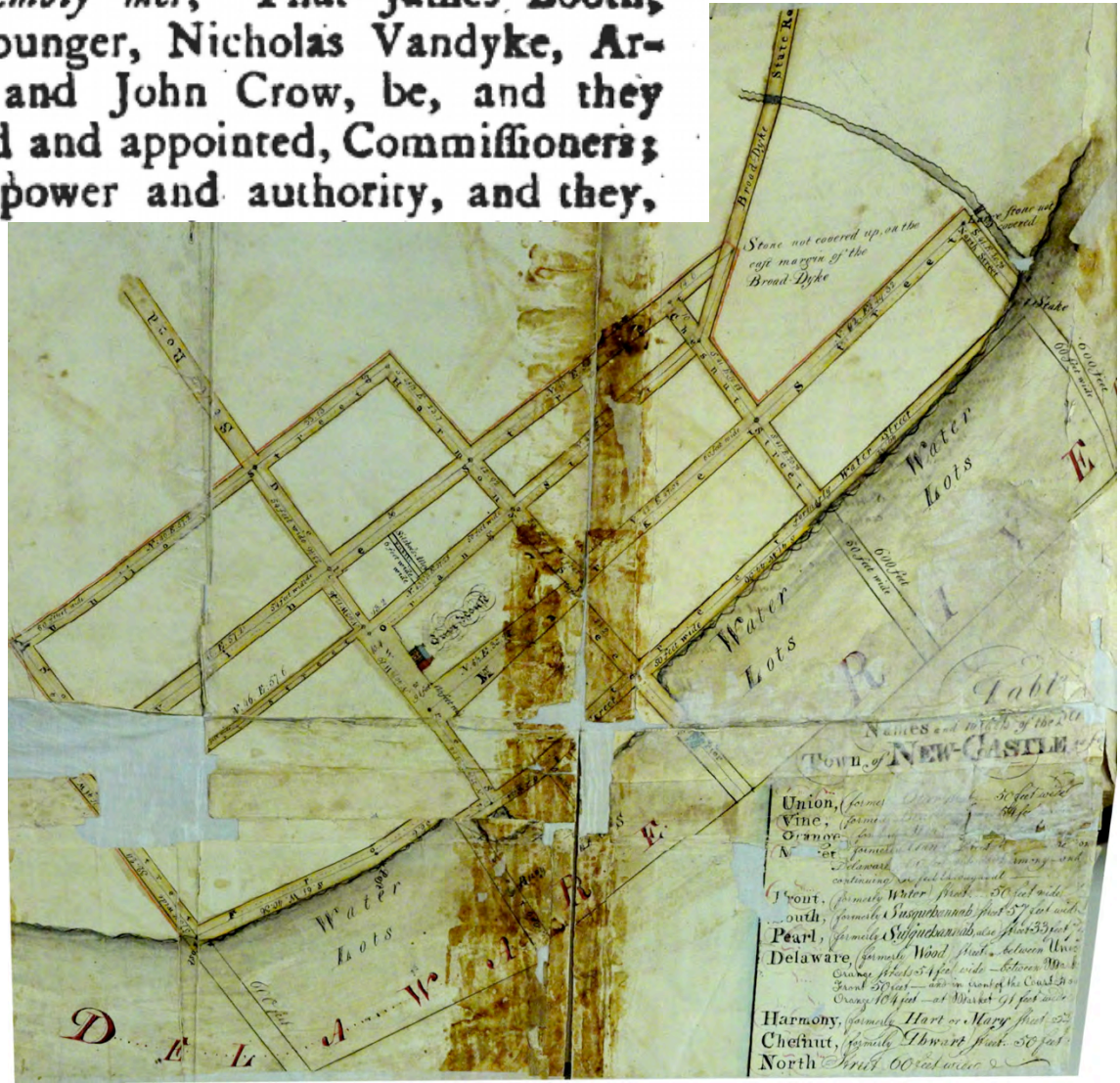
1797.

An ACT for establishing the boundaries of the town of New-Castle, and for other purposes therein mentioned.

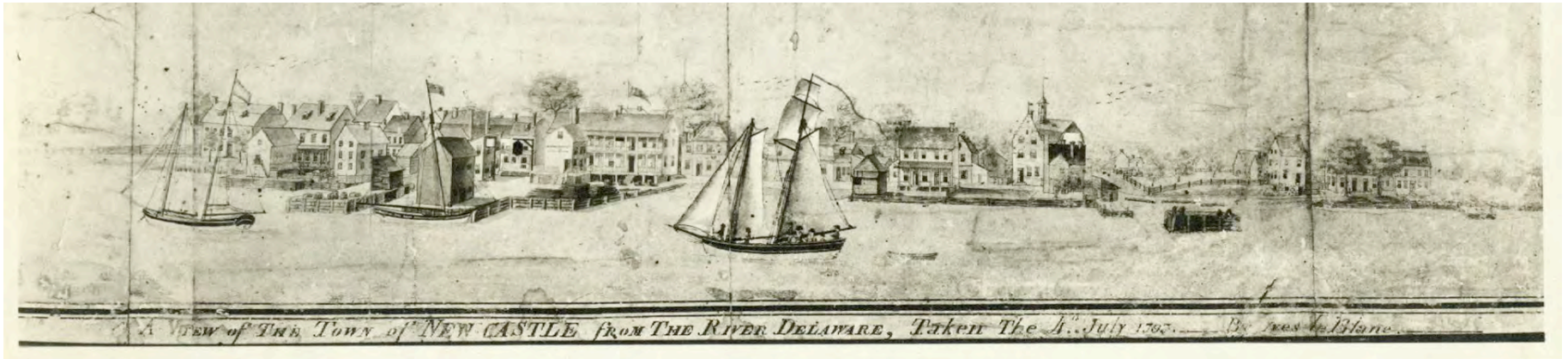
SECTION I. **B**E it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the state of Delaware in General Assembly met, That James Booth, George Read the younger, Nicholas Vandyke, Archibald Alexander, and John Crow, be, and they are hereby nominated and appointed, Commissioners; who shall have full power and authority, and they,

Commissioners appointed to fix the limits of the town, and to lay out and regulate the streets, lanes and alleys.

Former	1798	Modern
Otter	Union	Fifth
Beaver	Vine	Fourth
Minque	Orange	East Third
Land	Market	Second
Water	Front	The Strand
Susquehanna	South	South
Susquehanna	Pearl	West Third
Wood	Delaware	Delaware
Hart or Mary	Harmony	
Thwart	Chesnut	Chesnut
--	North	--



A View of the Town of New Castle from the River Delaware, Taken The 4th July 1797 By Yves Le Blanc



<http://nc-chap.org/chap/leblanc.php>



<http://www.shawnfaust.com/>



<http://nc-chap.org/chap/theCave.php>

“The Cave”

The Academy (c1800)



- 1772 Land was granted for a school
- c1800 Building erected, apparently by Trustees of New Castle Common
- 1801 "Trustees of the New Castle Academy" was created*
- 1811 Library Company (initially members only) established in the Academy



Punch & gouge decoration similar to those on George Read Jr. house (c1800) by Peter Crouting

Although a general free school system was established throughout the State in the year 1829, New Castle did not adopt it. The school was supported by students (initially \$30/year), and by the Trustees of New Castle Common. New Castle schools did not come under control of the state until 1875.

* Kensey Johns, James Booth, George Read, Archibald Alexander, James Riddle, James Colwell, Nicholas Van Dyke, James McCallmont, and John Bird.

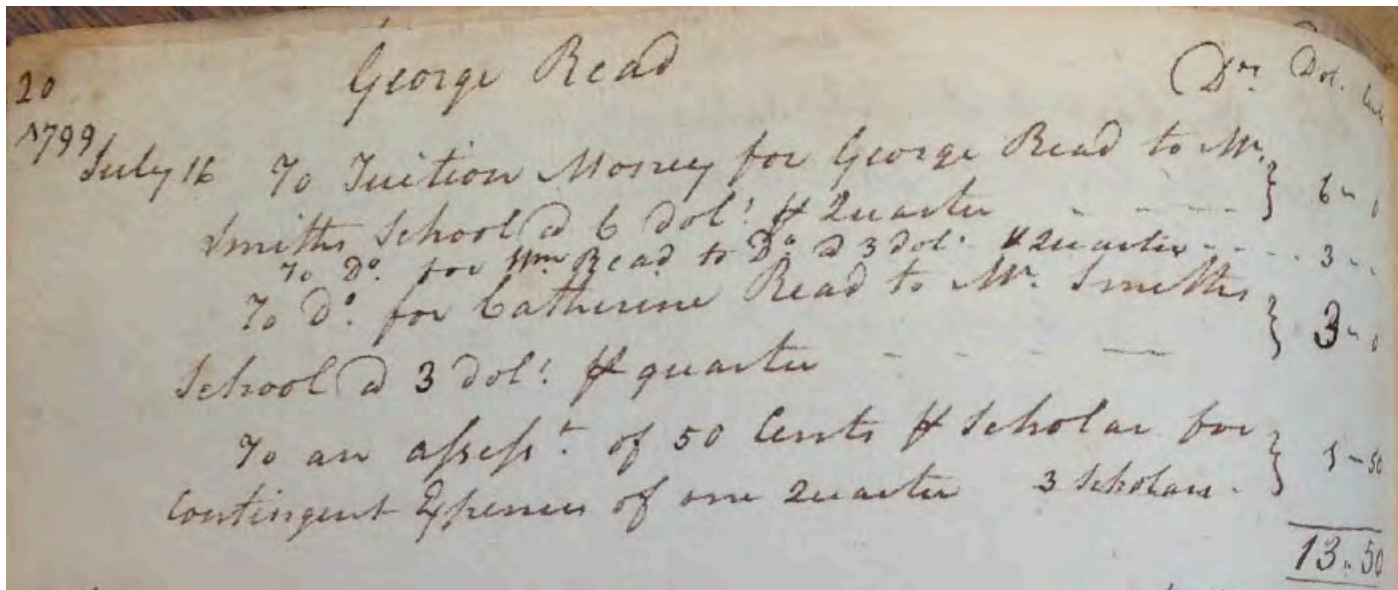
1798 Be it ordained that the Funds arising from the Lands...New Castle Common shall be and they are hereby appropriated for the erection and support of a College in the Town of New Castle...(Mar. 17, p44)

1801 Whereas by Ordinance of the Board of Trustees of the New Castle Common... the funds arising ... was appropriated for the erection of and support of a Seminary of Learning... and whereas a building for that purposes has been erected... (Mar. 11, p49)

Trustee Minutes, and Alexander B. Cooper, 1906

Details of the Academy

- There were two “Schools” in the Academy, run by Joseph Dana and Michael Smith
- There was also a “female institute”, possibly in the Academy
- Boys and girls went to both of the schools
- Children’s ages extended from ~6 to ~15 or more
- Students included children of Booth, Johns, McCullough, Van Dyke, Darby, Riddle, Crow, Read, Moore, Armstrong, Betson, Duncan, Wilson, Lighthall, Darragh, Magen, Bowman, Lefever, McCallmont, Williams, Caldwell...



CHAOS THEORY

Remember in Jurassic Park the professor that said butterfly wings might start an current that would cause a tidal wave?

Pennsylvania farmers wanted to get grain to market. Philadelphia merchants wanted the grain.

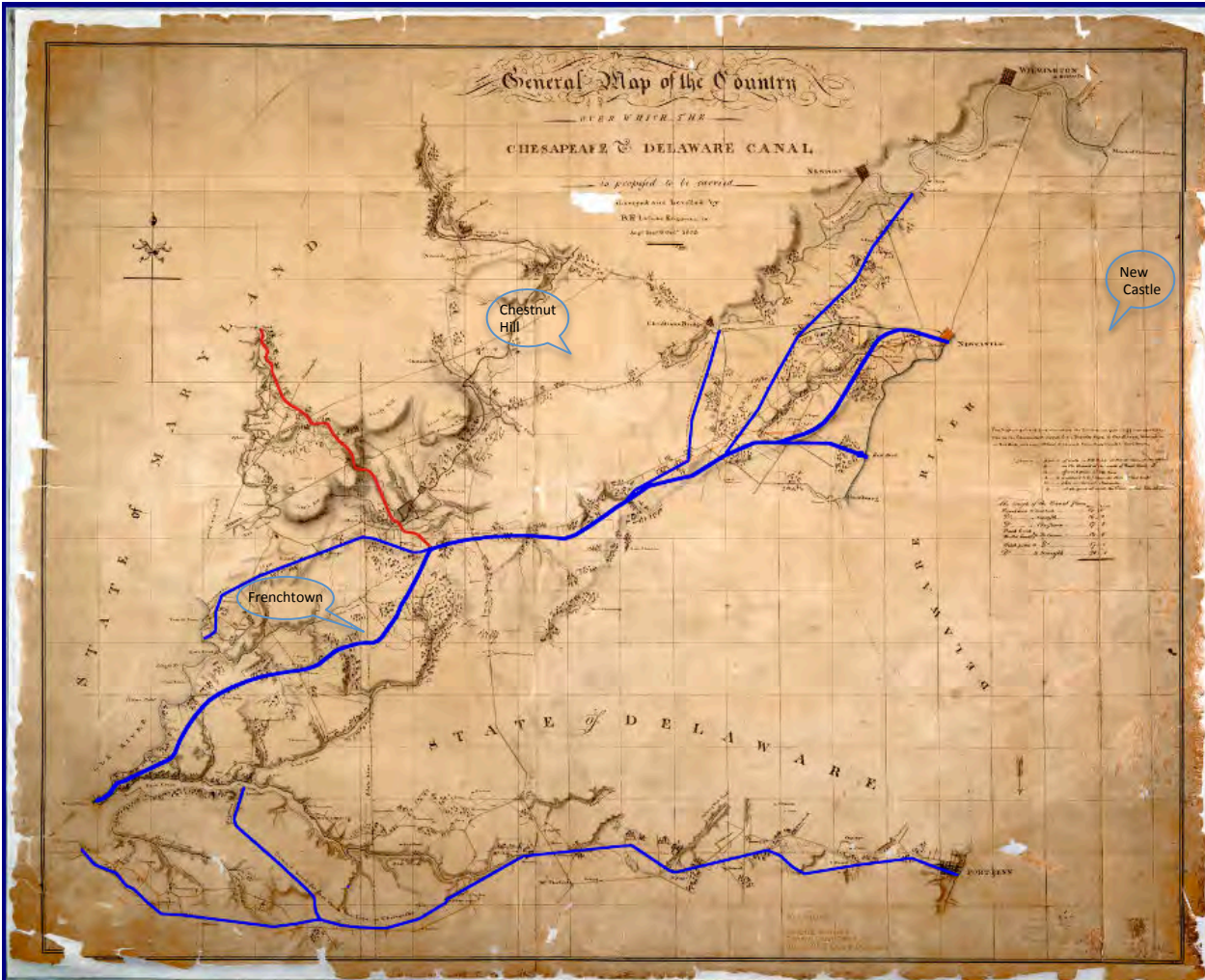
The US (Jefferson's Treasury Secretary Gallatin) believed in canals as a major transportation for the new country, but congress wouldn't pay (until later)

A private company primarily of Philadelphia merchants founded a company to build a canal across the obviously narrow stretch of land from the Chesapeake to the Delaware.

New Castle lawyer/judge/land speculator Kensey Johns thought he could make a buck.

They hired English born canal expert Benjamin Latrobe who had just finished a survey of the Susquehanna river.

He might have made a drastic change in New Castle, but instead greatly affected our knowledge of the town.

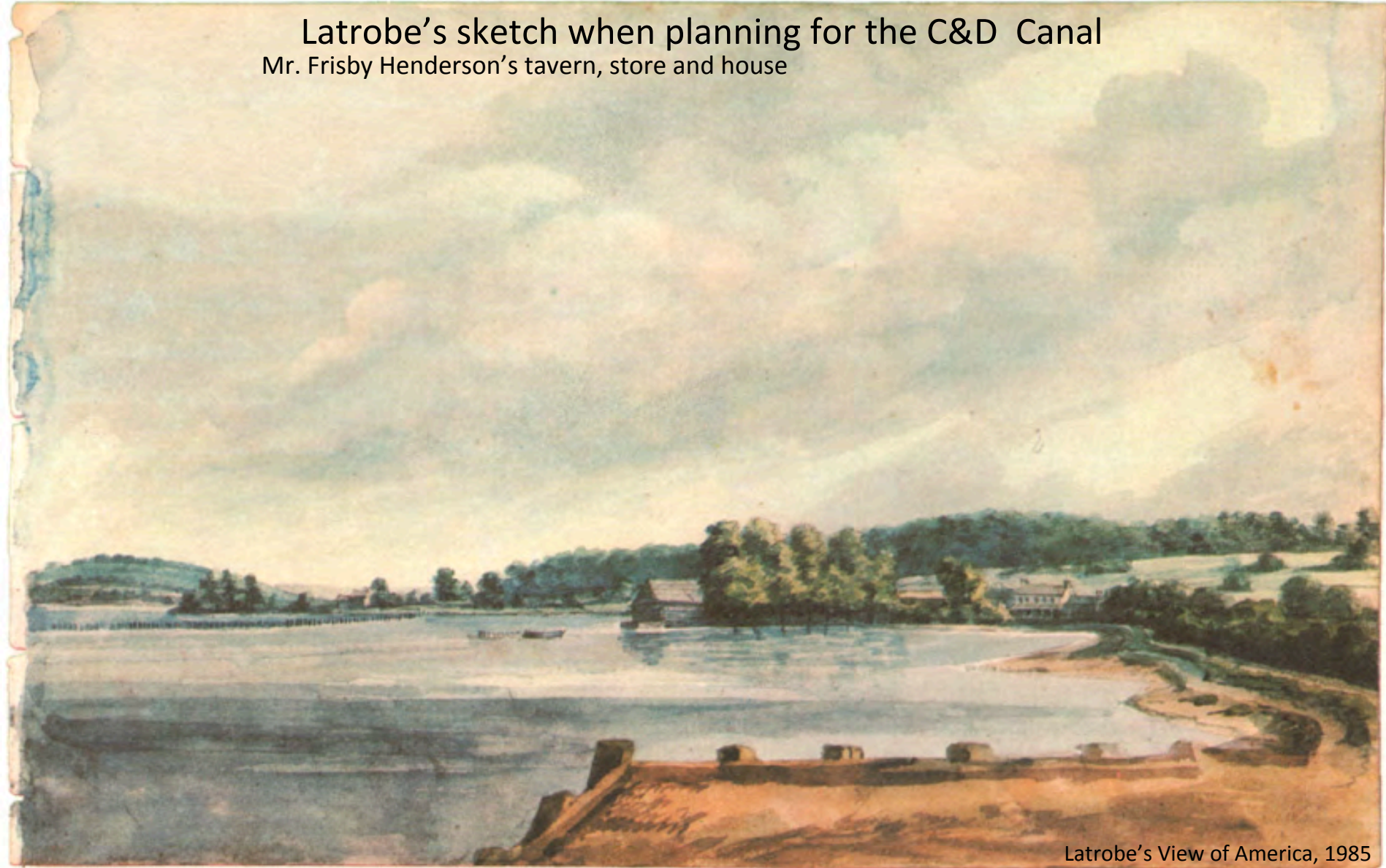


General Map of the Country
 -- over which the --
CHESAPEAKE & DELAWARE CANAL
 ---is proposed to be carried---
 Surveyed and Levelled by
 B. H Latrobe Engineer, in
 in Aug^r. Sep^r & Oct^r. 1803

Proposed routes including from Welch Neck/Back Creek or Frenchtown, MD to Port Penn, Christiana, New Castle or Christiana, and the feeder (shown in red) from Elk Forge to near Aikentown (Glasgow). The feeder was nearly completed in 1805 when the company closed due to lack of funds. The proposed feeder from White Clay Creek starting at Newark was never started.

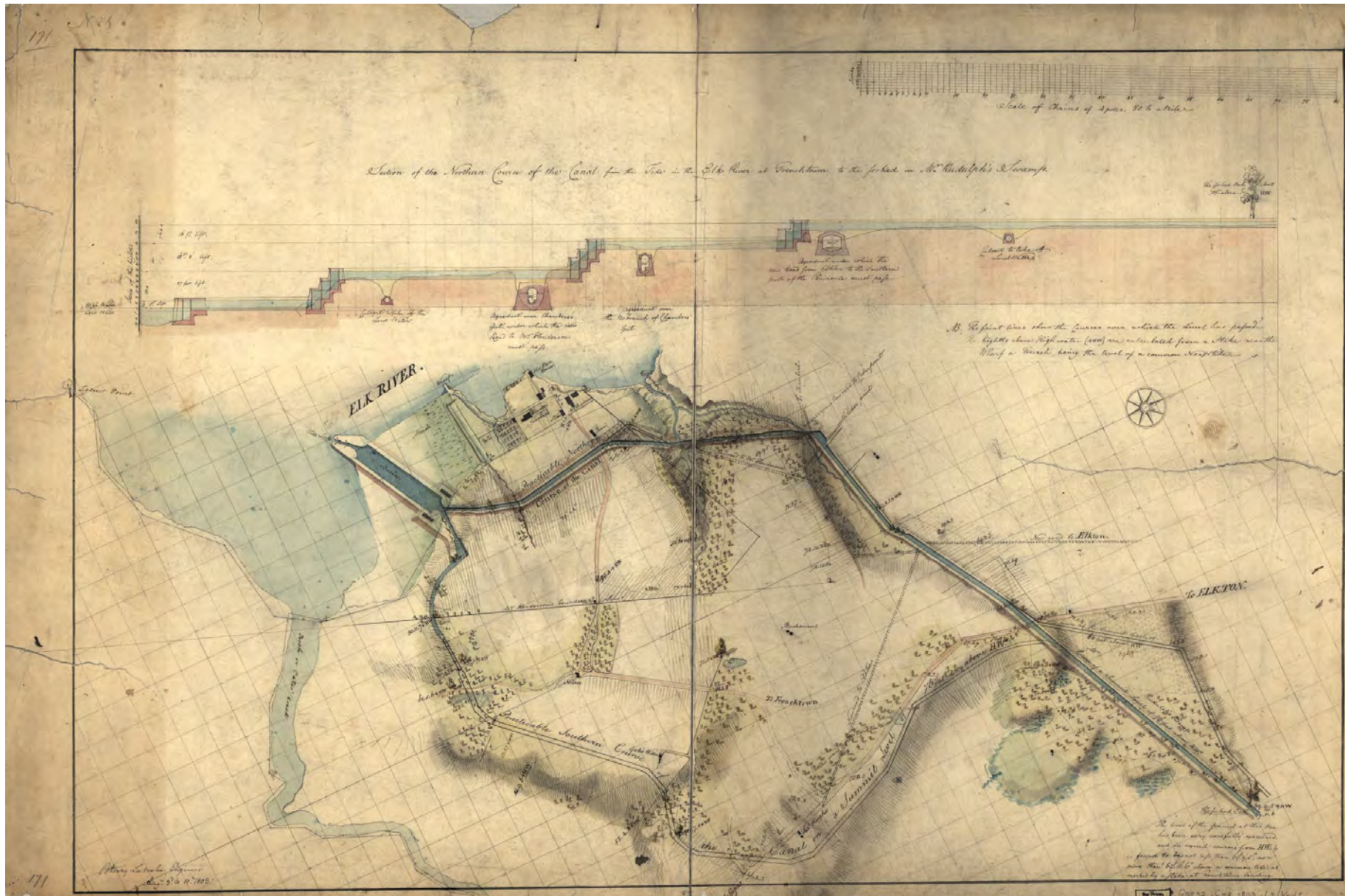
What was Frenchtown?

Latrobe's sketch when planning for the C&D Canal
Mr. Frisby Henderson's tavern, store and house



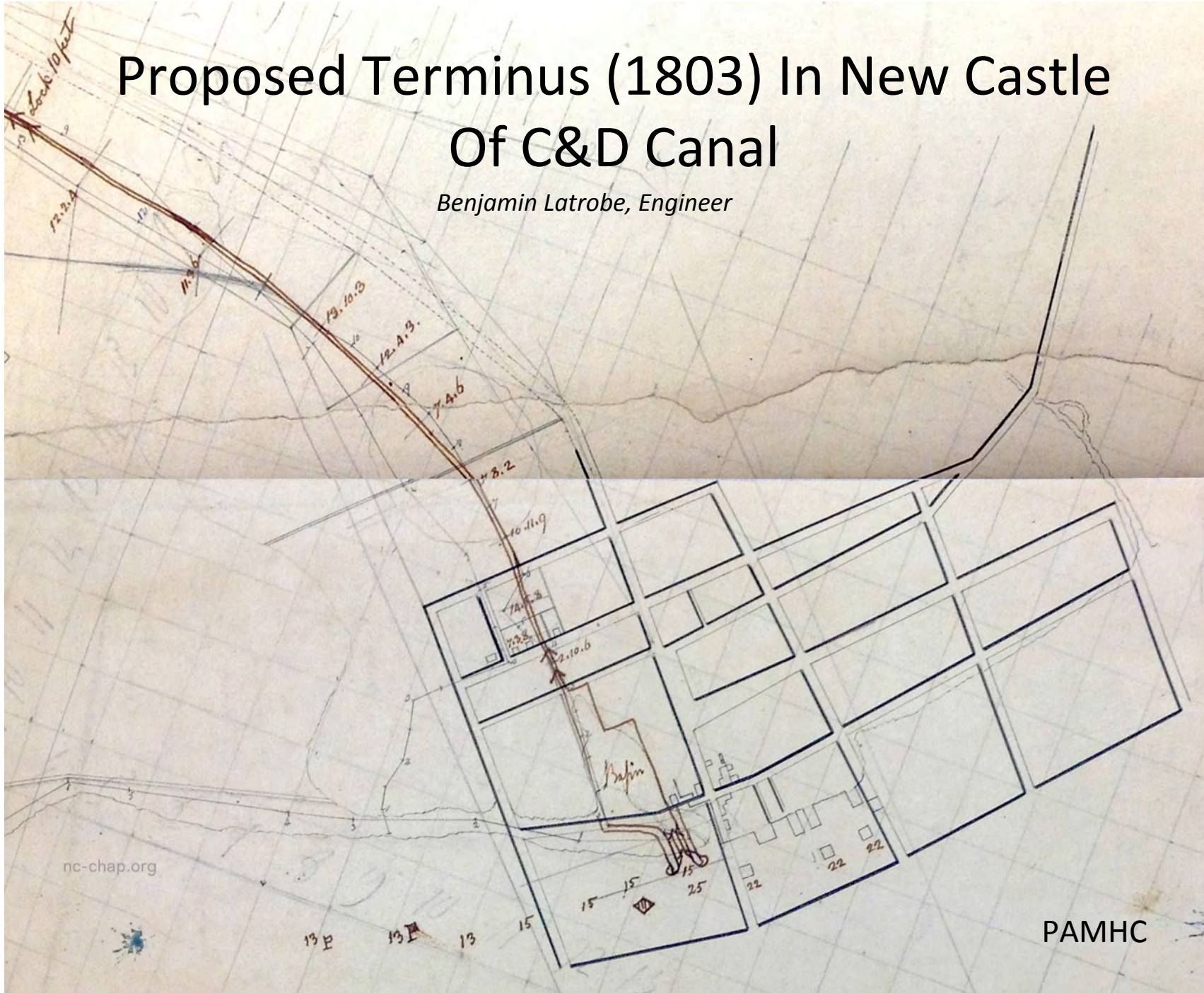
Latrobe's View of America, 1985

C&D Canal, Frenchtown Terminus



Proposed Terminus (1803) In New Castle Of C&D Canal

Benjamin Latrobe, Engineer



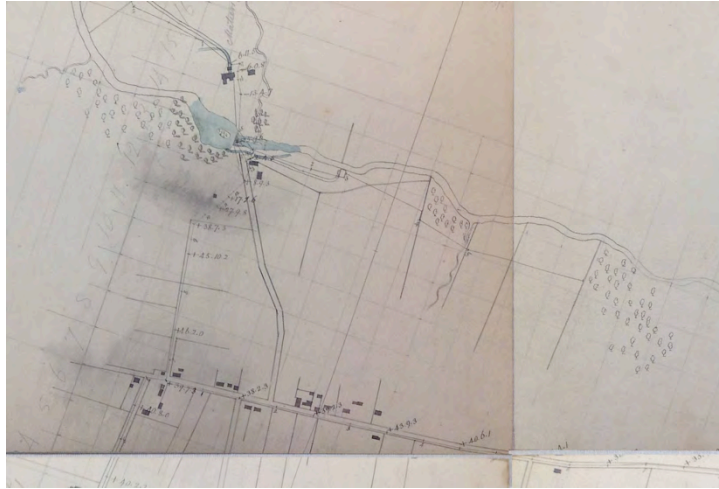
In the end, the first try (c1803) at the C&D canal failed.

There was no support from congress, and the company ran out of money after completing the feeder. Parts of it are still visible on private property near Old Baltimore Pike and the DE/MD line.



The eventual canal was built to the south with a government supported deep cut near summit bridge. With huge US support it became a sea level canal up to 500 ft wide. Imagine that in Battery Park in New Castle!

Latrobe provides very early maps: Newark east of Academy (< 30 buildings), Glasgow, Bear (3 buildings!)



Newark, DE east of Academy Street in 1803 and 1865



Data Source:
 1803 PA MHC MG11-95 Benji Latrobe (dark buildings)
 1865 Beers Atlas (white buildings on blue background)
 Map by Jim Meek, 2013



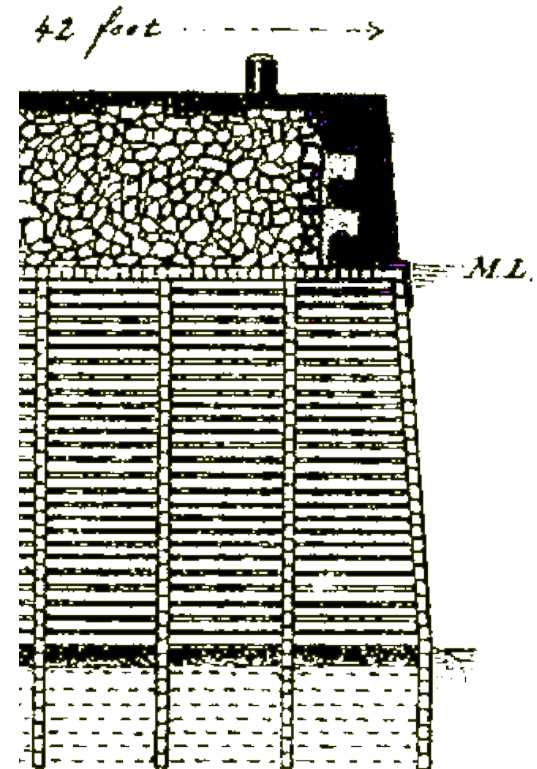
Ice Piers (town: 1794, U. S.: 1804-1870)



1794 The Assembly approved a lottery to “erect two piers in the harbour of the town”.

1804-1870 More piers are erected by the U.S.
They are the “first public works project of the U.S.”

The piers are granite blocks from Maine on top of a rubble-filled wooden crib. The wood is now slowly disintegrating allowing the tops to fall away.



Benjamin Latrobe

Created An 1804 Snapshot of New Castle America's First Architect"

He lived in New Castle while he worked on the C&D Canal and commuted to D.C.

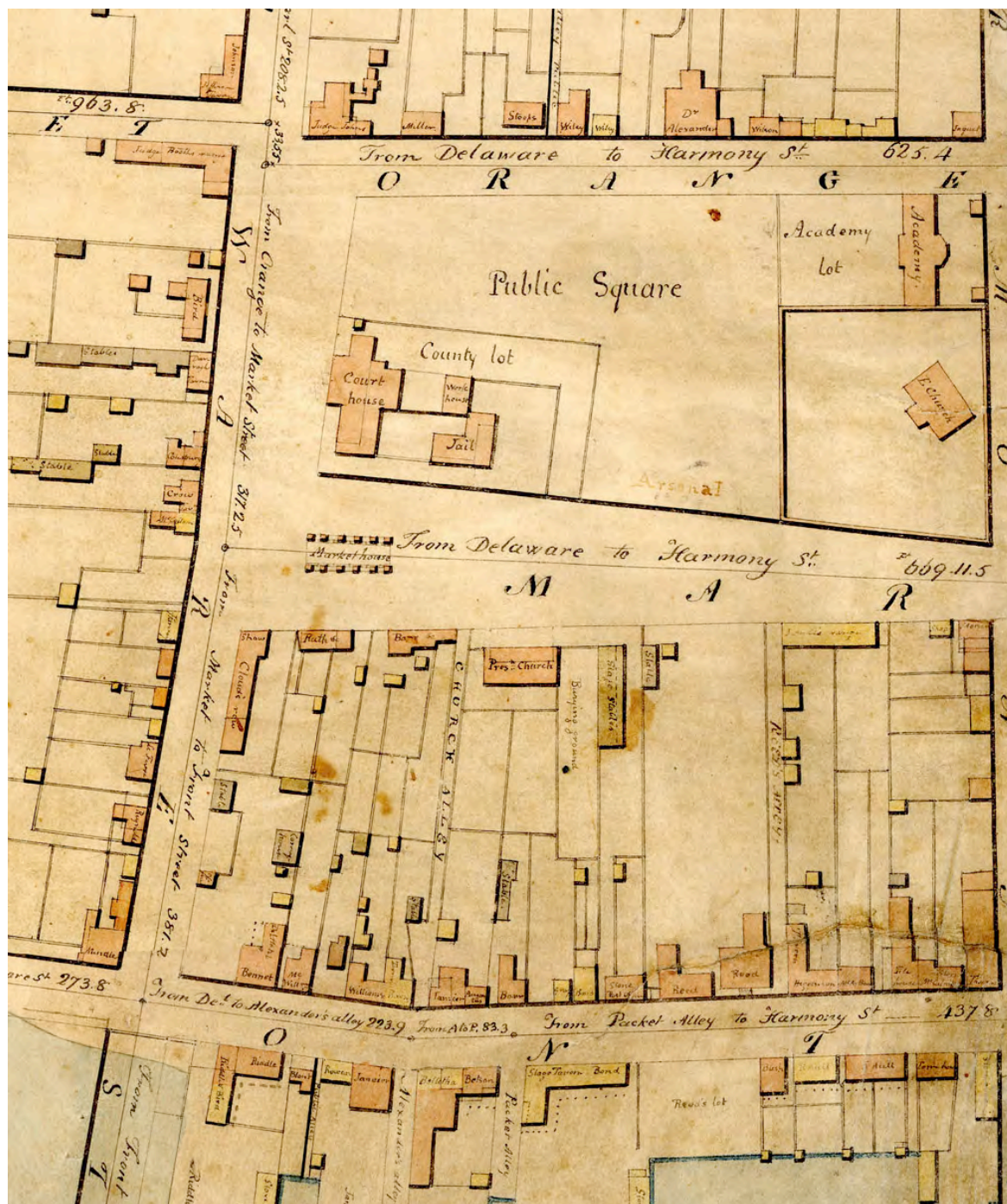
He: Made a survey and drawings of the town
Trained Robert Mills & William Strickland
His diary shows what he thought about
New Castle & its citizens



A PBS documentary is available from Amazon on what he did in

- Philadelphia (waterworks and houses),
- Baltimore (the Cathedral) and
- Washington (dome of capital and façade of White House) and his death and troubles.

It does not mention New Castle or C&D Canal!



The Latrobe survey

provides locations of:
courthouse,
jail, workhouse,
poorhouse, school,
churches,
market, docks, alleys,
slaughterhouse, taverns,
post office, tannery, hotels,
ferry building, stables,
outbuildings, waterfront,
burial ground... AND
PEOPLE!!

All in a measured drawing
and available online at
nc-chap.org

The Latrobe Survey has several components:

Artwork to give a picture of the town



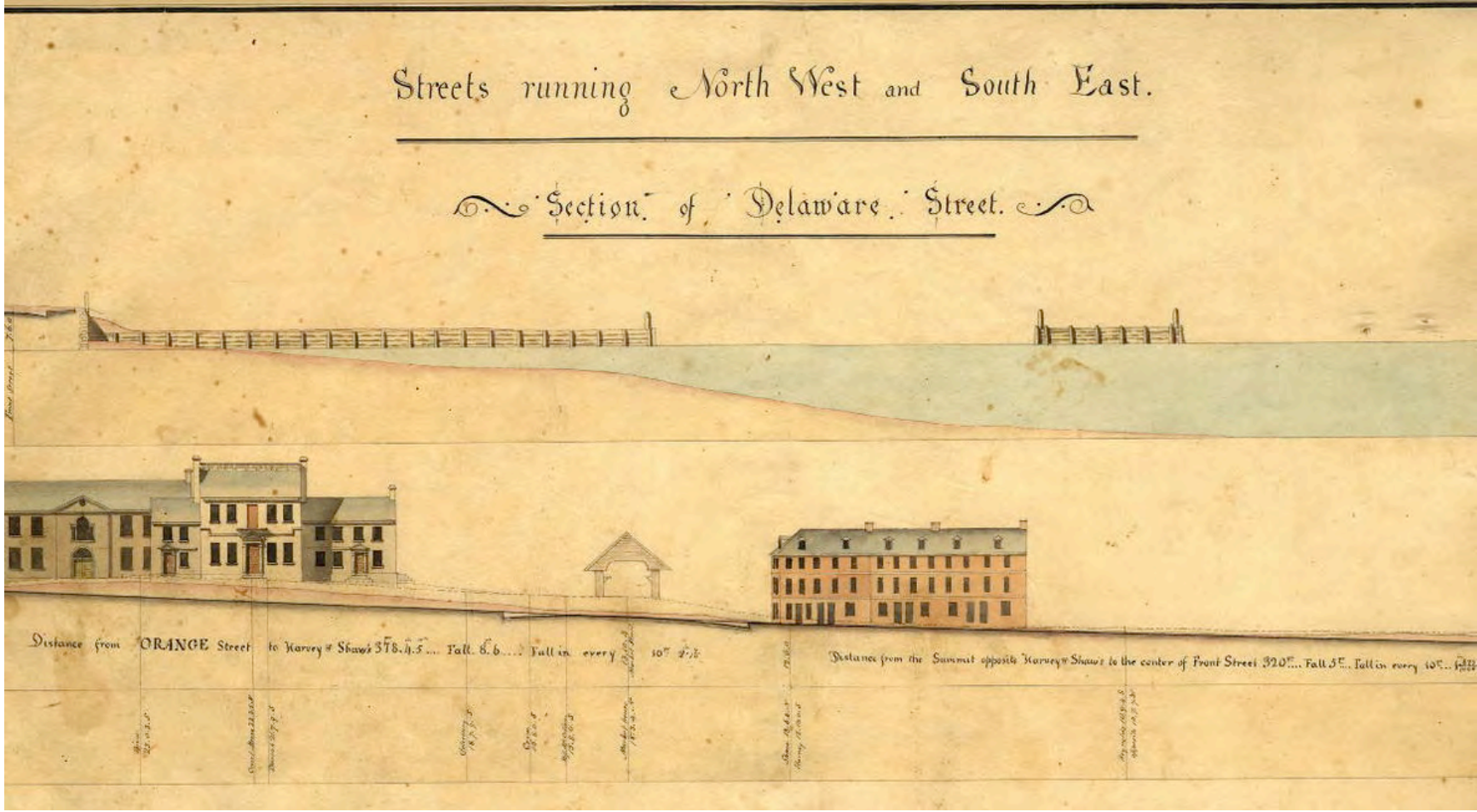
The detailed survey



Elevations of every street, some with façade's of buildings



Latrobe was hired to survey the streets of New Castle to plan for regrading to improve drainage



The elevations provide ground contours, height above sea level (MHW), and in the case of The Strand (Front Street) a snapshot of what the town looked like.



The Strand at Harmony, Then and Now



Thomas' Hotel, now
Episcopal Parish House



Dutch Tile House site and adjacent brick wall
Arch, water table, glazed header flemish bond



Oct, 1878



224 Delaware,
Judge Booth message,
Later candy & cigar stores,
Then Hotel Louise,
and David Finney Inn



Mary Robeson, c1900



The Latrobe family's introduction to New Castle was not positive:



55, 53 The Strand

“We arrived here about 11 o'clock [and] found the house shut up. I was obliged to go in search of a key while my family waited in the carriage in the street, surrounded by the idlers and blackguards of the neighborhood ... The furniture of both parlors was covered with white mould, the beds wet. One of the mattresses and almost all of the carpets rotten. “

[He had asked his irresponsible apprentice Strickland to open it up for him, but Strickland had gone off fishing]

Latrobe's positive comments in his diary on Caleb Bennett (Aug. 3, 1806)

"I have several acquaintances in this place. The first of them [Bennett] is a tavern keeper, and he is also the worthiest. He is an old soldier of the revolution, and besides being six feet 4 inches high, he wears as a relic an enormous Cocked hat fore and aft. He is a good man, a great politician, a flaming democrat, and an adorer of Buonaparte. His understanding is infinitely inferior to his heart, which is made of the kindest stuff. He is loved and laughed at by every body, and though he keeps a very bad tavern, he makes money in it, and much good may it do him. He is the only man, who, during the inconvenient, and on account of my constant absence from hence often very distressing residence of my family here, ever did us a kind office. And with him it was never necessary to solicit kindness, nor was it humiliating to accept it."

The Journals of Benjamin Henry Latrobe 1799-1820. From Philadelphia to New Orleans, Vol 3
E.Carter II, J. Van Horne, L. Formwalt. Md. Hist. Soc, 1980

[Kensey Johns] is a judge. A Man of *keen* intelligence, a political Cameleon, in pecuniary honesty a bankrupt, but very rich, and from nothing possessed like all other Lawyers of immense tracts of Land in the state. This judge was Treasurer of a Lottery scheme for the erection of piers to protect the harbor. It so happened that the prizes were not paid. After much hard squeezing and difficulty, he consented to regorge.

There are half a dozen good natured men

Physicians, storekeepers, lawyers and a divine or two. None of them were ever suspected of giving away anything in charity, or acquiring any thing by their genius. But to do no wrong in Newcastle is praise worthy.

It is no wonder indeed that talents and worth should be rare here. Newcastle cannot be a commercial town while Philadelphia exists. As soon as a merchant acquires capital, the field of Newcastle is too small for him and he removes to Philadelphia. Two exceptions exist however in the houses, of Riddle and Bird, and of Bond, who are supposed to have grown rich by supplying ships with Stock for their Voyages, a business in which they still continue and on a large Scale.

I will not stay a moment longer in the place than I can help.

Latrobe's And his Apprentices' Contributions



Original design of Wash. Monument



White House north portico



William Strickland (1788-1854)

Latrobe may be “America’s first architect”.

His students William Strickland and Robert Mills are probably the first architects born or trained in America. Each via their impressive output popularized the Greek Revival style still seen all over our country:

- Latrobe: the U. S. Capitol dome, White house portico, Washington Navy Yard gate and Baltimore cathedral.
- Strickland: Second National Bank of the U.S., U. S. Mint, U. S. Naval Asylum (all in Philadelphia)
- Mills: Washington Monument, Dept. of Treasury, Patent Office (now Portrait Gallery) (all in Washington)

Market & Town Hall



Latrobe, 1805



John Krimmel, 1811 "Pepper Pot"



Ghost outline of old market building



Robert Mongeriy Bird c1822, 1826



Sheriff's House, Jail, Arsenal—
Market, Town Hall (photo c1878)



PHL, South St. New Market & Head Hall

War of 1812, The Arsenal

Selected events:

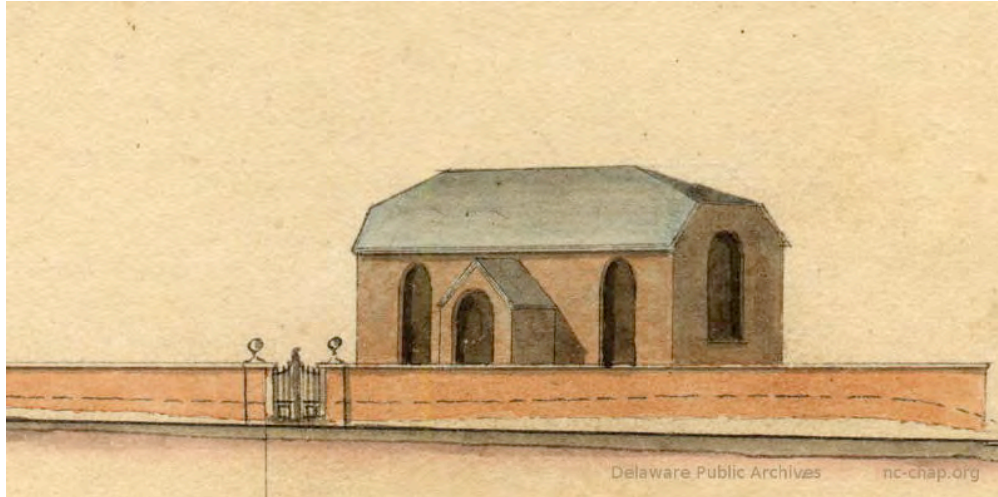
- 1807 U. S. frigate “Chesapeake” attacked, 4 seamen seized
 (“Don’t give up the ship”)
 Embargo on all exports to Britain
- 1809 **Arsenal built in New Castle**
- 1812 War declared
 American privateers seize 450 prizes in 6 months
 British capture 150 American privateers
 Fort built on Rocks in Wilmington
 British blockade Chesapeake & Delaware bays
- 1813 McDonough victory on Lake Champlain
- 1814 **British attack, burn D. C. on Sept. 12 and attack
 Ft. McHenry, Baltimore, Sept 13 (Rockets’ Red Glare)
 “Corps of Flying Artillery” formed in New Castle**
- 1815 Battle of New Orleans

Many theaters of war:

- 4 on the Canadian border,
- 1 each on Chesapeake, southwest, Gulf coast, high seas



Immanuel Church on the Green (1708, **1820**)

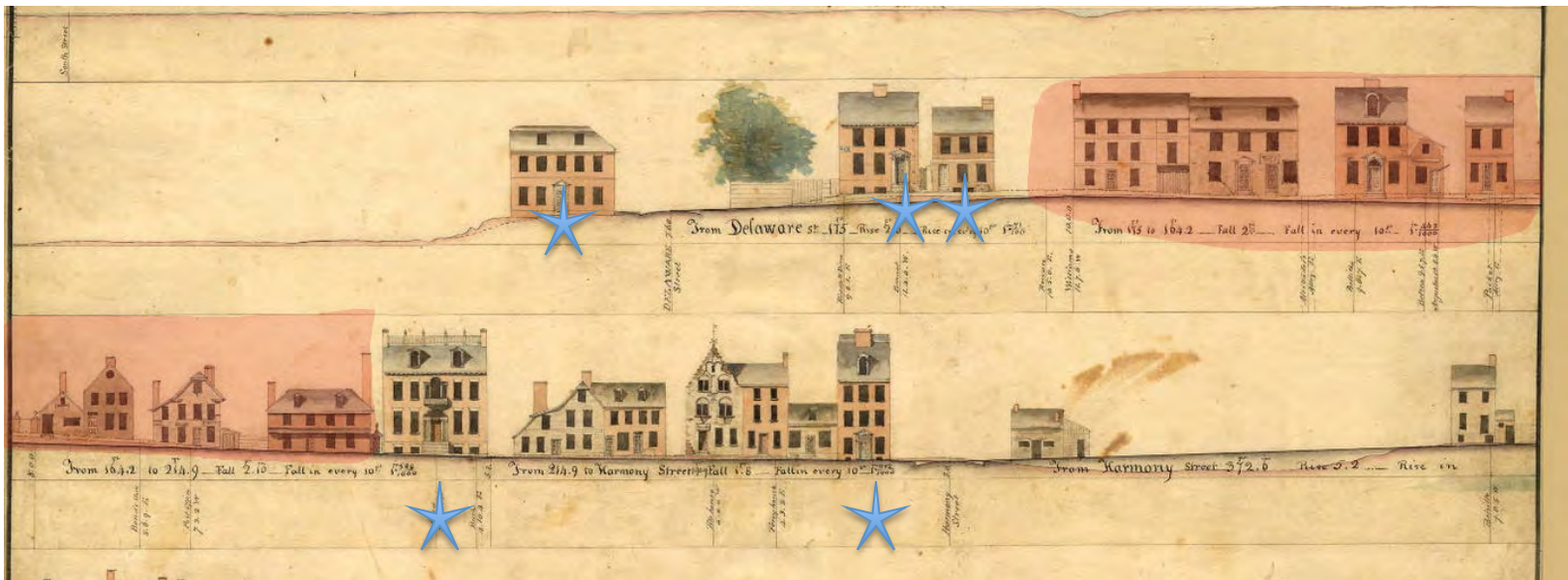


C1706 building drawn by Benjamin Latrobe, 1805



Pro Bono renovation in 1820 by prominent Greek Revival architect William Strickland, student of Benjamin Latrobe.

Great Fire of 1824



Reminiscences of a woman who was a 12 year old girl in New Castle during the fire

p 36

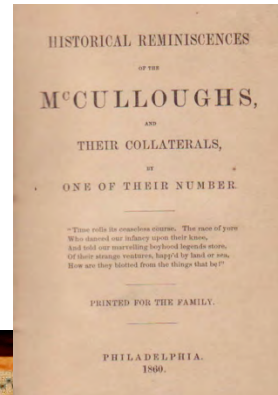
It was on Monday, April 26, 1824. We were in school, and at three o'clock was heard the (to us) unusual cry of fire.

Without waiting for leave, all simultaneously rushed out, down Read's alley... when it was discovered that Mr.

Bowman's board yard was on fire, and that it originated in an old shanty ... through two little boys, John Roberts and Dick Riddle making a fire to warm some pups.

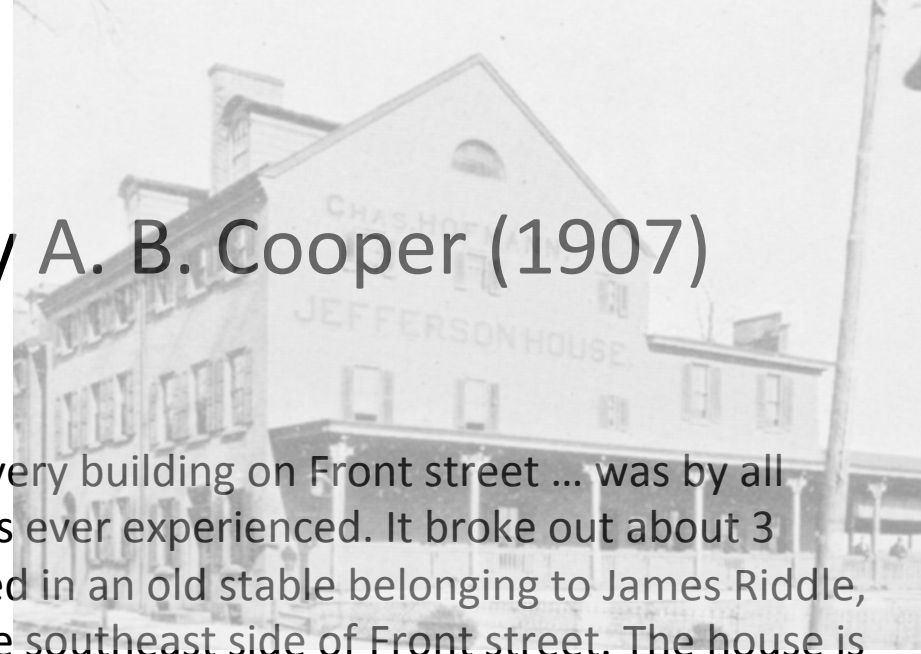
... we hoped to preserve the western side on which our own home was, as well as a large store ... a hotel and two storehouses on the river side.

... though [her father's] property "had taken wings" his credit stood firm till the day of his death.



Sarah McCullough's work done in DHMs Semmay in the 12th year of her age New Castle March 2nd 1824

Description of the fire by A. B. Cooper (1907)



The great fire of 1824, which destroyed nearly every building on Front street ... was by all odds the most disastrous fire the town or city has ever experienced. It broke out about 3 o'clock in the afternoon of April 26th. It originated in an old stable belonging to James Riddle, situated in the rear of his house and store, on the southeast side of Front street. The house is now owned and occupied by Charles Hofman, and is used by him as a hotel, the "Jefferson House." The fire rapidly communicated with the adjoining board yard of Jeremiah Bowman, on the northeast. The wind was blowing fresh from the southwest, and there being no apparatus at hand for the extinguishment of fire, all efforts to stay it were ineffectual. It soon reached the house and store of Mr. Riddle. By this time the fire companies of the town arrived at the scene and endeavored to stay the onward march of the flames, but in vain. The assistance of the Wilmington fire companies was requested and cheerfully given. They did good and effective service, but the destruction was great. All of the buildings on the river side of Front street, and a number on the opposite side were burned. For some time it was feared that most of the town would be destroyed.

[Maria Booth Rogers]

Tuesday Morning 2 oclock

My dear Husband,

We are all here in a state of alarm and confusion, a most destructive fire broke out about 3 oclock in the afternoon, in a stable or some back building of Mr. Riddle, on the wharf....You can have no idea of the scene of horror it exhibited. Imagine the whole on fire extending to the females crying, and yet very actively engaged in carrying water. I am almost exhausted with fatigue, all the furniture is lying about in the streets, the market house filled, the arsenal...and in the church yard. Mr. McCullough has lost everything, house, store, store house, goods furniture all destroyed...They sent to Wilmington for aid, and a great many came over and brought all the engines and hose, which was the means of saving Mr. Read's house which aarrested the fire on that side...I shall be glad to see the day dawn... It was really distressing this morning to walk round the town and see the desolation it has made...

When will you be home, Give my love to papa and James,

Yours affectionately MR

23 Dwellings were destroyed, besides store houses, stables other outbuildings and three inns.



Town Hall was built in stages by the Trustees.

In 1823 \$500 was appropriated to build **two engine houses on the southwest end of the Market House** [for two volunteer fire companies] and a room over the fire engine houses and the entrance into the Market House... In 1825 the trustees ordered that the town Hall should be three stories high with a 'railed cupola'. It was completed in 1826

The separate and rival Union and Penn fire companies both received support from the Trustees and town authorities... Fires were fought with a "hand fire engine" and fire buckets.

A. B. Cooper, 1906

Never have we seen a spectacle more distressing, than this once beautiful town now presents. From the north to the south end on Water street, little is to be seen but tottering walls and solitary chimneys, and this section of the place, which was once the theatre of business, is now abandoned, and left a solitary heap of ruin and desolation.

*The Delaware Gazette and Peninsula Advertiser
In History of Firefighting in New Castle, Sturgis & Thatcher*

The Strand/Front/Water street along with Delaware Street had been the business center of town.

Shipping was now largely finished.

Transportation across the peninsula was still important, but the competition between stage coach, canal, and multiple railroads was fierce.

Opening of New Castle & Frenchtown Railroad (September 10, 1832)



Hugh Ryan, 1985

Rise and fall of the NC&FT RR

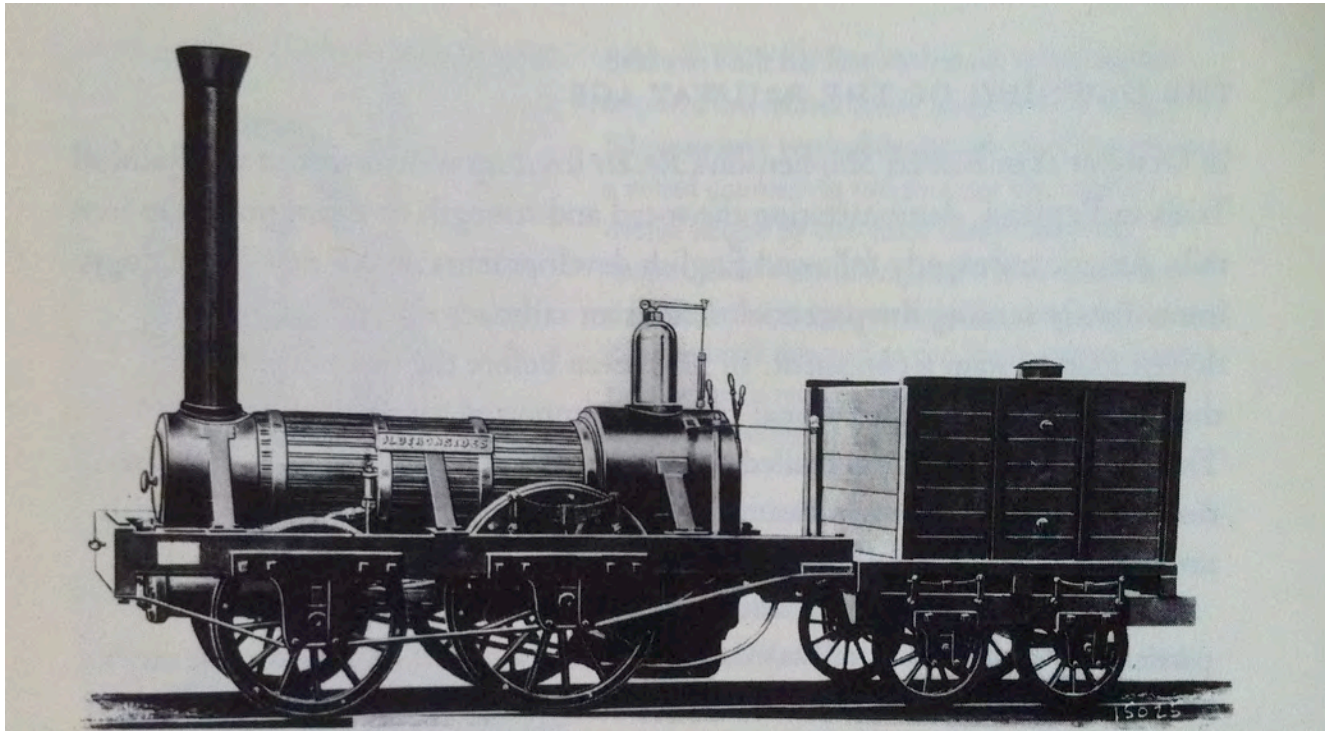
- 1827 A railroad company was created from separate Maryland & Delaware stagecoach companies
- 1831 A portion of the route was completed and opened with horses pulling carriages on rails supported by stone blocks. The horses were kept in the stables behind 113 Delaware. The English technology was used in other very early US RR.
- 1832, May 7 Stone foundations were deemed unsatisfactory especially with the heavy engines expected.
- 1832 Matthias Baldwin of PHL procured a Stephenson engine for the RR from England. It arrived in pieces, and a Baldwin employee assembled it in 6 weeks out of sight of the public. He apparently made drawings for Baldwin to use to build his own engines.
- 1833 The line was so successful the owners contemplated extending it to S. America!
- 1839 The Phil. Wilm. & Balt. RR merges with the NC&FT RR.
- Parts of the line added to Del. RR, Penn Central, Conrail, Norfolk Southern



http://nc-chap.org/resources/holmes_NC_FT_RR.pdf

A B. Cooper chapters XXI, XXII, XXIII

Baldwin Locomotive's first engine based on NC&FT RR

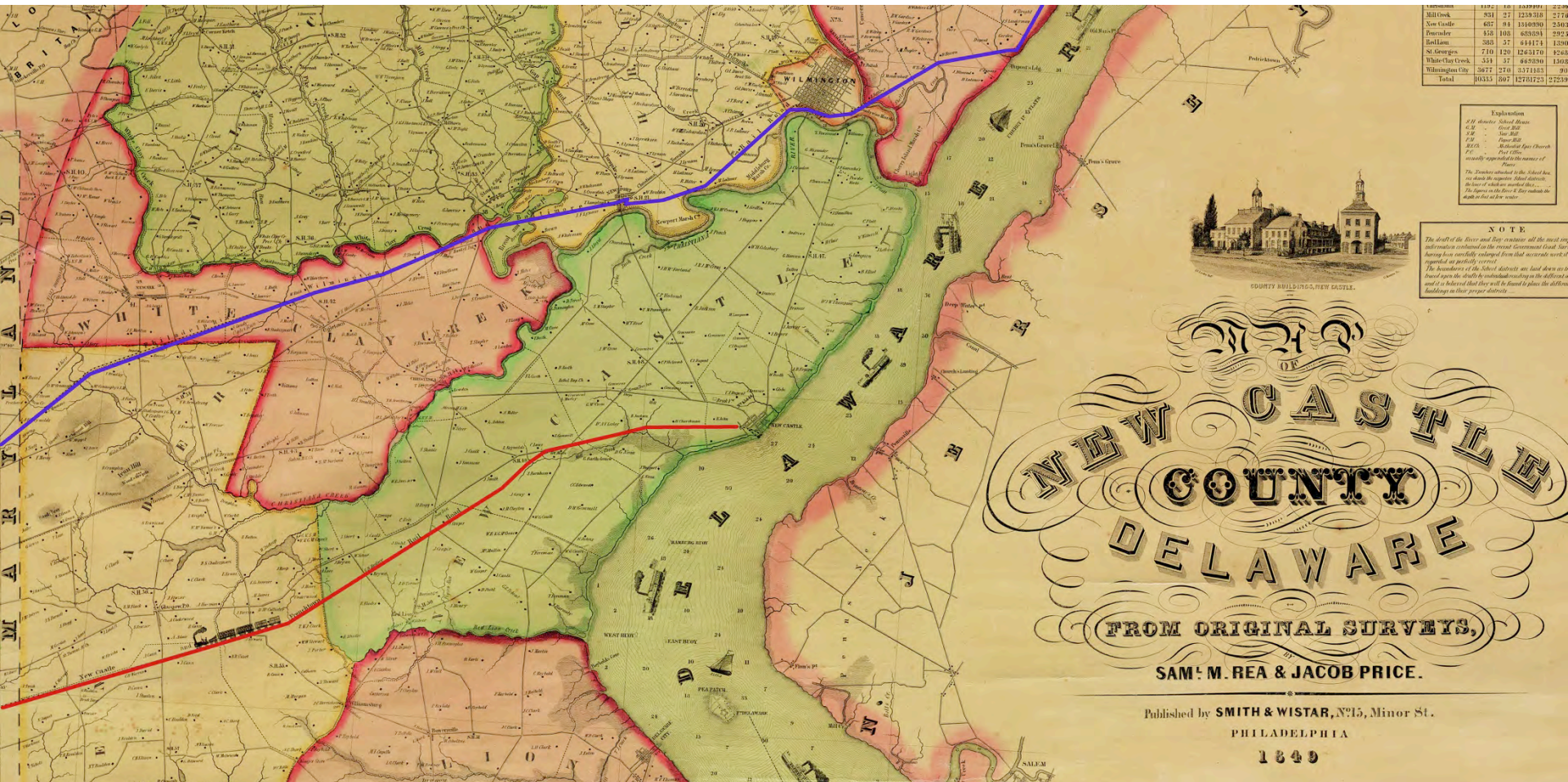


Matthias Baldwin's first locomotive, *Old Ironsides*, closely followed an English "Planet"-class design by Robert Stephenson and Company, which was imported to America by the Newcastle and Frenchtown Railroad in 1831. Baldwin helped assemble that import, the *Delaware*, learning a great deal about this novel technology. Although he soon improved his products, *Old Ironsides* proved a fine design, remaining in active service for over twenty years.

RAILROAD MUSEUM OF PENNSYLVANIA (PMHC)

Rea & Price, 1849

The Phil. Wilm. & Balt. RR has already bypassed the NC & FT RR
 The latter merges with the .. And its tracks



Glasgow, DE, 1932

The straight line route of the NC FT RR was still visible in aerial photos.

It's now less clear due to development, but I was able to find it in most places and walk from New Castle to the Chesapeake in sections.



1861 chart shows the RR line as abandoned



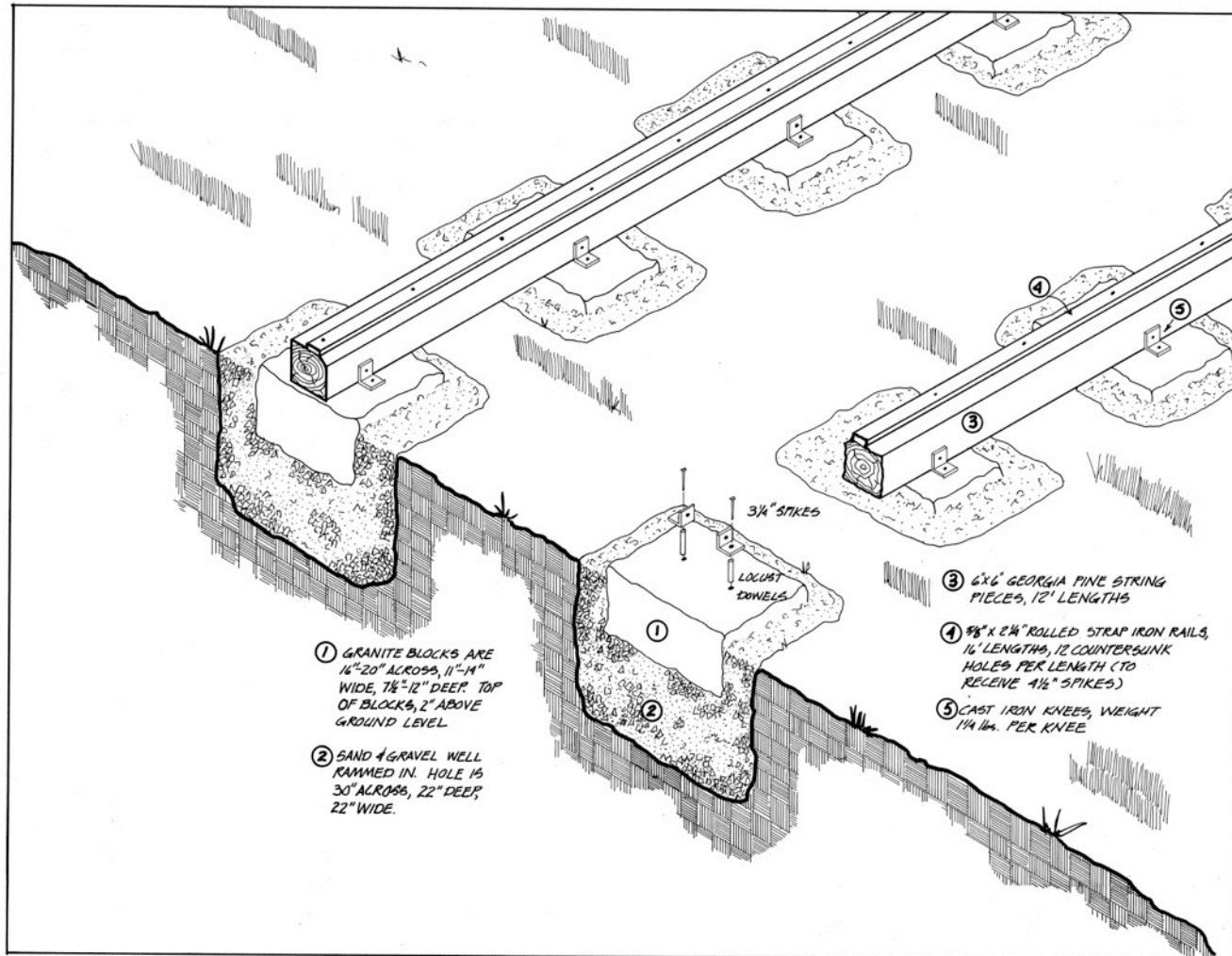
“Stone Sleepers”

60,000 quarried at I95 & Susquehanna at \$0.25/ea



New Castle & Frenchtown Railroad Tracks

Original version

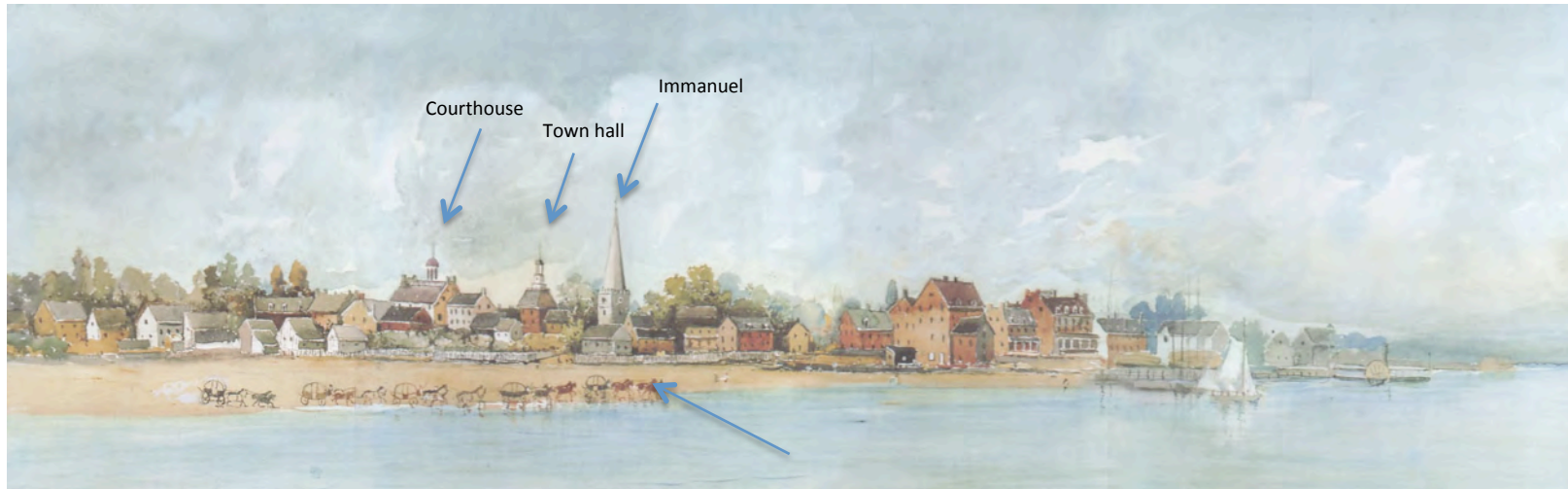




Mike Dixon

Shaw's c1895 Painting of New Castle

Possibly a copy of an engraving of a c1835 painting

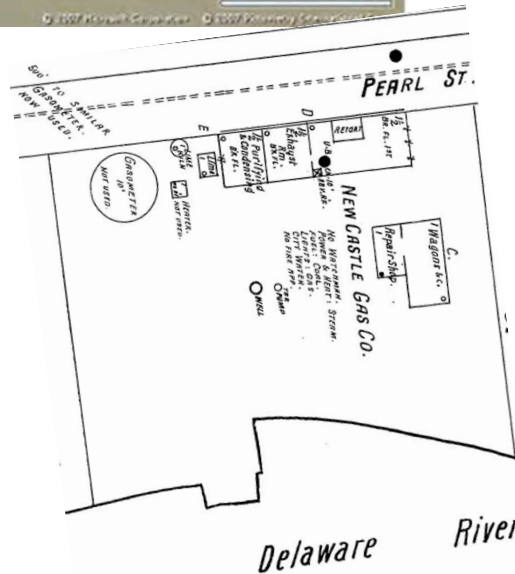
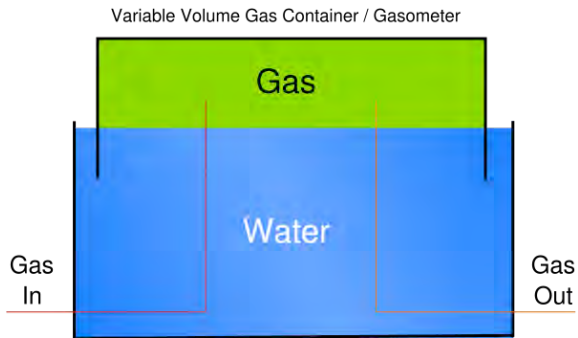


[Alexander B. Cooper in 1905]: "I have recently seen an excellent engraving, of Woodside's, which represents a fine panel picture, taken from the [c1835] steamboat "New Castle." It shows the whole river front of the town, and the buildings erected on it. **About where the remains of the old "Coal Wharf," now are [flagpole], appears a large sandy beach, and in the water along the beach are four of the old semi-oval coaches, with four horses attached to each. At this point the drivers used to water the horses, and soak the wheels of the coaches."**

"Just beyond them, a little further **up the river, a packet boat** is anchored, with a pennant floating from her mast head, upon which plainly appears the word, "Union." Some distance further up the **steamboat**, "New Castle" is seen approaching the wharf. The original panel picture is now owned and in possession of —— Forsyth, of St. Louis, Mo., who married Miss ——Janvier, of the New Castle Janvier family. "

New Castle Gas Co.

Provided illuminating gas from 1857 to 1917



Edward Moran – Maritime painter.
Trained in Philadelphia, painted this at age 28



Edward Moran, 1857
New Castle on the Delaware
Butler Institute of American Art
Youngstown, Ohio

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward_Moran
<http://nc-chap.org/chap/moran.php>



Storm off New Castle, Delaware – Edward Moran, 1857

Sold for \$6,000, May 2016



Imaged by Heritage Auctions, HA.com

Advances, Setbacks in New Castle History

- + 1655 Rule by Amsterdam, not Dutch West India Company
- + 1664 Govt. center for three lower counties
- 1682 Loses status as chief city to Philadelphia
- <1770 Loses shipping dominance to Philadelphia
- 1777 Loses state capital to Dover
- + 1797 Finally, self governed
- + 1800s North/South Transportation hub
- 1824 Fire destroys many buildings
- + 1832 NC&FT RR opens
- 1838 NC&FT RR Bypassed
- + 1840 on Gains industry: railroad engines, iron, steel
- 1880 Loses county seat to Wilmington
- 1900-1960 Industries close
- + 1920s Colonial revival awareness increases appreciation

Next week

Class 5:

People to 1850: Portraits of 45 rich and powerful people who lived in town

- What son of a prominent resident was an opium dealer and diplomat?
- What FOUR people who lived or worked in New Castle signed the Declaration of Independence
- Lawyers, judges, sailors, merchant, mother of 13 (!) who lived in 1/3 of our house(!) famous architects, ministers, patriots, librarians, musicians, a nationally famous bride