

NOTICES  
OF  
PARKERSBURG,  
VIRGINIA,

AS IT IS IN

*July, 1860.*

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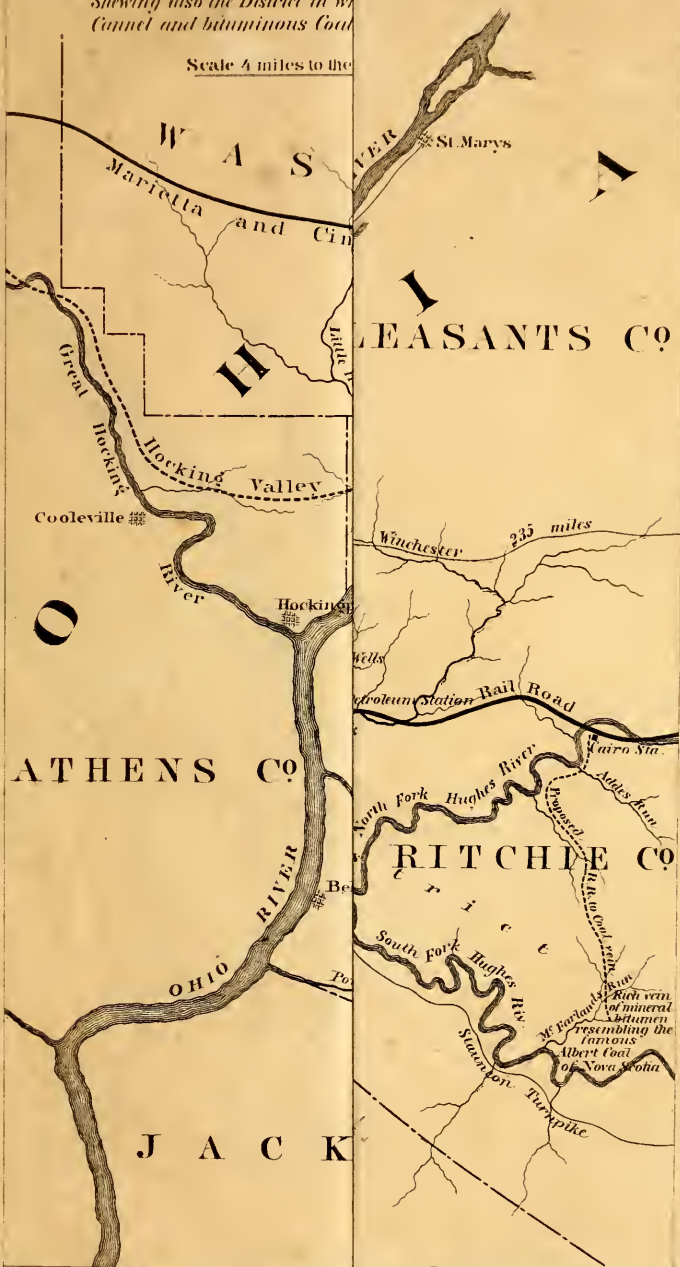




# Shewing the Rivers, Railroads of Trade & Manufactures.

Shewing also the District in which  
Cannel and bituminous Coal

Scale 4 miles to the





# MAP OF WOOD COUNTY VIRGINIA

and adjacent  
COUNTIES OF VIRGINIA & OHIO

Shewing the Rivers, Railroads & Turnpikes by means of which **PARKERSBURG** is destined to become a centre of Trade & Manufactures.

*Showing also the District in which Rock Oil & mineral Springs  
Cannel and bituminous Coal & Iron Ore abound.*

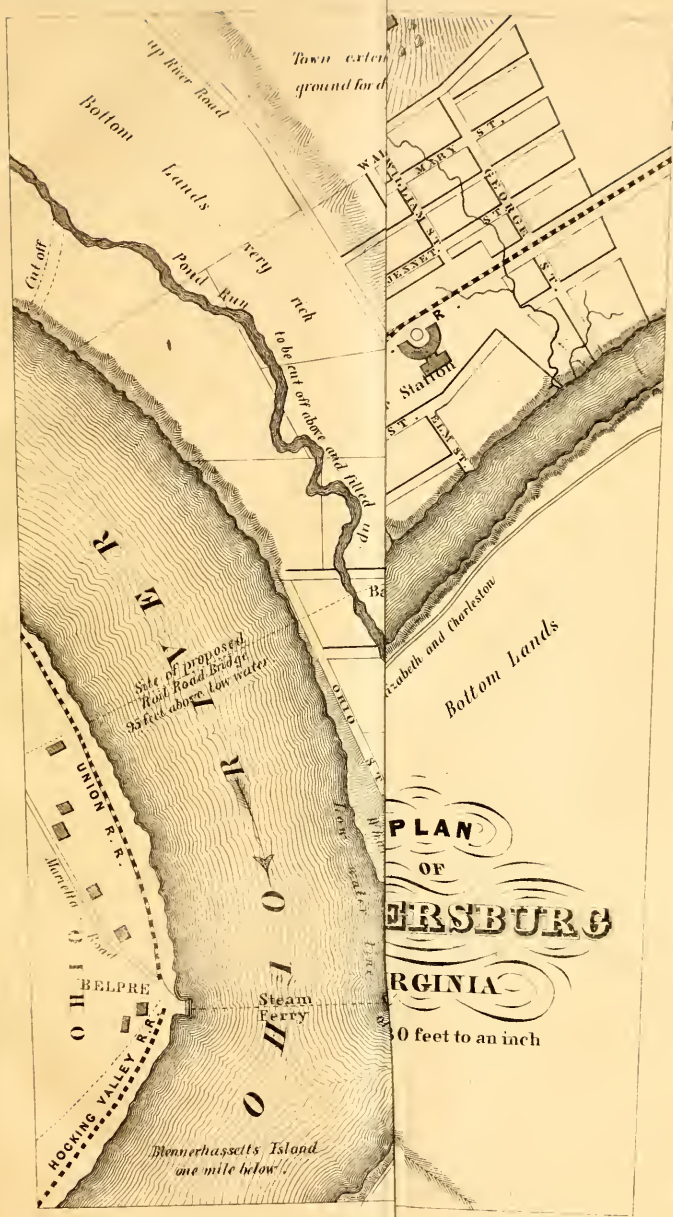
Scale 4 miles to the inch.











Town extension  
ground for

Bottom

Lands

Pond Run

very rich  
to be cut off here and filled up

Cut off

Station

Elizabeth and Charleston  
Bottom Lands

Site of Proposed  
Road Bridge  
95 feet above low water

UNION R.R.

Moretto

BELPRE

HOCKING VALLEY R.R.

Steam  
Ferry

Mennerhassett's Island  
one mile below

# PLAN OF WHEELERSBURG VIRGINIA

10 feet to an inch

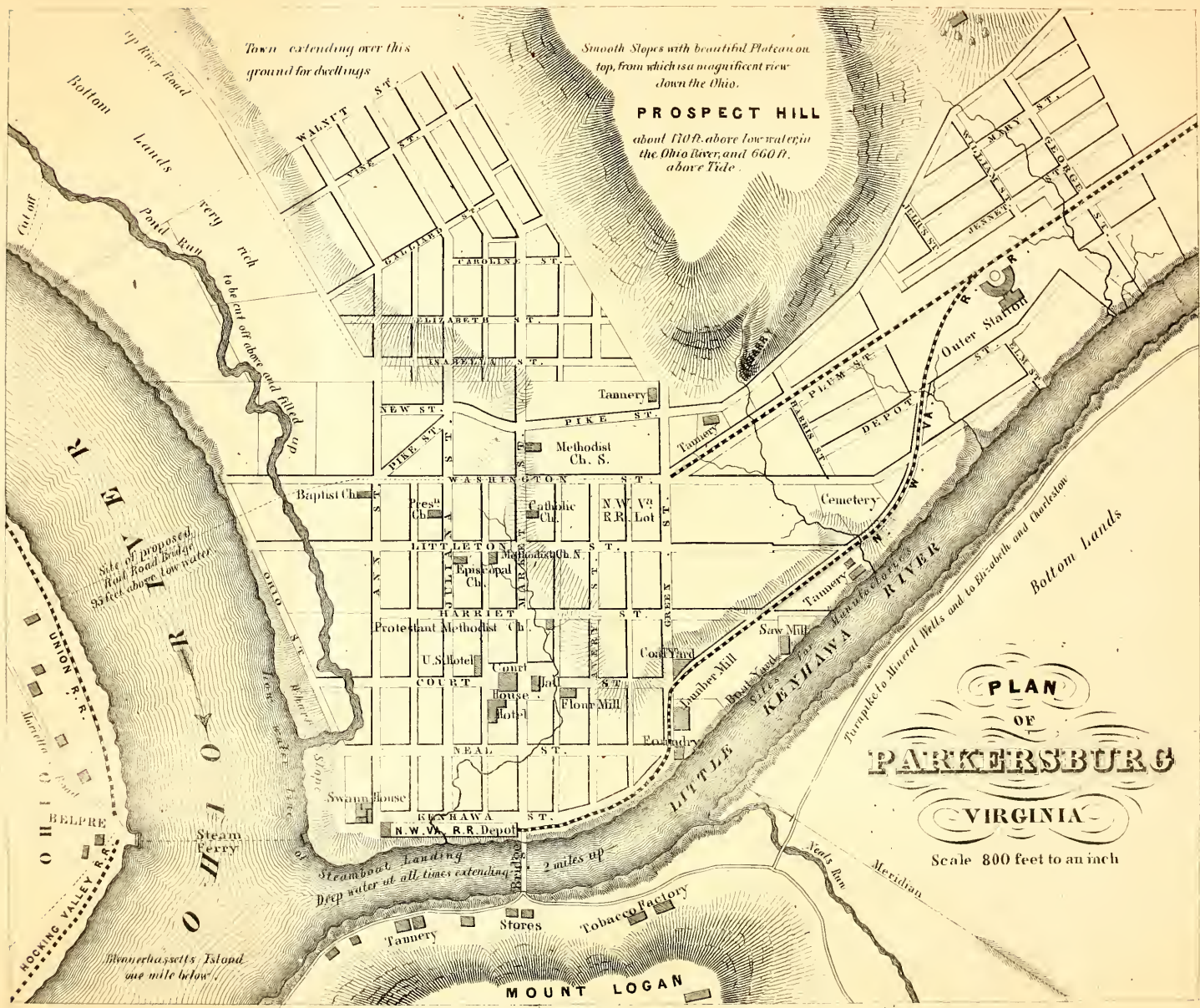


Town extending over this ground for dwellings

Smooth Slopes with beautiful Plateau on top, from which is a magnificent view down the Ohio.

# PROSPECT HILL

about 110 ft. above low water in the Ohio river, and 660 ft. above Tide.



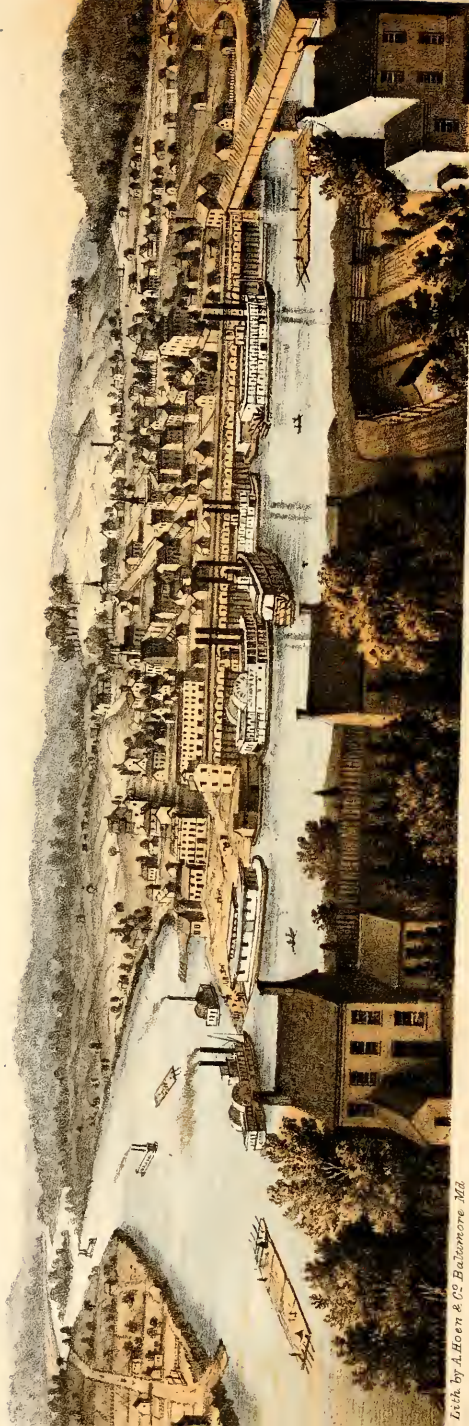
## PLAN OF PARKERSBURG VIRGINIA

Scale 800 feet to an inch









Lith by A. Hoer & C<sup>o</sup> Baltimore Md

Sketch from Nature by Henry H. Latrobe

# VIEW OF PARKERSBURG VA

from the south side of the Kanawha River, looking up the Ohio.

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BALTIMORE. . . . JOHN W. WOODS, STEAM PRINTER,  
No. 202 Baltimore Street, Baltimore.



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# NOTICES, &c.

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PARKERSBURG, 92 miles below Wheeling, 184 miles below Pittsburgh, and 277 miles above Cincinnati, the county town of Wood county, Virginia, is situated on the east bank of the Ohio river at its confluence with the Little Kanhawa. Its latitude is about the same as Baltimore and Cincinnati, and its climate that of the great central region of the Union. The range of the thermometer is not as great as at the North or the South. The rigorous and protracted winters of the first, and the extreme drought and heat of the second, are almost unknown, while the sultry nights of both sections are seldom experienced. In short, while the temperature is sufficiently variable, great and sudden changes are rare. Snow falls in winter but seldom and rarely remains more than a day or two at a time. Owing to this and to some local causes, Parkersburg, in common with a large extent of Northwestern Virginia, is remarkably healthy. Malarious or bilious diseases seldom or never become epidemic, and agues, the curse of the prairie states, are comparatively unknown. Indeed diseases generally are of a milder type than in less favored regions. It may be added here that although the Cholera has more than once ravaged the Ohio valley, no case occurred at Parkersburg or its vicinity in 1833, and not more than half a dozen cases in subsequent years.

The topography of the town site is somewhat peculiar and doubtless tends to promote and preserve the health of the inhabitants. The town lies upon three elevations or "benches" rising inland one above the other, and presents a very attractive appearance to the traveler approaching it by the river. All the water which falls upon it can be drained over the surface, and will be so got rid of when the improvements of the streets now in progress are completed, thus avoiding the use of underground culverts and sewers. The rise from bench to bench is sufficiently moderate to avoid steepness in the streets, which, however, are so much inclined as to be thoroughly washed by every hard rain, an advantage of which those will be sensible who have had an

opportunity to compare the rolling surfaces of Baltimore and Richmond with the dead levels of New York and Philadelphia.

With two or three exceptions the streets are sixty feet in width, and between them, in one direction, at the distance of one hundred and seventy feet from each, are alleys of twenty feet. The grades of all the streets and alleys were established by competent engineers, having reference to surface drainage, and are being brought to grade as fast as the revenues of the town will permit. The soil of the two upper benches is a sandy loam by which moisture is rapidly absorbed, and as nearly every lot may be thoroughly drained by the street gutters, dampness, the great foe to health, is in a great degree excluded from the residences of the citizens.

The accompanying plat of the town site shows its division into streets, &c. The lots between Washington and Green streets and the rivers, (the original town,) are eighty-five by one hundred and seventy feet, and the distance from street to street where there is no alley three hundred and forty feet. The public square, covering the intersection of Market and Court streets, is four hundred and forty feet in length by two hundred and thirty feet in breadth, and on this there has been erected during the present season, by the county authorities, a spacious and handsome courthouse at a cost of twenty-five thousand dollars. The other public buildings are churches of the Methodist, (North, South, and Protestant,) Baptist, Presbyterian, Episcopal, and Catholic denominations, three large hotels, railroad station, &c.

Among the business establishments of the town are two lumber mills, at which lumber is prepared for house and boat building, and in immediate connection with each are planing, and other machines by which flooring, shingles, lath, sashes, doors, blinds, bedstead and table stuff, broom handles and a variety of wooden "notions" are prepared for market. There is also a boat yard in connection with each of these mills, at which six steamboats were built during the past year and as many during the last half year. Each of these establishments employs about sixty hands. There are other mills of the kind in the vicinity, but on a less extensive scale.

All the lumber used by these mills except white pine, is hauled from the neighborhood or floated in the log down the Little Kanhawa river, the valley of which to its head, upwards of a hundred miles to the southeast, abounds with timber of nearly every

variety of the growth of the country. The quality of the lumber produced in the region tributary to Parkersburg is considered superior and has the preference in the Cincinnati market. The kinds are yellow pine, of which it is the only extensive accessible locality in the Ohio valley, white and other oaks, white and yellow poplar, locust, and every kind used for furniture and chair making, as walnut, sycamore, cherry, maple, gum, &c. Much of the lumber is exported, generally down the river to Cincinnati and other markets, but the pine flooring, planed and jointed, is also sent up the river to Wheeling and other towns. Steamboat lumber is sent in both directions, and parties are constantly engaged along the Little Kanhawa river in getting out, and hauling to the bank the long, straight and heavy white oak sticks which this locality so abundantly furnishes. The lumber trade could be greatly extended by capital and enterprise, and if there were shops here capable of furnishing their machinery, the building and fitting out of steamboats would become an extensive and profitable part of the business of the place.

Among the other manufacturing establishments are four steam tanneries. These chiefly procure hides from St. Louis, and send their leather to the east for sale. Their advantages are comparatively cheap labor, and an abundant supply of chesnut, oak and other barks. This business could also be greatly extended with profit.

There are three grist mills in the town, and others in the vicinity. The "extra" and "family" flour manufactured by them has a high reputation abroad as well as at home. The quality of the wheat produced in this region is known to be superior, and the breadth of land sown is annually increasing. There is also a distillery, two iron foundries, two tobacco factories, and two potteries; a very superior clay for the latter being found in the vicinity. There are besides, the usual proportion of mercantile establishments and mechanical trades, three large, well furnished and kept hotels, and several smaller ones. Two weekly newspapers, one upon each side in politics, are published in this town.

The coal used for manufacturing purposes and for fuel is now abundantly supplied at from \$1 50 to \$2 00 per ton, by the Ohio river during the boating season, and by railroad from the vicinity of Clarksburg at all seasons. The coal from Clarksburg, is mined in a vein 10 feet thick, and is of superior quality. It is

bituminous and excellent for the manufacture of gas. One of the mining companies is now completing arrangements for shipping it from Parkersburg by the river. The consumption of such coal along the Ohio and Mississippi rivers, from Parkersburg to New Orleans, a distance of some 1800 miles, is great and rapidly increasing, and as this superior coal can doubtless be shipped at a profit, the trade in it can be indefinitely extended, and will promote the prosperity of the town by employing a large amount of labor in boat building, transshipment and navigation.

This pamphlet has not been prepared and published in the interest of any land or other company, nor to promote the interests of any particular individuals or class. Its object is to call attention to the inducements Parkersburg and its vicinity presents to those who are seeking new homes or are desirous to commence business where enterprise and industry will insure success.

Situated in the midst of a productive agricultural region, and easily accessible from the richest portions of the great West, the cost of living is low when compared with that of the Atlantic states. The cost of fuel for motive power is also, as has been stated, extremely low, and the sources whence it is derived so extensive, that no increase of its cost can be anticipated. Pittsburgh and Wheeling respectively nearly 200 and 100 miles above Parkersburg, on the Ohio, are the seats of very extensive manufactories of various kinds, the products of which are almost hourly transported by Parkersburg, to the numerous consuming markets of the West, found on both sides of the Ohio to its mouth, and on the Mississippi and Missouri and their innumerable tributaries, draining the vast valley between the Alleghanies and the Rocky Mountains—the great lakes and the Mexican Gulf. The same articles can be made at Parkersburg, and some of them at less cost, particularly wagons, carriages, furniture, and all others of which lumber is a component part.

There is no point in the West more favorably situated for the business of packing provisions. The Counties of Ohio, viz. Ross, Pickaway, Pike, Fairfield, Highland, &c., which produce the richest corn crops, and breed the greatest number of hogs and cattle, lie immediately westward of this place, and are bisected by the Marietta and Cincinnati Railroad, which brings the material of this trade to Parkersburg, where, at the very convenient sites on the Little Kanhawa river, with the railroad to dump coal into their furnaces, they can perform all their operations at a



minimum of time and cost, and can dispatch their products to Baltimore and other Eastern markets, with the least possible expense of handling and transportation.

The commercial position and facilities of Parkersburg can hardly be overstated. It is accessible by railroad and steam navigation from every part of the Union, to the population of which it is nearly central. The Northwestern Virginia Railroad connects it with Baltimore, (383 miles distant,) and the Marietta and Cincinnati Railroad, leading from Belpre, on the opposite side of the Ohio river, now connects it with Cincinnati on a distance now of 200 miles, (to be shortened by the Hocking Valley Railroad to 190 miles,) and with every important point in the great States of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, &c., &c., to every one of which, except those to the North and East of Zanesville, it is nearer than Wheeling or Pittsburg. A cursory examination of any good map will show the immense extent of its river connections, covering indeed the whole navigable coast of the Mississippi and its confluent, stretching thousands of miles in aggregate length.

The greater portion of the through freight business done by the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, now passes through Parkersburg. Eight or more trains of 15 or 16 cars are, during the business season, daily dispatched from and received at the depot at that place, where the facilities for transshipment by steam machinery are unequalled. Those trains are laden with Western products for the Eastern cities from Boston to Savannah, while points as distant as Memphis and beyond St. Louis are the destinations of much of the return freight. The railroad route through Parkersburg being the shortest possible between Cincinnati and the seaboard, it will be readily perceived that this business already great, is destined to increase incalculably with the growth of the great West.

A portion of the tonnage through Parkersburg passes over the Marietta and Cincinnati Railroad, and the remainder comes or goes by the river. During the greater part of the year there are daily steamers both ways between Cincinnati and Parkersburg, while further accommodation is afforded by the daily line between St. Louis and Pittsburgh. In addition to these there are daily lines to and from Wheeling, on the Ohio, and Zanesville, on the Muskingum river, and tri-weekly and semi-weekly lines to and from Gallipolis and Portsmouth on the Ohio, and Charleston on the Great Kanhawa river.

Parkersburg is indeed manifestly the *natural* point of transshipment for freight, ascending the Ohio and seeking an Eastern market, for it is the first railway terminus which presents itself for that purpose, both time and distance being lost by continuing the voyage farther. When the Virginia Central Railroad may at some future day be extended to the river, at a lower point, boats will still prefer to push on as far as Parkersburg, shortening thereby the *rail* transportation without materially increasing the whole distance to Baltimore. Thus from the mouth of Big Sandy, the proposed terminus of the Virginia Central road, will be 487 miles to Baltimore by rail, and from Parkersburg it is but 383, while the river distance from Big Sandy to Parkersburg is 131 miles, and the total distance via Parkersburg, is 514 miles, making the water carriage but 37 miles more, and the rail carriage 104 miles less, and of course reducing the cost in much larger proportion. If on the other hand, freight passes above Parkersburg to Wheeling, it adds 92 miles to its water carriage, and, if destined for Baltimore, takes but 3 miles from its rail carriage. If it goes up still farther to Pittsburg, it increases its water carriage 184 miles and reduces its rail carriage to Philadelphia but 30 miles. No future change in railway connections can deprive Parkersburg of large advantages of this description. For the Ohio river trade, at least as high as Marietta and for the whole of the rich Muskingum valley, Parkersburg is also the unquestionably natural outlet.

Both the railroads terminating at Parkersburg, were opened to the public a little over three years since, in an unfinished condition. The Northwestern Virginia was soon completed, with the exception of the arching of the tunnels with stone and brick, which is now in progress. It is now one of the most substantial and smoothest running roads in the country, without sharp curves and of a maximum grade, admitting the highest speeds and great economy of transportation. The completion of the Marietta and Cincinnati Railroad, (although it is even now worked with considerable regularity,) has been longer delayed, but since its reorganization a few months since, measures have been inaugurated which will insure its completion at the earliest possible period. When this is effected, the two roads named will constitute a line at least fifty miles shorter in distance and still more in grades and curves between Cincinnati and Grafton on the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, than the line between the same points via Wheeling, Zanesville and Columbus.



Two great State turnpikes have their Western termini at Parkersburg. One runs nearly due East 235 miles to Winchester, whence there is a railroad to Harper's Ferry, on the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, and the other, 234 miles to Staunton, on the Virginia Central Railroad. Although both these roads cross the mountains, their grades are favorable throughout, and both are partially Macadamised. While the progress of railroads has rendered them valueless as through routes, they have served and still serve an excellent purpose in promoting the settlement of the country through which they pass. Being intersected by many shorter turnpikes, they act as feeders to the railroad, and are a great convenience to those who sell their produce or make their purchases at Parkersburg. The tolls received are sufficient to maintain them in good order. There is also a turnpike very nearly completed to Charleston, and the salt works on the Great Kanhawa river, over the line of which a tri-weekly stage is run. Two other less important turnpikes terminate at Parkersburg.

This brief recapitulation of the advantages enjoyed by Parkersburg, sufficiently indicate its importance as a commercial and manufacturing point. Its growth has been rapid. Although incorporated as a town in 1823, its population at the completion of the Winchester or Northwestern turnpike, in 1835, hardly exceeded 400, but had increased to 1500 when the Northwestern Virginia Railroad was chartered in 1851. By the census of this year, it approaches 2800. During the last three years, more than 150 buildings have been erected, 25 of which were commenced since January last, and others are contemplated. Much has been done towards the regulation of the fifteen or more miles of streets and alleys, the improvement of the wharves, &c., &c., and yet the town is without a funded debt, except that incurred to pay for its \$50,000 of stock in the Northwestern Virginia Railroad Company, at an annual interest of six per cent., having fifteen years yet to run, and for the redemption of which there is an accruing sinking fund deemed sufficient for the purpose.

These facts are tangible indications of continuing prosperity, in the town, yet the results would unquestionably have been much greater but for the commercial revulsion of 1857, which was nearly cotemporary with the opening of her railroads. During the same period, the crops have been short in the Northwestern States until the present season. If the confident and general anticipations of quantity and demand are realized, the trade of the railroads

will be greatly increased, and a fresh impulse given to every branch of business. The growth of the town, which has been both great and constant during the period of depression, must increase its ratio in better times. The expectation of this has induced the publication and circulation of this pamphlet at this time, as an invitation to men of capital and enterprise, who are about changing their location, or commencing business, to consider the advantages presented to them by Parkersburg.

To manufacturers and mechanics it may be sufficient to say, that, as there are already at Cincinnati, Wheeling, Pittsburgh, and other points on the upper Ohio, large and prosperous establishments adapted to the ever-growing markets of the West, so Parkersburg presents equal or superior advantages, both in cheapness of manufacture and facility of distribution, while lots can be bought—buildings erected and boarding be had, or housekeeping be conducted at much cheaper rates.

*Commercial men* must perceive that Parkersburg cannot but become a market for all Western products. Accessible from so many points of production, by both land and water, the *agriculturist* will look for a purchaser at the point of shipment to the Eastern market, and to the same point for his supplies. The lines of steamers both up and down the river, the principle business of which is to collect the produce brought to its shores, and in return, to distribute supplies for the daily wants of the population, afford evidence that this business has already commenced.

The agriculturist may be reminded that the vicinity of a point of shipment having superior facilities for reaching the great consuming and exporting marts, is the place he should select. The country on both sides of the Ohio, excepting the bottom lands of the water courses, is hilly, but not precipitous and in the language of the geological report of Virginia "the valleys and steep hill sides are covered with a richly productive soil, which is constantly recruited by the disintegration of the sandstone of the coal measures." Heavy timber, of various kinds, grows luxuriantly to the very tops of the ridges. Limestone is found almost everywhere, and there are many other indications of permanent fertility. Whether land is wanted for the plough, for grazing, or for sheep raising, or for all combined, the applicant can be suited, and at low rates, along the whole of the North Western Virginia Railroad. Until the building of this railroad, the region it traverses was inaccessible by any other than the common

roads of the country, and hence the great tide of emigration from the older States, passed wide of it. It now offers its virgin lands with a mild and healthy climate, great commercial facilities, opened and improved roads, nearness to schools, churches and neighbors, and in short, most of the blessings and refinements of longer settled countries, at prices not much exceeding those of lands of similar quality in the distant and ague ridden States and Territories.

It may be added that coal underlies the whole country, although near the Ohio River, the workable veins lie too deep for profitable working while there is so much above water levels and near enough for cheap transportation. Salt or salt water is as generally diffused, and has been reached at various points on and near the Ohio and tributaries. Iron ore appears in various places, although not yet worked. Petroleum or rock oil, from which fortunes are being realized with unheard of rapidity, in Northwestern Pennsylvania, is found in abundance over large tracts, between twenty and forty miles east of Parkersburg, with the advantage over the oil region of Pennsylvania, of being intersected by a railroad ready to convey its product speedily and cheaply to market. Many wells have already been bored, and are in progress, and, so far, the oil is reached at a moderate distance from the surface. A mineral bitumen in a vertical vein of several feet thick and not less than several hundred feet in depth has been discovered within 10 or 12 miles of the Northwestern Virginia Railroad from which a branch road is now being made to the mine. This singular substance (closely resembling the celebrated "Albert Coal" of Nova Scotia, worth \$15 per ton on shipboard and costing but \$3 to place it there and yielding enormous profits to its proprietors,) is in effect a mineral oil in a crystalline condition, and is now about to be extensively worked by a Company chartered for the purpose.

It may be inferred from what has been above submitted, that Parkersburg holds out as many inducements to the *Manufacturer* in almost every branch of industry, as to the *Merchant* and the *Farmer*, such as cheap fuel, cheap building materials of every kind and of the best quality, cheap subsistence, pure air, ample space for the dwellings of operatives, and sites for factory buildings, workshops and warehouses not to be excelled for convenience and facility of handling and transportation of the raw and made up article to and from the most distant sections of the Union, as well as the immediate neighborhood.

In conclusion, it may not be amiss to say a word of the recommendations of Parkersburg as a place of temporary sojourn to the traveler of leisure, or of permanent residence to the educated and affluent citizen. The position of the town can scarcely be surpassed for picturesque beauty, as every visitor who has climbed the easy ascent of Prospect Hill, or the more precipitous acclivity of Mount Logan, cannot fail to acknowledge. From the former he looks westward along the magnificent mirror of the Ohio reflecting on a calm evening, and by the light of a sunset whose splendor from this point of view has long been renowned, the historic island of "Blennerhassett," with the graceful Virginia and Ohio hills on either hand, and on the right, the plains of Belpre, the "beautiful meadow," so named by the French pioneers as they floated down "La belle Riviere" on their voyage of discovery and anticipated conquest.

Finally, let it be said to the citizens of the *Free States* looking for new homes, that Slavery in North-Western Virginia is an institution practically existing only *in name*, as the present census already shows most conclusively, the insignificant number of slaves exhibited in that of ten years ago having dwindled to a handful, while, the free blacks being few, free white labor is the productive power of the region with no drawback from the competition it meets with in people of color, elsewhere south of Pennsylvania.

Thus much having been said about Parkersburg, let its truth be tested by personal inquiry on the spot, to which the readers of this sketch are respectfully invited.







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