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MONONGALIA COUNTY FERRIES

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This article discusses the various ferries within the present borders of Monongalia (Mon) County. It should be noted that there were others in the much larger area of the original county which included modern Marion and Preston counties, as well as in territory now in Pennsylvania.

Most residents of Mon County will have at least a vague appreciation that ferries were part of our history, if only through a few contemporary names such as Collins Ferry Road and Ices Ferry Bridge. People cross the Monongahela River and Cheat Lake on modern bridges, and will have a notion that these bridges may have been preceded by ferry boats. What many will not see is that our current waterways and highways are based on highly modified topography. On the water side, Cheat Lake is less than 100 years old, and the dams on the Monongahela are less than half as old as the county itself. The relative youth and massive excavation involved in the construction of Interstate Highways I-79 and I-68 should be readily apparent, but there also were massive changes in travel patterns resulting from the construction of a new highway (US 19) from roughly Seneca Center to Mount Morris, PA, including the Star City Bridge, which were only instituted about 1950.

Under Virginia law, roads were the responsibility of the County Court (now called the County Commission). Counties were divided into road precincts, roughly corresponding to magisterial districts. All public road construction was done with local materials and labor. Each man between 21 and 50 years of age (except paupers) was obligated to work on the roads of his precinct at least 2 days a year between April and August. He could hire a substitute for about \$1 per day. Frequently road building days were mostly a social event. Most construction would have been limited to the things which could be done with shovels, picks, axes, and wheelbarrows.¹ It was not until 1891 that West Virginia gave the County Courts the authority to levy taxes for roads,² and it was 1907 when it authorized County Courts to condemn land for road construction, first provided state aid for road construction, and appointed a Commissioner of Public Roads.³

Turnpikes were generally better than public roads, but these were privately built and operated as toll roads under a state franchise. An unprofitable turnpike was often simply abandoned. Major bridges, as well as ferries, were operated similarly to turnpikes.

As a result, in the period when our ferries operated our county highways were narrow and twisting dirt roads following natural contours to ease passage over hills and through valleys. Many bridges would have been short or primitive and fords would have been common. Almost everyone worked within a short walking

distance of home, although most men had obligations or business which required them to visit Morgantown on occasion.

Other than locations and owners, we have relatively little data on local ferries before 1900. Some of the information in this article comes from the local history books written by Wiley, Callahan, and Core, while other bits have been gathered from genealogical records found on the INTERNET. Much of the information presented here is derived from the general literature on ferry boats as well as from the author's experiences as a boat builder and boat operator.

Ferry Locations and Use

Unlike modern practice where a bridge location may be chosen before its highway connections are designed, early ferries were constructed where roads already crossed streams, which is to say where a ford already existed. A concrete example of this is that one genealogical note says that Andrew Ice established his Cheat River ferry at "Ice's Ford" where Frederick Ice had settled in 1767.^{4, 5}

For many inhabitants of Monongalia County in the 18th and early 19th Centuries there would be little incentive to use ferries during most of the year. They would be thoroughly used to crossing small streams without bridges, and paying a ferryman would not have been attractive except during cold weather or high water. Since ferries were typically constructed at the sites of earlier ford crossings, in low water many travelers would have bypassed the ferry to avoid the tolls. The rewards to a ferry operator come from providing a safe option when the waters are high or cold.

We should expect that most ferries were at locations where the water was usually relatively shallow and where there was a gradual entry and exit slope. Swift currents add complications, but a rider on a horse or mule has no trouble crossing water with a depth of one and a half to two feet. Since historic animal drawn vehicles had large wheels, negotiation of a similar depth was not a problem for them either. Some fords were primitive and dangerous, particularly in bad weather. Figure 1. is from David Hunter Strother's *The Adventures of Porte Crayon and His Cousins*, first serialized in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* in 1855 and later republished in book form. In the text the author describes an unusually exciting stream crossing while touring in Virginia (probably in today's West Virginia) with his three nieces.



Figure 1. The Fording from Strother's Virginia Illustrated

Livestock was typically driven along roads to market, not hauled in wagons. This practice continued into the early 20th Century, when it was changed by the introduction of paved highways and trucks. Figure 2. shows a herd of cattle which the Strother party encountered. The leader of such an operation would hardly have been inclined to pay for ferry services. At times the drovers of sheep or hogs might choose a ferry, but would often prefer to swim their stock.

At low water levels, say less than ten inches, the ferry for horses and vehicles would be unable to operate. The operator might transfer pedestrians across in a rowboat in depths of six inches or so, but at low depths everyone would wade across.

Before the construction of our lock and dam system the Monongahela was usually shallow. So shallow, in fact, that there was at least one period of over a year when steamboats could not reach Morgantown. Even later there were occasional droughts which resulted in low water, and the Tygart Lake was, in fact constructed to assure sufficient water for navigation. No references to water levels on the Cheat have been found, but it should be expected that similar variations occurred.



Figure 2. The Drovers from Strother's Virginia Illustrated

Ferry Boats

Ferry Size and Construction

Much of the general public perception of boats on the American frontier between 1750 and 1850 is actually based on images created after 1860 as illustrations for books and magazines. These images were, in most cases, created by artists who had never seen either the original boats or accurate representations of them from contemporary sources.

There is little information directly available on the dimensions and construction of ferry boats before 1900. We can be certain that they were constructed of wood, and can guess that the heavy timbers of the boat were hewn with ax and adze in the manner used to make the structure of a barn. From the examination of various illustrations, the author believes that most were constructed as flat-bottomed scows (coal barge shaped) and that their hulls were typically about 13 feet wide and 30 feet long with a depth of hull of about 2 feet. There would have been wooden ramps at each end.

Such a boat would draw about 4 inches when empty. This size is large enough to accommodate a heavy farm wagon with two horses and probably a coach with four horses. A farm wagon and pair would weigh on the order of 3 tons which would increase draft about 3 inches. A coach and four would weigh on the order of 8 tons which would increase draft about 7 inches. A fully loaded Conestoga wagon weighed about 6 tons and had a team weighing as much as another 6 tons, and would have required a larger vessel.

All wooden vessels leak to some extent, so a bilge pump would be required equipment. In early ferries this would probably have been a square box pump with a leather cup on a wooden plunger. Later this might have been of sheet metal construction.

There should have been some sort of tender at each ferry location. In the earliest days this would probably have been a log canoe. Later it would generally have been a flat-bottomed wooden skiff, and after about 1940 a metal skiff. The skiff would have been used for maintenance work, and may also have carried pedestrians, particularly at low water.

Various ropes and other mooring equipment would also be needed.

Vessels of this sort were still in use in the 1940s in the American south. Figures 3. and 6. show examples.



Figure 3. A 1939 photograph of a reaction ferry between Camden and Gee's Bend, Alabama, taken as part of the Federal depression efforts. — Library of Congress

Ferry Propulsion

Core says "It is perhaps not necessary to state that the motive power used to propel these ferries across the rivers was provided through the manual use of oars or poles." ⁶ The author believes that Core is wrong on this point for several reasons.

Propelling a vessel weighing five tons or more with oars requires considerable strength. The use of poles for such a purposes introduces a considerable risk of

injury to the operator, as well as a risk of being propelled overboard. Oar driven ferries are common where passengers must be transported over long distances on open water, and for passenger-only crossing of short distances on rivers. While poled rafts were certainly in common use for occasional river crossings under primitive conditions, no knowledgeable ferry operator would choose such a method if alternatives were available.

The use of a cable prevents the ferry from being swept down stream, and most operators would have used a cable for safety reasons if the stream was not too broad.

We have two bits of direct evidence that the Morgantown ferry used a cable during some periods of its operation.

On July 10, 1830 John Core announced in *The Republican* that he had purchased a new rope and had the ferry in good condition. He also asked "All who are in arrears for ferriage ... to come forward and settle the same," indicating that a significant portion of his work was done on account rather than for cash.⁷

On February 11, 1850, the *Globe* completed the first successful steamboat trip to Fairmont. According to a story appearing in the *Fairmont Times*, November 6, 1907, on its return trip down river "some evil disposed or malicious persons let the rope of the ferry at Morgantown down so that it would sweep the pilot house, wheel, and smoke stack off the little boat as she went gliding down the river ..." ⁸

Cable systems were clearly common knowledge locally before 1830, so it is likely that they were used on most ferries.

Once a cable has been strung across a river it is possible to operate the boat as a "reaction ferry" or "current ferry" using forces generated by the current to move the boat. Such ferries are known to have been in use in Italy and Germany at least since the 15th Century.

Figure 4. is a sketch showing how the adjustment of the angle of the boat to the current can be used to generate the propulsive force. Figure 5. is a sketch of the method of construction of a ferry cable system using wire rope which was published by the Roebling Company in the 1920s. ⁹ The ferry in Figure 3. uses a block-and-tackle arrangement to adjust the angle, while the one in Figure 6. uses a wheel-and-drum device to accomplish this task. In both photos there is apparently little current and manual methods are being used to move the boats.

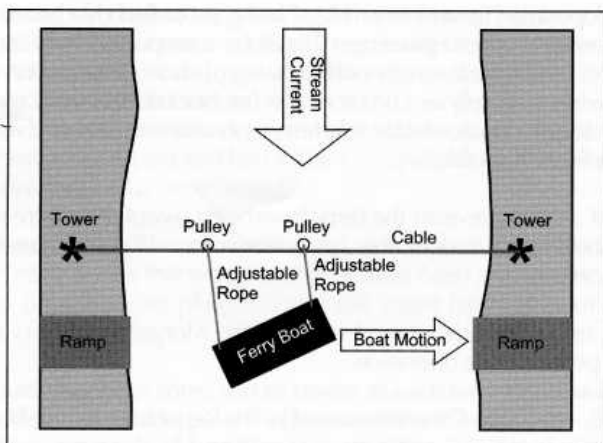


Figure 4. Reaction Ferry - principles

The "cable" used in a ferry system may be of a variety of materials, some of which sink, and others which float. Non-floating cables are generally made from steel cable which was not readily available until about 1860.

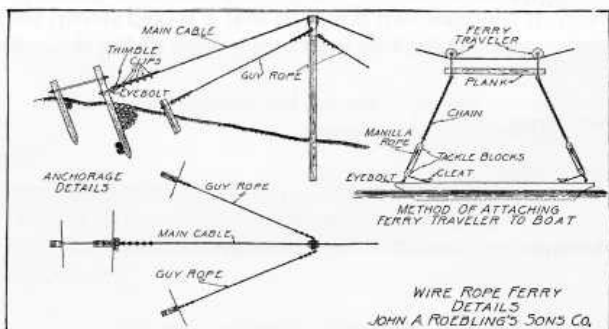


Figure 5. Roebling Company wire cable ferry design

Before 1850, it is almost certain that a frontier ferry would have used rope made from hemp fiber, although in some cases flax (linen) might have been used. Such rope may be heavily tarred to reduce decay, but would require regular replacement. It would stretch or shrink when dried or wet, so some winch arrangement was required to maintain proper tension. In addition, in many locations a method of lifting or lowering the cable is required to permit passage of boats moving up or down the stream.

No documentation has been found of any cordage works in Monongalia County, but in 1804 Samuel Jackson, owner of Jackson's Iron Works, advertised bar iron for cash, "wheat, rye, corn, beef, pork, tallow, beeswax, country linen, flax and hemp, at a generous price." ¹⁰ This indicates that hemp and flax were being grown on local farms, and it is likely that there were several local producers of rope operating as "cottage industries." Small scale rope production may have been carried out as an

adjunct to harness making since rope was often used for traces and reins. Spinning of yarns is done with flax and hemp in the same way, and with the same equipment, as wool. Construction of a small "rope walk" requires only three metal hooks along with wooden parts which may be made from logs with basic carpentry tools.



Figure 6. Parks Ferry, Ocneec River, GA. Federal Depression era photo, 1941 – Library of Congress

Ferries in Monongalia County

It may be useful to think of Mon County as having two classes of ferry; the first being those on the roads which connected to distant locations, and the second which were used for local travel.

There were three ferries of importance in long distance travel:

- Ice's Ferry, which carried traffic from what became the National Road.
- The Morgantown Ferry, which carried traffic toward Fairmont and Blacksville.
- One in Pennsylvania near Point Marion which carried traffic toward New Geneva and Brownsville.

These ferries were important in the running of regular mail services. Since mail services typically ran only two or three times per week the tolls they paid would not have covered the expenses of constructing and running a ferry service.

In 1821 John Wood published a map of Monongalia county. On this map we can find three places at which the same owner had both a mill and a ferry. Co-location of a mill and ferry might have been a common practice on larger streams since a mill operator was performing work which kept him in contact with local traffic and which could easily be interrupted to work the ferry. In addition, construction of a mill dam below a ford could increase normal water depth and provide added incentive to use ferry services.

In addition to the three major county histories published by Wiley (1883), Callahan (1926), and Core (1974, 76, 79, 84), three sets of maps have provided important information on ferry locations. These are:

- 1821 Map of Monongalia county - "Monongalia County - Surveyed and Drawn under the Direction of John Wood." This map was redrawn by Porter Stiles in 1975 for the Monongalia County Bi-Centennial Committee. His files are in the WV & Regional Collection of the West Virginia University Library, and contain photostats on the original publication. The 1975 version omits some information found on the original, probably because it was intended for publication at a reduced size.
- An Atlas of Marion and Monongalia Counties - In 1886 D.J. Lake & Co. of Philadelphia, PA published a large volume titled An Atlas of Marion and Monongalia Counties. This book is accessible in paper at the Morgantown Public Library, but also has recently been scanned and sold as a disc of computer files. The digital version is easily examined under magnification. The detailed maps are printed on the basis of Magisterial District and town.
- US Geological Survey topographic maps from 1907 to 1933.

The author of this article has not attempted to overlap the various maps and it appears that some locations are shown differently on the maps. This should not be surprising since the earlier maps were drawn from private surveys, and modern use of GPS units sometimes indicate errors in contemporary topographic maps.

Early Monongalia County Ferry Locations

Our oldest records of local ferries come from shortly after the founding of the county.

In 1784, immediately following his retirement from the army George Washington made his last western trip looking at lands to develop. He made a remarkable horse-back ride over the Alleghenies to the Monongahela valley. In his journal he reports "I came to the River Cheat abt. 7 Miles from its Mouth at a ferry kept by one Ice..."
11

Eight years later six Mon County ferries are mentioned in the LAWS OF VIRGINIA.

Chap. 52. - An ACT reducing into one the several acts for the settlement and regulation of ferries. (Passed December 26, 1792).

1. Be it enacted by the general assembly, That ferries be constantly kept at the places hereafter mentioned, and at the rates annexed to each ferry,....

Ferries on the Ohio river and its branches.

For Man For a Horse (Cents.)

4	4	From the lands of Jesse Martin, across Monongahela, to the land of James Hord, on the opposite shore.
4	4	From the land of Jesse Martin, across Monongahela, to the shore of David Scott.
4	4	From the lands of James Cleland, Monongalia, across Cheat river.

4	4	From the lands of Andrew Ramsay, Monongalia, across to William Morgan's, and from Morgan's to Ramsay's, the same.
4	4	From the lands of Dudley Evans, Monongalia, over Monongahela river, to the lands of George Wilson.
4	4	From the lands of John Collins, Monongalia, over Monongahela, at the mouth of Robinson's run, opposite.

Generally speaking, the rates and conditions governing ferries were uniform for rivers outside the Tidewater area. A thorough search of the Virginia statutes for the period between 1776 and 1807 might reveal more information on ferry ownership, but these records are not easily accessible. Some state of Virginia records were destroyed by a fire at Richmond in 1865 which complicates such a search.¹² It is unlikely that the act was revised on an annual or regular basis, but many amendments may have been added. In 1807 the Virginia general assembly transferred the regulation of ferries to the county courts.¹³ The author has not attempted to search the surviving handwritten county records, and there might be information in either the tax accounts or the minutes of County Court meetings.

It is noteworthy that the Ice name does not appear in this list. The importance of this omission is that it demonstrates that even governmental records may be in error on details.

Wood's 1821 Map

John Wood's 1821 map of Monongalia County includes present day Marion County. It includes only five ferries within the borders of present day Mon County as well as five in what is now Marion. Two are on the Monongahela, "Hollin's Ferry" at Morgantown and "Hamilton's Ferry" at Scotts Run. On Cheat River we find "Ice's Ferry," "Stafford's Mill & Ferry," and "Brook Ferry." The higher number of Cheat ferries probably reflects the fact that the iron foundry communities along the Cheat had a higher population than Morgantown at that time, and that they were an industrial community with local heavy freight movement along the river. Iron products were typically shipped by flatboat, with some reported to have gone as far as Erie, Pennsylvania and New Orleans during the War of 1812.

Ice's Ferry

As noted above, Ice's Ferry was probably established about 1784 on the site of an earlier ford. It was the longest serving county ferry, being in operation for about 115 years. The general location is where I-68 crosses Cheat Lake. The Cheat valley from a mile or so above Ice's Ferry to Point Marion was a populous area from about 1785 through about 1840. The area included several furnaces making iron products from local ore deposits using charcoal fuel. As Figure 7. shows, roads ran down the valley as well as over the hills to the east and to Morgan's Town.

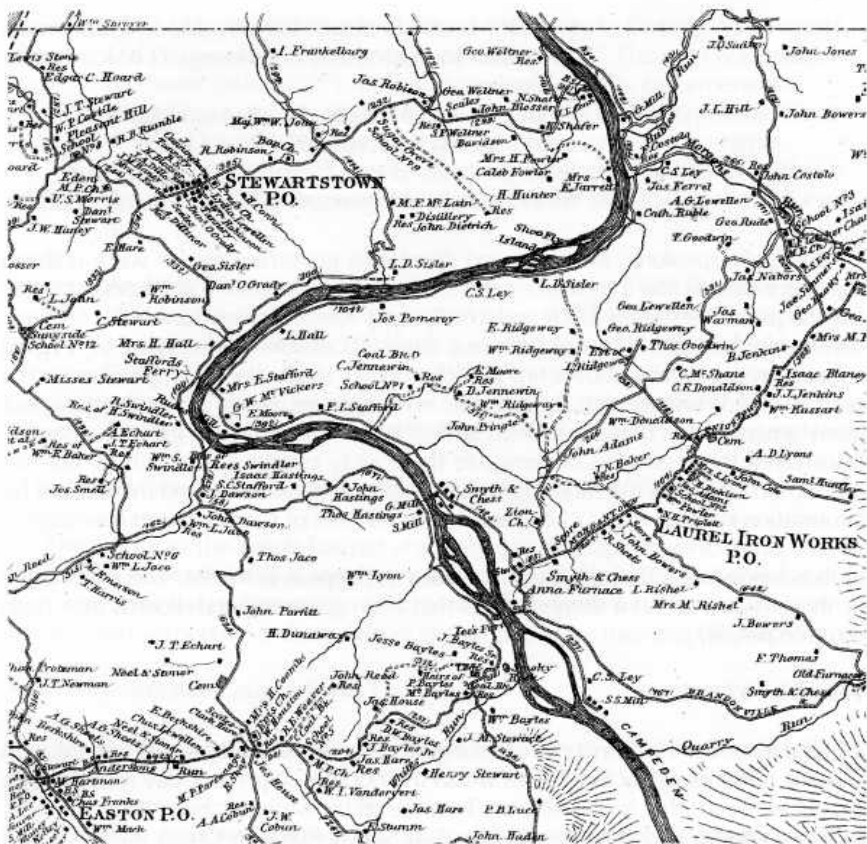


Figure 7. Excerpt from an 1886 map of Cheat River valley from Ices Ferry to state line

According to Callahan, a formal Ice's Ferry Road from Morgantown was opened by 1798, and the ferry was leased to John Henthorne in 1799. In 1830 Nicholas Vandervort was operating Ice's Ferry.¹⁴

Ice's Ferry continued in operation under various operators until the construction of the Ices Ferry Bridge in 1900. According to Core¹⁵ "The steel work on the bridge was 499 feet long...." which would mean that the ferry distance was probably about 100 to 150 yards.

The ferry served a changing network of roads. After 1818, both eastward and westward travel, which earlier had used more direct routes, was diverted to the national Road to which Morgantown was connected by a lateral road from Uniontown. In 1839. The Morgantown and Clarksburg Turnpike Company was formed to build a road by way of Morgantown and Ice's Ferry to the Pennsylvania State line.¹⁶ By 1885 the Brandonville & Fishing Creek Turnpike and the Morgantown & Uniontown Turnpike crossed here. Ice's Ferry also connected with the roads down bottom of valley to Point Marion, as shown on the map excerpt above.

"When the ferry was about to cease operations in 1900, there was a near

tragedy involving local citizens. They had crossed on the ferry in their carriage, heading to Mont Chateau. On the return trip, their carriage toppled into the river. All passengers were rescued unharmed.”¹⁷

The first Ices Ferry Bridge lasted only about eighteen years. On February 10, 1918 an ice gorge which extended up the river from the bridge to Albright broke loose and the bridge was swept away.¹⁸ A temporary ferry at old Ice's Ferry location was put into operation on March 27, while a new bridge was being built with Harry Hall as ferryman. The second Ices Ferry Bridge was completed in 1922 by the Independent Bridge Company of Pittsburgh, PA with steel produced by Jones and Laughlin.¹⁹

Other Cheat River Ferries

As noted above, the 1792 Laws of Virginia lists a ferry from the lands of James Cleland across Cheat river. Core lists Cheat ferries under the names of John Henthorne, Samuel Lewellin, and James McClelland for 1800. It is possible that Cleland and McClelland were the same person.

Figure 7. indicates the location of Stafford's Ferry, established in 1805, Later, the upper Stafford Ferry was opened at the mouth of Quarry Run.(Callahan)

Core says “On November 22, 1793, numerous public ferries were established, including one “from the land of Christiana Selser . . . across Cheat river, to her land on the opposite shore, the price for a man four cents, and for a horse the same.” “Selser's Ferry,” near the Pennsylvania line, was also known later as the “Line Ferry,” or as Lewellin's Ferry. Through the years it was operated successively by members of the Sulsor family, by Samuel Lewellin, by Jonathan Jordan and others. At this ferry was a very deep place in the river called “Sulsor's Hole,” from a man named Sulsor who drowned in it in an attempt to touch the bottom by diving.”²⁰ The author has not found the names Selser or Sulsor on surviving maps.

According to Callahan, the Cleland ferry listed in 1792 was located between the PA-WV state line and Ice's Ferry. Callahan also lists Charles Magill's ferry at Jackson's Iron Works in 1806.

Figure 7. also indicates the probable locations of former ferries, now fords, at the Geo. Weltner residence and near the J. L. Conn property in the upper right corner.

The 1821 map shows the ferry at the J. L. Conn property as the Brook Ferry and McFarland's Ferry located just north of the state line

The 1931 and 1933 topographic maps show no ferries on the Cheat in Monongalia County.

The Morgantown Ferry

Early Morgantown had a ford which was about two hundred yards below the site of the later bridges.²¹

Language in Callahan suggests that the original plan for Morgan's Town did

not provide adequate public access to the river, because in 1824 N. B. Madera conveyed the northern edge of Lot 6 to the town for the "ferry road."²² This is probably the short stretch of Garrett Street to the south of Wings Ole in 2013.

The Morgantown Ferry is identified on the 1821 Map as Hollin's Ferry.

As noted above, the Morgantown Ferry used a cable system at least as early as 1830.

Following the completion of the B&O Railroad to Fairmont in 1852, Morgantown changed its chief route of passenger travel and mail service. Rather than rely on road travel to Brownsville to connect with riverboats, it improved facilities for connection at Fairmont with trains to both the east and west. By 1854 daily mail service traveled over this new route.

Although for a time the cheaper river route for freight traffic was used when river levels allowed, the railroad connection at Fairmont hastened the construction of the first bridge across the Monongahela at Morgantown.

Safety considerations, as well as convenience, were prominent in the promotion of a bridge. A Dr. Isaac Scott had a medical practice extending from Kingwood on the eastern side of the river, and to Fairmont and Clarksburg on the other. On westside trips outside of ferry hours he forded the river. One afternoon in February he was called to Fairmont. Although he crossed the ford without unusual difficulty on his outbound trip, on his return the next morning he found the river very high. Attempting to ride across the swift stream, he suddenly felt his horse sink beneath the water, and at the same time encountered the current which washed him from his horse. Though encumbered by heavy boots, he held to the bridle of his horse which managed to swim across. Following the accident Dr. Scott earnestly agitated the bridge question, especially by using the newspaper in a novel way to keep the subject before the people. One week he wrote an article giving arguments for the bridge, and the next week answered his own article giving possible objections to the building of the bridge. In turn he answered these objections conclusively in favor of the bridge. He continued anonymous articles for months until everybody talked about the bridge and finally paid their subscription to the fund for its erection.²³

On March 11, 1850, the first important step toward the erection of a bridge was taken when the General Assembly of Virginia created the "Morgantown Bridge Company" with the right to build a bridge and to levy reasonable tolls.

The beginning of construction was delayed by negotiations with Jesse Mercer who owned the ground at the point selected for the west-side approach and also operated a ferry from that point. Following the company's offer to buy his ground, provided he would move his ferry during the period of construction of the bridge, he presented claims for damages which required considerable time for adjustment. In December 1854, the bridge was completed and its rates of toll were fixed, ranging from one cent per hog and three cents per footman to fifteen cents for a one horse vehicle and fifty cents for a four horse vehicle. The completion of the bridge resulted in the building of more homes on the west side of the river, an appreciable increase in the trade and industry of the Morgantown, and a marked increase of travel between Morgantown and Fairmont.²⁴

Other Monongahela River Ferries

As mentioned above, the 1792 Laws of Virginia listed five ferries across the Monongalia River. These were:

- "From the lands of Jesse Martin, across Monongahela, to the land of James Hord, on the opposite shore." This was from what is now Hoard, or Old Lock 9, on the east side to the shore below Fort Martin.
- "From the land of Jesse Martin, across Monongahela, to the shore of David Scott." David Scott's property was at the mouth of Scotts Mill Run, now called Scotts Run. It would appear that Martin owned several riverfront properties spread along a considerable distance. Later "John Dawson chartered a ferry at Hamilton, but it went down."²⁵ This was at one time called Scotts Ferry, and this would later be the location of the Jintown and Star City ferries.
- "From the lands of Andrew Ramsay, Monongalia, across to William Morgan's."
- "From the lands of Dudley Evans, Monongalia, over Monongahela river, to the lands of George Wilson." Evans' lands were at the mouth of Deckers Creek, so this would have been a predecessor of the Morgantown Ferry.
- "From the lands of John Collins, Monongalia, over Monongahela, at the mouth of Robinson's run, opposite." This was Collins Ferry, and its eastern end was at the mouth of West Run. Later notes say "William Wiley, removed to Monongalia County, Virginia, locating near Collins's Ferry, then called Martin's Ferry,"²⁶ "Collins's Ferry is an old one. Within forty years among its keepers have been: one Conwell, Jonathan Cobun, John Messer, Isaac Dean, George Smith, and Perry St. Clair, the present ferryman." It is from the mouth of Robinson's Run across the Monongahela River.²⁷

In his notes on early ferries, Wiley adds "Stone's Ferry is from the mouth of Crooked Run across the river."²⁶

Wiley relates an interesting story relating to an unnamed Mon ferry, as reported in The Standard. "In 1846 there were seven candidates for the House of Delegates Last but not least, came the 'Old Wheel Horse of Democracy,' Abner Scipio Davis We did not hear the beginning of Mr. Davis' speech, but learn that he commenced by saying that he regretted that he had not heard his brother candidates speak, having been engaged all day in ferrying his constituents across the river He informed them moreover that if they did not choose to vote for him, they might go to - and he would stay at home and attend to the ferry, which was a darn'd sight more profitable than going to the Legislature any how."²⁸

The 1885 Atlas of Monongalia and Marion Counties

In 1886 D.J. Lake & Co. of Philadelphia, PA published a large volume *An Atlas of Marion and Monongalia Counties*. This book is accessible in paper at the Morgantown Public Library, but also has recently been scanned and sold as a disc of computer files. The digital version is easily examined under magnification. The detailed maps are printed on the basis of Magisterial District and town.

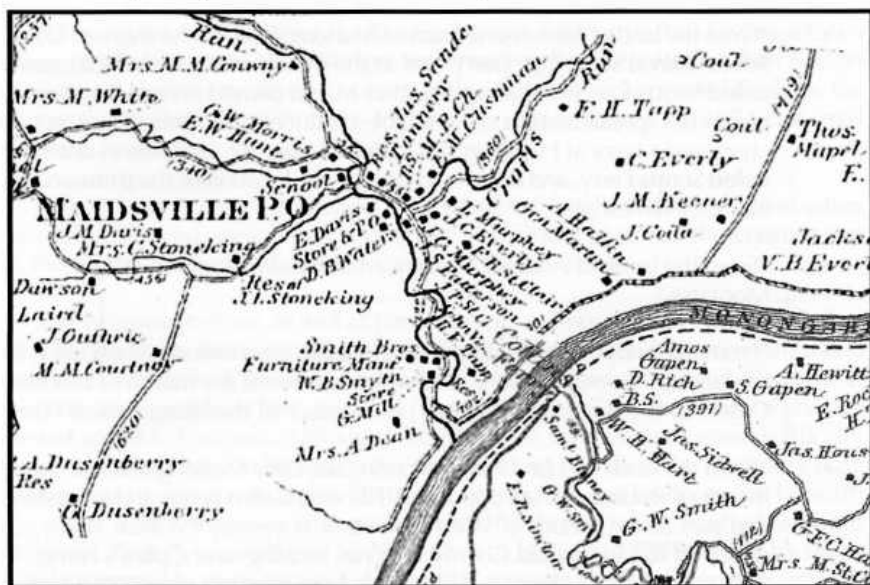


Figure 8. The Collins Ferry area in 1886

In the 1886 Atlas the Morgan, Union, and Cass Magisterial District maps show Collins Ferry running from near the mouth of West Run to a point near the mouth of Robinson Run. Figure 8. is a composite prepared by the author from the three district maps. Note that the Collins Ferry Road of that day ran in the narrow valley of West Run, and that there was an extensive community in Maidsville. This was about thirty years before large scale exploitation of the coal resources west of the river. The Fairmont, Morgantown and Pittsburgh Railroad north of Morgantown is indicated as "proposed." The maps do not show a ferry at Jimtown (opposite current Star City).

In the 1886 Atlas the Clinton Magisterial District map shows two ferries. One at Little Falls, which also appears on the Grant Magisterial District map, and a "B&O Ferry" near mouth of White Day Creek. Figure 9. is a composite of the Clinton and Grant District maps for the Lowesville area. (Two spellings, Lowsville and Lowesville, are found in various sources.)

20th Century Ferries

Early in the 20th Century new ferries were established at Morgantown and Star City. There are a number of photographs of these ferries.

The Morgantown Free Ferry was established to carry traffic across the Monongahela while the first bridge was being replaced. A number of postcards showing the ferry were published and mailed between 1907 and 1909. Close examination of the pictures shows that there were two steel cables on the upstream side. There appears to be a wake on the downstream side which suggests that a paddlewheel powered by a gasoline engine may have been used for propulsion, although none of the picture presents absolute confirmation of this. Figures 10, 11, and 12 show various aspects of this ferry and its landings.



Figure 10. The Morgantown Free Ferry, looking toward Walnut Street.



Figure 11. The Morgantown Free Ferry, looking down river. The white floating building to the right is the Wharf Boat containing offices, waiting rooms, and package storage for the packet boats traveling to Pittsburgh and Fairmont.

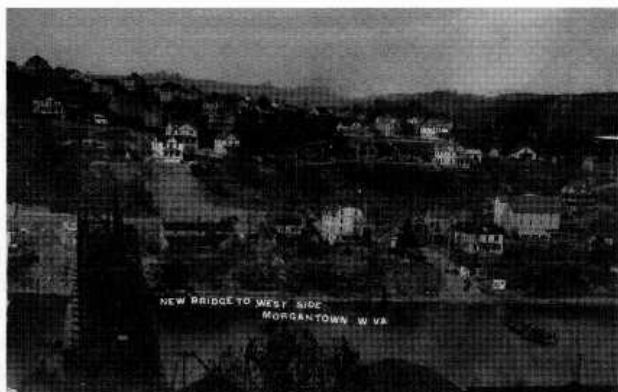


Figure 12. The Morgantown Free Ferry, showing the Westover landing and new steel truss bridge. The landing is approximately where General Woodworking was constructed later.

The Star City Ferry (also sometimes called the Jimtown ferry) operated at the site of the earlier Scott, Hamilton and Jimtown ferries. The new name was taken from the recently established Star City, which in turn took its name from the new Star Glass Company.



Figure 13. The Jimtown-Star City Ferry, probably about 1890

Examination of Figure 13, an 1890s photo of this ferry, leads the author to believe that this was a reaction ferry using a steel cable which was dropped to the river bottom when not in use. Since the road connecting Star City with the Seneca area (Monongahela Boulevard) was not built until 1950 and traffic to downtown Morgantown had to travel today's University Avenue route, this ferry primarily served local traffic between Star City and Scott's Run, or as a way for travelers to connect from Star City to US Route 19 and WV Route 7. During that period US 19 followed the route of today's WV Route 100 along the west side of the river from Westover and up Robinson Run through Maudsville to Mount Morris.

A number of USGS Topographic Maps are available for the period between 1904 and the present. Collins Ferry does not appear in 1933.

A 1904 Blacksville Quadrangle topographic shows a ferry at Little Falls. The ferry is omitted on the 1925 version of this map.

The 1933 map shows the Star City Ferry crossing the Monongahela from the foot of the present day University Avenue to the mouth of Scotts Run.

The 1933 map shows a ferry crossing the Monongahela from Van Voorhis to West Van Voorhis. The site of the east landing is just downstream from the Quality Glass trail access site. Evidence of the ferry landings can still be seen on the ground on both sides of the river. Both are used as primitive and private boat launch ramps.

A 1933 USGS Topographic Map indicates a ferry on the Monongahela at a site just north of the Fort Martin power plant. The notation may be a historic reference since no other information has been found to indicate that this ferry was actually in use in 1933. This location is downstream from the earlier Hoard Ferry location.

A possible Riverside-Evansdale Ferry is a bit of a mystery. The primary suggestion of its one-time existence is Ferry Street in the Riverside section of Westover. There is a marker in the WVU Arboretum roughly at the bottom of the Arboretum Service Road describing a farm road down the hill from the approximate location of the WVU Coliseum to a ford. Construction of Dam 9 and Lock 9, which first allowed year-round riverboat travel to Morgantown about 1885, would have eliminated the ford, and may have resulted in construction of a ferryboat. If a ferry existed in this location, it was certainly a private one. It may have been used for moving livestock and/or crops from the Krepps' farm on the top of the hill, or from Krepps' fields on the bottom lands on the east side of the river. No map or book references to a ferry at this location have been found.

The last ferry should serve as a reminder that almost all recorded ferries are those which served the public. On many streams there are also private ferries which allow farmers, workers, and cottagers to cross the water. These will range from rowboats carrying people or sheep to steel boxes capable of carrying heavy tractors. As the INTERNET and the publishing of family histories extends our knowledge of Monongalia history, we may discover additional ferry crossings.

Footnotes:

1. Yesterday and Today, page 7
2. Yesterday and Today, page 12
3. Yesterday and Today, page 14-15
4. Extracted from the genealogical website of Gwen Hurst on the Internet
5. <http://greathouse.us/archives/usa/va/augusta/1771-greathouse-ices-ford.htm>
6. Core, Vol II, page 287
7. Core, Vol III page 54
8. Core, Vol. III page 340-341
9. Price List, John A. Roebling's Sons Company, Trenton, NJ, 1927
10. Wiley, page 682
11. Callahan
12. Core, Earl, The Monongahela Story, page 328

13. Core, Earl, *The Monongahela Story*, page 352
14. Core, Vol III page 56
15. Core, Vol III page 464
16. Wiley, p. 107
17. Samsell
18. Core, Vol IV page 464
19. West Virginia Division of Highways website
20. Wiley, page 681
21. Callahan, page 178
22. Callahan, page 309
23. Callahan, page 179
24. Callahan, page 178
25. Wiley, page 298
26. Wiley, page 164
27. Wiley, page 707
28. Wiley, pages 299-300

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