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History of Richmond as a port city

Myrtle Elizabeth Callahan

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Approved April 24, 1952

Herbert A. Anderson

Chairman, Department of Economics

HISTORY OF RICHMOND AS A PORT CITY

BY

MYRTLE ELIZABETH CALLAHAN

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND
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FOR THE DEGREE OF
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JUNE, 1952

TO MY MOTHER

PREFACE

The purpose of this study has been to trace the evolution and course of Richmond as a port city from its beginning date, its period of gradual growth, the years of peak activity in the nineteenth century, the beginning of its decline in world trade, the subsequent renaissance of the port, followed by a recent decline at the present time, pointing out factors which brought about and contributed to each of these stages.

I wish to gratefully acknowledge and express my appreciation for the valuable assistance and suggestions, in the preparation of this thesis, offered by the following people: to Professor Jack Wagoner for suggesting the subject and possible sources of information regarding the subject; to Dr. Douglas Southall Freeman for suggesting additional sources of information; to Captain O. L. Rowe, City Harbormaster, for supplying current information regarding the Port of Richmond, and the canal, an adjunct of the port; to Miss Bessie Eberwine for obtaining from the libraries in Baltimore, Maryland, material relative to the coffee trade during the nineteenth century; and to Dr. Herman P. Thomas for guidance and suggestions concerning the content and arrangement of the material in each chapter.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Chapter</u>	<u>Page</u>
I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. ORIGIN OF RICHMOND AND EARLY GROWTH, 1733-1800	3
III. DEVELOPMENT AND COMMERCE, 1800-1860	7
IV. THE CIVIL WAR AND GROWTH OF COMMERCE FOLLOWING WAR, 1861-1890	17
V. THE PERIOD 1890-1950	23
VI. INDUSTRIES CONTRIBUTING TO THE GROWTH OF THE PORT.	35
Tobacco	35
Shipbuilding	39
Tredegor Iron Works	41
The James River Packet Company	42
Silk	42
Coal	43
Flour	45
VII. STEAMSHIP SERVICE OF THE PORT	47
VIII. REASONS FOR THE PORT'S DECLINE	52
IX. HISTORY OF IMPROVEMENTS	55
X. THE RICHMOND DOCK COMPANY	62
Origin and Development	62
XI. THE JAMES RIVER CANAL, ADJUNCT OF THE PORT OF RICHMOND	64
The Conception	64
The Birth	66
The Period of Greatest Prosperity, 1850-1860	75

Chapter

Page

The War Years, 1861-1865 77
The Decline 80
Present Status of the Canal 84
Summary 85

XII. METHODS OF TRANSPORT ON THE CANAL 88
 Canoes 88
 Bateaux Boats 88
 Canal Boats 89
 Freight Boats 90
 Passenger Packet Boats 92

XIII. PRESENT STATUS OF RICHMOND AS A PORT CITY . . . 96

BIBLIOGRAPHY 103

VITA 106

HISTORY OF RICHMOND AS A PORT CITY

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The history of Richmond as a port city has been traced from its earliest beginnings until the present date. This development has been taken through all the stages: origin, rise, decline, renaissance, and present status. Also, the evolution of the James River Canal, an adjunct of the port, has been traced through the following stages: origin, rise, decline, and present status.

The history begins when Colonel William Byrd saw the possibility of the site as a trading center in 1733 and projected a plan to establish a town at the falls of the James, which was carried out in 1737. This early phase is followed by a study of Richmond's growth as a port city during the eighteenth century and following the Revolutionary War; the official designation of Richmond as a port city in

1800; the continued growth until the Civil War period, highlighted by the immense coffee trade from South America and flour exported there from Richmond; the Civil War years when Richmond became the center of national interest; reconstruction following the devastation of the Civil War; peak activity of the port in the nineteenth century; the gradual decline of trade to and from the port; revival of the port following certain major improvements; reasons for the latest decline of the port; volume of trade, past and present; savings effected through the use of the port; and present status of Richmond as a port city.

CHAPTER II

ORIGIN OF RICHMOND AND EARLY GROWTH, 1733-1800

Richmond's development as a port, into which come the goods of many foreign lands and from which go its products, dates almost from the discovery of the site.

One of the most important factors in this development of Richmond has been its location, situated only one hundred miles from the Atlantic Seaboard at the head of tide-water on a navigable stream.

The James River was the first river to be explored commercially by the English and has played an important part in the history of Virginia from the time of the settlement at Jamestown. The site of Richmond was discovered only ten days after the founding of Jamestown, first permanent English settlement in America.

Present-day Richmond grew from this little trading post at the falls of the James, founded primarily for the

purpose of the tobacco trade. In 1733, William Byrd laid the foundation for Richmond, stating that: "The uppermost Landing of James was naturally intended for a Mart where the Outer Inhabitants Must Center."¹

For a hundred years before William Byrd laid out his town at the head of navigation on the James, frontier traders had been familiar with the site. Indians from rich hunting grounds in western Virginia met the factors at the falls. It was a natural stopping place and had become an outfitting post for planters as well as hunters and other adventurers before the village was chartered in 1742, in which year the population consisted of 250 people. At this time, loads of tobacco were carried and loaded on ships moored in the tidal basin. Roughly built cabins clustered along the river. Artisans were busy operating grist mills, digging iron ore, and preparing for the future role of the community as an industrial center. During this period the village was the last outpost of civilization. But as population spread to the West, it became the natural market between the West and the East.²

¹Workers of the Writers' Program of the W. P. A. in the State of Virginia, Virginia, A Guide to the Old Dominion, Oxford University Press, New York, 1940, p. 286.

²Approaches to its History by Various Hands, Richmond, Capital of Virginia, Whittet and Shepperson, Richmond, Virginia, 1938, p. 18.

In this early period, transportation was largely by water, and Richmond, being an inland port, profitted by the lack of overland transportation media. Ever since the city's founding the James River has borne much of Richmond's commerce.

Richmond's growth during these early years was slow but continuous. In 1769, a town later called Manchester (now South Richmond) was established at Rocky Ridge on the south side of the river.³ In 1775, Richmond was still little more than a frontier village.⁴ During the next decade Richmond's gradual growth continued, with vicissitudes that included the destructive great freshet of 1771. Many buildings were washed away and tobacco and other goods in warehouses were damaged badly. In 1778, the town contained less than 300 homes. Four years later, Major William Mayo plotted on what is Churchhill, 32 squares for Richmond "with Streets 65 Feet Wide," and named the place after Richmond on the Thames. In 1779, Richmond was made the capital of Virginia; and by 1780 it had 684 inhabitants.⁵

³Workers of the Writers' Program of the W. P. A. in the State of Virginia, op. cit., p. 287.

⁴Lutz, Earle, A Richmond Album, Garrett and Massie, Richmond, Virginia, 1937, p. 14.

⁵Workers of the Writers' Program of the W. P. A. in the State of Virginia, op. cit., p. 287.

Following the Revolutionary War, the task of rebuilding was begun. The first undertaking, in 1782, was to incorporate Richmond as a town. As yet the only method of transportation was by water.⁶ By 1790, the population had increased to 3,761 inhabitants. In 1793 the town was enlarged by taking in the lots of the Reverend William Coutts.⁷ By 1800, Richmond had a population of 5,730.

⁶Lutz, op. cit., p. 16.

⁷Ibid., p. 18.

CHAPTER III
DEVELOPMENT AND COMMERCE, 1800-1860

In 1800, Richmond had a population of 5,730 and was the most populous city in the Union. Not until 1820 did she lose first place to New York.¹ The city was established as a customs port and district on December 5, 1800, when President John Adams appointed James Gibbon, Collector, giving him charge of the entire seacoast of the State.² Goods were imported into Virginia, previous to and for a score of years after the Revolution, chiefly by English, Scotch and Irish merchants. The principals of these mercantile houses resided in Great Britain, and junior partners

¹Bryan, J. III, "Richmond," Saturday Evening Post, August 28, 1948.

²Smith, W. G., "Richmond May Be World Port Again," Richmond Times Dispatch, December 16, 1934.

conducted the business in Virginia. The monopoly of the trade of Virginia, to a great extent was retained by the British merchants many years after the peace of 1783, but adventurers from the northern and eastern states gradually made good their footing; even some Virginians condescended to stand behind the desk or the counter.

When our goods were imported directly from abroad, and our produce exported to Europe, we paid dearly for the honor of such direct trade. We found it to our interests to encourage northern competition, which increased by slow degrees. The purchase of goods in New York and Philadelphia became the rule, and direct importation the exception.

The system which formerly existed prevented an accumulation of capital in Richmond, since the profits on trade went chiefly to the principals in Great Britain. Large sums were thus exported from Richmond and Petersburg to establish merchants in London, Liverpool, and New York, while scarcely any capital came from those cities to replace it.³

The War of 1812 caused the Richmond merchants to suffer many hardships, due to the Embargo and Non-intercourse Act which preceded this war with Great Britain. It was difficult

³Mordecai, Samuel, Richmond in By-gone Days, G. M. West, Richmond, Virginia, 1856, p. 40.

for the merchants to secure goods from London and Liverpool, and the deprivation of Richmond of many articles of necessity was very severe.⁴ Also, shippers suffered severe losses at sea. After a year of warfare it was necessary to open a marine insurance company in Richmond to combat conditions. The owners had to be guaranteed some protection against the loss of their ships and cargoes.⁵

Prices rose rapidly. For example, salt sold in Richmond at one period of the War of 1812 at \$25 per sack, and almost all imported commodities were in proportion. The supplies obtained were not so much by importation as by capture from the enemy. Our privateers were numerous, as well as daring, and frequently were successful in getting their prizes into those ports which the enemy could not easily blockade.

Exports from Richmond were chiefly by way of Amelia Island, at the northern extremity of East Florida, then a Spanish colony and neutral. Tobacco, almost the only article, was transported partly in small vessels through the inlets and sounds of North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia. Richmond's central position was highly unfavorable for this forced trade.

⁴Bondurant, Agnes M., Poe's Richmond, Garrett and Massie, Inc., Richmond, Virginia, 1942, p. 45.

⁵Bullington, Ann, Vignettes of the James, Richmond Press, Inc., Richmond, Virginia, 1941, p. 75.

Following the War of 1812, the port soon again buzzed with activity. However, it was shaken by a depression that hit suddenly in 1819. Shipping on the James was drastically reduced, but in due time conditions returned to normal, and Richmond, in the first part of the nineteenth century, became a bustling canal port, the central point between the mountains and the sea.⁶ It grew rapidly into a typical, picturesque waterfront of its day. Along Lester Street large warehouses loomed and interspersed through the locale were well-patronized saloons. Sailors from all climes, who spoke many different languages, laughed, sang, and made merry in these waterfront places.

The U. S. Deputy Collector for the Port, in an article in the Richmond Times Dispatch in December, 1934, stated:

"With the tremendous importance of the port in the early days, I find that the total collections of duty in 1821 was only \$86,990.58. That total was regarded as something prodigious."

By 1833, Richmond had become a port of first importance. In this year exports of domestic produce from Richmond to foreign countries shipped in American vessels amounted to \$2,466,360; those shipped in foreign vessels were valued at \$498,131. During the same year, five schooners, nine barks, thirty-seven brigs, and thirty other ships, in all eighty-one outgoing vessels cleared the Port of Richmond. Four

⁶Meacham, W. S., "Despite Change, Richmond is Still Richmond," New York Times, September 5, 1937.

schooners, six brigs, two barks, and three other ships entered from foreign countries, making a total tonnage of 3,412 tons.

The import trade was not so great as the export. The merchandise brought into the city from foreign countries in 1833 was valued at \$209,963 and the duties to the federal government amounted to \$75,120. Among the articles brought up the James were salt, bar and pig iron, and plaster and lime. Among the items carried down the James were flour, wheat, coal, and tobacco.⁷

Yearly the river's freight grew in volume. By 1837, seagoing vessels from London, Liverpool, and other foreign ports, as well as those from New York and Baltimore, anchored at the Richmond wharf. One line, that of J. Hooper and Sons, had seven freight packets on a regular schedule between Richmond and Baltimore in 1839. Much of this cargo came from the fertile plantations of the upper James as well as the lower estates. Negroes worked the tobacco fields and traveled almost daily the roads to the city, rolling hogsheads of tobacco or driving carts loaded with farm produce, for shipment from the port.⁸

⁷Bondurant, op. cit., p. 30.

⁸Bullington, op. cit., p. 78.

Activity at the port continued well into the forties. This was an uneventful period, but at least one boat that cleared in 1844 was of general interest and was seen off by many. This was the bark "Bachelor," bound for Ireland with a cargo of mercy. She carried food and clothing, Richmond's gift to the suffering Irish. The port at that time embraced Port Mayo, the canal, and Rocketts, in the vicinity of Thirty-first and Main Streets, in what is now known as Fulton. The landing was just below the present city wharf.⁹

During the period of the Mexican War, 1846-1848, Richmond received a setback through a fire which destroyed the Gallego Mills. Built on the river at the end of the eighteenth century, the Gallego Mills produced a flour that was famous throughout the world and particularly popular in Latin America, as it could be shipped with a minimum of loss through the equatorial belt.¹⁰

Richmond's population continued to increase and by 1850 it numbered 30,000 people.¹¹ In the decade preceding the Civil War, the city was one of the greatest coffee ports north of the Indies.¹² Boats from South America lay thick in

⁹Bondurant, op. cit., p. 82

¹⁰Approaches to its History by Various Hands, Richmond, Capital of Virginia, Whittet and Shepperson, Richmond, Virginia, 1938, p. 18.

¹¹Eaton, Clement, A History of the Old South, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1949, p. 432.

¹²Approaches to its History by Various Hands, op. cit., p. 18.

the river, often waiting for another to sail in order that they could have berths. These coffee boats brought stones to the city in the form of ballast. As coffee is light it is necessary to carry something to supply deficiency in weight. These stones were used as cobbles for Richmond streets. Other cargoes were brought in besides coffee, such as spices and foodstuffs, silks and clothing, tropical fruits, etc.¹³

For a picture of the port at the middle of the nineteenth century, the following paragraphs are quoted from the Richmond News Leader of October 15, 1940:

"Few Richmonders are aware that at one time Richmond had the greatest waterway on the Atlantic Seaboard. During the middle of the 19th century more than a hundred sailing ships were crowded in so closely at the port that not another boat could anchor.

"In those days in order to keep the freight from piling up on the wharf it required more than 200 wagons and drays, many drawn by four mules, running day and night to remove the cargoes, so great was Richmond's trade by water.

"The vessels were unloaded by means of a block and tackle rigged up on the wharf, the motive power supplied by a horse. The cargoes were stored in sheds near the dock or placed in warehouses to await buyers, unless consigned to Richmond merchants. (Contrast present method of unloading with one described: Today electric cranes handle cargoes between the vessels and the terminal buildings.)

¹³Bullington, op. cit., pp. 78-9.

"The center of the city's activity was the river dock, since it anchored vessels from all over the world: coffee from Brazil; sugar and molasses from the West Indies; salt from Liverpool, England; cloth from Manchester, England; herrings from Novia Scotia; lime from Maine; guano from Peru.

"With the exception of a line of Philadelphia steamers, only sailing vessels such as barques and schooners entered the dock; the other steamship lines had landing places at Rocketts.

"On the south side of the James River the channel was deep enough for larger ships than those which frequented the dock to sail up to the Dunlop mills and take on cargoes of flour for the tropics. The flour manufactured at the Dunlop mills kept perfectly in tropical countries, consequently enormous trade resulted. Today, a century later, the Dunlop mills are still operating.

"William Taylor, who was one of the largest wholesale merchants in Richmond, imported at one time a cargo of Irish potatoes directly from Ireland, and when the news got around, his store and warehouse were thronged with Irish citizens who bought the entire cargo.

"Hundreds of hogsheads of tobacco were shipped to Germany.

"Thousands of bales of hay and tons of ice came into the dock. When schooners arrived with ice from Maine, great was the rejoicing by hot and thirsty Richmonders.

"It was not unusual to see forty oyster boats in the waters of the dock.

"Great loads of sand were brought in--fine white sand for the floors of harbor shops and saloons, and black sand for blotting ink."¹⁴

¹⁴Richmond News Leader, October 15, 1940.

During the period 1852-1854, the port handled 100,000 tons of cargo a year. At that time it was a highly important port of export, shipping tobacco, flour, and lumber to such points as Germany, France, and South America.¹⁵

Richmond entered upon a campaign for the improvement of the port in the fifties, for the people were aware of the ominous presence of a threatening cloud in the sky to the north. Few were blind to the fact that bad days lay ahead. Still war held off and men had heart for other things. Seven years passed and the blow had not fallen.

The business and revenue of the Port of Richmond increased steadily from 1853 to 1860. In 1855, 1217 boats and vessels entered the dock, and 1377 left; in 1857, the number which entered was 1852, and those which left numbered 1891; in 1860, the number had risen to 2123 incoming vessels and 2337 outgoing craft. In 1855, sixty New York packets, forty Baltimore packets, and twenty-nine Boston packets entered the dock with assorted cargoes. In 1860, the number had increased to fifty-six from New York, seventy-five from Baltimore, and thirty-nine from Boston.

The chief articles of trade unloaded at the port were the heavy, bulky staples. The following statistical details will give an idea of their character and quantity: In 1860,

¹⁵Richmond Times Dispatch, April 30, 1950.

incoming vessels unloaded 29,897 tons of coal, 25,470 barrels of fish, 22,778 tons of guano, 29,813 bales of hay, 13,333 tons of iron (pig and scrap), 48,491 casks of lime, 27,035 bushels of oats, 8,149 tons of plaster, 73,177 sacks of salt, 3,116,600 shingles, 2,053 barrels of tar and rosin, and 43,112 bushels of wheat. The principal articles loaded at the dock on outgoing vessels consisted of 423,194 barrels of flour, 56,367 packages of tobacco, 143,000 bushels of wheat, and 1,117 tierces of tobacco. The receipts from dockage for 1860 were \$50,128.03, the disbursements were \$7,721.52, and the net income \$42,406.51.¹⁶ For more than half a century this port (at the head of navigation on the James) grew larger and busier; then at the beginning of the Civil War, it ceased its feverish activities to become a Confederate Navy Yard and torpedo base.¹⁷

¹⁶Dunaway, Wayland F., History of the James River and Kanawha Company, Columbia University Press, New York, 1922, pp. 164-5.

¹⁷Bullington, op. cit., p. 79.

CHAPTER IV

THE CIVIL WAR PERIOD AND
GROWTH OF COMMERCE FOLLOWING WAR, 1861-1890

The port at Richmond saw a great deal of activity during the Civil War. A navy yard sprang into instant operation and boats were built there for the Confederate Navy. Commerce, of course, collapsed, being at a virtual standstill, but a fine white packet did run the blockade and bring a cargo of general merchandise to the city.

When Richmond was evacuated in April, 1865, departing Confederate troops set it afire, and when the Federal forces arrived, three quarters of the city were in ashes. Among the detrimental effects to the port and its commerce as a result of this fire were the burning of the following: a section of the canal property; the Gallego Mills, noted for its world famous flour, and the majority of the tobacco factories.

Not until the war ceased did the port regain its position in the shipping world. Four years of war had left a river obstructed with sunken craft, devoid of wharves and warehouses, and whose channel had been made more shallow and more narrow through failure to dredge it. Commerce revived when the sunken ships and other obstructions were removed.¹ Following the deepening of the channel in 1870, the collections for the year 1871 were \$53,654.18. Contrast this figure with the total collections fifty years before, in 1821, of \$86,990.58.² The disruption following the Civil War accounted for this decline. However, by 1872, river traffic had recovered to the extent of 600,000 tons. 86% of this tonnage was coastwise and 14% was foreign commerce. In this year, more tonnage was handled by water than all other transportation facilities combined. This trade was carried on in sailing vessels.³

By 1880, the population had increased to 63,600, and was doubled again in the next twenty years.

For a picture of the port in 1880, the following paragraph from the Richmond Times Dispatch of December 16,

¹Bullington, op. cit., p. 107.

²Richmond Times Dispatch, December 16, 1934.

³Ibid., December 16, 1934.

1934, follows:

"In 1880, and for a few years following, it was not an uncommon sight to see many foreign ships in the port. They brought large importations of coffee from South America and carried flour to that country. That was the time when sailing vessels as ocean freight carriers began to pass into the discard. Fewer and fewer of these ships arrived here.

"The harbor bristled with the masts of sea-going ships. There were vessels from the seven seas. Freight carriers at that time were wooden vessels and for many of them the voyage across the seas was attended by great peril. For such vessels, the channel from the seas to Richmond was navigable.

"In those brave old days of the wooden ships the far west end of Richmond was Monroe Park. Most of the business life of the city was east of 14th Street. In the neighborhood of 18th and Main Streets several ship chandlers carried on a lucrative business. The City Dock, at the foot of 17th Street was used extensively and many sailing vessels in foreign trade went there to discharge and take on cargo.

"The steamships used the wharves further down the river, where passenger ships also docked.

"The Old Dominion steamship vessels and other coastwise ships carried passengers and freight to New York on tri-weekly sailings. The Clyde Line Steamship Company's steamers carried passengers and freight, plying between Richmond and Philadelphia. The Powhatan Line had three sailings a week to Baltimore."⁴

Richmond was one of America's greatest post-bellum ports. In 1882, a total of seventy commodities passed

⁴Smith, W. Gay, U. S. Deputy Collector, "Richmond May Be World Port Again," Richmond Times Dispatch, Richmond, Virginia, December 16, 1934.

into and out of Richmond in the ships that plied from Norfolk up the river channel into Richmond.⁵ In this year, commerce on the James reached its peak, during the nineteenth century, totalling 1,640,000 tons, a large proportion going through Richmond.⁶

The great turning point in Richmond as a port was the completion of the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad from Richmond to Newport News in 1882, resulting in the slow but gradual languishing of the harbor. Upon the completion of this railroad there was a shift of the coal trade of Richmond to Newport News. When the railroads moved to Richmond, there began the slow transfer of the coffee trade which had long centered here.⁷ Thus, the railroads eventually destroyed the flourishing coffee and flour trade between Rio de Janeiro and Richmond.

Another reason for the decline of the port after 1882 was due to the building of roads and highways, resulting in an increase in transport on land.⁸

By 1883, Richmond had effected a remarkable recovery from the ravages of the Civil War. At the close of the

⁵Richmond Times Dispatch, October 2, 1949.

⁶Ibid., April 30, 1950.

⁷Richmond News Leader, February 25, 1944.

⁸Ibid., October 21, 1924.

Civil War, in 1865, one third of the city's area was burned. The value of merchandise and produce lost, including tobacco, was approximately \$5,000,000; her people were left so bare of food that when the city was occupied by Federal troops, at least half of the population had to be subsisted on army rations. She had to start practically all over again on money borrowed at 12% interest; and following the war she had to pay an excise tax, never before imposed, from 1866 to 1883, on tobacco, spirits, and several other articles, of \$39,000,000, 90% of this being on tobacco alone, her largest article of commerce. Yet in spite of all these drawbacks, her population by 1883 had increased over 100% (from 37,910 in 1860 to 70,944 in 1883); her business activity had branched out in new directions; and she had improved the channel of the James River, spending \$500,000 for this purpose.

Also, previous to and during the war period, only vessels drawing ten feet of water could come at high tide to the wharves at the head of navigation. But the channel was gradually deepened so that it had by 1883, a depth of seventeen feet to Richmond and nineteen feet five miles below.⁹

⁹Ruffin, Col. F. G., "The Advantages of the James River in Virginia for Shipbuilding," addressed to the Ship-builders of Glasgow, Everett Waddey, Stationer & Printer, Richmond, Va., 1883.

The port was long hampered by the existence of pilot's charges and a fight to abolish this unjust burden resulted in the General Assembly of 1838 passing a law doing away with them.¹⁰

In 1890, sail and paddle wheels still held a noticeably wide margin over steamers which drew too much water for the channel below Richmond. The ships came in great numbers and even the bad financial condition of this era did not seem to limit the amount of shipping that entered the port. Spices, salt, wines, brandies, coffee, tea, fish (many from the lower James), and divers commodities were brought to Richmond in the holds of ships.¹¹ In this year, the first year in which government tonnage records are available, a total of 743,100 tons of freight was moved over the James River. Since 1890, however, for a period of thirty-four years, there was a fluctuating but gradual decline in freight carried over the river.¹²

¹⁰Bullington, Ann, Vignettes of the James, Richmond Press, Inc., Richmond, Virginia, 1941, p. 78.

¹¹Ibid., p. 107.

¹²Bowers, G. M., "The James River, Its Improvement and Commerce," Richmond, Virginia, October 2, 1934.

CHAPTER V
THE PERIOD 1890-1950

The history of the Richmond port from 1890 to 1950 may be divided into two periods, the decline of the port from 1890 to 1920, and the growth since 1920. Beginning in 1890 and continuing for three decades, there was a gradual decline in freight carried over the James River. Perhaps the reason for this can be explained in that channel deepening did not keep pace with the progressive draft of all vessels built.¹

A significant entry in the City Annual Report of 1912 follows:

"The city has purchased the old dock from 17th Street to the shiplocks. The gates of the shiplock were decayed and broken down to such a degree that the dock could not be used. These gates have been removed and repaired and are now in good order.

¹Bowers, G. M., "The James River, Its Improvement and Commerce," Richmond, Virginia, October 2, 1934.

A new wharf along the river front from Gillies Creek to Nicholson Street, about 700 feet long, has been completed at a cost of approximately \$25,000. The work of removing the rock in front of the harbor will be continued until we have 13 feet of water along the entire wharf front."

As a result of these improvements, the fortunes of the port took an upward turn in the following year. The duties collected in 1913 were \$1,000,000.² In 1913, by an order of President Taft, the Customs District of Richmond was abolished and Richmond became a port of the Virginia Customs District, with headquarters in Norfolk.³

By 1920, Richmond covered an area of 23.38 square miles and had a population of 171,677 inhabitants. In this year, however, the total tonnage was the lowest on record, only 135,000 tons.⁴

Following 1920, the port showed considerable growth. In 1921, Richmond collected \$1,000,000 in duties at the port, and since that date the collections have steadily advanced.⁵ In this third decade of the twentieth century,

²Smith, W. G., U. S. Deputy Collector, "Richmond May Be World Port Again," Richmond Times Dispatch, December 16, 1934.

³Ibid.

⁴Bowers, G. M., "The James River, Its Improvement and Commerce," Richmond, Virginia, October 2, 1934.

⁵Melvin, Horace, Richmond Times Dispatch, October 4, 1931.

the commerce coming into the harbor consisted of wheat, corn, lumber, bricks, salt, salt fish, fish roe, tomatoes, green peas, sand, junk, oil, (two million gallons) and tar paper.⁶

Comparison of the James River tonnage with 127 other navigable rivers of the Atlantic Coast Division showed that the commerce of the James for the year 1923 ranked fifth in tonnage and second in value of tonnage, and in the latter was exceeded only by that handled on the Hudson River.⁷

In 1924, Richmond's water-borne commerce began to pick up. In this year the total tonnage exceeded that of 1890 by nearly 50,000 tons, due principally to the general increase in business activities at that time.⁸

An excerpt from an article in the Richmond Times Dispatch of November 22, 1936, in reference to the year 1926, stated: "Richmond's water-borne commerce has definitely been on the up-grade since 1926." Duty collections began to increase slowly. Gradually they grew heavier until in 1931 the port receipts were \$4,071,328.55.

⁶City Annual Report, Richmond, Virginia, 1922.

⁷City Annual Report, Richmond, Virginia, 1925.

⁸Smith, W. G., Deputy Collector of Customs, The Richmond Times Dispatch, December, 1934.

In 1931, leading the list of imports was tobacco, which came principally from Turkey.⁹

On January 1, 1932, the first foreign craft to put in at Richmond Port in thirty-three years docked here. Richmonders turned out by the hundreds to visit the British, "Baron Elibank," and chat with her officers and men. The ship carried a cargo of 500,000 pounds of refined Cuban sugar. This was the first of several planned shipments by water to Richmond. It took the ship thirteen hours to negotiate the tortuous turns between Newport News and Richmond. The officers of the ship agreed that with the bends taken out of the river, traffic could be developed to a profitable extent. Until the arrival of this ship, all foreign merchandise had been arriving here for many years in bonded cars and coastwise vessels.¹⁰ Since the latter part of the nineteenth century ships were built of increasing size and draft, which made it difficult or impossible for them to navigate river channels to inland ports. Consequently, foreign commerce directly into the Port of Richmond sharply decreased. This explains why the major portions of the customs receipts, since the latter part of the nineteenth

⁹Bowers, G. M., "The James River, Its Improvement and Commerce," Richmond, Virginia, October 2, 1934.

¹⁰Richmond Times Dispatch, January 2, 1932.

century, did not come from products that reached Richmond as ship cargoes but as shipments which arrived in Richmond on railroad cars, or coastwise vessels. These imports arrived at some other port and were reshipped to Richmond. The last foreign ship to enter Richmond's harbor (until the arrival of the "Baron Elibank") was the British bark, "Success," which arrived here in 1899 with a cargo of molasses from the British West Indies.¹¹

The same situation existed as to exports. During this period among the products which were shipped out of Richmond for foreign destination--products which could have been shipped direct if the ships could have reached Richmond--were cigarettes, cigars, tobacco, paper and paper products, steel, flour, machinery, lumber products, lead, and tinfoil.

Twelve vessels from foreign nations unloaded cargoes here during 1933, and for the first time since old sailing days Richmond took on the aspect of an international port. All of the ships except one (which brought newsprint from Canada) brought Cuban sugar here.¹²

The old flour and coffee trade with Rio de Janeiro declined about 1890 and there was no considerable docking

¹¹Richmond Times Dispatch, October 4, 1931.

¹²Richmond Times Dispatch, December 21, 1933.

of foreign vessels in the Port of Richmond since that time.

The increase in foreign ships for 1933 was attributed to the development of sugar importing here and also to the improved wharf and warehouse facilities at the Richmond waterfront terminal. The Upper Terminal was completed in this year. Customs receipts for the sugar cargoes carried in the twelve foreign ships amounted to \$644,411.¹³

Since the "Baron Elibank," the British ship, docked here in 1932, which was the first foreign ship having docked here since 1899, seventeen foreign ships had entered the harbor for the year 1934, with sugar cargoes, and a foreign flag was no longer a curiosity.¹⁴

In 1935, the tonnage had reached 1,771,033, the value being \$84,570,335. In 1936, the tonnage was 1,080,000 and it was valued at \$54,000,000.¹⁵ The figures for 1936 indicated that about 80% of the tonnage consisted of gasoline and oils, fertilizer materials, logs, sand and gravel, most of which was transported by the owners of the commodities in their own vessels. Thirteen per cent of the river tonnage was handled by the common carrier steamship

¹³Richmond Times Dispatch, September 20, 1940.

¹⁴Richmond Times Dispatch, December 21, 1934.

¹⁵Richmond Times Dispatch, November 22, 1936.

companies operating in Richmond, and the remainder moved in vessels of small capacity.¹⁶

An excerpt from an article in the Richmond Times Dispatch of October 10, 1948, relating to 1939, follows:

"Nearly 1,500,000 tons of commodities were handled in the Richmond harbor during 1939, the last pre-war year, which means that Richmond handled 50% of all James River traffic. Visionary men could foresee the section's growth around the James River, but they would be astonished at today's developments. Richmond, by the grace of God, and nearly \$8,000,000 has become a seaport."

William G. Smith, retiring as Deputy Collector of Customs in 1941, saw receipts grow from \$20,000 in 1913 to \$6,000,000 in 1941. Much of the prestige and business of the Port of Richmond began to come back upon completion of the Richmond Waterfront Terminal.¹⁷ The first cargo to arrive at the Terminal in 1941, was 1,008 tons of newsprint brought in on a British steamer, this newsprint being consigned to the Richmond Times Dispatch and the Richmond News Leader. A great majority of the ships entering the harbor that year were of the cargo-carrying type, and twenty-three were flying the flags of foreign nations.

¹⁶ Approaches to its History by Various Hands, Richmond, Capital of Virginia, Whittet and Shepperson, Richmond, Virginia, 1938, p. 284.

¹⁷ Richmond News Leader, June 3, 1941.

River traffic became a war casualty, for beginning in 1942 and for the next three years there was a decline in customs receipts for the Port of Richmond. Receipts were as follows: 1942, \$5,058,885; 1943, \$4,532,823; 1944, \$4,445,946.¹⁸ Receipts began to pick up again in 1945 with a total of \$5,104,514, increasing slightly each year with an all-time high of \$6,659,235 in 1948.

The 149 year old Port of Richmond completed its second heaviest import year of its history in 1949. Receipts for the year amounted to \$6,638,822. Twenty foreign ships docked here during the year. They brought in such items as raw and refined sugar from Cuba, tobacco from Africa, Cuba, Greece, Russia, Bulgaria, and Turkey; cigarette-making machinery and parts from England; tonka beans from Venezuela and Trinidad; maple sugar from Canada; liquors from Scotland; bulbs from Holland; chinaware and pottery from Holland, Japan, England, France, and China; watch parts from Switzerland; linens and laces from Ireland; wearing apparel from England and Scotland; hats from France; and furniture from England and Holland.

Sizable quantities of the imported materials were absorbed by the tobacco industry here. These included tobacco

¹⁸ Contrast custom receipts of \$6,000,000 received in 1941 with receipts for the three years following, 1942, 1943, and 1944.

itself, machinery and parts for local cigarette factories, and the tonka beans and cane and maple sugar were used for flavoring various tobacco products. Nearly 23,000,000 pounds of refined sugar and approximately 2,500,000 pounds of raw sugar were imported from Cuba, principally for the use of local tobacco firms.

Much of the imported tobacco and nearly all of the imported liquor were moved from the water or rail carriers in which they arrived, to bonded warehouses where they were stored until needed by the importer. Duty was paid on the imported commodities only when they were removed for use.¹⁹

¹⁹Richmond News Leader, July 6, 1949.

The following tabulation shows the amount of duty collected at the Port of Richmond for fiscal years ending June 30. This tabulation is for duty collected on importations only, since no duty is collected at the Port of Richmond on exportations.²⁰

1921	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	\$1,000,000.00
1922	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,110,850.53
1923	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,430,053.05
1924	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,740,784.87
1925	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,869,075.60
1926	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,222,676.07
1927	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,321,000.00
1929	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3,175,123.48
1930	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3,656,072.64
1931	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4,071,328.55
1932	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3,656,164.26
1934	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4,093,491.32
1935	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4,279,775.00
1936	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4,667,716.00
1937	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5,495,425.00
1938	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5,609,087.00
1939	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5,793,356.00
1940	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6,032,242.00
1941	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6,000,000.00
1942	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5,058,885.00
1943	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4,532,823.00
1944	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4,445,946.00
1945	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5,104,514.00
1946	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5,513,013.00
1947	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6,330,536.00
1948	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6,659,235.00
1949	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6,638,822.00
1950	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6,206,858.00
1951	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4,345,195.00

20

These figures were given to the author by the U. S. Customs Collector of the Post Office Building, Richmond, Virginia.

The drop in receipts for the fiscal year 1951, as contrasted with 1950, is attributed to the cut in import rates, notably Turkish tobacco, the rate on this commodity being cut 33 1/3% in March, 1950.²¹

The volume of James River freight varied from year to year. Complete records of freight carried date from the year 1890. The average annual tonnage handled on the river for the ten year periods from 1890 to 1920 was as follows:

1890 to 1900	- - - - -	637,000 tons
1900 to 1910	- - - - -	557,000 tons
1910 to 1920	- - - - -	551,000 tons

The annual tonnage and value of tonnage over a fifteen year period was as follows:

	<u>Tons</u>	<u>Value</u>
1921 - - - - -	388,545	\$52,392,509.00
1922 - - - - -	639,217	51,085,691.00
1923 - - - - -	712,853	73,518,819.00
1924 - - - - -	789,542	67,821,993.00
1925 - - - - -	814,607	85,679,691.00
1926 - - - - -	941,572	74,264,135.00
1927 - - - - -	983,017	82,364,757.00
1928 - - - - -	1,125,210	70,501,397.00
1929 - - - - -	1,105,615	81,132,626.00
1930 - - - - -	1,219,801	64,606,369.00
1931 - - - - -	1,332,783	52,316,500.00
1932 - - - - -	1,122,404	51,840,985.00
1933 - - - - -	1,333,725	64,172,754.00
1934 - - - - -	1,873,471	70,383,850.00
1935 - - - - -	1,771,033	84,570,335.00

²¹Statement made to the author by the U. S. Customs Collector, Post Office Building, Richmond, Virginia.

The following listing will disclose the fact that the city tonnage on the James River, during the past decade, has continually increased by years since 1945, a war year. The listing will also illustrate the fact that total tonnage for each year in the decade, with the exception of 1945, exceeded the one million mark.

TOTAL JAMES RIVER TONNAGE FOR THE PAST
TEN YEARS, ALSO TONNAGE HANDLED THROUGH
THE RICHMOND HARBOR

<u>Year</u>	<u>Total River Tonnage</u>	<u>Richmond Harbor Tonnage</u>
1939	2,320,168	1,474,015
1940	2,649,275	1,422,613
1941	4,096,413	1,383,604
1942	3,382,998	1,175,968
1943	2,749,104	1,286,792
1944	2,329,229	1,323,718
1945	1,468,599	863,171
1946	2,214,113	1,379,204
1947	2,505,140	1,604,041
1948	2,930,017	1,755,880
1949		1,759,626
1950		2,085,910

CHAPTER VI

INDUSTRIES CONTRIBUTING TO THE GROWTH OF THE PORT

Tobacco:

Tobacco was largely responsible for the establishment of a permanent trading post at the site of the present Richmond. Richmond, from its colonial beginnings, was a center of trade for tobacco. From 1611 to date, the history of tobacco is virtually the history of a large portion of Virginia. The demand for it had existed in England for some years and by 1612 the amount used entailed an outlay of 200,000 pounds. The tendency of the planters to run ahead of English demand, the lack of a market for the surplus crop, and competition from other growers were but a few of the problems that gave the Virginians deep concern.

By 1665, however, ships sailing from Richmond laden with tobacco represented many cities--Bristol, Weymouth, Dartmouth, and Hull; Plymouth, Bideford, Barnstaple, and London.

Although tobacco gave the colonists a cash income worthy of note, for years funds so derived did little to develop other than the plantations of the Old Dominion. The money was utilized by the planters chiefly in obtaining from the mother country articles of clothing, liquors and wares utilized by their families and their servants and slaves.¹

Ships that brought English goods to stores and homes went back laden with Virginia produce equally welcome on that side of the water. Among exports from Richmond and its neighborhood for the year from October 1764-1765 were over 20,000 hogsheads of tobacco.

Announcements in the Gazette for 1785 and 1786 show frequent arrival of ships from European ports, bringing wares to be exchanged with the Richmond merchants for tobacco. Only the smaller of the ships came all the way to Richmond.² From 1815 through 1820 the principal commodities shipped down the river included a large element of tobacco.³

¹Approaches to its History by Various Hands, Richmond, Capital of Virginia, Whittet and Shepperson, Richmond, Virginia, 1938, p. 64.

²Stanard, Mary M., Richmond, Its People and Its Story, J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia, 1923, p. 113.

³Approaches to its History by Various Hands, op. cit., p. 64.

By 1835, Richmond manufacturers were boasting that the tobacco they prepared for foreign markets was more sought after than any made elsewhere.⁴ Up to 1840, most of the tobacco raised was exported. The British duty on tobacco was heavy, three to four shillings a pound, equivalent to an ad valorem duty of 900%. The British purchased 40% of the tobacco exported, the French 20%, the Italians 15%, and the North Europeans 25%.

The leading tobacco manufacturer in Richmond during ante-bellum days was James Thomas, Jr. His career as a tobacconist began in Virginia as an agent of the French government to purchase tobacco in the Virginia markets. Early in the decade of the 1830's he commenced manufacturing chewing tobacco. By 1850, he had become a large manufacturer whose popular brand, "Wedding Cake," was shipped to England in large orders from Richmond. It was also shipped to England, Germany, Australia, and to the distributing centers of New York, Baltimore, and Boston. After the gold rush of 1849, he held a virtual monopoly on the trade of chewing tobacco sent to California.⁵

⁴ Bondurant, Agnes M., Poe's Richmond, Garrett and Massie, Inc., Richmond, Virginia, 1942, p. 35.

⁵ Eaton, Clement, A History of the Old South, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1949, p. 430.

In 1850, large cargoes of leaf and stem tobacco were exported from Richmond to Bremen and Havre.⁶ By June, 1860, Richmond, instead of shipping most of its raw tobacco abroad, as in former times, processed much of it in the city. With its fifty-two factories, it was by far the largest tobacco manufacturing city in the United States. By 1866, following the Civil War, Richmond had only fourteen tobacco factories. The city's wounds were almost mortal and recovery was painful.

However, tobacco was largely responsible for the surge upward shortly after the Civil War. A new type of leaf was becoming popular: bright tobacco. By 1867, this leaf was in demand in almost every tobacco factory and every retail store in the world. Prior to the Civil War tobacco had been a luxury of gentlemen. It now came into almost universal use throughout America and most of Europe. Cattlemen, miners, laborers, students, everyone sought solace in the golden product of Virginia farms and Richmond factories. Snuff, which once had been used mainly to tickle the noses of noblemen, increased in popularity, along with all of the other forms of tobacco.

A brand of cigarette manufactured in Richmond by Allen & Ginter became world famous through a policy of bold advertising, which was copied by many American industries.

⁶Stanard, Mary M., op. cit., p. 113.

Since 1870, the factories here in Richmond have only with difficulty kept up with the mounting demand for cigarettes. Despite heavy taxation by the United States government, despite foreign monopolies, and periodical crusades against the popular commodity, the demand has increased until cigarettes hold a place among the greatest of American commodities abroad.⁷

No tobacco or cigarettes have been exported directly from the Port of Richmond since 1942, when the Buxton Steamship Lines, Inc., discontinued their sailings here. Since that time, tobacco and cigarettes have been taken from here by trucks and by railway.⁸

Shipbuilding: Trigg Shipbuilding Company and The Richmond Locomotive Works

Two of the large industries in which Richmond took great pride and to which it owed much of its growth during the nineties were the Richmond Locomotive Works and the Trigg Shipbuilding Company.

In 1848, a shipyard was started on the southside of the James. Records show that Talbott & Brothers had built an

⁷ Approaches to its History by Various Hands, op. cit., p. 64.

⁸ Statement made to the author by Captain O. L. Rowe, City Harbormaster.

iron steamer, the "General McDowell," in 1844, for use on the canal, but it was not a success. During the Civil War the Confederate Navy Yard built ironclads here.

The Richmond Locomotive Works started operations about 1838. The engines for the battleship "Texas," pride of the American navy during the Spanish-American War period, were built at the plant here. In the early part of 1891 the boiler shop burned and part of the "Texas'" machinery was ruined. During World War I the big plant was converted into a shell factory, first for the Allies, and then for the nation.

The Talbott plant, on the dock, was converted into the Trigg Shipbuilding Company in 1898. This Company's shipyards were active from 1898 until 1902. Contracts to build two torpedo boats, the "Shubrick" and the "Stockton," were secured. A great event occurred in Richmond on October 31, 1899, when President William B. McKinley and members of his cabinet came here to see the "Shubrick" launched. The "Stockton" was finished two months later. Another vessel built at the plant was the Chesapeake and Ohio's "Virginia" which was put in operation between Newport News and Norfolk. The destroyer "Dale," and later the "Decatur," were launched in 1900; however, in 1902 the Company was placed in the hands of receivers and

the Company was placed in the hands of receivers and shortly afterwards closed permanently.⁹

Tredegör Iron Works:

The greatest iron company of Richmond and of the South was the Tredegör Iron Works which was founded in 1837. The Company made clam cable, rails, and spikes for railroads. However, the market of this company was chiefly in the North where the goods were shipped, as southerners were prejudiced against buying home-made products of iron.¹⁰ The Tredegör Iron Works Company was the leader of the South in the development of the iron industry in 1860. The plant contributed munitions and supplies to the Confederacy during the Civil War. Here were rolled the plates that armored the "Merrimac-Virginia," terror of the Union Navy. The plant also contributed munitions and supplies to the United States in all foreign wars since its establishment. This oldest plant of its kind south of the Potomac is now a jumble of blackened brick buildings spread over a twenty-five acre lot.

⁹ Lutz, Earle, A Richmond Album, Garrett and Massie, Richmond, Virginia, 1937, p. 128.

¹⁰ Workers of the Writers' Program of the W. P. A., in Virginia, Virginia, A Guide to the Old Dominion, Oxford University Press, New York, 1940, p. 286.

The James River Packet Company:

Edmond and Davenport, a business principally of wholesale groceries, together with a Mr. Boyd of Lynchburg, organized the James River Packet Company.

Later this partnership was so successful that a still larger financial enterprise was begun, the shipment of flour and cotton to South America, and the investment of the proceeds of these cargoes in sugar and coffee, which were imported to Richmond. Thus originated a trade that did more for the growth and prosperity of the port than almost any other interest up to that time had achieved. Such was the growth of this business that the firm made a large fortune from it, and when the War Between the States broke out in 1861, it owned a line of barks that ran regularly from Richmond to Pernambuco (now known as Recife) and to Rio de Janeiro. The war blockade of the Confederacy caused this commerce to be diverted to Baltimore; and after the war the firm was never active in the business again.¹¹

Silk:

The decade, 1830-1840, ended with one of the oddest booms on record. In company with half the country, Richmond

¹¹Davenport Insurance Corporation, The Experience of a Century, 1848-1948, Whittet and Shepperson, Richmond, Virginia, 1948, p. 18.

was swept by a craze for silk culture. Millions of mulberry trees were imported and set out everywhere, even in St. John's Cemetery. The silkworm eggs were also imported, and after hatching in bedrooms, kitchens and parlors, the cocoons were treated and some silk extracted. As suddenly as it started, the bubble burst.¹²

Coal:

In the industrial development of Richmond one of the resources practically exhausted now but important in a previous period was the coal deposited on both sides of the James River. This coal, which was discovered in 1701, was the first to be mined in America.¹³ In 1766, 4,900 tons of coal were shipped from the port, obtained from the mines in Chesterfield County across the river from Richmond.¹⁴

By 1808, canal boats were transporting coal and other produce from Westham at the upper end of the great falls to Shockoe Hill in Richmond. Since the canal did not then extend past the falls, the coal was dumped and reloaded, and then hauled a mile and a half to the Port of Richmond at Rocketts.

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Lutz, op. cit., p. 22.

¹³ Stanard, op. cit., p. 113.

¹⁴ Bondurant, op. cit., p. 32.

The mining methods used in the coal fields around Richmond were of the simplest type. Slave labor was employed and the pits were dug. The coal was reached by mule-propelled machinery. In 1822, more than 48,000 tons of coal, exclusive of that consumed locally, were mined around Richmond and shipped to other parts. In 1826, 79,000 tons of coal were exported from the Richmond area. For one year longer this bituminous coal maintained the lead over Pennsylvania anthracite and other coal. Richmond's coal industry reached its height in 1833. By 1836, only 17,000 tons of coal were exported from the Richmond area, a considerable drop from the 79,000 tons exported a decade earlier. Coal was still considered a large item of export in this decade, however.

Two coal mining companies contributing to the coal export trade from Richmond were the Chesterfield Mining Company and the Midlothian Mining Company. In 1830, the Chesterfield mines had a capital of over \$2,000,000 and were employed in the coal carrying trade tributary to Richmond. These mines gave constant employment to sixty coasting vessels. The annual shipments from the Chesterfield mines increased from the year 1822 to 1831, 574,202 bushels to 1,204,253 bushels.

Up until the year 1855, the Chesterfield Mining Company and the Midlothian Mining Company both had establishments on the Richmond side of the James River, at Rocketts.¹⁶

With the completion of the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad to Newport News in 1881-82, the coal trade of Richmond shifted to Newport News.¹⁷

Flour:

Joseph Gallego, a Spanish miller living in Richmond, gained international fame for the superior type of flour which he shipped to Europe and South America. Although the flour produced at the Gallego Mills was famous throughout the world, it was particularly popular in Latin America, since it was the only flour that could be carried across the equator without spoiling, hence its unique and world-wide reputation; consequently, enormous trade resulted. South America, in return for the flour, sent back coffee to this port. The coffee was then distributed from Richmond to the North, South, and West.¹⁸

The original mill was built on the James River at the end of the nineteenth century. It was the largest mill in

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Whitty, James H., "Fuel Industry Maintained Own Fleet of Sixty Ships," Richmond Times Dispatch, Richmond, Virginia, October 19, 1924.

¹⁷Richmond News Leader, October 2, 1924.

¹⁸"Richmond's Past," J. T. Hill Printing Company, 1891.

the city in 1820, and for many years after. Richmond received a setback when the mill burned in 1830, but until that time it had been known to grind 300,000 bushels of wheat in a year's time. The mill burned again in 1848, entailing a loss of \$400,000. It was, of course, in the paths of the flames in 1865, when Richmond was burned during the Civil War. Again, on December 27, 1903, it suffered a \$260,000 loss. The building was not rebuilt to its original height of nine stories, after this last fire. Prior to this last fire, however, the Gallego Mill was considered to be the largest single mill in the world. The Gallego Mill had the advantage of shipping its flour direct to all parts of the world from its own local dock.¹⁹

The Gallego Mill for a century, the nineteenth, played a major role in Richmond's commercial life and accounted for a huge portion of its exports.²⁰

¹⁹ Wright, R. W., "Richmond Since the War," Scribners, July, 1877.

²⁰ Bondurant, op. cit., p. 38.

CHAPTER VII
STEAMSHIP SERVICE OF THE PORT

Some living today will probably recall when Rocketts, a division of the Port of Richmond, was a beehive of activity with the arrival and departure of steamers for New York, Washington, Baltimore, Philadelphia, and elsewhere, and when foreign flags were seen floating lazily from big freighters. The Rockett's Landing was in the vicinity of Thirty-first and Main Streets, in which area Fulton is now located. The landing was just below the present city wharf.

The first steamboat ever seen in Richmond, "The Eagle," was the talk of 1815. A crowd gathered at the landing to see the odd craft which was given a test for their benefit as far as Warwick, where the present Amphill plant stands. The spectators were amazed to see that the boat moved upstream at the rate of two miles an hour, and could go backward as well as forward.

The steamboat "Powhatan" was put into operation in 1816, running from Norfolk to Richmond. It plied between Baltimore, Norfolk, and Richmond, and required a week for the round trip.¹

When the sailing vessel had largely disappeared, the advent of the steamboat brought a demand for deepening the river channel from Rockett's to Mayo's Bridge, in order to admit boats to Shockoe Creek and as far up the stream as Hazall's Mill. This project permitted a ready transfer of freight between the boats using the canal and those plying the river.

The "Howard Smith" boat, which arrived in 1889 and tied up at the Chesapeake and Ohio wharves, excited much interest. She carried 1,150 tons of ice and was the first four-masted schooner to visit Richmond. Steam did all chores possible on the ship. The hot and cold water in her bathrooms was a wonder of the day.²

Many Richmonders still recall the old "Ariel," which maintained a regular tri-weekly schedule between Richmond and the Hampton Roads cities. The "Ariel" was later replaced

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Bondurant, Agnes M., Poe's Richmond, Garrett and Massie, Inc., Richmond, Virginia., 1942, p. 82.

²Bullington, Ann, Vignettes of the James, Richmond Press, Inc., Richmond, Virginia, 1941, p. 107.

by the "Pocahontas," which was in operation up to World War I.

The Old Dominion Steamship Company operated night boats for many years between Richmond and Norfolk for passengers and freight, connecting with Old Dominion liners between Norfolk and New York. An interesting and enlightening item in the City Annual Report of Richmond, 1881, states:

"As evidence of the improvements which have been made, the ships of the Old Dominion Steamship Company now leave at a fixed hour, instead of as formerly, waiting for a suitable height of tide. Both the Old Dominion and Virginia Navigation Companies connect with ocean-going and coast-vessels at Norfolk and Newport News."

The Virginia Navigation Company, which was chartered on May 9, 1893, ran day boats for passengers and freight to and from Norfolk, touching at intermediate river landings.

The Old Dominion night line was discontinued on May 10, 1920, and the service of the Virginia Navigation Company was abandoned November 29, 1919. Richmond business men then organized the Richmond-New York Steamship Company (chartered July 26, 1920), which on August 14, 1920, inaugurated tri-weekly freight steamer service, direct between Richmond and New York. Suffering financial reverses, the line was sold on October 8, 1925, to Eastern Steamship Lines, Inc., the latter continuing the tri-weekly Richmond-New York sailings for freight.

Beginning December 15, 1941, night service was established between Richmond and Norfolk by Buxton Lines, Inc.,

chartered on February 18, 1921.³ The Buxton Lines extended their activity to freight and passenger service, but discontinued their services to Richmond in 1942.

The Eastern Steamship Lines discontinued their services to Richmond in 1941.⁴

The Norfolk, Baltimore and Carolina Line, Inc., scheduled steamship service to Richmond in 1949, providing for two ships to dock here each week. Arrival of the Norfolk, Baltimore and Carolina Line, Inc., marked the first resumption of scheduled river service since the Buxton Line abandoned its operations here shortly after World War II began, in 1942. A number of large-scale shippers felt that this service was vitally needed by the community. Authority was given to operate both ship and barge service to the Norfolk, Baltimore and Carolina Line by the Interstate Commerce Commission.⁵ However, this shipping line discontinued its services here after only two or three months of operation.⁶

³Approaches to its History by Various Hands, Richmond, Capital of Virginia, Whittet and Shepperson, Richmond, Virginia, 1938, p. 284.

⁴Statement made to the author by the City Harbormaster, Captain O. L. Rowe.

⁵Richmond News Leader, September 23, 1949.

⁶Statement made to the author by the City Harbormaster, Captain O. L. Rowe.

There is no regular and scheduled shipping service to the Port of Richmond today, with the exception of the shipping of newsprint, which is sent in by the Mercer Paper Company Line operating out of Nova Scotia, arriving here once each month.

CHAPTER VIII

REASONS FOR THE PORT'S DECLINE

The trade activity of the Port of Richmond reached its peak in 1882, after which the picture began to change, due to the building of railroads, roads, and highways. The Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad was completed from Richmond to Newport News in 1882. With the completion of this railroad, there was a shift to Newport News of the coal trade of Richmond.¹ The railroads destroyed, also, the flourishing trade between Richmond and Rio de Janeiro. The port continued in a decline thereafter, which reached bottom in the early 1920's, when the total tonnage was at the low point of 135,000 tons.²

¹ Richmond News Leader, October 21, 1924.

² Richmond Times Dispatch, April 30, 1950.

Another reason for the decline was the fact that the deepening of the river channel did not keep pace with the increased draft of the vessels built.³ Naval design had changed. The recent war brought on the Liberty ship, the Victory ship, the C-1, and the rest of the fleet of superior ships that draw too much water to get up the James to Richmond. This accounts for the decline of the Port's trade following World War II.

Now, at the present time, with only a 25-foot channel into Virginia's capital city, the small and out-of-date ships that could negotiate the river bring only a few commodities into Richmond each year: gasoline, kerosene, fuel oil, sand and gravel, sugar, newsprint paper, slag, wood pulp, tar and sulphur, etc., and take very little out, mainly peanuts and tobacco stems, the latter being a by-product of the cigarette factories, the stems being used for fertilizer. Contrast the present picture with that just prior to World War II, when Richmond was a first class port. Before World War II, 90% of the commercial vessels afloat could use the 25-foot channel.

Also, it is natural that the development of the great harbor of Hampton Roads, which is 100 miles nearer the sea,

³Bowers, G. M., "Richmond as a Port, Its History and Its Development," Richmond, Virginia, March 13, 1937.

with its strong rail connections paralleling the James River on both sides, should have deprived the river of much of the traffic enjoyed in olden times, but notwithstanding this severe competition, the city of Richmond has exerted every effort to re-establish water transportation on an important scale and revive its position as a port.⁴

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Approaches to its History by Various Hands, Richmond, Capital of Virginia, Whittet and Shepperson, Richmond, Virginia, 1938, p. 284.

CHAPTER IX
HISTORY OF IMPROVEMENTS

All along the James, progress was made in port improvements in the early part of the nineteenth century. Little is known, however, of the physical condition of the tidal or navigable portion of the James River prior to the early part of the nineteenth century, aside from the fact that it was used as a transportation medium by the early settlers of America from the year 1607 and throughout the Colonial period. Before any Federal improvements were begun, the minimum usable low water depth was seven feet.

Prior to 1816 ships could not ascend to Rocketts because of shoals and rocks in the river. These obstacles were removed in 1816, resulting in greater activity at the Richmond wharves; it also was fortunate for the city's progress, as this improvement established it firmly as a port.¹

¹ Bullington, Ann, Vignettes of the James, Richmond Press, Inc., Richmond, Virginia, 1941, p. 75.

The development of Richmond as a port through the deepening and widening of the channel of the James River has been the objective of the city and Federal authorities and other local civic organizations for more than 130 years. Since 1818 the people of Richmond have been working toward the improvement of the James River in order that the city might become eventually one of the important inland ports in America.² The first survey of the James was made as far back as 1818, and others followed in 1826 and 1827. All were the work of the government.

The first notable improvement of record was made in 1852 and 1854, when \$44,000 was spent in removing dangerous rocks and in dredging the channel immediately below Richmond. This expense was equally borne by the Federal government and the City of Richmond. Following the Civil War, commerce revived when sunken ships and other obstructions were removed.

In 1870, Congress authorized the excavation of a channel varying in depth from 14 1/2 to 16 1/2 feet below mean low water from the mouth of the river to Richmond; thus, the channel was deepened in this year.

² City Planning Commission, A Master Plan for the Physical Development of the City, Richmond, Virginia, 1946, pp. 177-179.

In 1884, Congress authorized extensive improvements in the river by providing for a channel depth, below mean low water, of 22 feet from the mouth of the river to the corporate limits of Richmond, with channel widths varying from 200 to 400 feet. In 1902 and 1905, subsequent acts of Congress authorized even more extensive work on the river, finally providing for a 22 foot depth of channel from Richmond to the mouth of the river, and a 400 by 600 foot turning basin in the Richmond harbor.³ By 1916, a channel was completed which extended from the mouth of the river all the way to Richmond, a distance of 104 miles.

Approximately \$4,000,000 was expended by the Federal Government for channel improvements in the James River from 1852 up to and including 1915, while that spent by the City of Richmond within the same period amounted to nearly \$1,000,000

Beginning in 1924, commerce on the James increased annually. Realizing the necessity for improving channel conditions to meet the increased use of the river, the Richmond Port Commission was created, its purpose being to

³ Richmond Times Dispatch, October 2, 1949.

secure further improvements in the James River and better terminal facilities.⁴

In consideration of the channel improvements having been made, Richmond agreed to provide terminal facilities, which were financed jointly by the city, PWA, and WPA.

It was not until 1930 that the renaissance of the Port of Richmond began.⁵ At this time a serious movement began to provide a major channel for the port, a shorter river voyage, and an economical system of handling freight. In this year, Congress approved a plan which provided for a channel 25 feet deep and 200 feet wide to the proposed Deepwater Terminal. As a part of this program three canals were cut, eliminating 10.8 miles of channel at Aiken Swamp, Turkey Island, and Jones Neck, thus reducing the length of the navigable channel. The three cut-off canals eliminated from navigation three circuitous and hazardous bends in the river. The Deepwater Terminal was then built 3.8 miles below the corporate limits because of a solid bed of rock from that point to the city, which prevented constructing it nearer the city.⁶

⁴Richmond Times Dispatch, October 2, 1949.

⁵Richmond Times Dispatch, April 30, 1950.

⁶Richmond Times Dispatch, October 2, 1949.

As a result of the improvements effected in the ten-year period, 1924-1933, the Federal government and the city combined spent approximately \$2,250,000 in channel and terminal improvements with the result that the total river commerce increased from 789,500 tons in 1924 to 1,333,700 tons in 1933, an increase of 544,200 tons, or approximately 69% and this was accomplished in spite of a general decline in practically all lines of business endeavor, and within a period of world-wide depression. The value of the 1,333,700 total river tonnage handled in 1933 was \$64,172,700. This increase was largely due to the channel and terminal improvements.⁷

Because of these improvements and the construction of terminal facilities in 1928 and 1931, together with other improvements made in 1931, 1933, 1934, and 1935, the tonnage handled through the Richmond harbor alone increased from the low point of 135,000 tons in 1920 to 1,080,000 tons in 1936. The value of this latter tonnage was estimated to be \$54,000,000.

The existence of solid rock in the river bed to a depth of 18 feet below mean low water extending from the lock gates of the city to a point 3.8 miles below the corporate limits

⁷Bowers, G. M., "Richmond as A Port, Its History and Its Development," Richmond, Virginia, March 13, 1937.

of the city, and the excessive cost of its removal, brought about the necessity of terminating the 25-foot channel at that point. By 1937, the last of the cut-offs had been finished, shortening the distance between Richmond and Hopewell by 10.8 miles.⁸

In the decade, 1930-1940, approximately \$6,960,000 was spent on improvements, \$3,434,000 by the War Department on the terminals, resulting in the completion of the Deepwater Terminal in 1940, and a navigable channel with a minimum depth of 25 feet for the entire ninety-one miles between Richmond and the mouth of the James River in the Hampton Roads area. Completion of these improvements caused Richmond to be accessible to the majority of ocean-going vessels prior to World War II.⁹

The latest step in the long history of improvements to the waterway has been an effort launched to deepen the channel of the James River from 25 to 35 feet in order that larger vessels might bring their cargoes to Richmond. A 35-foot channel depends upon a Federal survey and the necessary appropriation.

⁸Bowers, Gamble M., "Richmond's Deepwater Terminal," Commonwealth Magazine, Richmond, Virginia, December, 1940, pp. 17-19.

⁹City Planning Commission, A Master Plan for the Physical Development of the City, Richmond, Virginia, 1946, pp. 177-179.

Before World War II there were approximately thirty-five American vessels drawing more water than the James River channel afforded. However, during the period of World War II the United States alone built over 3,500 such vessels. Now that the draft has increased, the twenty-five foot channel is not deep enough for these large ships. It should be ten feet deeper.

It has been estimated by James Bolton, of the Deepwater Terminals, that further deepening of the channel would effect a saving of \$1,000,000 to the petroleum industry. This saving would occur in that ocean-going tankers, following such an improvement to the channel, could enter the Port of Richmond instead of having to transfer the load in Norfolk to small tankers and barges for conveying the cargo to Richmond.

CHAPTER X
THE RICHMOND DOCK COMPANY

Origin and Development:

To improve navigation and also to provide dock facilities at Richmond, the Richmond Dock Company was incorporated on February 19, 1816. It proceeded to open navigation for James River vessels from the upper wharf at Rocketts Landing to about Mayo's Bridge, and also to provide a canal connecting the James River Company's canal basin at the foot of Eighth and Eleventh Streets with tidewater.

In 1841, the property and rights of the Richmond Dock Company were purchased by the James River and Kanawha Company at public auction. It was in a dilapidated condition at the time but was improved and put into operation in 1843. The James River and Kanawha Canal Company further repaired and enlarged the dock facilities so that they were able by 1845 to accommodate larger vessels. In 1849-1854, the Richmond

Dock facilities were further improved by a series of locks and basins below the main canal basin, including a more adequate ship canal from the dock to Rocketts.

The Richmond Dock Company proved a valuable adjunct of the James River and Kanawha Company. In 1855, 1,217 boats and vessels entered the dock and 1,377 left; however, by 1860, the traffic had increased to 2,123 boats and vessels inbound and 2,337 outbound. The Richmond Dock facilities, along with other property of the James River and Kanawha Company, were leased to the Trigg Shipbuilding Company by the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway in 1898, and they were purchased by the Trigg Company, June 1, 1901.

On April 19, 1912, the city acquired from Receivers of the Trigg Company the property east of Seventeenth Street and since that time the City Dock facilities have been greatly improved, including the construction of large warehouses for the storage of water-borne freight.¹

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Approaches to its History by Various Hands, Richmond, Capital of Virginia, Whittet and Shepperson, Richmond, Virginia, 1938, p. 284.

CHAPTER XI

THE JAMES RIVER CANAL, ADJUNCT OF THE PORT OF RICHMOND

Richmond grew with the development of transportation. Although it was not until 1840 that freight was shipped by canal between Richmond and Lynchburg, a canal was proposed in 1750.

The Conception:

George Washington first aroused his countrymen to the importance of connecting the East with the West by means of a waterway from the Virginia capes to the Ohio River. He dreamed of a great canal which would go up to the Ohio, binding the settlers there to the people of the coast. As a young man he started preaching his gospel of expansion, although it was not until after the Revolution that his influence was sufficient to get the project started.

As a result of George Washington's trips west in 1753, 1770, 1772, and 1774, had come the realization of the advantages a connection via the waters would bring. Such a connection would make Virginia strong in trade and wealth and make Richmond, whose population wasn't nearly as large as Williamsburg is now, a great trading post. Pioneer settlers in the Ohio Valley had multiplied. Unless a mode of transportation were established with the East, the growing western trade would naturally follow the broad waters of the Ohio River and down the Mississippi to New Orleans, controlled by the Spanish.¹

In order to fully appreciate the practicability of the project one should consider the physical aspects of the James River. It is formed in Alleghany County by the junction of the Jackson and Cowpasture Rivers. Its mouth is at Hampton Roads and its full course is some three hundred and thirty-five miles. Richmond is at the head of the James tidewater and from this city to the sea there are no natural obstacles to navigation. Above Richmond towards Lynchburg, the falls and numerous other navigational impossibilities prevent transportation by boat. The Great Kanawha River, which rises in North Carolina, cuts the Alleghany front just

¹Virginia Academy of Science, The James River Basin, Past, Present, and Future, Richmond, Va., 1950, pp. 727-32.

below Pearisburg, and joins the Ohio at Point-Pleasant, West Virginia, was part of the scheme. The reasoning was that if the James and Great Kanawha Rivers were made navigable and joined by a turnpike road at their nearest points, the East and West would be cemented by mutual political and commercial ties.²

The James River Company, which represented the beginning of the construction of the first commercial canal in the United States, was launched after a visit to Richmond by George Washington in 1784, when Lafayette was also a guest in the city.

The purpose of the canal was to bring to Richmond western produce which had begun to go to Baltimore and other northern points, and to connect the East with the West by a waterway.

The Birth:

On January 5, 1785, acts were passed for clearing and improving the navigation of the James and Potomac and, subsequently in the session, for vesting in General Washington an interest in each company, 100 shares of \$20,000 in the one, and 100 shares of 5,000 pounds sterling in the other,

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"The James River and Kanawha Canal," Richmond Times Dispatch, Richmond, Virginia, April 25, 1948.

as donations from the state, in token of respect for his services, not only in suggesting these works, but also for his services to the nation. Washington respectfully declined the donations, but offered to hold them in trust for such public institutions as he might designate and the Legislature approve.

The James River Company was chartered with a capital of \$100,000. In October, 1785, the stockholders met and elected George Washington as president, although he declined the presidency.³

At the time of the organization of the James River Company, Virginia claimed sovereignty as far west as the Mississippi River. At this time, navigable waterways furnished the only means of contact with distant regions.

In spite of the fact that the James River Company's charter read that if the work were not completed within ten years the charter would be revoked, it was not until 1795 that boats entered Richmond for loading and unloading.⁴

The James River Company opened seven miles of canal to Westham above Richmond on December 29, 1789.

³ Bondurant, Agnes M., Poe's Richmond, Garrett and Massie, Inc., Richmond, Virginia, 1942, p. 31.

⁴ Virginia Academy of Science, op. cit., p. 719.

Washington inspected the construction of the canal when he passed through Richmond on a southern tour in 1791.⁵

Water was let into the basin at Richmond in November, 1800.⁶

Many difficulties and vexations were encountered during this early period of the canal's construction. For one thing, the expense had proved greater than anticipated, and for years the stockholders received no dividends. The bonds of the company held up well, however, and were exchanged for goods at the country stores at from fifteen per cent discount to par. The first dividend was paid in 1801, being three per cent.

The company began to charge tolls in April, 1794, half tolls only being demanded at that time; however, by 1806 full tolls were being charged. To January 1, 1805, the company had received in tolls, for the first twenty years of its existence, only \$65,000--the years had been lean for the stockholders. From that time on, however, it began to be a profitable investment. Stock was at par in 1805, and the company was considered prosperous. Its capital stock was \$210,000, and it had expended up to this time \$136,000 on

⁵ Approaches to its History by Various Hands, op. cit., p. 276.

⁶ Virginia Academy of Science, op. cit., p. 719.

works of improvement. The tolls brought increasing revenue as the James River valley grew in both wealth and population.

The nature of the produce brought down the river at this early period of the nineteenth century is illustrated by the fact that in 1803, the James River Company charged tolls on: 16,917 hogsheads of tobacco, 170,588 bushels of wheat, 48,183 barrels of flour, 34,248 bushels of corn, and 2,022 coal boats.⁷

From 1796 until 1801, improvements were effected in clearing the river of obstructions from Westham to Crow's Ferry in Botetourt County. Thousands of men went up the river to labor on sluices and lengthen the distance the canal could serve.⁸

Production and commerce having increased with the opening of the canal, the James River Company was, by 1808, an exceedingly profitable enterprise.

The contract for thirteen locks around the falls at Richmond was let in 1810. Airel Cooley was paid \$49,000 to construct the locks between the Basin and Mayo's Bridge.⁹

⁷ Dunaway, Wayland Fuller, History of the James River and Kanawha Company, Columbia University, New York, 1922, pp. 31-32.

⁸ Bullington, op. cit., p. 127.

⁹ The present locks were constructed in 1854 and may still be seen.

Much of the money promised was not forthcoming and the project began to fail because of lack of funds. Therefore, on February 17, 1820, (Richmond then had a population that approximates Hopewell today) the State assumed control of the James River Company, as the lean years had come. The canal was then enlarged from Richmond to Westham and extended to Maiden's Adventure Falls in Goochland County, 27 1/2 miles by canal from Richmond. It soon became apparent, however, that progress was slow as a State enterprise.¹⁰

Before tracing the further history of the enterprise, however, a brief review will be given of the operations of the James River and Kanawha Company up to the year 1820. The operations of the company were never on an extensive scale, and were the object of persistent complaints on the part of settlers along the river. Unlike most similar enterprises in the State, the company was a financial success, its prosperity increasing with the years. A report of its receipts and disbursements for the last year of its operation as a private corporation, 1820, were \$33,731,95. The company's disbursements for 1820 were \$26,577.57, these disbursements being for salaries of officers and employees,

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Jenkins, Jim, Jr., "The James River and Kanawha Canal," Richmond Times Dispatch, Richmond, Virginia, April 25, 1948.

interest on money borrowed, and dividends. The surplus for 1820 amounted to \$7,144.38. The company paid a dividend of twelve per cent that year.

The chief commodities brought down the river from 1815 to 1820 were tobacco, wheat, corn, flour, coal, iron ore, stone, timber, and pork. The principal articles carried up the river were articles of merchandise. In 1820, the tolls in effect for a ton of 2,000 pounds were: 15 cents for groceries, 15 cents for dry-goods, 4.8 cents for tobacco, 14 cents for flour, 15 cents for salt, and 2.4 cents for coal. These tolls had no reference to distance. The amount of toll was the same whether the article was transported from Westham, or Maiden's Adventure, or Lynchburg.¹¹

The James River Company as a state enterprise, whether under the compact or under the exclusive control of the State of Virginia, was a failure. It never accomplished what it set out to do. It failed in its original design, that is, to construct a canal from Richmond to Covington. After 1823, work on this part of the improvement was almost suspended, and after the lapse of a few years was entirely suspended. By 1824, the results accomplished consisted of thirty-four miles of canal having been constructed, an imperfect road of some 100 miles, and contracts let for the improvement of the

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Dunaway, op. cit., pp. 45-6.

Great Kanawha, while the cost had already involved borrowing \$830,000. After 1828, practically all work on the line as a whole, except on the Kanawha road, was allowed to languish for lack of funds to execute it. Although the organization continued until 1835, very little new work was undertaken. The public mind was unsettled and sectionalism retarded progress. Repeated surveys had been made to learn the practicability and expense of the project. The legislature, being cautious, had not proceeded vigorously with the work. Timid counsels had caused it to be fearful of putting the work under a single great improvement, but rather the work was laid out in three sections. The first section was the canal from Richmond to Maiden's Adventure Falls, a distance of about thirty miles, and this section was completed. The second section was the construction of the Kanawha turnpike, which was completed. The third section consisted of the improvement of the Kanawha River, which was not completed.

The James River Company under state control, from 1820 to 1835, enlarged and reconstructed the former canal from Richmond to Westham and extended it to Maiden's Adventure Falls in Goochland county. The enlarged canal was about thirty miles long, forty feet wide, and from three to three and one-half feet deep.

In spite of the fact that the improvements actually constructed by the James River Company under state control were insufficient, nevertheless, these improvements were advantageous to the public in getting produce to market. A comparison of tolls under the old company prior to its dissolution in 1820 with those subsequent to that time will point out the advantages gained. From 1817 to 1820, the tolls on tobacco, wheat, and flour, which were the principal articles of trade from Cartersville to Richmond, were \$3.48 per ton, and the tolls from Lynchburg to Richmond were \$11.12 per ton. However, from 1827 to 1832, tolls were \$2.06 and \$5.30 per ton between the same points, respectively, or approximately half of what they had formerly been, for a ton of 2,000 pounds, in each instance.¹²

Because of the poor financial situation existing, the Richmond merchants called a public meeting on June 3, 1831, at which they drew up resolutions urging the speedy connecting of the James and the Kanawha Rivers by a canal. In the legislative session of 1831-1832 the James River and Kanawha Company was created. Then followed years of construction on the canal, which was intended to bring trade and prosperity

¹²Dunaway, op. cit., pp. 86-8.

to Richmond.¹³

In 1835, the privately owned and operated James River and Kanawha Company was organized as a joint stock company. This Company took over the canal property and rights, its purpose being to carry out the original plans and construct the canal to the Ohio waters.¹⁴ The James River and Kanawha Company continued vigorously to carry out improvements for the next fifteen years.

The canal to Lynchburg, the first division, was completed in the fall of 1840, a distance of 146 1/2 miles. Thus, Richmond was linked with the Piedmont country.

A big day occurred on December 3, 1840, when the freight boat, "General Harrison," accompanied by a similar boat, loaded with Richmond goods, arrived in Lynchburg; thus, the canal was furnishing a means of taking goods from Richmond and bringing produce to Richmond.

The continuous canal of increased capacity for boats of sixty tons was opened to Lynchburg in 1841.¹⁵

In 1842, an unusually large freshet broke the embankments of the canal between Lynchburg and Richmond in over a hundred places. It took four hundred men four months to repair damages.

¹³Dunaway, op. cit., p. 88.

¹⁴Jenkins, op. cit., Richmond Times Dispatch, April 25, 1948.

¹⁵Mordecai, Samuel, Richmond in By-gone Days, G. M. West, Richmond, Virginia, 1856, p. 303.

With the aid of a State loan, work progressed so that the canal from Lynchburg to Buchanan was opened in November, 1851. This was the western terminus of the canal, a distance of 197 miles from Richmond.

The canal followed the north side of the James River from Richmond to Lynchburg, and on the south side of the river from Lynchburg to the Blue Ridge Canal, a distance of about seventeen miles. Here it crossed again to the north side of the river, consisting of a stretch of water where there was little current from Balcony Falls to Buchanan.

The Period of Greatest Prosperity, 1850-1860:

The canal was at its heyday during the period from 1850 through 1860. At this time about seventy-five deck boats, sixty-six open boats, and fifty-four bateaux were hauling freight up and down the canal. It took approximately four hundred and twenty-five horses and mules and nine hundred men to handle the canal traffic. Most of the freight traffic was in agricultural products, the canal being a valuable outlet for districts upstream. In one year 150,000 bushels of corn and 60,000 gallons of whiskey came down to Richmond from Rockbridge alone.¹⁶

¹⁶ Jenkins, op. cit., Richmond Times Dispatch, April 25, 1948.

In the fifties the canal was the principal artery of commerce in Virginia, and it is thought advisable to describe the character and extent of its traffic and of the tolls charged: Freight traffic on the canal in 1841, the first year after its completion to Lynchburg, amounted to 110,141 tons, for which the gross receipts were \$121,751.29 and the net revenue \$59,610.33. In 1845, the traffic had increased to 134,759 tons, with gross receipts amounting to \$183,651.05, and a net revenue of \$128,519.58. In 1852, the tonnage was 210,040, the gross receipts rising to \$277,448.97, and the net revenue was \$182,190.47. The canal reached its maximum as a revenue producer in 1853, when its tonnage was \$170,368.81. After 1853, the growing traffic of the railroads interfered with the canal's business and its revenues decreased due to the necessity of reducing tolls in order to compete with the railroads.¹⁷

The best years of the canal were in the decade immediately preceding the Civil War. Competition with the railroads was developing, but as late as 1860 the James River and Kanawha Canal still brought more freight into Richmond than all of the railroads combined. In 1859, a typical year, the canal

¹⁷Dunaway, op. cit., pp. 167-8.

tonnage exceeded by about 2,500 tons the combined tonnage of the four railroads entering Richmond.

Wayland Fuller Dunaway says, in his history of the James River and Kanawha Company, that prior to 1850 that Company was the giant corporation of the State and that, even as late as 1860, it was by far the largest freight carrier in Virginia.¹⁸

The canal company received fair revenue from water rents to industry, but its biggest return was from freight tolls. Its income from all sources in 1860 was \$308,895.33, of which \$153,715.88 was net.¹⁹

The War Years, 1861-1865:

Financial difficulties had pursued the James River and Kanawha Company, with various helpful schemes being worked out from time to time. Among these was the one of March 23, 1860, raising the capitalization to \$12,400,000, of which the state took over \$7,400,000, thereby relieving the company of debt.²⁰

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Virginia Academy of Science, op. cit., p. 815.

¹⁹Bondurant, op. cit., p. 36.

²⁰Virginia Academy of Science, op. cit., p. 728.

The city was at its peak industrially and commercially by 1860; however, by this time it was recognized that war was inevitable.

Recruits for the army began pouring into Richmond on the packet boats in 1861. Iron from the western part of the State for guns came by the canal, also.²¹

Tolls were diminished during the Civil War, as war personnel and supplies had to be carried at one-fourth the usual price. Forty-two freight boats in 1861, were withdrawn from the canal to be employed by their owners in military defense of their state.

In May, 1863, a detachment of the enemy's cavalry made a raid on the canal and destroyed one foot bridge, two road bridges, and four farm bridges in the upper Byrd estate, and broke down the gates of Lock No. 14, which caused navigation to be suspended two days. Difficulty after difficulty was encountered in maintaining the property.

Sheridan destroyed a portion of the canal in 1865, putting an end to much of its usefulness. Federals then continued to damage parts of it.²²

²¹Bullington, op. cit., p. 126.

²²Ibid, p. 126.

The Civil War dealt the canal a blow from which it never fully recovered. The revenues of the James River and Kanawha Company declined steadily as the war progressed. The proclamation of President Lincoln, which declared a blockade of the Confederate States, soon had its effect, in that the commerce of the dock and of the canal was cut off and revenues decreased.

Since it was important to keep the canal in good repair for purposes of transporting military supplies, the Confederate government was anxious to have it kept in good condition and rendered every assistance possible to attain this objective. However, at no time was there a sufficiently large labor force to keep the canal in thorough repair. Eventually most of the foremen and mechanics were called to the colors, and repairs on the canal were almost entirely suspended.

Union soldiers continued to damage parts of the canal. On March 6, 1865, a force of cavalry entered the town of Scottsville and injured and destroyed parts of the canal at that point. On the following day they were joined by another column, whereupon they spent about a week going up and down the canal for a distance of ninety miles, inflicting all the damage in their power, to within thirty miles of Richmond.²³

²³Dunaway, op. cit., pp. 205-7.

The fire following the evacuation of Richmond by the Confederate forces in April, 1865, destroyed the general office of the canal company; also, the toll office was destroyed.

All work on the canal was suspended until an arrangement with the United States military authorities was made whereby the government would furnish material and labor to put the canal in repair, the company charging one-half the ordinary tolls against these advances.

Following the Civil War the canal was reopened, but it had to be made navigable again, since it was greatly damaged during the war. On June 28, 1865, the first through packet arrived in Lynchburg.²⁴

The Decline:

The James River and Kanawha Canal Company was hanging on the ropes by 1867. Interest was increasing in railroads and sentiment was growing cold toward the canal. The Richmond Times ran an editorial stating that the canal "has a talent for sinking into a state of hopeless bankruptcy"; as a matter of warning to its readers, the paper mentioned the possibility of the canal devouring the State of Virginia.

²⁴Virginia Academy of Science, op. cit., p. 728.

It soon became apparent that the canal was doomed. Railroads were more in harmony with the tempo of the period. When the railroads were once able to demonstrate their practicability and usefulness, the James River and Kanawha Canal, like others in the country, was unable to compete with them and finally succumbed to their superior advantages. This competition was scarcely felt by the canal before 1853, but after that time the railroads encroached steadily upon the traffic of the canal, until finally the service was circumscribed by the railroads, thus, creating a hopeless situation for the canal.

The railroads continued to take tonnage and revenues away from the canal until it was finally forced into bankruptcy. The chief competitor of the canal was the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad, which extended a distance of 205 1/2 miles from Richmond to Covington.²⁵

The tonnage basin of the canal, by 1876, was greatly circumscribed by the Chesapeake & Ohio and the Orange & Alexandria railroads on the north of the James and by the Richmond & Danville and the Atlantic, Mississippi & Ohio railroads on the south. These railroads competed for local freights with the canal along almost its entire length.

²⁵Dunaway, op. cit., p. 185.

Also, through their connection with each other, the railroads competed for through freights between Richmond and Lynchburg.

Although the railroads continued to diminish the tonnage and revenues of the canal until they finally reduced it to bankruptcy and abandonment, there was no other canal enterprise in the state that interfered with its traffic.

Amid the troubles of the canal, the political forces supporting the canal proved to be less influential than those favoring the railroads.

A freshet of 1877 caused the James River to become a roaring torrent, which played havoc with everything across its path and damaged the canal throughout its entire length. This was the final blow for the canal, as it never recovered from the effects of this. The canal was so crippled that it was at first considered ruined, and the damage was estimated at \$200,000.²⁶ The Commonwealth put all available convict labor to work on it and navigation was resumed to Lynchburg, in February, 1878. However, the damage to the canal was so widespread that the project never fully recovered, giving way eventually to the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad.²⁷

²⁶Dunaway, op. cit., p. 230.

²⁷Jenkins, op. cit., Richmond Times Dispatch, April 25, 1948.

The following factors contributed to the decline of the canal's continued progress: Railroad competition made serious inroads upon canal revenues. The Civil War and the poverty attending the reconstruction period were both severe blows to the canal company. As a final blow, the severe floods of the 1870's so damaged the canal that canal operations were forced into bankruptcy in 1880.

The General Assembly authorized that the canal be sold to the Richmond and Alleghany Railroad Company in 1880, as this Company wished to use the tow path for a right-of-way. Here was a natural for the railroad. The twelve foot wide tow-path made a perfect roadbed for laying crossties. This, of course, eliminated a great deal of engineering and grading costs. Freight boats could transport freight and materials directly to the spot they were needed. The work of building the road along the tow-path was at once begun. Canal traffic continued, however, even after the railroad was begun but as sections of track were completed, the canal boats were gradually withdrawn. It was not long before the musical sound of the boat-horn was no longer heard. Finally, the canal boats, like the old stages, disappeared entirely. Thus, the demise of the canal came after a struggle of ninety-five years of varied fortune. It passed into history March 5, 1880.

From the river came a new sound. On August 9, 1881, the first train made the run from Richmond to Lynchburg, and today along the old tow-path of the James River Canal runs the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad, (the tow-path being used to a large extent for its tracks) forming a central route between the Virginia capes and the great West.

Present Status of the Canal:

Only vestiges of the canal system remain today. However, a small stretch of the canal still serves Richmond. A section about eight miles long from Boshier to Richmond is now used to supply water to the City of Richmond and industrial firms for hydroelectric power, and to supplement the Richmond water supply at times of low flow of the stream. The basin of the James River Canal in the city is now covered by the freight yards of the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad Company. The canal today provides the City Dock for the Port of Richmond. It extends from 28th Street to 17th Street, this portion of it being in existence in 1885.

Tariff of tolls on goods, wares, merchandise, etc., passing the lock gates of the Richmond Dock, which were adopted May 1, 1885, still remain in effect to the present day. Some examples follow:

Bacon, beef, and pork, per 100 lbs.	.01
Coal, Virginia, 2,000 lbs.	.06
Cotton, per bale	.05
Pianos	.50

At the present time, some ship parts for the Navy are being shipped out, but it is not used for any other purpose, except for storing of small boats such as yachts, and pile-driving equipment, barges, etc., to protect the boats from ice and freshets in the James River. In view of the low tariff of tolls, it does not pay the City of Richmond to operate the canal other than for the protection of the boats, which are owned by the citizens of Richmond. Rates for storage are five cents a day for any size boat, so long as it is a pleasure boat. For commercial boats such as barges, etc., the rate is ten cents per day.²⁸

Summary:

The James River Canal was constructed during George Washington's presidency. Paralleling the James and constructed at a cost of more than \$8,000,000, it was one of Virginia's most important public projects, and the greatest freight and passenger carrier in the State of Virginia in its hey-day. It was greatly damaged, however, during the War between the States; almost swept away by the flood of 1877; considered financially worthless in 1879; and having

28

This information on the present status of the canal was supplied by the City Harbormaster, Captain O. L. Rowe.

been sold in 1880 to the Richmond and Allegheny Railroad, was acquired along with that road in 1888 by its competitor, the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway.²⁹

The total mileage of the canal and branches was 222 miles of which 177 miles was artificial canal and 45 miles was river navigation. The canal was 30 feet wide at the bottom, 50 feet wide at the line, and 5 feet deep. The tow-path was 12 feet wide.

Cost of the canal from Richmond to Lynchburg was \$4,837,628 or \$39,082 per mile. Altogether, there were about 160 miles of canal and 36 miles of river navigation which was made possible by locks and dams. Cost of the canal from Richmond to Buchanan was \$8,259,184, a sum greater than the cost of the original Erie Canal!

George Washington helped plan the link between the East and West, but steam frustrated its backers. The James River and Kanawha Canal was the result of Washington's vision, although it never reached the West, but ended thirty miles beyond Lynchburg. Had his plan met with early success, perhaps Richmond would be one of the largest cities in the

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Workers of the Writers' Program of the W. P. A. in the State of Virginia, Virginia, A Guide to the Old Dominion, Oxford University Press, New York, 1940, p. 92.

United States. Had the plan met with early failure, Richmond might yet be undeveloped.³⁰

The dream of Washington was at last realized, not in just the way he had planned, it is true, but in a better and more enduring way. The Chesapeake and Ohio Railway now traverses the country along the valleys of the James, the Greenbrier, the New, and the Great Kanawha and the Ohio, connecting the eastern and western waters, the Mississippi River and the capes of Virginia.

As to the original canal, little of it remains today. A small portion of it continues to serve Richmond, as the section from Boshier to Richmond is now used to supply water to the City of Richmond and industrial firms for hydroelectric power. Also, the canal today provides the City Dock for the Port of Richmond.

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Jenkins, op. cit., Richmond Times Dispatch, April 25, 1948.

CHAPTER XII
METHODS OF TRANSPORT ON THE CANAL

Canoes:

During the Revolution the Virginia government made good use of tobacco canoes for conveying supplies up and down the James, paying the planters five hundred pounds, Virginia money, for a ten hogshead canoe. The double canoe was the most practical method of navigation until a new type of boat was brought into use, designed especially to meet conditions on the upper James.¹

Bateaux Boats:

The bateau was designed by Anthony Rucker and was similar to a canoe, long and narrow, but it could carry a larger cargo than the double canoe, and it made the journey

¹Wertenbaker, T. J., The Old South, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1942, p. 130.

from Lynchburg to Richmond in seven days. But the bateau required a crew of three men and it was difficult to steer it past certain places at low water. Even after the James River Company had improved the river channel, in using the bateau men often had to wait for a rise in the water before setting out on their journey. In these strange craft the commerce of the upper James and its tributaries as far west as Rockbridge and Botetourt flowed back and forth until the fourth decade of the nineteenth century. It is said that Thomas Jefferson was present at the launching of the first James River bateau.²

Canal Boats:

The owners and operators of bateaux boats had a business which they knew the canal could destroy, so they refused to make way for progress and fought the canal's progress with determination. Thus, the bateaux boats were clogs in the way of progress. Richmond, however, needed the canal more than it needed the bateaux. Without a level and basin it was all but impossible to develop manufacturing at Richmond. This was so true that before the canal and basin were built at Richmond, Petersburg was a much larger and

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Wertenbaker, T. J., The Old South, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1942, p. 130.

a more thriving community. With the construction of the basin and canal, the city was introduced to manufacturing; growth came to the port; and passengers and freight were given a one-way route to the towns and cities up the James.³

As the canoe gave way to the bateau, so the bateau gave way to the canal boat. With the construction of the James River and Kanawha Canal, and the introduction of enclosed boats carrying a far heavier burden of freight, there was no need for the lighter craft.⁴

Freight Boats:

The freight boats measured 85 to 93 feet in length and were pulled by mules. Although the largest canal freight boats were built to carry 80 tons, the available load seldom exceeded 60 tons. The captain's room, crew's sleeping room, and kitchen were usually in the bow, and there was a stable to accomodate two mules in the stern. In the center of the boat was freight space for a capacity of about 150,000 pounds. The freight rate per hundredweight averaged about 6 1/2 cents downstream and 6 1/2 cents upstream. Each boat

³Bullington, Ann, Vignettes of the James, Richmond Press, Inc., Richmond, Virginia, 1941, p. 126.

⁴Wertebaker, op. cit., p. 132.

carried a crew of six men and was towed by a team of four horses. These boats made the upstream trip from Richmond to Lynchburg in three and a half days, the returning trip in three.

There were many rules of the road. Horses and mules were supposed to slow down to a walk for all tow-path bridges and the speed limit was four miles an hour. Anyone desiring to traverse the canal at the break-neck speed of five miles an hour could obtain permission from an officer of the company, otherwise he was likely to be fined.⁵

The James River Packet Company ran a line of boats from Richmond to Lynchburg in 1848, and later extended this line to Buchanan, by which mail, freight, express, and passengers were transported from Richmond to various points on the upper James River. Later the firm became interested in stage lines that connected with the canal boats and ran to the various Virginia Springs and to other points of interest in the western part of the State. Such lines as these carried all the traffic of the time, since railroads had not then come into the South.⁶

⁵Richmond, Capital of Virginia, Approaches to its History by Various Hands, Whittet and Shepperson, Richmond, Virginia, 1938, p. 276.

⁶Davenport Insurance Corporation, The Experience of a Century, (1848-1948), Whittet and Shepperson, Richmond, Virginia, 1948, p. 18.

For an observer's picture of the freight boats on the canal, the following excerpt is quoted, which was written by the late Mrs. Anne S. Rutherford and published in the Richmond News Leader's Bicentennial Issue, 1737-1937:

"The movement of these freight boats was slow but sure, frequently taking ten and eleven hours to go a distance of forty miles. Yet it became the means of operating the country west of Richmond and bringing to market its produce. Coal, coke, and salt mines, each with their products lying idle, were opened and worked. It gave, also, to the agriculturist a cheap and easy way to deliver their crops of grain, hay, and tobacco, nor was it an unpleasant sight to see the odd-looking boats gliding down the canal, impelled by one or more horses or mules that walked slowly along the tow path made for the purpose on the side of the canal.

"I cannot say that all of the boatmen were honest who plied their little crafts up and down the canal. They often fed their team in some hayfield on their way, sometimes stopped to milk a cow or to pillage an orchard, and were known to butcher animals found near, carrying them off for food. I was personally a sufferer from these piratical crews as my orchard and farm yard were very near the canal. . ."

Passenger Packet Boats:

When the James River Canal was completed, it afforded a new means of travel which was long a picturesque feature of social life. Not only the economic life, but also the

7

Rutherford, Mrs. Anne S., "The James River and Kanawha Canal," The Richmond News Leader, Bicentennial Issue, 1737-1937.

social life of Virginia centered around the James River Canal. Socially the canal was a success. It was the favorite method of travel to and from the capital.

Packet boats were made to accomodate about sixty persons, but could handle more, if necessary. The upper deck was a cool, comfortable place. Below deck, quarters were cramped, poorly ventilated, and some people avoided sleeping aboard the packets because they feared smothering to death.

Packet boats were drawn by three horses which were kept at a constant trotting pace. They were changed about every twelve miles where stables were available for keeping fresh horses. Passengers sometimes leapt ashore and raided a tree, returning with the fruit to board the boat, which had not gone very far.⁸

The packet landing was at the foot of Eight Street. Passengers arrived on foot or by carriage, and the place was always a scene of great activity. When the packet had received its cargo of passengers, the horses were hitched, and off it started. At Seventh Street a bridge was encountered, and by the time the packet rounded Penitentiary Hill it was moving at a fast clip with the horses at a trot.

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Bullington, Ann, Vignettes of the James, Richmond Press, Inc., Richmond, Virginia, 1941, p. 126.

Passenger traffic on the canal was never extensive, being confined even at its height to six regular packet boats. Passenger boats left Richmond on alternate days for Lynchburg, Buchanan, Columbia, and Scottsville. The maximum receipts from passenger traffic were only \$8,708.79 in 1847, a representative year.

In 1848 the regular packet fare to Lynchburg from Richmond was \$3.50 without meals, and \$7.50 if meals were included, not including drinks. Children and servants travelled at half-fare. The fare was reduced in 1859 to meet railroad competition. The trip consumed thirty-three hours going up, and thirty-one and a half hours returning.

The body of Stonewall Jackson was taken to Lexington from Richmond by packet boat. It was over the canal, too, that the Virginia Military Institute cadets left Richmond when the city was evacuated in 1865.⁹

On April 2, 1865, at midnight, the Danville Railroad bore off all the officers of the government, and others who could escaped by canal packets.

George W. Bagby, noted Virginia humorist, recorded in his "Reminiscences" an interesting picture of passenger travel on the canal boats:

⁹Lutz, Earle, A Richmond Album, Garrett and Massie, Richmond, Virginia, 1937, p. 98.

"In 1838, I made my first trip to Richmond. . . Those were the good old days. . . the picturesque craft charmed my young eyes more than all the gondolas of Venice would do now. True, they consumed a week in getting from Lynchburg to Richmond, and ten days in returning against the steam, but what of it? Time was abundant in those days. . .

"For purposes of through travel, the canal lasted ten or twelve years. The canal, after a fair and costly trial, is to give place to the rail. The dream of the great canal to the Ohio, with its nine-mile tunnel, costing fifty millions, must be abandoned. The canal has served its purpose. Henceforth, Virginia must prove her metal in the front of steam."¹⁰

10

Bagby, George W., Canal Reminiscences: Recollections of Travel in the Old Days on the James River and Kanawha Canal, from The Old Virginia Gentleman and Other Sketches, Dietz Press, Richmond, Virginia, 1938.

CHAPTER XIII

PRESENT STATUS OF RICHMOND AS A PORT CITY, 1951

Richmond today is a United States Customs Port. The city spreads from both banks of the James River, at the head of navigation, approximately ninety miles from the river's mouth at Hampton Roads. It is situated within five hundred miles of 49.7 per cent of the total population of the United States; 50.8 per cent of the nation's total income; 50.6 per cent of the nation's total retail output and 59.1 per cent of the nation's total industrial output. Richmond is the intersection of trade routes and is justly named "Gateway to the South."

The capital city has a metropolitan population of 229,905 people, with a city area of 39.77 square miles. By way of contrast, one hundred years ago in 1850, the total area of the city was only 2.40 square miles, and the population consisted of 27,570 people. But in the one

hundred years since 1850, Richmond has expanded its total area seventeenfold, from 2.40 square miles to 39.77, and its population by more than eight times.

The Richmond originally laid out in 1737 as a town was eight blocks long and four blocks wide, but it is now more than nine miles long from north to south and is about nine miles from the east and the west end sections.¹

The Port of Richmond today, the most westerly one of the northern Atlantic, starts in the neighborhood of the city-owned Intermediate Terminal along Lester Street in the vicinity of "Tobacco Row." It meanders along both sides of the James River, past the low-lying wharves and storage tanks of a dozen or more oil, fertilizer and chemical firms, to the city-owned Deepwater Terminal, at the end of Ninth Street Road behind the du Pont Plant.²

The navigable section of the James River, over which the city is responsible and has jurisdiction, extends from the head of the tidewater at 14th Street to a distance of twenty miles downstream.

Entrance to the James River from the Atlantic Ocean is through Hampton Roads, which has a depth of 40 feet.

¹Richmond Times Dispatch, June 20, 1950.

²Richmond Times Dispatch, April 30, 1950.

From the mouth of the James River to Hopewell, Virginia, is 69 miles.

From Hopewell to the Richmond Deepwater Terminal is 18 miles, and the channel covering this area has been dredged to a depth of 25 feet.

From the Deepwater Terminal to the Upper Terminal is 4 miles.

The City of Richmond owns and controls two river terminals. The Upper Terminal is located on the left bank of the James River at the foot of Nicholson Street, in the manufacturing section of Richmond. The Deepwater Terminal is located 4 miles below the Upper Terminal on the right bank of the river. It will accommodate vessels 650 feet long.

The Upper Terminal is a concrete wharf wall, 756 feet long with 80,000 square feet of warehouses and transit shed facilities, and an automatic sprinkler system. A five-ton crane, electric current, and domestic water are available, and there are good rail and highway connections, as it is served by both the Chesapeake and Ohio and Southern Railways. This terminal is at the head of navigation, the rapids preventing larger vessels from moving any farther inland.

The Deepwater Terminal is city-owned and is a concrete wharf 1,250 feet long, bordering a turning basin 700 feet

by 1,600 feet. This terminal is Richmond's great inland port facility. It has 333 acres of land with trackage to serve the entire open area. It has two huge, reinforced concrete warehouses with 190,000 square feet of floor space used for storage, also, freight moving equipment and an administration building. Electric current, automatic sprinkler fire protection, and domestic water are provided. For bulk storage there is a section of 15,000 square feet. It also has the modified gravity-type concrete electric cranes. There are 10 miles of city-owned railroad connecting with the Seaboard and ample connections to major highways. The terminal has locomotives for shifting cars, track scales for weighing cars, and a fleet of modern trucks for economic handling of freight. The terminal was completed in 1940.

Both the Upper Terminal and the Deepwater Terminal are operated by the Richmond Waterfront Terminals, Incorporated, under agreement with the City of Richmond.

In addition to the two terminals described, other docks and wharfs are available. The City of Richmond owns and operates the City Dock, just above the Upper Terminal. The City Dock is in the very heart of the wholesale and warehouse district of the city. It extends along Dock Street to 17th Street, a distance of 4,450 feet. The dock is entered from the river by a masonry lock with a 15 foot lift. The lock

chamber has a width of 35 feet and a depth of 12 feet and will accomodate vessels 168 feet long. Also, along the river front, within the harbor limits, there are fourteen privately owned wharves, six of which have rail connections.

According to the City Harbormaster's report, vessels arriving and departing at the Port of Richmond are averaging about nine per day each way in and out, throughout the year. This includes steamers, scows, tugs, tankers, barges, and yachts.

Twenty-six ocean-going steamships entered the port in 1949. Some were of Nicaraguan, Canadian, Swedish, and Finnish registry.³ In 1949, the port received 3,054 vessels of all types, and in 1950 the number of vessels was 3,645.

The bulk of the cargo now is gasoline and oil. The City Harbormaster reports that the only means of oil supply to the City of Richmond, at the present time, is through the James River.⁴

Richmond has come a long way since 1800, the official recognition date of the city as an inland seaport. The earliest skyline view of Richmond is of that year, sketched by the artist, Charles Fraser, picturing a sparsely settled

³Richmond Times Dispatch, April 30, 1950.

⁴Statement made to the author by the City Harbormaster, Captain O. L. Rowe.

center. In today's outline of the historic seven hills, tall buildings loom against the background.

The city of today is progressive and wealthy. It not only has wealth but it also has shrines. It witnessed many stirring events of the Colonial and antebellum eras, and is the former capital of the Confederacy. The great tobacco industry had its inception here; the first iron in the New World was made here; also, the first coal in America was mined in Richmond. Much of the wealth of the city today depends upon the tobacco industry here.

Manufacturing plants line the banks of the James River; railroads, steamships, and busses are busily engaged in loading and unloading varied cargoes, where once straggling settlers bartered English merchandise for Indian furs.

Shipping through the Port of Richmond today saves Richmonders millions of dollars through reduced freight rates. The port's existence also causes other agencies of transportation to lower their freight rates.⁵ The Deepwater Terminal has given the citizens a saving of \$1 per ton on all freight coming to Richmond by water. Because the port handles sugar, Virginians are supposed to save 10 cents a hundredweight in sugar costs because of lower freight rates.

⁵Richmond Times Dispatch, April 30, 1950.

Total community savings and benefits exceed \$4,000,000 annually, according to the Budget Report of the City Harbormaster for 1949-1950.

As beautiful and historic Richmond moves along in the twentieth century, may it continue to grow and prosper as an inland seaport, as it adds height to its skyline.

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VITA

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The author's vocation is college teaching. From 1947-1951, she was an instructor in the Department of Business Administration and Secretarial Science, Richmond Professional Institute of the College of William and Mary. During the current session she is an Assistant Professor of Business Education at Guilford College, Guilford College, North Carolina.