

**HISTORIC RESOURCE STUDY
CHESAPEAKE & OHIO CANAL NHP**

**11.
THE C & O CANAL
DURING THE
CIVIL WAR:
1861–1865**

**BY HARLAN D. UNRAU
HISTORIAN, C&O CANAL RESTORATION TEAM, SENECA
DENVER SERVICE CENTER
1976**

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	707
I. THE CANAL PRIOR TO THE OUTBREAK OF THE WAR	709
II. WAR COMES TO THE CANAL: 1861	710
III. THE CANAL REACHES ITS LOWEST EBB: 1862	724
IV. COMMERCE ON THE CANAL EXPERIENCES A REVIVAL: 1863	743
V. THE CANAL TRADE EXPANSION CONTINUES: 1864	754
VI. PEACE COMES TO THE CANAL: 1865	767
VII. THE CANAL IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE CIVIL WAR	770
APPENDIXES	777
A. DISCOVERY AND DEVELOPMENT OF GOLD VEINS NEAR GREAT FALLS	777
B. STATEMENT OF BOATS NAMES AND OWNERS HELD BY THE U.S. GOVERNMENT APRIL 17, 1861	779

INTRODUCTION

A study of the Civil War experiences of the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal Company indicates a continuation of the ups and downs which had characterized the history of the waterway since the 1830s. The immediate effects were almost all negative. During the early war years the canal failed to share in the general prosperity which came to the northern states. One reason for its failure to secure much of the increased trade was that it was not a through route to the transmontane west, thereby limiting its portion of the heavy east-west traffic. Also, its geographical location was unfortunate because its entire line was on the border between the Union and the Confederacy, in the path of the contending armies. Consequently its trade was greatly reduced and its works alternately occupied and/or destroyed by the opposing forces. The resulting irregularity of its services as a carrier argued against large-scale use of it by the government or by private shippers. Furthermore the financial straits in which the company continually labored were a serious obstacle to the progress of the canal.

The only direct advantage derived from the war was the large demand for coal. Of the 15½ million tons of coal mined in the United States in 1860, nearly 60 percent was Pennsylvania anthracite while the remainder came from the Appalachian fields of Maryland and Virginia (including West Virginia). A specialized "super-coal," Maryland's product was particularly suited for New England textile mills and for steamship bunkering, and it had been used successfully for smelting iron. Thus, with Virginia coal no longer available to the northeastern market, Maryland's contribution became increasingly important to the Union cause. Yet the company had to wait over two years before its carrier was sufficiently clear of the battle zone to permit long periods of uninterrupted navigation.¹

In the long run, the war both encouraged and discouraged hopes for improved business prospects. The year 1863 marked a definite financial turning point in canal affairs as profits rose sharply to levels well above those of the prewar years. For a decade after the war, the net income of the company rose measurably with a regularity hitherto unknown to the disaster-ridden canal. It should be noted, however, that during the conflict a sizeable portion of the increased profits were the result of the neglect of the physical condition of the canal and of rising toll rates during the inflationary period, rather than by a marked increase in trade.

In other important ways, the war record was even less bright. Markets were affected differently. The lucrative flour trade, which was already passing to the Baltimore & Ohio in 1860, was finally and definitely lost as a result of the unreliability of canal navigation during the war. The coal trade, on the other hand, improved steadily toward the end of the conflict, and by 1865 it had become, for all practical purposes, the sole support of the canal company. Accounting for more than 90 percent of the trade on the waterway, the traffic in coal came to bear a great weight in canal affairs. When technological improvements later enabled the railroad to compete more successfully for the trade, the Allegany County coal companies forced toll reductions which deprived the canal of its profits before the trade was lost.

The physical condition of the waterway deteriorated greatly during the hostilities. Years passed before the masonry structures were properly repaired and the trunk restored to its original dimensions. As a result of the suspension of improvements, the canal was becoming outmoded and incapable of meeting the demands of an enlarged business. When improvements became unavoidable during the next fifteen years, the company found itself without the tremendous sums required. At best, the prosperity of the latter war years merely arrested the inevitable decline of

¹ Katherine A. Harvey, "The Civil War and the Maryland Coal Trade," *Maryland Historical Magazine*, LXII (December, 1967), 361-362.

the canal. At worst, the war indirectly hastened the end, while causing much incidental anguish to those who depended on it for a livelihood.²

² Walter S. Sanderlin, "The Vicissitudes of the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal During the Civil War," *Journal of Southern History*, XI (February, 1945), 51–53, 66–67.

I. THE CANAL PRIOR TO THE OUTBREAK OF WAR

The year 1860 had not been profitable for the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal Company. Political influence from the Maryland legislature had brought about the wholesale turnover of employees and the reorganization of the administration of the company in May and June.³ The canal had not been opened to navigation until mid-May. Business had then been brisk until November, when heavy rains over the Potomac Valley caused the rivers to rise rapidly. Dams Nos. 5 and 6 were injured, while considerable destruction was done to Guard Lock No. 4 and the towpath below Dam No. 4. The Marsh Run Culvert was washed out, several sections of the trunk were filled with silt and debris, and the walls of Lock No. 21 partially collapsed. The canal was shut down for three weeks while temporary repairs were made thus preventing the movement of coal from Cumberland to the District cities when such trade could be expected to be at its height. Income from the tolls which had totaled \$32,547.54 in October fell to \$15,951.47 for the final two months of the year, and the annual trade statistics showed a decline of more than 17,000 tons of coal from the 1859 totals.⁴

When the canal was drained for the winter in late December, more permanent repairs were made to restore the canal to its operating condition before the freshet. As a result of these efforts, company officials looked forward to a “prosperous boating season” in 1861 despite the looming clouds of war.⁵ Nevertheless, the approaching conflict was the cause of some anxiety and mixed emotions to the canal directorate as evidenced by the following communication from President Lawrence J. Brengle to Clerk Walter S. Ringgold on New Year’s Day:

We are in great excitement here [company headquarters at Frederick] with regard to the National Crisis, and don’t know what to do that will be of any advantage to arrest the difficulty. We are much divided in sentiment on the subject. I still hope there is conversation enough in the country yet to save it.⁶

Water was readmitted to the canal in the second week of March 1861, and during the following month there were heavy shipments of coal from the Allegany County mines. In March income from the tolls was \$16,768.25, while during the first ten days of April \$12,581.01 was collected.⁷

On April 12 torrential rains drenched the entire watershed of the Potomac Valley, causing a disaster that dashed the company’s hopes of a profitable year.⁸ The Potomac continued to surge upward. Upon the portion of the canal, it reached a height only exceeded by the 1852 flood. Considerable destruction was caused to canal property as a result of “the unprotected condition of the embankments near the feeder at Dam No. 4.” A number of washes and breaches occurred on the Cumberland, Hancock, Williamsport, and Antietam Divisions while damage to the Monocacy and Georgetown Divisions was less severe than had been feared.⁹

³ *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, K, 183–183, 192–195.

⁴ *Thirty-Third Annual Report* (1861), C&O Co. pp.3, 8–9, 14, and Carleton to Board of Directors, November 7, 1860, Fitzpatrick to Ringgold, November 6, 1860, and Stake to Board of Directors, November 13, 1860, Ltrs. Recd., C&O Co.

⁵ Ringgold to Colston, December 15, 1860, Ltrs. Recd., C&O Co., *Thirty-Third Annual Report* (1861), 9–10, 14; and *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, K, 240, 244.

⁶ Brengle to Ringgold, January 1, 1861, Ltrs. Recd., C&O Co.

⁷ *Thirty-Third Annual Report* (1861), 10, and *Thirty-Fourth Annual Report* (1862), C&O Co., 3, 9.

⁸ Carleton to Ringgold, April 13, 1861, Ltrs. Recd., C&O Co.

⁹ *Thirty-Third Annual Report* (1861), 10, and *Washington Evening Star*, April 15, 17, 1861

II. WAR COMES TO THE CANAL: 1861

As the repair crews prepared to restore the waterway, they were hindered by two factors—the desperate financial condition of the company and the withdrawal of Virginia from the Union on April 17, thus insuring that the Potomac Valley and the canal would feel the full impact of the grim struggle about to engulf the United States. Upon the adoption of the Secession Ordinance by the Virginia Convention, Confederate militia converged on Harpers Ferry, eager to seize the arms and machinery at the United States Armory and Arsenal. Unable to capture their objective before it was fired by the retreating Federal troops, the Rebel army used the area as a concentration point where untrained volunteers were organized into a fighting force by Colonel Thomas J. Jackson. Troops were sent across the Potomac into Maryland, occupying the strategic locations at Point of Rocks and Maryland Heights.¹⁰

Despite the presence of the Confederates around Point of Rocks and Harpers Ferry, progress in effecting repairs of the flood damage was reported by the division superintendents. Water was back in the entire line by May 14, but the activities of the Virginia militia around Harpers Ferry and Alexandria made the coal shippers hesitant to use the waterway until the military situation was clarified.¹¹ Although the canal records do not indicate how many boats were detained by the Rebels between Point of Rocks and Harpers Ferry, it was reported that a boat owned by Thomas McKaig had been held up at the latter town by a detachment of Confederate soldiers while its load of salt was removed.¹²

The coal operators were further alarmed by reports during the period of repairs that small bands of Confederate pickets were gathering near the Potomac Aqueduct. In an effort to drive the pickets away, small bodies of Federal troops commenced frequent forays across the Potomac at night in late April and early May. Finally on May 23 the United States Government occupied the aqueduct, and on the following day Union troops occupied the Virginia shore opposite Washington. As the towpath of the aqueduct proved to be inadequate for the military exigencies, it was later determined to shut the water off from the structure and convert its trunk into a double-track wagon road by overlaying the floor with 4 inch planks. By December 5, the bridge over the aqueduct was under construction, and on December 16, the water was drawn off to permit the erection of long wooden inclines on trestles to form connections with the roads on either side. A dam was placed across the Georgetown entrance of the aqueduct by December 23, thus closing the structure to the trade of the canal.¹³

By late spring the Cumberland coal trade had virtually been halted. On June 1, the *Pottsville Miners' Journal* announced that the trade “appears to be entirely suspended for the present by Railroad as well as Canal. The dislodgement of the Rebels from Harper’s Ferry, which will soon take place, will re-open the trade by Railroad from Cumberland again, but not by Canal.”

¹⁰ *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (Washington, 1880–1900), Series I, Vol. II, 809–810.

¹¹ Spates to Ringgold, May 6, 13, 1861, Ltrs. Recd., C&O Co., and *Thirty-Fourth Annual Report* (1862), 3.

¹² *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, K, 290.

¹³ *Washington Evening Star*, May 2, 24, December 5, 16, 23, 1861; Maj. Gen. J. G. Barnard (Brevet), *A Report on the Defenses of Washington to the Chief of Engineers, U.S. Army* (Washington, 1871), 79–80. The long wooden incline on the Georgetown side of the aqueduct extended over the canal and connected present-day 36th Street with the abutment. Commission of Fine Arts and Historic American Buildings Survey, *Georgetown Architecture—The Waterfront* (Washington, 1968), 151. Prior to the construction of the bridge over the aqueduct, an alternative proposal of building a boat bridge was studied seriously. However, the idea was given up because of the depth and powerful currents of the river in the vicinity and the frequency of floods and icing.

Meanwhile the competing Pennsylvania Broad Top Coal was “coming into demand to supply its place.”¹⁴

The annual meeting of the company stockholders was held at Frederick on June 4. The fears and uncertainties of the period were reported as follows:

The general condition of the canal for navigation at this time is believed to be better than it has been for some years past, and a fair business for the season could be done, but for the political agitations of the country, by which business has been prostrated, transportation rendered uncertain and precarious, and subject to frequent delays, if not seizures by the contending parties on the banks of the Potomac, and unless there be an early removal of the seat of war, it is feared that a general suspension of the transportation on the Canal, will occur.¹⁵

During the second week of June, Brigadier General Joseph E. Johnston, who had replaced Jackson as commander at Harpers Ferry in May, received news that a Union column under Major General George B. McClellan advancing eastward along the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad had occupied Cumberland on the 10th. Shortly thereafter, he learned from his scouts that Major General Robert Patterson, the federal commander of the recently-created Department of Pennsylvania with headquarters at Chambersburg, was closing in on Williamsport with 14,000 troops. Sensing that his position at Harpers Ferry was a trap for his command, Johnston on June 15 pulled troops out of that vicinity and fell back to Winchester.¹⁶

Before evacuating Harpers Ferry, Johnston had his demolition teams sabotage the canal. These groups wreaked considerable havoc on the waterway from Harpers Ferry to Dam No. 5. On the evening of June 8 word was received in Williamsport that some rebel soldiers were attempting to put “a blast into Dam No. 5, to blow it up.” The Clearspring Guards proceeded to the dam and drove off the Virginians after a brief skirmish. Later in the night, the Confederates returned and planted a cannon to defend their men while at work on the dam. One blast was ignited which destroyed a small portion of one of the stone-filled cribs, but no serious damage took place. The next morning a small band of Unionists armed with Minnie muskets left Williamsport and aided the Clearspring Guards in repossessing the dam. During the following week, a series of skirmishes took place at the dam as each side attempted to drive the other out of the area.¹⁷

On June 13 canal president Alfred Spates reported that the canal was badly injured above Harpers Ferry. Gates at four of the locks were destroyed, and a number of boats had been burned. Based on the damage that he had seen, he complained that he felt “very sad at the destruction committed.”¹⁸

The Washington *Evening Star* on June 14 reported that the Virginians were making a concerted effort to destroy Dam No. 4. According to the account, the rebels were

engaged every night, with dark lanterns, drilling holes in the solid rock on which Dam No. 4 rests, on the Virginia side, in order to blow up the same. Should they make successive heavy blasts the dam must give way. The work is superintended by Redmond Broun,

¹⁴ Pottsville *Miners' Journal*, June 1, 1861, quoted in Harvey, “Civil War and Maryland Coal Trade,” p. 365.

¹⁵ *Thirty-Third Annual Report* (1861), 4.

¹⁶ Edwin C. Bearss, “War Comes to the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal,” *West Virginia History*, XXIX (April 1968), 155–156. Patterson’s troops occupied Williamsport but made no effort to cross the Potomac at that time.

¹⁷ Washington *Evening Star*, June 11, 14, 1861.

¹⁸ Spates to Ringgold, June 13, 1861, Ltrs. Recd., C&O Co.

an Irishman who superintended its construction. He has two sons among the Confederate troops.

Heavy firing was reported at the dam as a company of 45 Sharpshooters from Boonsboro had gone to assist the Sharpsburg Company in an attempt to drive the Confederates away. Already four Virginians had been wounded badly during the skirmishing.¹⁹

The presence of Southern troops on the Virginia side of the Potomac made it unsafe to attempt any repairs. What especially worried General Superintendent A.K. Stake was that it was difficult to secure planks to repair the stop lock at Dam No. 4. Unless this was done promptly, the canal below that point would be subjected to extensive damage by a freshet. The discouraged engineer reported to company officials on June 26 that

Nothing but soldiers, baggage, wagons, camps, guns, pistols and swords, meets our gaze here [Williamsport]. Wherever we go they have pretty nearly eaten up everything we have. I hope they will get away soon.²⁰

Because of the straightened finances of the canal company President Spates on July 1 urged Clerk Ringgold to see if he could collect in advance from the Georgetown millers \$1,000 of their water rents.²¹ Of this sum \$500 would be allocated for the repair of the stop lock at Dam No. 4. Once completed, this would enable the boatmen to bring down a number of stranded coal boats. The captains were reportedly willing to pay their tolls in cash on their arrival in Georgetown. Repairs to the canal in the Harpers Ferry area were progressing rapidly, but Dam No.1 was leaking so badly that it would take a good force ten days to tighten it.²²

While the company was attempting to collect advances from the Georgetown millers on their water rents, it received word from several enterprises that the war had forced them to cease operations. One such message came on July 9 from Williamson & Co. which had leased the Pioneer Cotton Factory in Georgetown on January 1, 1861. With the outbreak of hostilities in April, inflationary wages and expenses, the scarcity and high price of cotton, and a drastic reduction of sales even at prices below production costs had ruined the company's credit. As a result, the plant had been closed and all hands had been discharged. Until the conflict ended and the factory was back in operation, the company requested that it be relieved of its water rents.²³

A Cumberland minister also described the depressing effect of the outbreak of hostilities upon the interests of Western Maryland and his town. Among other observations, he wrote that

Her great thoroughfare, the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, was interrupted and her Canal closed. Trade from Virginia was withdrawn. Every industry was stopped or curtailed; stores were closed and marked "for rent;" real estate sank rapidly in value. Merchants without customers slept at their counters, or sat at the doors of their places of business. Tradesmen and laborers, out of employment, lounged idly about the streets. The railroad workshops were silent and operations in the mining regions almost entirely ceased. Then commenced a deep, painful feeling of insecurity and an undefined dread of the horrors of war. Panic makers multiplied and infested society, startling rumors were constantly float-

¹⁹ Washington *Evening Star*, June 14, 1861.

²⁰ Stake to Spates, June 26, 1861, Ltrs. Recd., C&O Co.

²¹ In fiscal year 1861, the company had collected \$5,202.24 in water rents.

²² Spates to Ringgold, July 1, 1861, Ltrs. Recd., C&O Co.

²³ Williamson and Co. to President and Directors, June 20, 1861, Ltrs. Recd., C&O Co., and *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, K, 254. Desperate for revenue, the canal company refused to grant the request of Williamson & Co. on July 9.

ing about of secret plots and dark conspiracies against the peace of the community and private individuals.²⁴

It was July 2 before the Union troops crossed the Potomac at Williamsport. In the campaign that ensued, Johnston, the Confederate commander, took his army eastward out of the Shenandoah Valley and combined with the force under Pierre G. T. Beauregard to maul the Federals in the war's first major battle at Manassas on July 21. During the maneuvering in the weeks before the battle, marauding bands of Confederates made several forays against the canal, one of which took place at Great Falls, Maryland, on July 7. In the day-long fire fight, the Confederates nearly succeeded in driving out the Eighth Battalion of the District of Columbia Volunteers that was protecting that strategic position.²⁵

Heavy rains at the beginning of July caused additional damage to the canal. Although Union advances in the Potomac Valley had compelled the Confederates to pull back from the river, the repair crews did not wish to take any chances. General Superintendent Stake complained that the Rebels seemed determined to oppose any navigation on the canal, and it was "impolitic if not dangerous to attempt repairs." Only those sections that could be attended to without risk would be pushed. Work was to be commenced on July 8, and Stake estimated that it would require eight to ten days to restore navigation. As the regular work crews that resided along the line of the canal had left, the company would be forced to transport men, supplies, and provisions into the areas needing repairs. Stake's fears that the canal would be subjected to damage by marauding soldiers as long as the Union and Confederate armies confronted each other in the Potomac Valley were heightened as he organized the work crews when he was warned of a threat by the Rebels to "blow down Dam No. 6." At the same time a Union officer warned that no repairs should be made to Dam No. 1. If the warning was not heeded, he would have his men tear down the dam. Almost daily roving Confederate bands were in the habit of shooting across the Potomac toward the canal at numerous points along the river.²⁶

Despite the hindrances to the work crews, all of the repairs on the canal were finished by July 20, the day before the Battle of First Manassas, except those at Edwards Ferry, a culvert three miles above Paw Paw Tunnel, and the Oldtown Deep Cut. While the last repairs were underway, General Robert Patterson dispatched a company of troops to Hancock to protect the waterway from Williamsport to Cumberland. The repairs at Edwards Ferry were completed soon thereafter, but it took an 80-man crew with 20 horses and carts some 25 days to restore navigation at the large breach near the aforementioned culvert and the heavy rock slide at the Oldtown Deep Cut. When an inspection of the repairs by President Spates revealed that the pool behind Dam No. 5 was so low that the canal could not be navigated, a crew was put to work tightening the dam. Finally on August 26 the canal was again navigable from Cumberland to Georgetown. To affect the repairs, Spates had been forced to borrow \$1,000 from the Merchant's Bank in Baltimore and \$1,000 from the Cumberland Bank of Allegany County.²⁷

With the canal again open for its entire length, trade improved rapidly led by the loaded coal barges that had been stranded below Dam No. 6. Tolls which had fallen to \$657.36 in May, \$206.27 in June and \$16.94 in July zoomed upward to \$2,444.07 in August and \$10,509.17 in September. During the three-week period after August 26, 10,628 tons of coal, in 96 boats, were

²⁴ Will H. Lowdermilk, *History of Cumberland* (Washington, 1878), 396–397.

²⁵ *O. R.*, Series I, Vol. II, 123.

²⁶ Stakes to Spates, July 6, 1861, Ltrs. Recd., C&O Co.

²⁷ Spates to Ringgold, July 20, 24, August 1, 13, 25, 1861, Ltrs. Recd., C&O Co. General Superintendent Stake, frustrated by the effect of the war on the canal, resigned his position effective August 1. Ringgold to Stake, July 10, 1861, Ltrs. Recd., C&O Co.

shipped from Cumberland to the District cities.²⁸

The rise in trade was encouraged by several factors. First, to keep the Confederates from interfering with boating on the upper divisions of the canal, President Spates, who was a friend of one of the aides of General Robert E. Lee, made an agreement with them.²⁹ Second, President Abraham Lincoln on July 20 approved a communication from Secretary of War Simon Cameron to Representative Francis Thomas, a former president of the canal company in 1839-41, authorizing the organization of four regiments of loyal citizens

on both sides of the Potomac River from the Monocacy to the west boundary of Maryland, for the protection of the canal and of property and persons of loyal citizens.³⁰

Third, as the Potomac divided the territory held by the Union and Confederate forces in the weeks following the Battle of First Manassas, Federals reporting to Brigadier General Charles P. Stone watched the river from Great Falls to the Monocacy River, while units under General Banks held the line of the river from the Monocacy to Shepherdstown. By mid-August, Stone's main force was camped at Poolesville, while Edward's Ferry, Conrad's Ferry and Seneca were held by strong detachments and a string of pickets stretched down to Great Falls. With his division encamped near Hyattstown, Banks assigned the 2nd Massachusetts to occupy Harpers Ferry and hold the Virginia bridgehead, and posted the 13th Massachusetts at Sharpsburg, the 1st Maryland Infantry at Williamsport, the 28th New York at Berlin, and the 28th Pennsylvania at Point of Rocks. The primary mission of the Federal forces was to observe "the enemy across the Potomac and protect the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal."³¹

Fourth, heavy rains in early August caused the Potomac and its tributaries to swell. With the river at near flood stage, there was little immediate danger of a Confederate thrust into Maryland as the unseasonably high water level prevented fording of wagons and artillery.³²

As a result of these factors, canal traffic proceeded with little interruption until mid-October. To be sure there were several incidents along the canal during this period, but none had a serious affect on the operation of the waterway. On August 16 and several days following there were reports that a company of Confederates had shot at canal boats near Edwards and Conrad's Ferries from positions across the river. A canal boatman was mortally wounded by Rebel fire at Shepherdstown on September 9. During the skirmish at that town, the Federals destroyed the Potomac Mill which had passed into the ownership of Alexander R. Boteler, a former Congressman elected by the American Party from the Harper's Ferry District who was now a member of the Confederate Congress and a colonel on the staff of General Jackson.³³ The bridge across the Po-

²⁸ Carleton to Ringgold, September 14, 1861, Ltrs. Recd., C&O Co., and *Thirty-Fourth Annual Report* (1862), 9. In comparison, the toll collections for the same months in 1860 had been as follows: May—\$19,214.19; June—\$18,529.60; July—\$23,051.10; and August—\$28,005.02. *Thirty-Third Annual Report* (1861), C&O Co., 14.

²⁹ Spates to Ringgold, August 13, 1861, Ltrs. Recd., C&O Co. The terms of the agreement were never made public.

³⁰ *O. R.*, Series III, Vol. I, 338–339, and Roy P. Basler, ed., *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* (8 Vols., New Brunswick, 1953), IV, 455.

³¹ *O. R.*, Series I, Vol. V, 560, 565, 567, 569, 574. One of the regiments from which picket details were sent to the Great Falls area was the 71st Pennsylvania. Most sources agree that members of this regiment, known informally as the "First California Regiment," were the first to discover free samples of gold near the falls during this period. For more information on this topic, see Appendix A. of this chapter.

³² *Ibid*, 565, 573

³³ Ezra J. Warner and W. Buck Yearns, *Biographical Register of the Confederate Congress* (Baton Rouge, 1975), 25–26; Hagerstown *Mail*, January 18, 1867; and Misc. Mss., Alexander R. Boteler Papers, Duke

tomac was also wrecked by the Union troops in the hope that such an action would deprive the Rebels of easy access into Maryland.³⁴

Six days later, on September 15, a severe skirmish erupted at Harpers Ferry following sporadic clashes on the 13th and 14th between a strong Rebel force attempting to retake the town and northern troops under Colonel John W. Geary. Placing his left behind the railroad embankment southeast of the abutment of the burned Y-bridge and his right along the canal towpath near Lock No. 35, Geary drove the Confederates back in the direction of Bolivar Heights after a two-hour fire-fight.³⁵

The increase in canal trade and the apparent inability of the Confederates to mount an offensive across the Potomac into Maryland contributed to the optimism of businessmen along the canal. Hence several new enterprises were commenced along the waterway in early October. John Pettibone was granted permission to build ice houses on the berm of the canal near the “logwall” to facilitate the transportation of that item to Washington.³⁶ B. R. Poole was authorized to build a warehouse on the land of the canal company near Lock No. 25 for an annual rental fee of \$12.³⁷

Despite the trade increase, however, the company was forced to admit by October 1 that its means were inadequate to operate and maintain the canal properly. Accordingly, the board passed the following resolution:

Whereas on the 6th of Feby. last, the Board adopted a resolution “that the Company will continue to receive the Certificates of tolls in payment of tolls so far as their means and financial ability will admit, and Whereas, in consequence of suspension of business on the canal for some months past, owing in a great measure to the belligerent operations on the Potomac, the means of the Company are inadequate to the proper repair and maintenance of the Canal, therefore it is,

Resolved, that from and after this day, all tolls accruing on the Canal be required to be collected in cash, until otherwise ordered.³⁸

There was a marked increase in military activity along the canal in mid-October. Union soldiers under Colonel Geary crossed the Potomac, pushed through Harpers Ferry, and occupied Bolivar heights. Once a picket line was formed, fatigue parties began removing and boating to the Maryland side hundreds of bushels of wheat stored in the flour mill on Virginus Island. By the evening of the 15th, the Union men had completed their task, but before they could be withdrawn across the Potomac the next morning, a strong force of Confederates led by Lieutenant Colonel Turner Ashby advanced and drove in Geary’s picket line. A sharp fight ensued in which the Yankees defeated Ashby’s troops, and under the cover of darkness on the night of October 16 the Federals evacuated their bridgehead and recrossed the Potomac.³⁹

The bloody Battle of Ball’s Bluff occurred on October 21. A 1,700-man brigade led by

University Library, Durham, North Carolina. Later in 1864, Federal troops crossed the river at Boteler’s Ford and marched toward the Shenandoah Valley to destroy its usefulness for the Confederacy. On the way, Boteler’s home (“Fountain Rock”) near Shepherdstown was burned. *Shepherdstown Register*, July 16 and August 21, 1924, in Boteler Papers.

³⁴ John F. Luzader, *Historic Sites: Shepherdstown, West Virginia* (NPS Mss., 1962), 21

³⁵ *O. R.*, Series I, Vol. V, 197–199, 569, 594.

³⁶ *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, K, 257. Later on July 29, 1862, the firm of Bayliss and Kidder was granted the privilege of cutting ice on the “logwall” for ten years at an annual rent of \$50., *Ibid*, K, 270.

³⁷ *Ibid*, K, 222.

³⁸ *Ibid*, K, 258

³⁹ *O. R.*, Series I, Vol. V, 239–342.

President Lincoln's close friend, Colonel Edward Baker, had crossed the Potomac at Harrison's Island using a number of flatboats, one of which had been moored in the canal about one mile away. After occupying Ball's Bluff as part of a general reconnaissance campaign ordered from Washington, the Federals were assailed by a 1,700-man Confederate force under Brigadier General Nathan G. Evans and routed. The withdrawal became a disaster as the Union troops fell back to the crest of the bluff and then attempted to escape. Baker was killed along with 49 of his men, 158 were injured, and 714 missing, many of whom drowned, compared to only 155 casualties for the Confederates.⁴⁰

Two days after the debacle at Ball's Bluff, on October 23, a small pitched battle broke out at the mouth of South Branch. The fight was triggered when the Confederates attempted to blow up the abutment of the South Branch Bridge. Some six companies of Federal troops, whose strength was diminished by a raging epidemic of measles, were required to drive the Rebels off and restore order.⁴¹

The Union success at South Branch forestalled the intent of the Confederates to destroy Dam No. 6. Earlier on October 20, Colonel Angus W. McDonald, headquartered at Romney, had issued the following order:

Col. E. H. McDonald will take all the mounted men of his command, except those upon scout service, and with them, together with Captain Sheets' Co. of the Cavalry Regt., repair to the mouth of Big Capon, in the County of Morgan, and then proceed to destroy Dam No. 6, by digging around the abutment a sufficient ditch on the Va. shore to drain the Dam, and by such other means as may suggest to him as best to effect the destruction, confining his operations to the Va. shore. The necessary implements will be provided to accompany you. Having effected all you can towards the destruction of the Dam you will proceed to destroy the water stations of the B & Ohio R.R. as far up the South Branch, or as many as you can convenient with a speedy return to this point with your command. Arriving there you will proceed to destroy the abutments of the Bridge thereof. On your arrival at Dam No. 6, and every 12 hours after, you will dispatch a courier to report your progress to Head Quarters [at Romney, Virginia]. Upon your return you will report in writing your action under this order.⁴²

The repercussions resulting from the disaster at Ball's Bluff sapped the enthusiasm of Generals Banks and Stone for operations designed to wrestle the initiative from the Confederates. In early November there would be elections in Maryland, and the States Rights Party, composed of pro-Southern elements, was making a bid to gain control of the Border State. A responsive War Department ordered the Union commanders to give furloughs to soldiers of the Maryland Volunteers so that they might return home and add their weight to the polls. General Banks was also directed to send detachments of men to various points to protect Union voters from intimidation by "disunionists" and to arrest any such persons who had just returned from Virginia. If necessary he was authorized to suspend the writ of *habeas corpus*. As expected under such circumstances, the generally peaceful election swept Augustus W. Bradford, a conservative Unionist, to victory as Governor by a margin of 57,502 to 26,070 over his States Rights opponent, Benjamin C. Howard

⁴⁰ E. B. Long, *The Civil War Day by Day: An Almanac, 1861–1865* (Garden City, 1971), 129–130, and *O. R.*, Series I, Vol. V, 327–329.

⁴¹ Smith to Ringgold, October 23, 1861, Ltrs. Recd., C&O Co.

⁴² This copy of the orders was found in an anonymous pamphlet, *To the People of Maryland: The Canal and its Management Vindicated* (n. d.) Rare Book Division, Library of Congress. The orders were taken from the personal baggage of Col. Angus W. McDonald by Brigadier General B. F. Kelley at the capture of Romney.

and Unionists gained healthy majorities of 68 to 6 and 13 to 8 in the House of Delegates and the Senate respectively.⁴³

The setback suffered by the troops led by Colonel Ashby at Bolivar Heights on October 16 had far-reaching repercussions. Influential citizens of Jefferson County, Virginia, led by Representative Alexander R. Boteler of Shepherdstown, began to urge President Jefferson Davis to appoint a battle-tested commander to lead the recruits in that area. On October 24, Boteler warned Davis that the “enemy along the canal has been re-enforced.” The previous day he had watched a Union fatigue party construct a raft at Dam No. 4, and he had seen a number of loaded coal barges pass down the waterway.⁴⁴ The barrage of letters caused Davis to act, and on November 5 he issued orders for Major General Thomas J. Jackson, who had acquired the nickname “Stonewall” at the Battle of First Manassas, to proceed to Winchester and assume command of the newly-created Valley District.⁴⁵

Meanwhile, trade on the canal had continued to be heavy during the month of October. Up until the 26th, 154 boats carrying 27,313 tons of coal had cleared the Cumberland mole. Of these, 78 had discharged their cargoes at points above Georgetown, principally Sandy Hook just below Harpers Ferry where a large Federal supply depot was located.⁴⁶

Heavy downpours in early November caused the Potomac to crest at the highest levels since the devastating flood in 1852. However, little serious damage was inflicted on the canal except at the Harpers Ferry bridge abutment, where part of the stone wall on the towpath side had been washed into the canal and a portion of the high wall on the berm side had been undermined, and at the Round Top Cement Mill above Hancock, where a major break had occurred. On the Monocacy Division repairs were slowed, when the Union troops took possession of the company scow, wheelbarrows, and tools. The icebreaker had also been appropriated by the Federals to transport artillery and had been damaged. In making the repairs, money was the biggest problem because the superintendents, in most cases, were out of cash, credit, and provisions. Workers on the Antietam Division, complaining that they had not been paid for over a month, walked off their jobs in early December.⁴⁷

Despite some of the military’s actions that tended to hinder the repairs, Union soldiers in the vicinity of the canal also aided in its restoration. On November 10, Brigadier General Stone informed President Spates that during the flood he had sent large parties of his men to protect the canal. Without such efforts, much of the embankment would have been “permanently injured.” The troops

carefully watched the towpath, and as soon as the water receded from it, commenced refacing. 90 men being employed in my division the first day & more since.

Three breaches were promptly stopped. One large one near Seneca, in front of Genl. Banks’ Division was repaired, but gave way again & is, I believe, made whole even more, by men from Genl. Banks’ division.⁴⁸

⁴³ Richard Walsh and William Lloyd Fox, eds., *Maryland: A History, 1632–1974* (Baltimore, 1974), 354–355; *Secret Correspondence Illustrating the Condition of Affairs in Maryland* (Baltimore, 1863), 30–39; *O. R.*, Series I, Vol. V, 628–29, 641, 645–647, 651–652; and *Hagerstown Herald & Torch*, November 13, 1861.

⁴⁴ *O. R.*, Series I, Vol. V, 898–899, 919.

⁴⁵ *O. R.*, Series I, Vol. V, 938.

⁴⁶ Carleton to Ringgold, October 26, 1861, Ltrs. Recd., C&O Co.

⁴⁷ Murray to Ringgold, November 5, 14, 1861, Byrns to Spates, November 6, 1861, Jones to Ringgold, November 11, 1861, and Boatman to Ringgold, December 2, 1861, Ltrs. Recd., C&O Co.

⁴⁸ Stone to Spates, November 10, 1861, Alfred Spates Papers, Alderman Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville.

Although the repairs to the canal were underway, the Confederates were convinced that the waterway would not be reopened until spring. The *Winchester Republican* expressed these sentiments when it reported on November 15 that:

The Chesapeake & Ohio Canal has been damaged by the recent freshet as to render it entirely worthless for purposes of navigation, nor could it be repaired, were every facility afforded, before spring. We conversed with a gentleman who walked across the dry bed of the canal at Hancock a few days since. He reports that it is broken at many points, and that the Yankees had abandoned all hope of having it in running order again this winter. The Canal closed, and the Potomac blockaded, the infidels will have to rely exclusively upon the Washington & Baltimore Rail Road for fuel and supplies of all kinds.⁴⁹

As a result of the flood and the lengthy period of repairs, revenue from tolls fell from \$17,793.22 in October to \$3,245.56 in November. Liquid assets of the canal company were non-existent. In an effort to secure funds, the collectors at Georgetown and Cumberland were instructed not to pass any boats whose owners refused to pay their tolls in cash.⁵⁰ The financial condition of the company was so poor by late November that it was forced to suspend payment of interest due on its debts to various banks.⁵¹

On November 24 just as the entire length of the canal was about to be opened for navigation, President Spates sent a letter to Major General George B. McClellan, calling attention to the strategic value of the canal to the Northern armies and asking for increased protection of the waterway by Federal troops. The communication read as follows:

It is the desire and intention of the Directors of the canal to keep it open for navigation as long as the season will admit and if the water is moderate in its temperature this may be done with no large expenditure throughout the entire season. It will offer great facilities to this community in the transportation of coal from the mining regions of Alleghany and may also be of material advantage to the U. State in facilitating the transportation of supplies for the army not only through the course of the canal, but in connection with the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad from the west to Cumberland and thence by canal to Washington. To accomplish this it is desirable and essential that proper protection of the works and facilities for transportation should be given by the United States. Hitherto for some months past detention has arisen by the military restrictions which have been imposed upon the boats navigating the canal;—They have not been allowed to run during the night and have been unnecessarily detained during the day so as to prolong their voyages nearly double the usual time required. It is in this view that I take the liberty of addressing you and earnestly request that you will give such orders as you may deem requisite to give ample protection to the canal and proper facilities for transportation upon it, and also that property of the company consisting of boats, houses & c. which are essential to the proper conduct of the canal and which have been used by the military authorities be directed to be returned to the officers of the company.⁵²

⁴⁹ *Winchester Republican*, November 15, 1861, in Boteler Papers.

⁵⁰ . Spates to Ringgold, November 3, 1861, Ltrs. Recd., C&O Co. On November 12, the canal board relaxed its policy to permit the “several Mining Companies and others engaged in the transportation of coal...at established rates” to pay their tolls at the end of the month. *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, K, 262.

⁵¹ Reed to Ringgold, November 26, 1861, Ltrs. Recd., C&O Co.

⁵² Spates to McClellan, November 24, 1861, Ltrs. Sent, C&O Co. The following day Spates wrote a similar letter to Quartermaster General Montgomery C. Meigs. Spates to Meigs, November 25, 1861, Ltrs Sent,

By the beginning of December, the canal was again open to navigation for its entire length. During the first two weeks of the month, 87 boats carrying 7,613 tons of coal, 633 tons of lumber, cord wood, and cooperage, and 89 tons of hay and oats left Cumberland. More than one-half of the boats were slated to discharge their cargoes at the Sandy Hook government supply depot.⁵³

Meanwhile General Stonewall Jackson, while waiting for reinforcements to move against the Union force at Romney, had determined to impede reconstruction of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad and to stop boating on the canal. When the Confederates had reoccupied the line of the railroad from Harpers Ferry to Cumberland after the Battle of First Manassas, the federal government had imposed heavy duty on the waterway as a line of supply. At Cumberland the Baltimore & Ohio relayed to the canal large quantities of supplies for the Army of the Potomac and Washington's civilian population.⁵⁴ Since October numerous reports had been reaching Richmond that troops and munitions were being sent up the canal for use in probable thrusts against the valuable agricultural region in the Shenandoah Valley. The failure of his generals to destroy the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad and the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal had caused Jefferson Davis to complain that such a default had left the foe "in possession of great advantages for that operation."⁵⁵ In early December word reached Jackson that large numbers of empty coal boats were passing up the canal to Cumberland, and he recognized that the reopened canal would be "of great service to the Federal Army at Washington." Since the Cumberland coal fields were an important source of that product and the farm lands served by the canal supplied flour, wheat, and corn, Jackson decided "to cut off western supplies by breaking Dam No. 5."⁵⁶

Sending his militia troops in a feint toward Williamsport, Jackson marched his main force to the vicinity of Dam No. 5 on December 7. That afternoon a Rebel force of about 400 infantry and 200 horse soldiers commanded by Captain William McLaughlin appeared on the Virginia shore of the dam. Throwing their three 10-pounder Parrotts, one 12-pounder Sawyer, and two 6-pounder smoothbores into battery, the cannoneers of the Rockbridge Virginia Artillery "commenced throwing shells and shot at the dam and houses on the Maryland shore." A barn was set on fire and all the houses within range, including the lock-tender's residence, were riddled, but the projectiles failed to do any damage to the crib and rubble dam. The bombardment continued until dusk. The only Union troops at the dam were a company of the 13th Massachusetts, which had been assigned to guard the river from Harpers Ferry to Oldtown, on picket and several companies of the 12th Indiana, which had been posted at Sharpsburg, Williamsport and Dams Nos. 4 and 5 since October 13. As all the Federals were armed with short-range smoothbore muskets, their weapons were useless against the Rebel gunners. That night Colonel Samuel H. Leonard of the 13th Massachusetts dispatched a canal boat to Cumberland, and the craft quickly returned with Company G, 13th Massachusetts, which was armed with long-ranged Enfield rifle-muskets. The

C&O Co.

⁵³ Carleton to Ringgold, December 9, 13, 1861, Ltrs. Recd., C&O CO.

⁵⁴ Festus P. Summers, *The Baltimore & Ohio Railroad in the Civil War* (New York, 1939), 100–109.

⁵⁵ *O. R.*, Series I, Vol. V, 946

⁵⁶ *O. R.*, Series I, Vol. V, 390, and Walter S. Sanderlin, *The Great National Project: A History of the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal* (Baltimore, 1946), 207. Originally, Jackson had considered destroying both Dams Nos. 4 and 5, but he opted against the former because the new masonry Dam No. 4, considered by some to be "the strongest of its kind in the country," had been completed in the spring of 1861. On the other hand, construction of a new masonry Dam No. 5 to replace the old leaking log-cribbed, rock-filled structure was proceeding more slowly and was still only partially completed. Aside from the fact that Dam No. 5 was more vulnerable, it also had the advantage of being farther removed from the Frederick region, where General Banks had camped his division in early December. John Miele, "The Chesapeake & Ohio Canal: A Physical History" (NPS Mss., 1964), 46–47, and *O. R.*, Series I, Vol. V, 676–677.

newcomers were posted in the woods on the Maryland shore and ordered not to fire until given word.⁵⁷

Early on the morning of December 8, the Confederate artillerists reopened their concentrated fire on the dam. Emboldened by the slight resistance of the previous day, they advanced their gun to the brink of the river and fearlessly exposed their position. Following the order of Colonel Leonard, the newly-arrived men from Company G, 13th Massachusetts, opened fire from their hiding places along the river. Within a few minutes, the Rebel artillerists abandoned their guns and fled to less dangerous ground along with the cavalry and infantry. Without sufficient numbers of men and a supporting battery, Leonard was unable to cross the Potomac to take possession of the fieldpieces, thus enabling the Confederates to withdraw their six guns at nightfall.⁵⁸

On December 9 the Confederates opened a scathing small-arms fire on the Federals. Covered by the Southern fire, a Confederate fatigue party worked its way down to the southern abutment of the dam. Using entrenching tools, they began digging a ditch around the end of the abutment, into which they hoped to divert sufficient water from the Potomac to erode the ground from the abutment and eventually cause it to topple and the dam with it. The Confederates worked until dark, protected by the stone abutment from the fire of the Union sharpshooters. By the time that they were recalled, water was pouring through the ditch.⁵⁹

Satisfied that his efforts to destroy Dam No. 5 were successful, McLaughlin recalled his troops and returned to Winchester. However, the level of the Potomac was falling rapidly, and the water passing through the Confederate ditch soon diminished to a trickle and then ceased. On the 14th, Jackson reported:

I have made two attempts to prevent navigation on the canal, but have not thus far succeeded. The only good results that I am aware of having been effected was the capture of 1 captain, 2 corporals, and 5 privates of the Twelfth Indiana Regiment, and damaging this end of Dam No. 5, and killed 1 of the enemy. On our part 2 men are supposed to be mortally wounded. The injury done to Dam No. 5 is not sufficient to admit the passage of water on the Virginia side.⁶⁰

Two days after the action at Dam No. 5, on December 11, Union Brigadier General Stone assumed "military supervision of the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal" in compliance with Special Order No. 322, issued at the command of Major General McClellan:

The Secretary of War directs that the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal be placed under the military supervision of Brigadier General C. P. Stone, Volunteer Service. The immediate superintendence of the canal will be under the President of the Company, Alfred Spates, Esq. The officers of the canal, serving under him shall be in all respects, satisfactory to the military authority. The receipts of the canal will be applied to meet current expenditure on account of its operations, and any excess or deficit in the income will be placed to the account of the Canal Company. The President of the Canal Company will furnish General Stone with an account current of the monetary affairs of the company, monthly. General Stone will give military protection to the canal property and such aid as is con-

⁵⁷ Washington *Evening Star*, December 10, 1861; Charles E. Davis, *Three Years in the Army: The Story of the Thirteenth Massachusetts Volunteers from July 16, 1861 to August 1, 1864* (Boston, 1864), 16–17; Ted Perry, ed., *Civil War Letters of Edwin Rice* (Boston, 1975), 18, 20; Baltimore *Evening Sun*, August 11, 1937; and Harold R. Mannakee, *Maryland in the Civil War* (Baltimore, 1961), 64–64.

⁵⁸ Washington *Evening Star*, December 10, 1861.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ *O. R.*, Series I, Vol. V, 365.

sistent with the good of the service in keeping it in repair. Should the execution of this last provision extend beyond the limits of General Stone's command, his requisition on the proper commanders will be promptly complied with.⁶¹

Accordingly, all officers commanding pickets between Great Falls and the Monocacy River were ordered (and all officers of pickets along the rest of the canal were requested) to "give all aid and assistance in their power, consistent with the good of the service, to the Canal Co. authorities in the preservation & improvement of the canal."⁶²

Before making another attempt to destroy Dam No. 5, Jackson circulated reports that he planned to attack the Federal forces at Romney with some 7,000 men. While the Union commanders prepared to head off such an attack, Jackson completed preparations to oversee personally the destruction of Dam No. 5. By the time that he left Winchester on December 16 at the head of the Stonewall Brigade, his scouts had collected and secreted a number of small boats to be used in crossing the Potomac. After sending a brigade of militia to feign an attack against Williamsport via Falling Waters, the Stonewall Brigade, which had been reinforced by Colonel Ashby's cavalry south of Martinsburg, took position on the hills overlooking Dam No. 5 at dusk on the 17th. That night a fatigue party led by Captain R. T. Colston of Company E, 2nd Virginia, who was familiar with the area and the structure of the dam, moved out. Colston and his men crept half way across the dam and slid down into the icy water to begin hacking away at the dam's cribs. Their muffled blows went undetected by Union sentinels on the north bank until nearly daybreak. At the first alarm, the Federals opened fire on the workmen, but they soon saw that the Rebels had piled up stone in the middle of the dam to form a crude but effective breastwork.⁶³

As additional protection for Colston's fatigue party, Jackson had placed two guns on a hill commanding the dam. The cannoneers promptly put their pieces into action, shelling a brick house on the Maryland side of the river from which Yankee sharpshooters were harassing the workmen. The Federals soon scattered, but a section of the 1st Pennsylvania Artillery quickly galloped into view, threw their two 10-pounder Parrotts into battery, and forced the Rebel artillerists to desert their guns. The deadly Union artillery and rifle fire compelled Colton's fatigue party to drop their tools and take cover because the demolition team in going to and from the barricade across the dam had to run a deadly gauntlet.⁶⁴

General Banks took steps to cope with this threat to the canal. As there was the possibility that the Confederate forces which had occupied Falling Waters might move against Dam No. 4, he directed Colonel John R. Kenly of the 1st Maryland Infantry, camped four miles west of Frederick, to be prepared to march his regiment to either Dam No. 4 or No. 5 "as necessity may require or as the movements of the enemy may dictate." When it became obvious that Dam No. 5 was the Rebels' objective, Kenly pushed his column forward and established his command post at

⁶¹ Special Order No. 322, December 6, 1861, in Spates Papers.

⁶² General Order No. 33, December 12, 1861, in Spates Papers. Stone immediately requested from Spates information on four topics of vital concern to the operation of the waterway, (1) a list of canal company employees including their duties, stations, and salaries; (2) an estimate of the number and type of ice boats needed on each division to keep the canal open during the winter; (3) an estimate of the number of animals needed for full-scale operations; and (4) a list of stations where boats should be able to stop and discharge cargo in order to eliminate the current system that placed restrictions on the movement of goods on the waterway. Stone to Spates, December 11, 1861, in Spates Papers. Spates was given a pass so that he could travel on the towpath at any time with a servant and two horses. Pass issued by A. P. Banks, December 16, 1861, in Spates Papers.

⁶³ *O. R.*, Series I, Vol. V, 395–396, 688, and Bearss, "War Comes to the Canal," pp170–171.

⁶⁴ *O. R.*, Series I, Vol. V, 390, 397, and Washington *Evening Star*, December 21, 1861.

Four Locks on the 19th.⁶⁵

At the same time, Banks deployed four infantry regiments with eight field pieces along the Potomac between Shepherdstown and Hancock. Two regiments, the 5th Connecticut and the 29th Pennsylvania, and a section of guns from Battery F, 4th U. S. Artillery, were called up from the reserve to reinforce the units charged with the defense of the canal.⁶⁶

Colston's fatigue party, reinforced by companies from the 27th and 33rd Virginia, continued their demolition work in the bitterly cold water during the nights of the 18th and 19th. Union artillery and sharpshooters shelled the Virginia shore and the dam, scattering the fatigue party and killing and maiming several of them. Nevertheless, they continued their efforts, under the cover of Rebel gunners, until mid-afternoon of the 20th. By that time, a breach had been opened that Jackson believed to be of sufficient size to cripple the canal, and the Confederates pulled back.⁶⁷

After the retirement of Jackson's troops, Union patrols crossed the Potomac and visited the site of the Confederate encampment. There they picked up numerous blankets and entrenching tools and burned a mill that the foe had been using. Upon inspecting the dam, Colonel Leonard found that damage was not extensive, and working parties were organized to assist canal hands with its repair.⁶⁸

On December 21 canal navigation was resumed both above and below Dam No. 5. During the day, two guns were rushed to Little Georgetown, where some Rebel infantry appeared on the south bank of the Potomac. Although the Confederates withdrew after a few shots, the troops guarding Dam No. 4 were reinforced with the 29th Pennsylvania and the 5th Connecticut was ordered to Hancock.⁶⁹

The canal was still open New Year's Day 1862, and, according to President Spates, the "waterway, despite the recent activities of the Confederates is in good order and things look very well all over the line."⁷⁰ Despite the Confederate attempts to destroy Dam No. 5, the heavy December traffic in coal caused the toll collections to rise sharply to \$6,345.14 for the month.⁷¹

Nevertheless, 1861 had been a disastrous year for the canal company as well as for the Western Maryland coal industry. The trade statistics on the waterway for the year compared with those of 1860 demonstrate the drastic decline in traffic and revenue:

	TOTAL TONNAGE	COAL TONNAGE	TOLLS
1860	344,532	283,249	\$182,343.86
1861	144,814	119,893	70,566.99

The statistics of the aggregate Cumberland coal trade for the year also reveal the dependence of the Allegany County interests on the through transportation of the canal and the Baltimore &

⁶⁵ O. R., Series I, Vol. V, 397, and Bearss, "War Comes to the Canal," p. 172. Some of Kenly's men occupied Fort Frederick and "knocked a hole in the wall through which to point a gun for taking pot shots at the Confederates across the Potomac." John Thomas Scharff, *History of Western Maryland* (2 vols., Philadelphia, 1882) Vol. I, 217.

⁶⁶ O. R., Series I, Vol. V, 368, and Washington *Evening Star*, December 21, 1861.

⁶⁷ O. R., Series I, Vol. V, 390, and Bearss, "War Comes to the Canal," p. 174.

⁶⁸ O. R., Series I, Vol. V, 390, 398, and Washington *Evening Star*, December 21, 1861.

⁶⁹ O. R., Series I, Vol. V, 399–400, and Bearss, "War Comes to the Canal." P. 175. Apparently, Jackson, who was back in Winchester by the 21st, was deceived by the over-optimistic stories of his subordinates, because he reported on Christmas Eve, "There is reason to believe that the recent breaks in Dam No. 5 will destroy any vestige of hope that might have been entertained of supplying Washington with Cumberland coal by the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal." O. R., Series I, Vol. V, 390

⁷⁰ Spates to Ringgold, January 1, 1862, Ltrs. Recd., C&O Co.

⁷¹ *Thirty-Fourth Annual Report* (1862), 9.

Ohio Railroad. The shipments of the various coal companies fell from 789,000 tons in 1860, which was an all-time high up to that date, to slightly less than 270,000 tons in 1861, an amount almost exactly that shipped in 1851 when the trade was just opening on the newly-completed canal.⁷²

At the annual meeting of the stockholders in June 1862, President Alfred Spates commented on the dismal ramifications of the canal operations during 1861:

The last annual report [June 1861] anticipated to some extent the unfavorable operations of the Canal for the past year, owing to the belligerent movements then in progress on the Potomac, and although the direct damages done to the Canal and its works by the military were not very great, yet, its business results were even more disastrous than was expected. This was caused by the damages arising from the proximity of the contending forces on the river, the restrictions imposed upon the transportation by the military authorities, and the frequent detentions of the boats, by which the time usually required to complete their voyages was nearly doubled.

The Canal was opened for navigation about the 15th of March, 1861, with an active business for one month, which was then interrupted by a freshet in the river, causing considerable injury to the Canal and the suspension of navigation for a month, which time was required to complete the repairs. When navigation was again restored, active hostilities had commenced, and there was comparatively no business on the Canal before September. Between this [date] and ... December, there were occasional interruptions by breaches in the Canal.

The diminished revenues of the Company have prevented any improvements on the Canal, and indeed have been altogether insufficient to keep it in proper condition, and this has resulted in an increased indebtedness for services and materials, in addition to the numerous and large claims of that class previously existing.

It will be observed that the expenses for ordinary repairs, &c., have been unusually small, but this has been the consequence of the limited means of the Company, which were not adequate to the repairs actually required for the security of the Canal, and the proper maintenance of the navigation.

As a result of the depredations of nature and man, 1861 was the worst year financially that the company had experienced since 1848, two years before the canal was completed to Cumberland.⁷³

⁷² Harvey, "Civil War and the Maryland Coal Trade," 364–365.

⁷³ *Thirty-Fourth Annual Report* (1862), 3–5.

III. THE CANAL REACHES ITS LOWEST EBB: 1862

Under the direction of the military authorities, canal company officials attempted to keep the waterway open during the winter of 1861–1862 for the first time since the waterway had been completed to Cumberland in 1850. Icebreakers were employed in the fight to keep the canal operating as the military was anxious to transport supplies to its troops preparatory to the coming spring offensive and the canal officials were eager to make up for the loss of trade during the previous year. A cold snap in early January closed the canal, but the weather soon moderated and by the 15th it was again open and ice-free as far west as Hancock. Despite the resumption of trade, income from tolls fell to \$954.19 for the month.⁷⁴

At the beginning of the new year, General Jackson made a final effort to interrupt traffic on the canal. Reports reaching Jackson led him to conclude that the reinforced Federals might converge on Martinsburg and then push on toward his base at Winchester. To counter such a movement, the Confederates took the field on January 1 and marched from Winchester toward the Potomac. After a long march through bitter winter weather, the Rebels occupied Bath on the 4th after the Federal garrison was scattered and fled across the Potomac in boats.⁷⁵ Here Jackson was reinforced by Colonel Ashby, who had been engaged since December 30 in a vain effort to reopen the breach at Dam No. 5 by placing a rifled gun on the Virginia side and firing shots at it.⁷⁶ On the morning of the 5th, the Confederates advanced on Hancock, but after a two-day bombardment of the town, Jackson ordered his gunners to cease fire and withdraw to Romney when it was learned that more Union troops were being sent into the fray. Cold weather now put a stop to military operations along the canal.⁷⁷

After the canal navigation was closed, Major General Banks ordered the canal officials to make repairs on the waterway with the aid of his men. If the division superintendents did not commence the work immediately, the military would oversee the work entirely. The government would pay the repair crews so that the men would not have to be concerned about getting paid.⁷⁸

Political influence brought about a wholesale turnover of employees during the period from February to April 1862. Alfred Spates was reelected president, but the administration of the line was reorganized. Six new superintendencies were formed and new collectors and lock tenders were appointed. Although these appointments were the last during the war years, some of the new officials soon proved to be less than efficient employees.⁷⁹

In late February Major General Nathaniel P. Banks' advance guard crossed the Potomac and occupied Harpers Ferry. A pontoon bridge could keep this force supplied, but the Federals' plan called for large-scale operations and the restoration of through traffic on the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. Among the proposed plans for such an undertaking was that advanced by President Lincoln to bridge the river at Sandy Hook with canal boats, while a Philadelphia engineering firm rebuilt the railroad bridge at Harpers Ferry. A number of canal boats on the Monocacy and Antietam Divisions were appropriated by the military for the project. However when McClellan visited the area on February 27, he determined that the banks were too steep for the projected boat bridge, and plans for it were scrapped.⁸⁰

⁷⁴ Carleton to Spates, January 8, 1862, and Spates to Ringgold, January 15, 1862, Ltrs. Recd., C&O Co.; *Thirty-Fourth Annual Report* (1862), 9; *Thirty-Fifth Annual Report* (1863), C&O Co., 8; and *Washington National Intelligencer*, March 10, 1862.

⁷⁵ O. R., Series I, Vol. V, 391–392.

⁷⁶ *Washington Evening Star*, January 1, 1862.

⁷⁷ O. R., Series I, Vol. V, 391–392, and *Washington Evening Star*, January 7, 1862.

⁷⁸ Leonard to Link, February 6, 1862, and Banks to Spates, March 6, 1862, in Spates Papers.

⁷⁹ *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, K, 272–274, 276–277, 282.

⁸⁰ O. R., Series I, Vol. V, 49, 730, and Lincoln to McClellan, February 8, 1862, in Basler, *Collected Works*

With the arrival of warmer weather, the canal, whose westernmost sections had been closed during much of February, was again opened to navigation from Cumberland to Georgetown by March 1. Coal stockpiles in the District cities had been depleted during the severe winter, and would have to be replenished from the Allegany County coal mines. Since it was assumed that the powerful army organized by McClellan would seize and hold the initiative during the coming year, canal officials were optimistic that the waterway would escape being a scene of active military operations and would consequently have a banner year in trade.⁸¹

Reports submitted by the division superintendents in early March indicated that the canal was generally in good navigable condition. However, the company's carpenter and blacksmith shops on the Monocacy Division had been robbed and a number of tools were missing. One of the company scows had been located, but it had been seized by the army and was being used as a ferry on the river.⁸² On the Cumberland Division it was reported that the towpath and berm banks along some sections had been injured by government wagons passing over them. The railings on the aqueducts had been removed to allow military vehicles to pass.⁸³

The naval engagement at Hampton Roads, Virginia, in which the Confederate ironclad *Merrimac* destroyed two Union warships—*Cumberland* and *Congress*—on March 8, had repercussions which affected the canal. News of this defeat frightened and panicked officials in Washington. President Lincoln was so distressed

that he could not deliberate or be satisfied with the opinions of non-professional men, but ordered his carriage and drove to the navy yard to see and consult with Admiral [John] Dahlgren [the officer in charge of the Washington Navy Yard] and other naval officers, who might be there.⁸⁴

Perhaps the most gloomy assessment of the battle was rendered by Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton:

The Merrimac...would destroy every vessel in the service, could lay every city on the coast under contribution, could take Fortress Monroe; McClellan's mistaken purpose to advance by the Peninsula must be abandoned, and Burnside would inevitably be captured. Likely the first movement of the Merrimac would be to come up the Potomac and disperse Congress, destroy the Capitol and public buildings; or she might go to New York or Boston and destroy those cities, or levy from them sufficient to carry on the war.⁸⁵

Knowing that the Union ironclad *Monitor* was en route to Hampton Roads from New York Harbor, Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles attempted to reassure them that the *Merrimac*, if she tried to ascend the Potomac, could not pass Kettle Bottom Shoals. Rejecting the optimistic report by Welles, Stanton, with Lincoln's concurrence ordered on March 9 Quartermaster General Montgomery C. Meigs and Admiral Dahlgren to seize 50 or 60 canal boats and other craft. The barges would be filled with stone and gravel, moved down the river, and sunk at Kettle Bottom Shoals or at some other point in the channel to prevent the *Merrimac* from ascending the Poto-

of Lincoln, V, 130

⁸¹ Edwin C. Bearss, "1862 Brings Hard Times To the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal," *West Virginia History*, XXX (January, 1969), 436

⁸² George W. Spates to Alfred Spates, March 8, 1862, Ltrs. Recd., C&O Co.

⁸³ Lowe to Ringgold, March 8, 1862, Ltrs. Recd., C&O Co.

⁸⁴ *Diary of Gideon Wells* (3 vols., Boston, 1911), Vol. I, 61–62

⁸⁵ *Ibid*, 63.

mac. That afternoon all unemployed boats on the Georgetown Division were taken to the Washington Navy Yard, where a large fatigue party began loading them with gravel. By nightfall, eight were ready to cast off, and a similar number would be ready to sail by dawn.⁸⁶

On the evening of March 10, news reached Washington that in a battle on the previous day; the *Monitor* had forced the *Merrimac* to retire to the Confederate navy yard at Norfolk. On the basis of this report, Welles succeeded in getting Lincoln to forbid the sinking of any of the 60 canal boats that had been loaded with gravel and sent down to Kettle Bottom Shoals as long as the *Monitor* could keep the *Merrimac* from entering the Potomac.⁸⁷

Meanwhile, Commander Wyman had been making soundings on the river, and he concluded that the best points to obstruct the Potomac were at Smith's Point and Mattawoman Muds. Accordingly, orders were issued to move the gravel-loaded canal boats to Smith's Point.⁸⁸

After the crisis atmosphere subsided, the military continued to rush boats down the canal. On March 10, some 103 canal barges, most of which were empty, passed through Williamsport under the charge of army officers. Of this fleet of boats, 37 had come from Cumberland and the rest from unknown points.⁸⁹ None of them had any way bills.

Several weeks later, President Lincoln, Secretary Stanton, and other officials passed down the Potomac on board a steamer for Fortress Monroe. When the long line of canal boats moored near the Maryland shore attracted attention, the President jokingly exclaimed:

that is Stanton's navy. That is the fleet concerning which he and Mr. Welles became so excited in my room. Welles was incensed and opposed the scheme, and it has proved that Neptune was right. Stanton's navy is as useless as the paps of a man to a suckling child. They may be some show to amuse the child, but they are good for nothing for service.⁹⁰

After detaining the 103 boats for more than a month, the Federals found a need for about 50 of them in late April. Commander Wyman had ascended the Rappahannock to Fredericksburg with his squadron, while at the same time Major General Irwin McDowell had commenced an overland advance from Aquia Creek to Fredericksburg. As his troops pushed forward, they repaired the Rappahannock, Fredericksburg, and Potomac Railroad, which had been wrecked by the withdrawing Rebels. Forty canal boats were convoyed down the Potomac and up the Rappahannock to Fredericksburg to bridge the latter river.⁹¹

By late March 1862 the tide of the war had turned momentarily in favor of the Union. Banks' troops had occupied Winchester, and Stonewall Jackson's columns had been forced to withdraw up the Shenandoah Valley to Mount Jackson. McClellan's Army of the Potomac had occupied the fortified Confederate camp at Centreville and then marched to Alexandria from where it had embarked aboard ship for Fortress Monroe. These Union gains in the eastern theater of the war removed the canal for the time being from the sphere of active military operations.⁹²

With the threat of invasion lifted, canal company official hoped that full-scale navigation could be resumed. The Cumberland coal companies alerted their people to be ready to resume shipments. Although there was a shortage of boats as a result of the military's actions, it was forecast that with "uninterrupted navigation" there would be enough vessels to earn a large revenue. To take advantage of the trade opportunities, appeals were sent to McClellan and other mili-

⁸⁶ Bearss, "1862 Brings Hard Times," 437–438.

⁸⁷ *Diary of Gideon Welles*, Vol. I, 63–66.

⁸⁸ Bearss, "1862 Brings Hard Times," 438.

⁸⁹ Wolfe to Ringgold, March 10, 1862, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

⁹⁰ *Diary of Gideon Welles*, Vol. I, 67.

⁹¹ O. R. , Series I, Vol. XII, 3, 94, 98, 105, 121, 207.

⁹² Bearss, "1862 Brings Hard Times," 438–439.

tary and civil officials, asking for the prompt release of the seized boats that were so vital to the economic life of the canal.⁹³

The issue of disloyalty and labor difficulties with the boatmen soon arose to cloud the prospects for a profitable trade. As Maryland was a Border State with a strong pro-Southern element, Unionist authorities suspected Democrats of being disloyal and throughout the war many such individuals lost their jobs or were imprisoned. One of the canal company's most capable division superintendents, B. B. Boatman of the Antietam Division, was fired for disloyalty, because at the previous November election he had refused to write his name on the back of his ballot. On April 4 he sent a letter to the canal board protesting the charges against him:

I have been identified in interest with it, since it has been a canal, now removed, from my position, I suppose, because of my attention to the business relating to it upon the day of election, instead of subjecting myself to the contemptible position of a serf, by unauthorized and unconstitutional act, of requiring each voter to endorse his name on the back of the ticket. I have never concealed my political views, been an open and avowed Democrat, and now, even in this day of bickering and clamor, challenge any man, to allege one charge against me, in word or act disloyal. [I] have spent much of my time laboring on this work, not receiving my monthly dues, always hoping in its prosperity, and that finally [I] would receive the compensation.⁹⁴

Although no charges of disloyalty were proven against Boatman, the canal company refused to reinstate him.

The company representatives in Cumberland were distressed by rumors that the boatmen were planning to strike. While the coal companies were willing to pay higher rates, the demands of the boatmen, which ranged between \$1.50 and \$1.75 a mile per ton, were such that they would cause the price of Cumberland coal to rise to a point where it would be unable to compete with coal from the Pennsylvania mines. Already, the Pennsylvania Railroad Company had reduced its hauling charge on Broad Top Coal by 30 cents a ton per mile.⁹⁵

The dispute with the boatmen was resolved on April 11, when the canal directors agreed to permit an increase in the toll on coal from 1/4 to 5/16 of a cent per ton mile.⁹⁶ As soon as this compromise was reached, a large number of boats were loaded with coal to begin the spring coal navigation. However, the small number of boats available for the canal trade was alarming. As many of the canal boats that had been taken over by the government were lying idle at Georgetown, President Spates prevailed upon Governor Augustus W. Bradford of Maryland to intervene on the company's behalf and get the Federal authorities to release the desperately-needed barges. The situation was urgent since the lack of boats would soon ruin the canal company and the laborers of Allegany County, some of whom had been out of work for nearly a year. In the meantime the Pennsylvania interests had moved "heaven and earth to maintain themselves on the ground they were enabled to occupy" by the disasters that had befallen the canal. It was reported that the Pennsylvania Railroad Company was prepared to reduce its coal-hauling charges still further to exclude the waterway "from market another year when an attempt to regain it on our part will be almost impossible." As a result, the "very existence of the canal" was "trembling in the

⁹³ Ringgold to Greene, March 24, 1862, Ltrs. Sent, C & O Co., and Greene to Ringgold, April 1, 1862, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

⁹⁴ Boatman to Board of Directors, April 4, 1862, Ltrs. Recd., C&O Co. Boatman claimed the canal company owed him \$1,000 in back pay and that he would be willing to settle for two-thirds of the amount if he received the rest immediately.

⁹⁵ Greene to Ringgold, April 7, 1862, ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

⁹⁶ *Thirty-Fifth Annual Report* (1863), 5

balance.” It would be impossible for the boatmen to replace in 1862 the 100 boats held by the government.⁹⁷

On April 15 Governor Bradford contacted Quartermaster General Montgomery C. Meigs on behalf of the canal company. That same day Meigs sent a memorandum to President Lincoln recommending that the War Department

take immediately all necessary measures to have all boats, scows, and other property used in repairing and navigating the Canal restored to their rightful owners. If boats have been used for the uses of the Army or Navy and cannot be restored, they are forthwith to be paid for, so that trade on the Canal may be revived.

Lincoln submitted the memorandum to Secretary Stanton with the following comment:

I do not sign the within, because I do not know but there is a good reason, known to the Secretary of War, why the course indicated should not be taken. But if no such reason is known, I think that course should be adopted.⁹⁸

The communication by Governor Bradford was effective, because on April 16 Stanton promised canal officials that he would issue an order within 24 hours for the restoration of the government-held canal boats to the company. The company was to receive compensation for those boats that had been destroyed or injured. Some 36 boats had been sent down the Potomac to the Rappahannock and they would be returned as soon as possible. Six or eight of the boats had been sunk with stone, and if practicable, they were to be raised from the river bottom and returned to the company. Twenty-four boats at Georgetown were to be released at once. About 40 boats which had been released earlier and which had been taken again by Army officers for the transportation of government stores from various points on the canal to Alexandria were to be unloaded and released immediately. There was also hope for the restoration of the Potomac Aqueduct to canal purposes.⁹⁹

Secretary Stanton saw that a General Order was issued by Lorenzo Thomas, Adjutant General of the United States. General Order No. 44 dated April 21, 1862, directed that

All the lock-houses, boats, scows and other property belonging to the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Company, on the line of said canal, now held, used or occupied by the United States officers or troops, will be forthwith given up and restored to the President of the said company. All officers of the Army will respect Alfred Spates, Esq., as President of the said company, and are hereby prohibited from interfering in any manner with him in the management of the canal; but are directed to give such aid and assistance as is consistent with the good of the service, in keeping it in repair, and removing all restrictions which have been imposed upon the boats navigating the said canal. The President of the said Canal Company is authorized to give all passes that may be required to be used on the canal, subject to the approval of the Commander of the District.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ Greene to Ringgold, April 11, 1862, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

⁹⁸ Lincoln to Stanton, April 15, 1862, in Basler, *Collected Works of Lincoln*, Vol. V, 191.

⁹⁹ Ringgold to Greene, April 16, 1862, Ltrs. Sent, C & O Co. A copy of the “Statement of Boats & Names of Owners &c.—Held by the U.S. Government from Books of the Quartermaster, U.S.A., Washington, D.C., April 17, 1861 [1862],” may be seen in Appendix B.

¹⁰⁰ General Order No. 44, April 21, 1862, in Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

On the same day that the order was issued, the *National Intelligencer* reported that:

The canal continues in fine order, and boats with flour, grain, wood, and limestone arrive hourly. Our information tonight justifies the belief that on Monday next we shall welcome the first boats from Cumberland bringing large cargoes of coal; and, as the Aqueduct is now changed to a bridge, Georgetown must have the full benefit of the trade.¹⁰¹

Several weeks earlier, the board, in an effort to stimulate the coal trade, had granted permission to J. E. Reeside to experiment with steam-propelled boats in the transportation of coal.¹⁰²

Meanwhile, Superintendent Jacob Masters of the Williamsport Division had reported in early April that while there was plenty of water for navigation, it would be wise to repair the damage done to Dam No. 5 by the Confederates in December 1861. The repairs, which could be undertaken as soon as the stage of the Potomac fell, were to be made either by building upon the foundations of the old crib, which were still standing, or by closing the space between the new masonry dam and the abutments of the old.¹⁰³ The canal board authorized Masters to commence the project at an opportune time and allocated the necessary funds.¹⁰⁴

Despite the shortage of boats, traffic on the canal quickly increased. Tolls collected for April reached \$4, 637, a figure five times the March total.¹⁰⁵ During the last week of April, however, the canal was damaged heavily as torrential rains drenched the Potomac Valley, causing the river to rise rapidly and crest at Dam No. 4. Two residents of Williamsport complained that this was the

7th high water within the last 18 months. After every high water, we have had the unwelcome and astonishing news that the planks at the stop lock [at] Dam No. 4 had either not been put in, or if put in had gone out. Invariably has this been the case for the last 18 months or two years. The last high water proves that with all the sad experiences for that length of time with a cost of not less than \$50,000 to the canal but no improvement has been made, for the report is now that several of the plank gave way, and the rushing water has done its usual work of in some places filling up and others sweeping away its embankment.

The two Williamsport residents went on to castigate the canal board for its inefficient and shortsighted repair policy:

It is said the Repair can be made in two weeks but if the two weeks prove to be such weeks as it generally takes at that point, four instead of two will come nearer the time. Now the question is can there be no remedy for this intolerable evil, will the Board remain quiet and let this state of things continue until the canal for the want of means to keep up these continued repairs fail & become entirely worthless. We hope not. We hope and pray that your Honbl. Board will appoint a committee to investigate this matter, and see if some means cannot be devised that will effectually resist the weight of water at said stop lock which has proved as destructive to canal interest for the last two years. We say emphatically it can be done and at little cost. We have said that the canal has lost \$50,000

¹⁰¹ Washington *National Intelligencer*, April 21, 1862.

¹⁰² *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, K, 287–288.

¹⁰³ Masters to Board of Directors, April 8, 1862, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

¹⁰⁴ *Thirty-Fifth Annual Report* (1863), 4. The cost of repairs to Dam No. 5 totaled \$3,338.58 for 1862.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid*, 8.

by the continued disasters by the giving away of the Stop Lock. The basis of our calculation is this. 7 times the level's damaged that required \$2,000 to make full repair, \$14,000—average the loss of toll each time, 12 days @ \$500 per day, \$42,000—add \$14,000 cost of repair—and we have \$56,000 to the company at this point.

Furthermore, it was charged that such disasters had cost the canal its flour trade, two-thirds of which had been taken over by the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad during the preceding decade. Millers had complained that they could not rely on the canal for ten days at a time, and they had been compelled to find a more reliable channel of transportation.¹⁰⁶

When news of the damage caused by the freshet reached Cumberland, A. C. Greene, one of the canal directors and an agent of the Borden Mining Company, exploded:

The concurrence of circumstances against the resumption of canal trade this spring are positively infernal. Not only is the canal deprived of revenue, but the trade itself is imperiled by the untoward events. I have great fears that the largest and most important buyers of coal will despair of getting anything from us this year.

Already the Broad Top Company of Pennsylvania was “straining everything to retain” its foothold in the District cities’ coal market that it had secured the previous year. At the time of the difficulties he had some 1,800 tons of coal en route to Georgetown, and nearly 7,000 tons ready for loading at the Cumberland wharves. Greene trusted that every effort would be made to restore navigation as soon as possible, as much depended on the boatmen’s ability to deliver the coal in early May. As the Baltimore and Ohio was still out of operation, the canal was the sole outlet to market for the Cumberland coal.¹⁰⁷

The superintendents of the Williamsport and Antietam Divisions pushed the repair crews hard to shore up the battered embankments and clear out the obstructions. Continued rains added to their difficulties, but by May 8 water was readmitted to these divisions from the feeders at Dam Nos. 3 and 4, and the entire canal was again open to navigation.¹⁰⁸

Traffic on the canal increased rapidly, but on the night of May 14 heavy rains fell on the upper reaches of the Potomac’s watershed, causing a rapid rise on the river above Dam No. 5. The work programs to repair the damage inflicted on the dam by the Confederates in December 1861 had not been completed, and the high water caused considerable damage to that structure. Encouraged by the presence of President Spates who had rushed to the scene of the latest disaster, the work crews were able to effect temporary repairs and prevent any interruption to navigation at this critical period.¹⁰⁹

In May 1862 General Stonewall Jackson launched his famous lightning like offensive in the Shenandoah Valley. Following defeats at McDowell, Front Royal, and Winchester, the battle-weary Federals fled toward the Potomac. Thus the shifting tide of war in the Shenandoah at a time when there was heavy traffic on the canal again threatened commerce on the waterway.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁶ Embrey and Son to Dellinger and Greene to Ringgold, April 26, 1862, Ltrs. Recd., C&O Co. The railroad had made a determined effort to win the flour trade away from the canal in the 1840s. Nevertheless, the flour trade continued to be one of the larger though erratic sources of revenue. From 14,880 tons in 1843, it rose to 25,761 tons in 1851 and fell to 11,087 tons in 1860. In 1861 it had dropped to 7,067 tons, and after a slight recovery to 7,340 tons in 1862 and 8,566 in 1863, it declined to 5,962 tons and 5,383 tons in 1864 and 1865 respectively, Sanderlin, *Great National Project*, 217.

¹⁰⁷ Greene to Ringgold, April 29, 1862, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

¹⁰⁸ Spates to Ringgold, May 2, 1862, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

¹⁰⁹ Greene to Ringgold, May 15, 1862, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

¹¹⁰ Bearss, “1862 Brings Hard Times,” 442–443.

In May 26 most of the Union troop crossed to the Maryland side of the river at Williamsport. The soldiers and their wagons crossed the river on a ferry and marched over the bridge spanning the canal. One brigade, however, recrossed the Potomac at Jameson's Ferry, three miles above Dam No. 4. The recent rains had swollen the river and made the crossings a laborious effort.

Rebel cavalry units hounded the rear guard of the Union army as far as Martinsburg, where on the 27th; they captured a large amount of supplies. The next day, two squadrons of the 2nd Virginia Cavalry made a forced reconnaissance to within one mile of the Potomac, but Union batteries, emplaced near the canal at Williamsport went into action and forced the Confederates to withdraw. On the 29th, several Confederate forces in the area united under Brigadier General Charles W. Winder and carried out Jackson's instructions to attack with artillery the Federal troops of Brigadier General Rufus Saxton posted on Bolivar Heights covering the approaches to Harpers Ferry. However, word soon reached Jackson that a strong Union column under Major General James Shields was advancing westward from the Manassas area toward the Blue Ridge, while a powerful force under Major General John C. Fremont was approaching across the mountains from South Branch. As the two Federal divisions would sever his line of communications, Jackson pulled his men back from Bolivar Heights and retired rapidly up the Shenandoah Valley before the jaws of the trap snapped shut.¹¹¹

Following the Confederate withdrawal, the Union armies quickly reestablished control of the south bank of the Potomac. By June 4th, the Federals were again in possession of Martinsburg, Charles Town, and Winchester. A survey showed that the Confederates had done little damage to the Baltimore and Ohio during their brief stay in the area, and it was predicted that through trains would again be running east and west out of Martinsburg within one week.¹¹²

The company stockholders were informed by President Spates at their annual meeting on June 2 that the heavy spring rains and the shortage of boats had retarded business activity on the waterway since the resumption of navigation in mid-April. The entire trade up to May 31 did not comprise one full month of normal operations. All told, only 25,259 tons of coal had been shipped from Cumberland, yielding a meager \$18,449.86 in toll revenues.¹¹³

Heavy rains in early June which caused the Potomac to flood hampered the Union army's efforts to cross and recross the river. On the night of June 4 the railroad bridge at Harpers Ferry was swept away along with lesser important railroad bridges and trestles in the area, thus severing the line of the Baltimore and Ohio. Until the river crested and fell, it would be impossible for the Union trains and remaining columns to cross. To aid in the crossing, a steam tug was sent up the canal from Georgetown and placed in the river at Harpers Ferry. On the 5th the rains ceased and the river began to recede and by the evening of June 8 the last of the Federal wagons got back over to the Maryland side of the Potomac at Williamsport.¹¹⁴

The June flood also caused extensive damage to the canal. On June 2, two days before the Harpers Ferry Bridge was destroyed, a break occurred in the waterway near the Antietam Ironworks. The break was so sudden that a work scow was swept through the breach and smashed. First reports indicated that it would take about one week to repair the break, but President Spates urged the division superintendent to turn out as large a force as possible including available boatmen, and to institute round-the-clock working parties.¹¹⁵

¹¹¹ O. R., Series I, Vol. XII, pt. 1, 530–535, 606–607, 626–640, 707, 730, 738, pt. 3, 530.

¹¹² *Ibid*, Series I, Vol. XII, pt. 1, 539–541, 813–814.

¹¹³ *Thirty-Fourth Annual Report* (1862), 5–6.

¹¹⁴ O. R., Series I, Vol. XII, pt. 1, 540–542, pt. 3, 304, 323, 342, 361–362.

¹¹⁵ Benton to Ringgold, June 3, 1862, and Spates to Ringgold, June 4, 1862, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

In a letter on June 12, A. C. Greene urged President Spates to rush the repairs on the Antietam Division, because the flood damage to the Baltimore and Ohio and Confederate demolitions at Martinsburg had cut off all transportation of coal to the District Cities. It was imperative that coal shipments be resumed quickly on the canal so that demand could be met. As flooding had damaged the Pennsylvania rail network, there was the prospect of a heavy demand for Cumberland coal and it was of great importance that the waterway be ready to grasp the opportunity.¹¹⁶

When there still was no through navigation on the canal by June 21, Greene complained that “it is 1000 pities” that “we are in no condition to meet this call for coal.” He trusted that repairs were being pushed on the Antietam Division and that attention was also being given to Dam No. 5. Unless a close check was kept on the pool above that structure, there would be insufficient water for navigation during the dry summer months.¹¹⁷

By the end of June, construction crews had a new railroad bridge in operation across the Potomac at Harpers Ferry. However, the canal above Dam No. 3 was still dry. As a result, the receipts from tolls, which had amounted to \$11,607.72 in May, had fallen to \$3,813.61 in June.¹¹⁸

On the evening of June 28, water was admitted to the canal above Harpers Ferry, and it was predicted that boats would start arriving at Cumberland by July 2. However, as work had dragged on at Dam No. 5, the pool behind that structure was too low to supply water to the sections of the canal between Dam Nos. 4 and 5, thereby delaying navigation.¹¹⁹ A heavy rain during the night of July 1 eased the low-water problem but created another by washing a “good amount of sand” back into the canal at Dam No. 4.¹²⁰

Meanwhile, the canal company was continuing to receive distressing news of the effect of the war on the mills along the waterway. On June 26, the board was informed that the Columbia Mills in Georgetown, which had not been in operation for some eighteen months, had been sold by Boyce and Taylor to Herr and Welch. Despite the dismal outlook, the company negotiated a 20-year water lease to the new company.¹²¹

Work on getting a suitable depth of water in the canal throughout its entire length continued to drag during the summer months. The division superintendents and their crews appeared to be more inefficient than at any time in the previous history of the canal. By July 24 a troublesome breach above Hancock had been repaired, and work on Dam No. 5 had progressed to the point that boats laden with coal were now able for the first time since July 2 to make the run from Cumberland to Georgetown. Accordingly, toll collections for July showed an increase over June of nearly 50 percent to \$7,130.73.¹²²

More trouble befell the canal on August 4 when a leak in Dam No. 6 caused an “utter failure” of navigation at that point. Superintendent Lowe reported that same day that one of the leaks had been located, and that the water in the pool was slowly rising. Because of the severe drought, it would have been helpful if the steam pump at the South Branch, which had been vandalized by a Confederate band the previous winter, had been repaired, but no funds were available for such work. Lowe, one of the most efficient superintendents, commenced the construction of a crib to prevent the bank at the dam from washing, and navigation was commenced the following day.¹²³

¹¹⁶ Greene to Ringgold, June 12, 1862, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid*, June 21, 1862, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

¹¹⁸ *Thirty-Fifth Annual Report* (1863), 8.

¹¹⁹ Greene to Ringgold, July 2, 1862, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

¹²⁰ Benton to Ringgold, July 2, 1862, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

¹²¹ *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, K, 290–291, 298–299, 305.

¹²² Spates to Ringgold, July 24, 1862, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co., and *Thirty-Fifth Annual Report* (1863), 8.

¹²³ Greene to Ringgold, August 4, 1862, and Spates to Ringgold, August 26, 1862, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

It was reported that the first boats in a week arrived at Cumberland on August 6. Nevertheless, canal officials were distressed that no rain had fallen in the Potomac Valley for nearly a month. As the drought continued to worsen, it was feared that low water would soon terminate through navigation on the canal. If no rain came, Greene hoped that there would soon be a big “battle with substantial victory on our side.”¹²⁴

Canal officials, including Clerk Ringgold and Director Greene, soon became irritated with the inefficiency and mismanagement of the canal by the division superintendents. On August 8, Ringgold observed:

The frequent interruption in the navigation of the canal is very discouraging and from mismanagement or some other cause, has been worse this season than at any former period. Unless some remedy can be speedily adopted, I apprehend the most unfavorable results.¹²⁵

Angered by reports that navigation had been delayed again by sand bars near Point of Rocks, Greene wrote on August 11:

There has been no real through navigation on the Canal this year—that is no boat, I believe, has been able to make a round trip without detention. Whatever may be the excuse for the troubles above Harpers Ferry, there can certainly be none whatever, for neglecting the removal of sand bars from the section at Point of Rocks until this time. That work most surely could have been done while the canal was idle from the damage at Dam No. 4 and the Supt. Of that division [Monocacy] is to blame for putting off attention to his work that length of time.

Greene was further incensed by the fact that the work at Dam No. 6 had been delayed by a lack of hands. As there were about 80 canal boats tied up in the vicinity, he was convinced that at least a dozen boatmen could be found who were willing to work on the dam for cash wages. Unless there was a speedy reform in the company management, Greene threatened to resign as he had no “idea of being disgraced by such mismanagement.”¹²⁶

The following day Greene reported to Ringgold that he had received word that the boats, after being detained while the bars were removed, had started arriving at Georgetown. At the same time, there were rumors that a lack of water at Dam No. 4 had stopped through navigation. As no word of confirmation had been received from Superintendent Masters, Greene had informed the coal shippers to ignore the rumors. Several railroad passengers were now overheard to say that below Harpers Ferry, where the canal was visible from the trains, there was no water in the ditch. While these stories circulated, the coal operators were compelled to keep an “expensive force in idleness expecting the arrival of boats hourly.” The Baltimore and Ohio had likewise kept locomotives and cars standing by “at large expense” expecting the boats. All this was taking place because division superintendents were ignoring orders of the directors to report any stoppages which occurred in their jurisdictions. Such mismanagement as had been witnessed that summer demanded an investigation, and he recommended that all the division superintendents be summoned to Washington for questioning.¹²⁷

¹²⁴ Greene to Ringgold, August 6, 1862, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

¹²⁵ Ringgold to Greene, August 8, 1862, Ltrs. Sent, C & O Co.

¹²⁶ Greene to Ringgold, August 11, 1862, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

¹²⁷ *Ibid*, August 12, 1862, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

The military also was becoming irritated with the inefficiency of several division superintendents and the pro-Southern sympathies of some canal employees. The post commander at Point of Rocks, Captain R. C. Bomford, complained on August 28 that Superintendent George Spates of the Monocacy Division was derelict in his duties. The entrance and chamber of Guard Lock No. 3 had been allowed to fill in with sediment, thus causing delays to heavily-loaded barges passing down the canal. The locks on the division were deteriorating badly, and the waste weirs were not fit for use. The towpath bridge across McGill's Ford just above Point of Rocks was so unsafe that every team that passed over it was in danger of being drowned. The towpath, especially at the high embankment at Callico Rocks, was in such disrepair that a rise in the water level of 2 or 3 inches above normal would cause a breach. The carpenters on the division had been kept busy at menial labor instead of repairing bridges and other structures. Moreover, Spates had employed two lock-keepers and one crew boss who were reportedly disloyal. The only way to weed out treason and inefficiency on the Monocacy Division, Bomford asserted, was for the company to fire George Spates and replace him with "a loyal man" so that "we can feel safe in passing him through our lines."¹²⁸

After reviewing the communications from Bomford, the board instructed Clerk Ringgold to request further information from the officer. On September 4, Ringgold drafted the following reply to Bomford on behalf of the board:

It is the earnest desire as it is the duty of this Board to see that no disloyal person is employed in any part of the work under their charge.

You make a distinct charge of your own personal knowledge against one so employed. We must have his name, not strike in the dark, and we call upon you as an officer and citizen to furnish the name without delay. You must be quite aware that to suppress the name under such circumstances will be conniving at the offence. If there are others whose names have been furnished to you with such information as will justify you in making distinct charges we desire to have those names and also the witnesses on whose statements the charge is based.¹²⁹

Before Bomford could answer the board's request for further information, the canal was once again to become a theater of active military operations. During the last week of June and on July 1, General Robert E. Lee, who had taken charge of the Army of Northern Virginia on June 1, had turned on and attacked McClellan's Army of the Potomac, then closing in on Richmond from the southeast. After compelling McClellan to retreat to the cover of a fortified camp at Harrison's Landing on the James River, Lee sent Jackson with three divisions to Orange, Virginia, to watch Major General John Pope's newly-constituted Army of Virginia. Following the defeat of Banks' corps of Pope's army at Cedar Mountain on August 9 by Jackson, Lee moved his forces to join the victorious Confederate divisions and set the stage for another Union defeat at the Battle of Second Manassas on August 29–30. The bluecoats fell back into the formidable defenses covering the approaches to Washington, and several days later, on September 2, the exposed Union force at Winchester under Brigadier General Julius White fell back to Harpers Ferry.¹³⁰

News of the Confederate offensive had important repercussions for the belligerents, as well as the canal company. When President Lincoln on August 4 ordered a draft of 300,000 militia to serve for nine months, the company appealed to Secretary Stanton to obtain exemptions for

¹²⁸ Bomford to Board of Directors, August 28, 1862, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

¹²⁹ Ringgold to Bomford, September 4, 1862, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co., and *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, K, 309.

¹³⁰ O. R., Series I, Vol. XII, pt. 3, 811.

its employees and the boatmen as the draft would have serious effects on the business operations of the canal.¹³¹

More ominous for the canal company was Lee's determination on September 3 to carry the war north of the Potomac. The Army of Northern Virginia was put in motion toward Loudoun County. On the morning of the 4th, a Confederate battery unlimbered its guns on Ball's Bluff and fired several volleys at a passing canal boat. General McClellan, who had been charged with repelling the Rebel invasion of Maryland, advised his superiors at the War Department that shelling canal boats "is an old amusement of the rebels; it is probably a pretty strong proof that they do not intend to cross at Edwards Ferry."¹³²

At Leesburg, Lee's lead division, under Major General D. H. Hill, made preparations for the offensive across the Potomac. One brigade was dispatched to the river across from Berlin to attack with artillery any Baltimore and Ohio trains that might be passing. With two brigades deployed in line of battle, Hill approached the river at White's Ford. This crossing of the Potomac and the nearby Monocacy Aqueduct were guarded by men of the 1st Potomac Home Guard Regiment and the 87th Ohio. The Union pickets quickly fled, and by nightfall Hill's combat-ready veterans had established a bridgehead almost without firing a shot.¹³³

Before allowing his troops to bivouac, Hill charged a detail with the task of stopping traffic on the canal and taking measures to make it easier for the main body of troops to cross the ditch. Near the Monocacy Aqueduct, the trunk could be crossed by a few pivot bridges and under passed by the White's Ford Culvert. Since these structures would turn into bottlenecks for the Army of Northern Virginia, General Hill had a fatigue party wreck the Little Monocacy Culvert and drain the Seven-Mile Level. The berm and towpath banks were cut down, the prism corduroyed, and the artillery and trains started rolling across. The next morning, on the 5th, Stonewall Jackson's corps forded the Potomac, crossed the canal, and pushed for Frederick.¹³⁴

Meanwhile, the men from Hill's division charged with wrecking key canal structures in the area were at work. Thomas Walter, the tender at Lock No. 27 who had worked for the canal company for 30 year and was one of the men believed by Captain Bomford to be disloyal to the Union cause, pled with General Hill not to destroy the aqueduct or the lock. If the Confederates intended to stop navigation on the waterway, he informed the general that it would be easier to cut down the banks than blow up the masonry structures. General Hill disagreed, and for awhile the discussion between the officer and the lock tender became so heated that bystanders feared that Walter would be arrested.¹³⁵

After consulting with his chiefs of ordnance and engineers, Hill learned that in the division there were not enough tools or spare powder to insure the destruction of the Monocacy Aqueduct, so he ordered his demolition team to concentrate on Lock No. 27. A hole was drilled into the masonry of the lock and a small charge of powder was detonated, causing slight damage to the structure. Having breached the Little Monocacy Culvert, cut down the banks at several points, and burned several canal boats trapped on the Seven-Mile Level, Hill recalled his troops on the evening of September 5 and proceeded toward Frederick to join Jackson. During the next several

¹³¹ Ringgold to Stanton, August 21, 1862, Ltrs. Sent, C & O Co. Events were to calm the anxieties of the canal officials, because the draft was never put into effect. Long, *Civil War, Day by Day*, 247.

¹³² O. R., Series I, Vol. XIX, pt. 2, 175.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, pt. 1, 1019, pt. 2, 144–145.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, pt. 1, 952.

¹³⁵ Petition to Board of Directors, October 14, 1862, Ltrs. Recd., C&O Co. When the canal company later moved to discharge Walter for collaborating with the enemy, a petition was sent to the directors from his neighbors asking that no disciplinary action be taken against him because of his successful effort to save the Monocacy Aqueduct from destruction..

days, other units of Lee's Army of Northern Virginia crossed the Potomac and canal at White's Ford.¹³⁶

On September 9 at Frederick, Lee divided his army into three major units and commenced operations to move against the strong Union force under Colonel Dixon Miles that was holding the Harpers Ferry–Martinsburg area. By eliminating Miles' command, Lee would be able to supply his army via the Shenandoah Valley. Accordingly, Jackson moved out with his corps, crossed South Mountain, passed through Boonsboro, turned southwestward, and struck for the Potomac. Major General Lafayette McLaws with two divisions advanced across Pleasant Valley, and took position on Maryland Heights which commanded Harpers Ferry on the north. The division under Major General John G. Walker was to destroy the Monocacy Aqueduct, recross the Potomac at Cheek's Ford, and occupy Loudoun Heights. With the remainder of his troops, Lee would cover Jackson's column, taking position to hold the South Mountain gaps.¹³⁷

Reaching the Monocacy Aqueduct just before midnight on September 9, Walker's division quickly drove off the thin line of Union pickets holding the aqueduct. Fatigue parties were organized, tools were passed out, and men put to work drilling holes for placing charges to wreck each of the seven arches of this aqueduct. After several hours, Walker's chief engineer reported little progress, complaining that the drills were extremely dull while the masonry was of "extraordinary solidity and massiveness." To demolish the aqueduct would take days not hours. As this would ruin Lee's plan for the attack against Harpers Ferry, the fatigue parties were recalled.¹³⁸

That same night a Union force moved into the area, took possession of the aqueduct, and placed artillery to command the approaches to that structure as well as Cheek's Ford. Surprised by the Union advance, Walker determined to recross the Potomac farther upstream at Point of Rocks on the night of September 10. The crossing was carried out with much difficulty, owing to the destruction of the pivot bridge over the canal at Lock No. 28 and the steepness of the river banks.¹³⁹

The Confederate invasion of Maryland had a disastrous effect on the operations of the canal and its ability to carry provisions and coal to the Union armies and the civilian population of the District cities. The Washington *Evening Star* reported on September 12:

Canal navigation is suspended beyond a point twenty miles from here—that is, at Seneca Dam. From that point up, for from thirty to forty miles, there is no water in the canal, the Confederate forces having drawn it off a week ago, by blowing up a culvert, when they first crossed into Maryland—hence supplies for the army cannot be sent up by canal further than Seneca.

This suspension of navigation with the up country of course cuts off arrivals of flour and grain from the fine grain-growing country in Maryland and Virginia lying near the Potomac. The market here, therefore, is very unsettled, and the stock of flour on hand is held at considerably higher figures by wholesale dealers. The only sales since the suspension is of high grades extra, in small lots, at from \$7 to \$8, according to quality, mostly at the intermediate rate of \$7.50. The government contract closed last week was taken at rates considerably below these figures.

¹³⁶ Spates to Ringgold, September 13, 1862, Ltrs. Recd., C&O Co. In this letter, Spates wrote that the damage could be repaired in two or three weeks with an adequate force and the necessary funds. He had made arrangements with a gentleman to put a large force of horses, carts, and hands to work on the repairs, but since the Rebels were holding the river at Point of Rocks nothing could be done

¹³⁷ Bearss, "1862 Brings Hard Times," 450.

¹³⁸ O. R., Series I, Vol. XIX, pt. 1, 912–913.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

There is a fair stock of wheat in millers' hands, and they are buying the limited quantity brought by wagons at rates ranging from \$1.35 to \$1.40, for red. Any considerable lots of good red would command \$1.37 to \$1.40, and prime \$1.40 to \$1.45 per bushel.

In corn, nothing doing, there being no arrivals: Prices have advanced from 2 to 5 cents this week, and good white would fetch from 70 to 75 cents per bushel. Oats are more active, with further supplies from Baltimore, fetching from 45 to 50 cents for good new, but for heavy old oats 60 cts. are paid. Some of the very light new oats sell as low as 35 to 40 cents per bushel measure.

The coal trade from Cumberland is of course entirely cut off, perhaps for the season. A fair supply had already been bought forward.

The harbor of Georgetown looks very active, with numerous steamers moving about, as well as other vessels, mostly in government trade.

Hay in bales sells at \$20 per ton, an advance of \$1 within a week.¹⁴⁰

Meanwhile, Lee's forces were converging on the Union troops holding Martinsburg and Harpers Ferry. On the 11th, Jackson's columns passed through Williamsport and crossed the canal and the Potomac at Light's Ford, and on the 12th forced General White's troops to evacuate Martinsburg and retire to Harpers Ferry. After closing in and investing the 11,000-man Union garrison at Harpers Ferry for two days, the Confederates accepted the surrender of the surrounded Federals on September 15. Meanwhile, McClellan's bluecoats had forced the Southern forces to abandon Turner's and Fox's Gaps on South Mountain, and General Lee fell back behind Antietam Creek, thus setting the stage for the bloody Battle of Antietam fought on September 17.¹⁴¹

Shortly after the fighting began, General McClellan dispatched Captain Charles H. Russell with his company of the 1st Maryland Cavalry to Williamsport to burn the pivot bridge across the canal at Lock No. 44 and to destroy the Conococheague Aqueduct in an effort to cut one of Lee's avenues of retreat. With the aid of some Pennsylvania militiamen who were holding the town, Russell's men destroyed the pivot bridge, organized demolition teams, and burned eleven boats, nine of which were loaded with coal, that had been forced to tie up at Williamsport. Unable to materially damage the sturdy masonry of the aqueduct, Russell's troops returned to the battlefield and the Pennsylvanians withdrew to Hagerstown. By the end of the fighting in the area, some of the coal from the fired boats was still smoking, and a group of local citizens extinguished the fires, salvaging what coal remained.¹⁴²

On the day following the bloody event at Antietam, the two armies lay exhausted in their positions. Then under the cover of darkness on the 19th, the Confederates retired across the Potomac into Virginia at Boteler's Ford near Shepherdstown. Three brigades formed the rear guard and remained in line on the Maryland side until the crossing was accomplished.¹⁴³

When McClellan learned of the Confederate withdrawal, he sent Major General Fitz John Porter's V Corps to pursue Lee's battered army. When Porter reached the river, he found that the Rebels were holding the southern bank and defending the fords with 44 artillery pieces. Determining to clear the fords and, if possible, cross the Potomac and capture the guns, a strong force of skirmishers advanced and took position along the embankment of the towpath side of the canal, from which the water had been withdrawn earlier, and along the river bank. Covered by the

¹⁴⁰ Washington *Evening Star*, September 12, 1862.

¹⁴¹ Bearss, "1862 brings Hard Times", 451.

¹⁴² Miller to Ringgold, October 3, 1862, Greene to Ringgold, December 2, 1862, and Masters to Board of Directors, February 8, 1864, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

¹⁴³ O. R., Series I, Vol. XIX, 986.

fire of the sharpshooters and a heavy artillery barrage, the Federals stormed across the Potomac at Boteler's Ford, scaled the heights beyond, and captured five cannon. The next day, the Confederates under Jackson counter-attacked and drove the Union troops back through Shepherdstown and across the Potomac. Most of the retreating men used the ford while some walked across the river on the top of the Potomac Mills dam. As the Union armies fled across the river, a large contingent of the Rebel line advanced to the river bank, where some took cover in the burned-out Potomac Mill. A steady fire was maintained, inflicting a number of casualties upon the retiring enemy. Once across the river, the Federals deployed a line behind the canal embankment until they were relieved on the 21st. The Rebels remained on the field until nightfall, when upon being relieved by cavalry units, they marched to rejoin the main body.¹⁴⁴

Meanwhile, the Confederate cavalry leader, Major General James E. B. "Jeb" Stuart, had been ordered by General Lee to take several cavalry and infantry units and recross the Potomac into Maryland at Williamsport, thus creating a useful diversion by exposing McClellan's flank. Under the cover of darkness on the 19th some of the troops forded the Potomac above the town, while a contingent crossed the river at Williamsport and put to flight some Union pickets. A working party was organized and quickly opened a good road under the Conococheague Aqueduct. By passing under the canal, the confederates moved out and took position on the ridges beyond Williamsport before daybreak. On the 20th, the Rebels attempted to expand their bridgehead, but after encountering a heavy force of Union cavalry converging on the town, they withdrew at dark across the Potomac. During their one-day occupation of Williamsport, the Southern cavalry burned one canal boat, *Independence*, and the gates of Lock 44, and wrecked Lockhouse No. 44.¹⁴⁵

Following the Confederate withdrawal from Williamsport into Virginia, Superintendent Masters reported to Clerk Ringgold on September 22:

We have been cut off from the outside world until yesterday so that we had no opportunity to send or receive anything by mail since the 6th of Sept. The damage done the canal at this place [Williamsport] by the recent military operations will amount to \$2,000 beside the loss of eleven canal boats burnt...If necessary the damage here can be repaired in a week's time; the most serious is the burning of the lock gates.¹⁴⁶

Immediately following the Battle of Antietam and the Confederate withdrawal into Virginia, General McClellan proposed to establish a supply depot for his army near Harpers Ferry. Consequently, it would be vital to reopen for trade as soon as possible the canal and the railroad. On September 21, McClellan's chief quartermaster, Lieutenant Colonel Rufus Ingalls, wrote Quartermaster General Meigs requesting that orders be issued for the repair of the waterway. When it was reported that repairs could not be commenced as long as the Confederates occupied portions of the southern bank of the Potomac and kept the canal under artillery fire, McClellan promised full protection to the repair crews and to the boats, once the waterway was reopened. As soon as navigation was resumed, all the small steamers plying the canal were to be sent to Harpers Ferry.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 338–340, 344–349, 351–352, 830–833, 912–913, 957, 982, 986, 989–990, 1001–1004. For a more complete study of the fighting in the aftermath of the Battle of Antietam, see John F. Luzader, "Historic Sites, Shepherdstown, W. Va." (NPS Mss., 1963), 4–19.

¹⁴⁵ Masters to Board of Directors, February 8, 1864, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co., and Bearss, "1862 brings Hard Times", 452.

¹⁴⁶ Masters to Ringgold, September 22, 1862, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

¹⁴⁷ O. R., Series I, Vol. XIX, pt. 2, 339–340, 342–343.

By late September, Lee's Army of Northern Virginia had pulled back into the Winchester area, thus enabling the canal repairs to proceed without hindrance. The *Washington Evening Star* reported on the 26th that:

There is some hope now that the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal may be rendered navigable again for the fall trade. It is found that the damage done it by the Confederate forces was not so great as had been apprehended ... therefore the repairs may be easily made if the line is kept free of the enemy.¹⁴⁸

McClellan, on September 30, ordered the formation of large fatigue parties to assist canal officials in effecting repairs. On October 1, a 65-man detail reported to Superintendent George W. Spates of the Monocacy Division. The soldiers were put to work closing the breach at the Little Monocacy Culvert, thus freeing the regular division repair crews to patch the masonry at Lock No. 27. The military detail was enlarged to a force of 150 on October 7, and Spates reported on the 14th that his division was again ready for navigation.¹⁴⁹

During the first week of October, President Spates inspected the canal from Williamsport to Cumberland. He was to see that initial reports of heavy damage to the Antietam and Williamsport Divisions had been exaggerated. Except for the actions of the Maryland and Pennsylvania troops, there would have been little destruction at Williamsport. On the Antietam Division, the only damage done by the invaders was the burning of the gates at Guard Locks Nos. 3 and 4. Although the Confederates had burned all the railroad bridges between Sir Johns Run and South Branch, there was no damage to the canal above Williamsport. Of more immediate concern was the drought in the Potomac Valley that had reduced the depth of the river at Cumberland to three feet.¹⁵⁰

Early in October the Confederates staged two raids designed to harass McClellan's build-up and wreak havoc on the Union supply lines. Col. John D. Imboden and 900 men left their base at Camp Lee in Hardy County, and after surprising a Union patrol at Hanging Rock, they attacked the entrenched camp manned by Company K, 54th Pennsylvania, at the mouth of Little Cacapon on the 4th. After forcing the Federals to surrender, the Baltimore and Ohio Bridge across the Little Cacapon was burned, along with the encampment. A cavalry battalion was sent across the Potomac to cut off the escape of the Federals posted at the Paw Paw Railroad Tunnel. Moving down the canal towpath, the Rebel horsemen forced the encampment of Company B, 54th Pennsylvania, located some 500 yards from Paw Paw Tunnel to surrender. While the Confederates were destroying the captured camp and equipment, they learned that the guard at their base camp near Cacapon Bridge had been scattered by Union cavalry. This news caused Imboden to abandon his plans to destroy the railroad bridge across South branch and withdraw from the area.¹⁵¹

In the early morning hours of October 10, General "Jeb" Stuart crossed the Potomac at McCoy's Ferry with 1,800 horse soldiers and four guns. The sixteen Union pickets in the area were driven in so rapidly that they were cut off from their reserve and were unable to report the attack. Informed that the Confederates were fording the river by a long-time local resident, Lancelot Jacques, Captain Thomas Logan immediately moved his troops camped at Green Springs Furnace to mount, but Stuart's horsemen had already pushed northward toward Chambersburg.

¹⁴⁸ *Washington Evening Star*, September 26, 1862.

¹⁴⁹ Spates to Ringgold, September 30, October 6, 14, 1862, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co., and *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, K, 310–311.

¹⁵⁰ Spates to Ringgold, October 6, 1862, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co. Also see, Benton to Ringgold, October 18, 1862, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co. On October 9, the canal company requested an army detail to help repair the Williamsport Division. *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, K, 310–311.

¹⁵¹ O. R., Series I, Vol. XIX, pt. 2, 16–25, 631.

As the Rebel objective was to destroy the machine shops and depot at that town, they did not attempt to damage the canal. After committing their destructive acts at Chambersburg on the 11th, the Rebels turned back toward Virginia and determined to cross the canal and Potomac at White's Ford before the Union troops, numbering between 4,000 and 5,000, at Poolesville and Mouth of Monocacy could intercept them.¹⁵² Although a battalion of the 99th Pennsylvania was posted on a precipitous quarry bluff overlooking the crossing, the bluecoats, after receiving word of the Confederate advance, quickly abandoned their position and marched eastward down the towpath to Weedon's Ford, thus permitting the Rebels a secure crossing of the river.¹⁵³

While Stuart's Chambersburg Raid increased the growing dissatisfaction of government officials with the performance of General McClellan, the canal suffered no damage at the hands of the Rebel raiders. On October 14, water was readmitted to the Monocacy Division. Although the damage inflicted on the canal by the Confederates during their Antietam Campaign had been repaired, there would be no through navigation on the canal until the drought was broken.¹⁵⁴

Heavy rains during the latter part of October caused the Potomac to rise. However, the high water caused a serious breach at Dam No. 5 on November 4, because the new masonry dam was still only partially completed as a result of the recent military activities in the valley. Thus, there was not enough water in the pool to induce a sufficient depth of water on the Williamsport Division to float heavily laden boats.¹⁵⁵

The canal trade was hampered further during the final days of October when McClellan, goaded by President Lincoln and Secretary Stanton put his Army of the Potomac into motion. Beginning on the 26th, the Federals crossed the Potomac at Berlin, White's Ford, and Edwards Ferry on pontoon bridges which had been sent up the canal from Washington. To facilitate the movement of this ponderous army, Union engineers threw four bridges across the canal that was so low that they stopped all traffic on the waterway. This news caused the Cumberland coal companies to withdraw the boats that had pulled into the basin ready to load. Large numbers of miners, concluding that canal navigation was over for the season left Allegany County and headed for Pennsylvania.¹⁵⁶

It was November 2 before the entire Army of the Potomac had crossed the river into Virginia. For the next three days, the army continued to be supplied from the big depots that had been established at Berlin and Harpers Ferry. Brigadier General George Stoneman's division, which had crossed the river on October 27 and occupied Leesburg, was supplied by canal boats sent from Washington to the Edwards Ferry River Locks where they crossed the Potomac and passed up Goose Creek to the turnpike where a depot had been established. By November 5, the Union army was in contact with the Manassas Gap Railroad and henceforth it used that line to transport its rations, munitions, clothing and fodder.¹⁵⁷

Canal company officials and boatmen alike laid plans to resume navigation as soon as the low bridges at Berlin were dismantled on November 12. That evening a fleet of 36 boats, loaded

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 36–37, 52–53, and Hassett to Ringgold, October 14, 1862, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

¹⁵³ O. R., Series I, Vol. XIX, pt. 2, 50, and Bearss, "1862 Brings Hard Times", 456–457.

¹⁵⁴ Bearss, "1862 Brings Hard Times", 457.

¹⁵⁵ *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, K, 313, and Greene to Ringgold, November 4, 1862, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

¹⁵⁶ Greene to Ringgold, November 13, 1862, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co., and O. R., Series I, Vol. XIX, pt. 2, 494, 499. It is interesting to note that on October 25, the day before the Federals began this operation, McClellan had his Assistant Adjutant General send a letter to President Spates promising that the Army of the Potomac would discontinue activities that hampered canal operations. Williams to Spates, October 25, 1862, in Spates Papers.

¹⁵⁷ O. R., Series I, Vol. XIX, pt. 2, 494, 531, 544.

with bridge materials, started down the canal. The next morning, 40 additional boats with the remainder of the pontoons, stringers, and sleepers proceeded to Washington.¹⁵⁸

At the same time, company official took steps to close the critical breach at Dam No. 5. The board had grown increasingly dissatisfied with Superintendent Masters for “his neglect and inattention to his duties” and “his want of action ... in the maintenance of his division” which had “contributed much to the loss of revenue and of business upon the canal.”¹⁵⁹ Accordingly, the directors assigned the job of repairing the dam to Superintendent Hassett of the Hancock Division. By the 17th, the leak had been repaired, the water behind the dam had been raised several feet, and there was sufficient water along the entire canal for the first time in a month.¹⁶⁰

Just as the company, boat captains, and shippers were preparing to capitalize on the improved situation along the Potomac, a small-scale raid by some Virginia cavalry caused some anxious moments. On the evening of November 24, a small Confederate band slipped across the Potomac at Conrad’s Ferry, swept into Poolesville where they captured 16 Federals and a telegraph operator, and quickly recrossed the river at White’s Ford. Despite fears that the raiders would cut the canal, it was found that no damage had been done.¹⁶¹

Even with all these difficulties, commerce on the canal showed a great increase in November as toll revenues rose to \$6,084.10 from \$538.78 the previous month.¹⁶² President Spates was so encouraged by this turn of events that he boasted the “canal has not been in better order for 10 years than now with a few exceptions.” One of the main exceptions was the run-down condition of the Georgetown Division. Superintendent Horace Benton had neglected the division, especially the needed repairs at Lock No. 3.¹⁶³

In early December 1862 the U. S. Treasury Department took cognizance of the fact that the canal provided the government with an established route of communication along the boundary between the North and South. Accordingly, upon the recommendation of President Spates and the authorization by military authorities who conducted “loyalty investigations,” six canal employees were appointed to act as revenue agents at \$2 a day. These men and their revenue-collecting offices were: George W. Spates at Poolesville; Levi Benton at Sharpsburg; John Warner at Shepherds Landing; Joseph F. Farrow at Williamsport; Thomas Hassett at Four Locks; and A. C. Blackman at Hancock. Four other individuals who were not employed by the company were appointed as revenue agents at Point of Rocks, Harpers Ferry, Dam No. 5, and Cumberland.¹⁶⁴

President Spates and Director Greene remained in Cumberland to expedite the shipment of all the coal they could in the final weeks of the boating season. As a hard freeze was expected in the mountains at any time and there were too few boats available for the amount of coal to be shipped, competition for the boats was keen with boatmen able to demand higher freight rates of up to \$2.50 per ton from the shippers.¹⁶⁵

Several icebreakers were outfitted to keep the Cumberland and Williamsport Divisions open as long as possible. On the 20th Spates reported that he had spent the past two weeks “doing all in my power by hard work & otherwise to keep the canal open.”¹⁶⁶ As a result, the receipts

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid*, Series I, Vol. XXI, 148–149.

¹⁵⁹ Greene to Ringgold, November 13, 1862, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

¹⁶⁰ Spates to Ringgold, November 17, 1862, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

¹⁶¹ O. R., Series I, Vol. XXI, 12, and Spates to Ringgold, November 26, 1862, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

¹⁶² *Thirty-Fifth Annual Report* (1863), 8.

¹⁶³ Spates to Ringgold, December 1, 1862, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid*.

¹⁶⁵ Greene to Ringgold, December 2, 5, 1862, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

¹⁶⁶ Spates to Ringgold, December 2, 5, 9, 12, 20, 1862, and Masters to Board of Directors, December 30, 1862, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

from tolls for December had been \$9,245.14, or more than 30 percent greater than November.¹⁶⁷ Hence navigation continued until February 1, 1863.¹⁶⁸

During the month of December, the canal board continued to receive reports about the inefficiency and dereliction of duty on the part of several division superintendents. The most remarkable charges were those against Superintendent George W. Spates of the Monocacy Division who was accused of remaining at his home near the mouth of the Monocacy River from August 13 to October 21 “transacting his farming affairs & hauling coal from the canal.” Moreover, he had refused to reimburse the military for work scows borrowed for use by his repair crews, and he had failed to replace tools that had been burned by the Rebels. During his absence from the line, his workers had gone unpaid.¹⁶⁹

Upset by such charges of willful misconduct, the directors issued an order to all the division superintendents on December 11:

That the several Supts. of the Canal be required to conform themselves strictly to the rules and regulations of the Company, that said regulations be strictly conferred on all parties connected with the canal, and that said Supts. be required to pass over the entire length of their respective divisions at least once a week, and to report to the Clerk of the Company, and also to the Collectors of tolls at Georgetown and Cumberland, whenever any interruptions of the navigation shall occur, and how long such interruption will continue; that they also be required to make monthly reports to the Board of the condition of their respective divisions, and that and carelessness on their part in the performance of these duties will be deemed cause for their removal from office.¹⁷⁰

All told, the year 1862 was even more disastrous financially for the canal company than 1861. The aggregate tonnage on the canal declined more than 12 percent from 144,814 tons in 1861 to 126,793 tons in 1862. Toll revenues plummeted nearly 10 percent from \$70,566.99 in 1861 to \$63,985.85 in 1862. Receipts from all sources for 1862 amounted to \$72,624.95 while expenditures were \$231,711.68. As a result of the seizure of canal boats by the Federals in March, the Confederate invasion of Maryland in September, several major freshets, and the inefficiency of some division superintendents, the canal company reached its lowest ebb during the war in 1862.¹⁷¹

The equally distressing statistics of the aggregate Cumberland coal trade in 1862 were summarized in the Pottsville *Miners' Journal* of January 10, 1863:

Since the war broke out the trade from this Region has been almost entirely suspended. The Railroad only carried Coal in the months of May, June, July, August and September—and the trade on the Canal was interrupted entirely in the months of May and October, and only partially resumed in the other months....

In spite of its handicaps, the Cumberland region shipped about 318,000 tons in 1862, an increase of roughly 48,000 tons over the previous year.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁷ *Thirty-Fifth Annual Report* (1863), 8.

¹⁶⁸ Bearss, “1862 Brings Hard Times” 462.

¹⁶⁹ Chambers to Board of Directors, December 10, 1862, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

¹⁷⁰ *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, K, 315.

¹⁷¹ Sanderlin, *The Great National Project*, 307, 309.

¹⁷² Pottsville *Miners' Journal*, January 10, 1863, quoted in Harvey, “Civil War and the Maryland Coal Trade.” 371.

IV. COMMERCE ON THE CANAL EXPERIENCES A REVIVAL: 1863

With the use of icebreakers and the help of the comparatively mild January weather, the canal remained open to navigation until February 1, 1863. It was during this time that a debate was carried on in the military, the War Department, and the Congress over what measures should be adopted to protect the canal and the railroad from further depredations by the Southern armies. One proposal that received some attention was that of Colonel Gabriel E. Porter who recommended that adequate protection could be accorded both transportation lines by establishing camps of instruction at strategic points between New Creek and Harpers Ferry. He emphasized the fact that concentrating troops in this area would provide training under actual war conditions, thereby resulting in appreciable savings to the Federal Treasury because officers could serve in the dual role of instructor and commander. Although the War Department rejected the proposal, Congress became sufficiently interested in Porter's plan to entertain a resolution offered by Representative Francis Thomas of Maryland on January 12:

That the Committee on Military Affairs be instructed to inquire into the expediency of providing for the establishment of camps of military instruction at suitable points on or near the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, as an effectual means of protecting the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal and the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, so that those public improvements may be safely used for the transportation of coal for the use of steam vessels of the United States Navy, and of supplies for the United States Army, while operating in Eastern Virginia, or on our Atlantic front.

The peak of interest in the proposal was reached in this resolution, and the problem of protecting the strategic canal and railroad was given back to the War Department.¹⁷³

On February 1, the water was withdrawn from the trunk so that necessary repairs could be made. During the month of February it was reported that the tender of Locks Nos. 1-4 in Georgetown had left his job without notice, and, consequently, the directors appointed Samuel Smart to that important position at the eastern terminus of the canal. About March 1 the canal was reopened to boat traffic and the pace of trade quickly picked up.¹⁷⁴

With the apparent course of the war changing in favor of the North, Congress in early March finally authorized an appropriation of \$13,000 for the raising of the Georgetown bridges over the canal to facilitate the expansion of trade. The bridges, which originally had been planned

¹⁷³ *Congressional Globe*, January 12, 1863, and Summers, *Baltimore & Ohio in Civil War*, 155–157. Later in 1863 and 1864, blockhouses were built at strategic points along the Potomac to guard the river fords. The blockhouses were

barns constructed out of the largest and longest logs that could be obtained, each barn being from forty to fifty feet square and ten to twelve feet in height. They were timbered on the top to keep the shells out and were notched through the sides for the purpose of shooting through above the earthworks. In building them, stone was first piled around the proposed foundation, about four feet high, then a deep ditch, four or five feet wide, is dug around the stone pile, the earth from the ditch being thrown upon the stones to a height of six or seven feet to protect the inmates of the house from shot and shell. The whole is surrounded with an abattis. . . and the entrance to the building was made in a zigzag fashion

Summers, *Baltimore & Ohio in Civil War*, 157–158.

¹⁷⁴ *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, K, 318, 322–324.

and constructed according to the practice prevailing on the Erie Canal in the late 1820s, allowed a clearance of only 8 feet above the normal level of water in the canal. By 1850, the barges had become so large that they could pass fully loaded under the bridges but could not return empty until the water level in the canal was lowered. As a result, long delays which hampered trade to and from Rock Creek Basin soon forced much of the business on the waterway to pass over the Potomac Aqueduct and down the Alexandria Canal to the river at that city, from where it was taken to Washington by barge. To reopen the route through Georgetown, eight bridges and the market-house in Georgetown and one bridge over the basin needed to be raised to allow at least a 12-foot clearance. The board considered this improvement in the early 1850s, but after 1854 the matter was dropped as far as independent action by the canal company was concerned. Appeals to Congress for financial assistance failed to pass during the remainder of the decade.¹⁷⁵ The closing of the Potomac Aqueduct in 1861 seriously inconvenienced canal trade, and, after political pressure by canal, Georgetown, and Maryland authorities, Congress passed the appropriation.¹⁷⁶

Although canal officials soon met with the corporate authorities of Georgetown to discuss the most expedient plans for raising the bridges, the actual work did not get under way until April 1865.¹⁷⁷ Nevertheless, the Georgetown authorities responded to the authorization by passing two ordinances. First, it was determined on April 4 that the canal president should submit his plans for altering the bridges and market-house to them for approval before the work commenced. Second, on August 8 plans were approved for a new market-house to be constructed on the site of the present building which was to extend to within eight feet of the north bank of the canal.¹⁷⁸

In late March President Spates sent two communications to Brigadier General Benjamin S. Roberts, then in command of the Union troops along the canal, complaining that the Federals were not complying with McClellan's General Order No. 44 issued on April 21, 1862. In response, Roberts justified the military's activities on the grounds that the canal company was employing suspected "disloyalists" and that the waterway was being used to secret[e] supplies and information to the Confederates. His lengthy accusations were as follows:

On entering upon my duties...and before I issued my General Order No. 2, I was informed by many reliable persons that a large contraband trade was carried on between Maryland and Virginia and information constantly passing to the Confederate Army, by means of small boats and skiffs along the river and canal on the lines where trade with Virginia is forbidden by a recent law of Congress. In order to carry into effect that law and the regulations of the Treasury and War Dept. intended for that purpose, I deemed it a military necessity to seize the boats and other water craft as designated in Part IV of that order. It had been stated to me that many boats used in this contraband trade belonged to the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal Co. and were hidden away under culverts and bridges along the canal and river, and rented by the captains, and agents of the Company to speculate in this atrocious traffic and to give encouragement and carry supplies to Dis-

¹⁷⁵ Sanderlin, *The Great National Project*, 206–207, and Constance McLaughlin Green, *Washington Village and Capital, 1800–1878* (2 Vols., Princeton, 1962), Vol. I, 265.

¹⁷⁶ *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, K, 325.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 422.

¹⁷⁸ *Ordinances of the Corporation of Georgetown, from January, 1863, to January, 1864* (Washington, 1864), 25, 44–45. Later on January 9, 1864 an ordinance was passed changing the plan of the market-house to include a second story on the north end of the building. On February 20, 1864, a resolution was approved providing that a basement be constructed under the entire building. *Ordinances of the Corporation of Georgetown* (Washington, [1871]), 3–4, 15. The plans and specifications for the new market-house were approved on May 7, and a contract was let to John A. Rheem of Washington on June 4. Later on July 2, the plans for the basement were dropped. *Ibid.*, 30, 33, 39.

loyalists and Rebels in Virginia. It was my first duty, under the state of things as thus represented, to seize all and every kind of skiff or boat that could be taken by secessionists from their place of concealment by night or day by force, or that could be rented of unfaithful employees of the Company without its knowledge.

It was not of course my intention in any manner to interfere with proper commerce and trade along the canal, or to embarrass in any degree its lawful business, known to me to be of great importance to the Federal Government. But if the Company has in its employment agents or persons who disregard the laws of Congress and the regulations of the Treasury Department and the Army, it must suffer the consequences; as I cannot permit boats or skiffs to be kept within the lines of my command that can be used in any manner, with or without the assent of the Company or its agents, to aid the enemies of the Federal Government.

When the company was ready to repair the abutment of Dam No. 5, the commandant at North Mountain would release the boats captured near the dam to aid in the restoration work. However, it was hoped that the company would

consent willingly to any transient and slight inconveniences the exigencies of the crisis may impose on them. All truly loyal and good citizens are expected to make such sacrifices, and the more willingly, as they are intended for the permanent and great good of the public.¹⁷⁹

As the prospects for canal trade were greatly improve in the spring of 1863, the board received several petitions from parties at Cumberland and Hancock, urging an increase in the toll on coal of 1/8 of a cent per ton mile. The petitions argued that such a decision would increase the revenue of the company and enable it to improve its desperate financial condition. Moreover, the general inflationary tendency of prices during the war years had witnessed increased freight rates on the railroads and canals of the North, and, consequently, the Cumberland coal shippers would not be hurt.¹⁸⁰

On April 10, the canal board met to consider the two petitions. After some discussion, the directors approved the following resolution:

That in consequence of the interruption of trade and of injuries received by the canal within the two years last past, it is absolutely necessary to make a temporary increase in the rates of toll on coal; and upon full consideration, the said toll is hereby increased 1/16

¹⁷⁹ Roberts to Spates, March 28, 1863, in Spates Papers. According to Mary Mitchell in her study of Georgetown during the Civil War, the only underground activities carried out in that town were initiated by small local tradesmen, laborers and citizens of obscure origins. Her research in Old Capitol Prison records revealed that “time and again, drovers, brewers and boatmen, who gave Georgetown as their residence, were incarcerated for blockade running, smuggling and disloyalty, denied *habeas corpus*, and released only after the interrogation of the prison authorities had extracted all possible information from them.” The most sensational case concerned a drug ring of apparently large proportions. The local anchorman was John Crumbaugh, a former cattle drover from Loudoun County, Virginia, who had been a butcher in the Georgetown market-house until 1861 when he purchased a wood and fuel business on the canal wharf at the foot of 33rd Street. He then bought a home on N Street and used its cellar as a way station between drug wholesalers, his canal boats, and a Virginia contact. In February 1863 he was caught with \$14,000 worth of quinine, morphine and nitrate of silver concealed in apple and potato crates. He was sent to the Old Capitol Prison and died there in 1864. Mary Mitchell, *Divided Town* (Barre, 1968), 122–123.

¹⁸⁰ Petitions, variously signed, to President and Directors, April 6, 1863, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

of a cent (making 5/16 of a cent) per ton per mile, to take effect on all cargoes shipped on or after the first day of May next, and to continue to the first day of November next, after which date the rate will be 4/16 ct, of a ton per mile, as it now is.¹⁸¹

The rise in trade and canal revenue triggered a petition from a number of canal employees, asking for a general wage increase to compensate for the rising inflation of the war years. This request was tabled immediately by the directors as it would further drain the company finances at a time when they were attempting to place the operation of the waterway on a more firm footing.¹⁸²

Just as canal navigation was increasing, the canal company began to feel the effects of the Federal Draft Act that President Lincoln had signed on March 3. This, the first effective Federal draft, imposed liability on all male citizens between the ages of 20 and 45 with the exception of the physically or mentally unfit, men with certain types of dependents, those convicted of a felony, and various high federal and state officials. Draft quotas for each district would be set by the President on the basis of population and the number of men already in the service from each district. A drafted man could hire another as a substitute or purchase his way out for \$300.¹⁸³

In mid-April the canal board received word that two lock tenders, M. Burris and I. Edelin, had been drafted. As they were both poor men with large families, neither of them was financially able to procure a substitute. Accordingly, a canal official had loaned Edelin \$100 for that purpose, while Burris borrowed a similar sum. By this time, the company owed each man over \$200, and unless the board could do something soon, the men would “be compelled to dispose of their claims at a great sacrifice.”¹⁸⁴

The quickened pace of trade activity during April and May 1863 produced a sense of optimism along the canal and local entrepreneurs quickly took steps to participate in the new-found prosperity. On April 19, Denton Jacques rented for 10 years at an annual fee of \$10 two parcels of land near Lock No. 49 about 100 by 125 feet on the berm side and 10 by 15 feet on the towpath side on which he intended to build several warehouses.¹⁸⁵ The firm of Bridges and Henderson, which had recently purchased the Round Top Cement Mill above Hancock, commenced negotiations in early May with canal officials to obtain free passage on the waterway to ship needed supplies between Hancock and the mill.¹⁸⁶ George Hill, Jr., obtained a 20-year lease on a large parcel of ground belonging to the company just west of the Potomac Aqueduct on which he planned to construct a mill. To run his new enterprise, he negotiated a 20-year lease for 200 inches of water power from the canal company.¹⁸⁷

At the same time, the improving trade gave rise to at least one proposal to provide the canal with an outlet to the Potomac just west of the Potomac Aqueduct and thus avoid the costly delays of boating through Georgetown. On May 7, T. S. Kidwell offered

to take the whole front of the Canal from Shoemakers Mill to within 200 feet of a right line drawn from the West line of the Aqueduct upon a lease reviewable forever, at \$500 per annum, with the privilege reserved to this Company [Chesapeake & Ohio] of dropping loaded boats from the Canal into the river by mechanical contrivances, at any point along said line.

¹⁸¹ *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, K, 329–330.

¹⁸² Petitions, variously signed, to President and Directors, April 6, 1863, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

¹⁸³ Long, *Civil War Day by Day*, 325.

¹⁸⁴ White to Board of Directors, April 10, 1863, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

¹⁸⁵ *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, K, 327.

¹⁸⁶ Hassett to Ringgold, May 4, 1863, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

¹⁸⁷ *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, K, 335–336.

After considering the proposal, the board determined that it was not “expedient or proper” to pursue the matter further at that time.¹⁸⁸

Despite the economic upturn along the canal, the directors continued to receive reports of the long-term ill effects of the previous two years of hostilities on the mills along the waterway. One such report arrived in early May from Jacob Miller who owned a sawmill near Sharpsburg. Soldiers had taken his mill on January 19, 1862, and had prevented his sawing until May 14. After that, the water was out of the canal from July 1 to 12, for nearly two weeks in August, and again from September 14 on. Following the Battle of Antietam, soldiers used the mill as a hospital and then as a pickets’ rendezvous. When the soldiers moved out, they carried the doors, windows, partitions, garners, flooring, weatherboarding, chimney stove, and other movable things with them. Even his post and board fence had been cut down and burned. By then it was too late in the year to resume operation, even if the repair materials had been available.¹⁸⁹

On May 20, Captain E. S. Allen of the Quartermaster’s Office informed the canal board that the tidelock at Georgetown was deteriorating and needed immediate repairs. Irked by the continued military occupation of the Rock Creek Basin, the directors authorized Clerk Ringgold to send the following cryptic reply:

they [the board] have given directions to the Superintendent to make the Lock effective as early as can be done, but inasmuch as it may require repairs beyond the available means of the Company, and as it is and has been used for sometime past almost exclusively for the United States, and the injury has arisen in some degree from their agents, and further that the U. States have made free use of the Canal, without payment of tolls, I would suggest whether it would not be proper that they should contribute to the repairs of the Lock in question.¹⁹⁰

At the 35th annual meeting of the company stockholders held on June 1, President Spates reported on the upsurge of canal trade in the spring of 1863. Since January 1, 83,396 tons of coal had been transported on the waterway, compared to 94,819 tons for the entire year of 1862. With the help of the rate increase in April, revenue from tolls for the first five months of 1863 was \$56,615.14, or nearly 90 percent of the \$63,985.85 that had been collected during the entire previous year. Although there was still a deficiency in the number of boats needed for the growing trade, it was thought that the rising freight rates would encourage boat-building. Already, there were a number of new boats being built in Cumberland.¹⁹¹

After frustrating two Federal attempts to penetrate the strong defensive positions at Fredericksburg and march on Richmond, the Confederates on June 3 again undertook a strategic offensive. This effort was designed to carry the war to the North and relieve pressure on Vicksburg and Chattanooga by making the Federals withdraw strength from those areas to counter Lee’s threat to the rich Cumberland Valley. By June 8 Lee had concentrated most of his Army of Northern Virginia near Culpeper. During the northward movement of the Confederates, General Joseph Hooker, who had been named commander of the Army of the Potomac on January 26, ordered reconnaissance operations that resulted in the Battles of Franklin’s Crossing on June 5 and Brandy Station on June 9. After the Rebels had driven Union troops out of their positions at Berryville and Martinsburg, the 9,000-man 2nd Division at Winchester was routed by Confederate

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, K, 334.

¹⁸⁹ Miller to President and Directors, May 1, 1863, Ltr. Recd., C & O Co.; Ringgold to Benton, May 29, 1863, Ltrs. Sent, C & O Co.; and *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, K, 324–325, 340.

¹⁹⁰ Ringgold to Allen, May 29, 1863. Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

¹⁹¹ *Thirty-Fifth Annual Report* (1863), 5.

infantry and cavalry on June 14. On the 15th, Southern troops under Major General R. E. Rhodes crossed the Potomac at Williamsport, and after a short skirmish, drove off the small defending force. The next day, while most of the men were resting, bathing, and washing their clothes, a fatigue party made attempts to blow up the Conococheague Aqueduct and wreck the other nearby canal structures. Three days later, on the 18th, the remainder of Lee's army crossed into Maryland at Boteler's Ford near Shepherdstown. After moving his army into Maryland, Lee concentrated it at Hagerstown, six miles from the Potomac and 74 from Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, his principal objective.¹⁹²

During the period in which the Army of Northern Virginia was proceeding northward, the canal was the scene of active military operations. At daybreak on June 10, some 250 Virginia cavalry under Major John S. Mosby crossed the Potomac at Muddy Branch to attack Company I, Sixth Michigan Cavalry, on duty near Lock No. 24. Dashing up the towpath, Mosby's Raiders drove in the patrols and chased the retreating Federals to within three miles of Poolesville. The Rebels quickly withdrew after capturing some 17 prisoners and 20 horses. After burning the Union tents, stores, and equipment at Seneca, they proceeded down the towpath and recrossed the river at Muddy Branch.¹⁹³

A daring raid was launched on the 17th by Lieutenant-Colonel Elijah V. White with 125 men against a small Federal company under Captain Samuel C. Means stationed at Point of Rocks. Crossing the river near Catoctin Creek, he sent a company of 70 men toward Frederick, while he took the remainder down the canal towpath, routed Means' company, and captured and burned three wagons and eighteen train cars. After cutting the telegraph wires and tearing up some railroad tracks, he recrossed the river with 53 of the 100 prisoners he had captured, all without the loss of any of his men.¹⁹⁴

A third raid was launched against the Cumberland Division of the canal between Paw Paw Tunnel and the "Narrows" several days before June 20. Although the only available information on the raid appears in a letter from Superintendent Lowe to Clerk Ringgold on that date, it is apparent that the Rebels intended to disrupt canal navigation. One or two lock gates were damaged, and the waterway was cut just below Lock No. 67 and between Locks No. 71 and 72 in a high embankment. Fortunately for the canal company, both breaches were made in slate material which did not wash easily. Thus, all the damage could be repaired in 10 working days with sufficient hands at a cost of about \$600.¹⁹⁵

After a series of engagements between Northern units and remnants of Lee's troops at Aldie, Middleburg, and Upperville in the Loudoun Valley, Lee ordered his main army to proceed from Hagerstown toward Pennsylvania on June 22. Upon learning of the Confederate movement, Hooker on the 25th directed his troops to cross the Potomac into Maryland at Edwards Ferry on a pontoon bridge, the materials for which had been brought up the canal from Washington. Using

¹⁹² O. R., Series I, Vol. XXVII, pt. 2, 549–550; Glenn Tucker, *High Tide at Gettysburg* (New York, 1958), 27–39; Clifford Dowdey, *Death of a Nation* (New York, 1958), 37–41; and Mark Mayo Boatner III, *The Civil War Dictionary* (New York, 1959), 331–332. At the time that the Confederates crossed the river at Shepherdstown, Major General Edward E. Johnson took up headquarters at Ferry Hill Plantation, the house being owned by the father of Henry Kyd Douglas who was a member of his staff. Wilbur Sturdevant Nye, *Here Come the Rebels!* (Baton Rouge, 1965), 147.

¹⁹³ O. R., Series I, Vol. XXVII, 786–788, and John S. Mosby, *Mosby's War Reminiscences - Stuart's Cavalry Campaigns* (New York, 1958), 158–162.

¹⁹⁴ O. R., Series I, Vol. XXVII, pt. 2, 768–771.

¹⁹⁵ Lowe to Ringgold, June 20, 1863, Ltrs. Recd., C&O Co.

the canal towpath and nearby roads, the Army of the Potomac had proceeded to Frederick by the 28th where it interposed itself between Lee's columns and Washington.¹⁹⁶

Meanwhile, General "Jeb" Stewart had commenced his famous Gettysburg Raid with three brigades on June 24 in an effort to circle around Hooker's rear and flank and connect with the Confederate columns marching toward Harrisburg. As the Potomac was two feet above its normal level on the night of June 27 when Stewart determined to cross the river at Rowser's Ford, a short distance below Dam No. 2, he ordered his caissons and limber chests to be emptied and his cavalymen to carry the artillery shells and powder bags across in their arms. Then the guns and caissons were dragged into the water and, completely submerged at times, towed through nearly a mile of water to the Maryland shore below Seneca Creek.¹⁹⁷

Regarding the canal as of strategic value to Hooker, Stuart seized possession of the waterway from Lock No. 23 to the Seneca Aqueduct and ordered his lead company to establish vedettes beyond the canal. To facilitate the crossing of the waterway, a passing barge was commandeered and turned crosswise to serve as an improvised bridge. Twenty dismounted men crossed over to the berm side of the canal and established an outpost, while the remainder of the Rebel forces crossed the waterway over the pivot bridge at Lock No. 23, which the Federals had failed to destroy prior to pulling out of the area. During the night, twelve barges blundered into the vicinity and were promptly commandeered. All were carrying freight except two with loads of Union soldiers, both white and black, en route to Washington. The Confederates found a valuable supply of grain on the boats. The prisoners were marched off toward Rockville, eight miles to the northeast. Before proceeding to Rockville to interdict the main supply route and line of communications for the Union army, Stuart had nine of the canal boats burned both above and below the Seneca Aqueduct, including one in its trunk that damaged the wooden railing. The gates of Lock No. 23 and Guard Lock No. 2 were destroyed and the towpath embankment breached, thereby draining the Monocacy Division of water and causing the other three boats to sink.¹⁹⁸

On June 30, Superintendent Spates of the Monocacy Division reported that his jurisdiction was again in good boating order. The burned and sunken hulls at Seneca had been moved to one side of the canal and would be removed from the trunk as soon as possible. The lock gates had been replaced and the towpath embankment repaired. In addition, his crews had replaced the gates at Locks Nos. 13 and 16 and the pivot bridges at Lock No. 13 and Great Falls, which had been destroyed by the Federals charged with guarding the line of the Potomac. The only remaining problem on his division was the pivot bridges at Lock No. 25 which the Army of the Potomac had used to cross the canal at Edwards Ferry on its way to Pennsylvania. The bridge had been damaged to the extent that it no longer turned on its pivot. Boats were passing in either direction between Seneca and Harpers Ferry in the employ of the federal government.¹⁹⁹

Following the momentous Battle of Gettysburg, July 1-3, the Confederates commenced a retreat toward Virginia. A severe storm made the Potomac unfordable when Lee's advance guard reached Williamsport on July 6. Here Union cavalry under Major General John Buford attacked

¹⁹⁶ Roger S. Cohen, "The Civil War in the Poolesville, Maryland, Area" (Md. Hist. Soc. Mss., 1961), 11.

¹⁹⁷ O. R., Series I, Vol. XXVII, pt. 2, 693, and Nye, *Here Come the Rebels*, 316.

¹⁹⁸ O. R., Series I, Vol. XXVII, pt. 2, 694; Nye, *Here Come the Rebels*, 316-317; Jane Chinn Sween, "A History of Dawsonville and Seneca, Montgomery County, Maryland," (Md. Hist. Soc. Mss., 1967), 70-71; and Spates to President and Directors, June 30, 1863, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co. Although C. E. Detmold, the owner of four of the boats that were burned, later requested that he be relieved from the payment of tolls, the board on January 23, 1864, determined that the "payment of tolls be required on the cargoes of all boats to the points where such cargoes were transported and destroyed." *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, K, 366.

¹⁹⁹ Spates to President and Directors, June 30, 1863, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

the Rebel force under Brigadier General John Daniel Imboden but were repulsed.²⁰⁰ The rest of Lee's army reached Hagerstown on July 7 and entrenched to await replacement of the pontoon bridge at Falling Waters that had been destroyed by Federal cavalry. Confederate engineers quickly began taking canal boats and pieces of houses and lumber to reconstruct the bridges. Following several more skirmishes between Union cavalry and the retreating Rebels in the vicinity of McCoy's Ferry, Clear Spring, and Williamsport on the 8th and the 10th, Lee determined to commence the river crossing before the pontoon bridges were completed as the level of the Potomac had receded to a fordable level. On the 10th, small Rebel contingents began crossing the river in canal boats and hastily-constructed hulls "at the rate of three teams an hour," but the bulk of Lee's army withdrew across the river on the night of July 13-14 over the pontoon bridge that had been finished that morning.²⁰¹ During the crossing, Major General Henry Heth staged a rear-guard action at Falling Waters in which he lost two guns and 500 prisoners to the advancing Federals.²⁰² With the entire Confederate force on the Virginia side of the river by the early afternoon of the 14th, the pontoon bridge was cut loose to allow the river's current to carry it downstream and dash it against the banks. That same afternoon, the Northern army crossed the river into Virginia over a pontoon bridge thrown across the Potomac at Harpers Ferry.²⁰³

After both armies had crossed back into Virginia, canal officials surveyed the condition of the waterway and commenced plans for the restoration of navigation. Superintendent Masters informed canal officials on July 19 that the damage wrought by the Confederates and the late rains on his Williamsport Division would require three weeks of repairs before navigation could be restored.²⁰⁴ Henry S. Miller, the collector at Williamsport, reported on July 22 that he was forwarding the toll permits that he had received for the month of June:

The cause of delay in these permits was an anxiety to have them there in good season - hence when the Rebels came into our place, I gave my permits to a man from our country, who expected to reach Washington, but was arrested, yet was successful in concealing my papers. He has just returned & I hasten them on. Please send me black waybills & return sheets. The Rebs tore in pieces every paper they could find about my office, but, I had all books and papers of importance concealed. We expect to see the boats running in about 2 weeks if the Johnny Rebs do not return. This morning we see their pickets again on the opposite side of the river. I am fearful we are not entirely clear here yet.²⁰⁵

After traveling down the canal from Cumberland to Williamsport, Greene observed on July 25 that navigation had been restored as far down the waterway as Dam No. 5. Provided the Rebel pickets did not reappear on the Virginia shore, the Williamsport Division might be reopened as early as August 1. For more than a week, repair crews had been at work removing sandbars mending the towpath, and patching the Conococheague Aqueduct. He remarked that "It is really wonderful that a month's hostile occupancy of the canal should have resulted in as little damage" for he had heard that the Antietam Division was unharmed. Thus, he was "charmed with the appearance of the work" and was encouraged that the Rebel pickets had disappeared. The one bad break on the Cumberland Division had been repaired, and he was pleased to note that a local farmer had prevented another by cutting a waste weir.²⁰⁶

²⁰⁰ O. R., Series I, Vol. XXVII, pt. 2, 299, 433-436.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 275, 280, 301-303.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, 639-642.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, 301, and J. Warren Gilbert, *The Blue and the Gray* ([Gettysburg], 1922), 121.

²⁰⁴ Masters to Ringgold, July 19, 1863, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

²⁰⁵ Miller to Ringgold, July 22, 1863, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

²⁰⁶ Greene to Ringgold, July 25, 1863, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

Because of his full-scale operations to repair the Williamsport Division, Superintendent Masters did not submit a full report to the board until August 4. The chief damage to his division had occurred at the Conococheague Aqueduct where the Rebels had torn “down to the bottom of the canal the 4 corners” of the structure—an “aggregate space of 74 feet.” All the coping and railing had been thrown into the creek and partially destroyed. A hole had been made in one of the arches “nearly the width of the aqueduct & 6 or 10 feet wide.” The four gates at Lock No. 44 were burned, and the two upper courses of the lock walls had been torn up and thrown into the chamber. Four roads had been made through the canal banks on the division through which the Confederate troops had passed. The aqueduct would be rebuilt “with masonry as high as the water mark or as far as the stone on hand.” The repairs would be completed by August 8 at a total cost of nearly \$5,000.²⁰⁷

Despite the resumption of navigation in the second week of August 1863, the operation of the waterway was disrupted repeatedly by Rebel guerilla raids in which large numbers of mules and quantities of provisions were stolen from the boatmen. A bitter Greene complained to Clerk Ringgold on September 2 that “the canal is again practically closed by the neglect of the Government to afford the boatmen protection.” As a result, numerous boats which arrived at Cumberland were refusing “to load and tie up their boat being unwilling and, in fact, unable to risk the loss of, in many cases, everything they have.” Although the military authorities had promised to “secure” the canal, a large number of boats “have since been disabled by the loss of their teams and have stopped.” He concluded his remarks by observing:

I think it would meet the unanimous approbation of this whole community [Cumberland] if Mosby or White or whoever leads these incursions should ride into Washington some fine night and carry off with them to parts unknown, Gen. Halleck, Sec. Stanton, and everybody else whose duty it was to prevent these shameful raids - - even for their own sakes. If we could only have some heavy rains to raise the river enough to render it unfordable, we might hope to do some business, but our old-fashioned drought is upon us with no prospect of a let-up until winter.²⁰⁸

During the month of August, President Spates sent at least four letters to various Union commanders, complaining that the Federal troops along the canal were not effectively protecting it from the Rebel raids and were, in fact, hindering navigation by seizing horses and mules from the boatmen and damaging canal company property. As a result of the correspondence, additional cavalry units were sent from Washington in late August to guard the canal between Georgetown and the Monocacy River, and the commanders at Harpers Ferry and Hagerstown were ordered to have their troops secure the line of the canal in their areas. Copies of General Orders No. 44, which had been issued on April 21, 1862, were sent to all the officers stationed along the river with instructions not to interfere with navigation on the waterway.²⁰⁹

On September 1, the military authorities arrested a number of Marylanders and confined them at Fort McHenry, charged with having communicated with the enemy or having provided information to the Rebel forces during the Gettysburg campaign. Among those incarcerated were President Spates and William Broun, the contractor building the Virginia abutment at the new masonry Dam No. 5. In the case of Spates, the reason for his confinement was a boast that he had visited General Lee during the campaign. William H. Hoffman, to whom the conversation was

²⁰⁷ Masters to President and Directors, August 4, 1863, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

²⁰⁸ Greene to Ringgold, September 2, 1863, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

²⁰⁹ Hentzelman to Spates, August 13, 22, 1863, Tucker to Spates, August 24, 1863, and Freeman to Spates, August 31, 1863, Spates Papers.

addressed, had passed the information to the military authorities. The men were to be held at the prison facility in Baltimore pending their appearance before a military tribunal on the charges of disloyalty.²¹⁰

The canal board on September 10 appointed Lawrence Brengle as company president *ad interim* during the confinement of Spates. At the same time, Brengle and Director Joseph H. Bradley were ordered to proceed to Baltimore in an effort to procure the release of Spates and Broun.²¹¹

On the 15th, Brengle informed Ringgold concerning the results of the visit to Ft. McHenry. During a conversation with Spates, the confined president had acknowledged that he, in company with Davis Raman, had visited the headquarters of General Lee at Hagerstown during the recent campaign. However, he had not conversed with Lee but with Charles Marshall, one of the General's aides with whom he had been "intimate" in Baltimore before the outbreak of the war.²¹² His visit to Marshall had been made so as to prevent his arrest by Confederate soldiers as he passed along the waterway and "to secure the interest of the canal as far as possible." Because the two canal representatives were unable to affect the release of Spates, Director Bradley intended to meet with Secretary Stanton, who was considered to be more sympathetic to the case. Although the charges against Spates were not conclusive, his enemies along the canal were "striving to keep him in the Fort." The charges against Broun were only rumors, and his release was expected within several days.²¹³

Spates was still confined at Fort McHenry on September 24, when the board received a letter from him urging the adoption of certain measures to serve the interests of the company.²¹⁴ Sometime after that date, he was transferred to the prison at Fort Lafayette in New York. Finally on January 25, 1864, after further intercession on his behalf by company officials, he was released by special order from Secretary Stanton.²¹⁵

Despite the uncertainties caused by Rebel raids and the disarray in the canal leadership, business on the waterway continued to improve after its reopening in mid-August. Evidence of the resurgence of trade was manifested by the new enterprises that were commenced along the line. On September 24, Mortimer Osborn was granted permission to install a counter and shelves in a room of Lockhouse No. 30 for the purpose of selling dry goods and groceries to the passing boatmen.²¹⁶ On the same day, George W. Case, the tender at Locks Nos. 19-20, was authorized to establish a tavern at Crommelin House.²¹⁷ When it was discovered that the company did not own the tract of land adjoining the Potomac Aqueduct that had been rented earlier to George Hill, Jr.,

²¹⁰ Fickey to Ringgold, September 1, 3, 1863, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.; Washington *Evening Star*, September 2, 1863; and Stake to Brengle, September 17, 1863, Ltrs. Recd. C & O Co. This was the second time that Spates was placed under arrest for disloyalty. Although no information could be found concerning his first arrest, it is presumed that it occurred in the aftermath of the Antietam Campaign in 1862.

²¹¹ *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, K, 349-350, and *Middletown Valley Register*, September 18, 1863.

²¹² Spates was a native of Montgomery County, having owned a 287-acre farm, which he called "Contention," along the old road between Washington and Rockville. By 1846 he was living in Baltimore, where he remained until 1853 when he moved to Cumberland to assume the position of Deputy Clerk of the Circuit Court of Allegany County, Cumberland *Alleganian*, June 24, 1876; Cumberland *Daily News*, June 24, 1876; Rockville *Advocate*, June 29, 1876; Rockville *Sentinel*, June 30, 1876; Baltimore *Gazette*, June 28, 1876; Cumberland *Civilian*, June 25, 1876; Card, Lodge No. 48, Independent Order of the Odd Fellows, February 1, 1853; and "Alfred Spates Qualification as Deputy Clerk," March 11, 1853, in Spates Papers.

²¹³ Brengle to Ringgold, September 15, 1863, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

²¹⁴ *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, K, 351.

²¹⁵ Greene to Ringgold, January 25, 1864, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

²¹⁶ *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, K, 351.

²¹⁷ *Ibid*, K, 352.

the company executed a 20-year lease for 200 inches of water power with him for use at his mill located at the corner of Potomac and Water streets in Georgetown which would soon commence operation.²¹⁸ On December 17, Daniel L. White was granted permission to construct a storehouse on the berm side of the canal at Conrad's Ferry.²¹⁹

During this period, the canal company continued to face the problem of inefficiency on the part of some of its division superintendents and of disloyalty charges against others. On September 14, Horace Benton, who had allowed the Georgetown Division to deteriorate, was fired and replaced by John Cameron, a long-time company employee.²²⁰ Later on December 17, the board received an anonymous note charging Superintendent George W. Spates of the Monocacy Division with disloyalty and recommending Alex Dent as his replacement. Although generally dissatisfied with the performance of Spates, the directors took no action on the communication.²²¹

All told, the year 1863 witnessed a tremendous revival in the overall Cumberland coal trade as its aggregate production increased to more than 748,000 tons, only a little less than the amount shipped in 1860 and 430,000 tons more than was shipped in 1862. One of the reasons for the increased orders in the Maryland field was that the Broad Top mines were closed for three months in 1863 as the result of the Gettysburg Campaign and a two-month miners' strike.²²²

The canal shared in the revival of trade as the total tonnage carried on the waterway soared to 265,847 tons, a sum that nearly equaled the combined tonnages of 1861 and 1862. The coal tonnage rose to 229,416 tons, more than double the 94,819 tons that had been transported in 1862. The tolls received from the trade increased to \$154,928.26, compared with the sum of \$134,552.84 collected during the previous two years combined.²²³

In June 1864 the stockholders were informed about the progress of canal trade during 1863 as follows:

The business of the Canal for the past year has been much better than that of the two preceding years; there was less interruption to the trade from military movements and other casualties to which it had been subjected, but for the invasion of June last, which in a great measure suspended business for two months of the most active period of the year, the revenues of the Company would have exceeded those of any former year.

The damages sustained by this invasion required an expenditure of about \$15,000 to restore the navigation and the loss of revenue for two months, which would probably have been not less than \$50,000. With this exception there was but little interruption to the navigation during the season of business which commenced about the 15th of March and continued till near the end of December.²²⁴

²¹⁸ *Ibid*, K, 358, and Ringgold to Hill, November 27, 1863, Ltrs. Sent, C & O Co.

²¹⁹ *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, K, 361.

²²⁰ *Ibid*, K, 349.

²²¹ *Ibid*, K, 361.

²²² Harvey, "Civil War and Maryland Coal Trade", 371.

²²³ Sanderlin, *The Great National Project*, 307.

²²⁴ *Thirty-Sixth Annual Report* (1864), C & O Co., 3.

V. THE CANAL TRADE EXPANSION CONTINUES: 1864

The canal was closed by ice from late December 1863 to early February 1864. At that time, the water was withdrawn to remove obstructions in the prism and make repairs in the banks and masonry structures along the waterway. Navigation was to resume in early March, and the canal board looked forward to even a more prosperous year than the previous one.²²⁵

While the repairs were underway, the canal board confronted a number of issues that were symptomatic of the greatly expanding commerce on the waterway. On February 18, Edward M. Linthicum, a long-time prominent Georgetown merchant, submitted a proposal to the directors for the construction of an inclined plane just west of the Potomac Aqueduct “to pass boats from the canal to the river.” Such a structure would alleviate the growing congestion of the traffic through Georgetown and in the Rock Creek Basin. The board was interested in the idea and determined to visit the Morris Canal in New Jersey in April to observe the world-famous inclined planes operating on that canal. The clerk and the treasurer were directed to procure a topographical survey plat of the company land on the river side of the canal between the aqueduct and the Foundry property.²²⁶

On April 14, President Spates, together with Directors Albert, Brengle, and Watson and the Maryland Commissioners of Public Works proceeded to Newark, New Jersey. Here they were met by W. H. Talcott, the engineer in charge of the works on the Morris Canal who gave them a tour of the canal and a “verbal explanation” of the operation of the inclined planes. Greatly impressed by what they saw, the directors returned to Washington very enthusiastic about the construction of an inclined plane above Georgetown. However, the uncertainties of the war and a shortage of expendable cash prevented the immediate building of the plane.²²⁷

The canal board determined on February 18 to terminate the leases of those parties renting company land west of the tidelock and tumbling dam at the mouth of Rock Creek. The company was anxious to reacquire use of this land so that it could be relet to interests who would install improvements for the transfer of coal to river boats. The current tenants, William H. Godey, Walter Godey, Solomon Stover, Dickson & King, and J. L. Sims, were notified that they were to vacate the property by March 31. At a public meeting on March 15, the property was advertised for new one-year rentals to begin April 1. All the lots were rented to M. P. McPherson, an agent of Edward Mayer of New York, for an annual sum of \$3,760. As he intended to erect the necessary improvements to facilitate the transfer of coal to river boats, the board quickly extended the one-year agreement on the condition that the new operation would be a successful venture. As the current tenants possessed leases to the properties that had not expired, they refused to relinquish their claims to the land. Unable to force the tenants off the lots, the board on April 11 resorted to negotiating equitable arrangements with the lessees in order to turn possession of the property over to the Mayer coal interests as early as possible.²²⁸

As the boating season approached, the board received more applications for the construction of feed stores and warehouses along the canal to accommodate the growing trade. On February 18 the directors forwarded to Superintendent Spates of the Monocacy Division three such requests from M. E. Alexander, L. Roderick, and George P. Ramsberg to build structures near Lock No. 29. Upon the recommendation of Spates, M. E. Alexander was granted permission on March

²²⁵ *Thirty-Sixth Annual Report* 1864), 6.

²²⁶ *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, K, 370–371.

²²⁷ *Ibid*, K, 379. On September 8, 1864, the board paid \$75 to W. C. Smith, a civil engineer, for conducting a survey and drawing plans for the outlet locks to be built at the same location as the proposed site of the inclined planes. *Ibid*, K, 398. Ultimately, the controversy would be settled in the early 1870s when it was determined to build the Georgetown Incline Plane.

²²⁸ *Ibid*, K, 369, 376–378, 381–382.

24 to build a store house on the canal berm near the lock to sell feed and provisions to the boatmen. At the same time, George P. Ramsberg was authorized to build a warehouse on the company land on the canal berm in the vicinity of the lock.²²⁹

Although the canal was reopened to navigation in early March, little trade passes down the waterway for several weeks. On March 14 Superintendent Lloyd Lowe of the Cumberland Division reported:

The canal has been navigable ten days. No boats been loaded. Two or three that was loaded last December has started down. The Boatmen are holding back for an increase on freight. They are having trouble to get hands. I found it necessary last month to advance the pay of Laborers, and will have to continue it to obtain old hands...²³⁰

Three days later the Washington *National Republican* published an article that elaborated on the labor unrest as follows:

nearly all the miners and boatmen have struck for higher wages. The company [Cumberland Coal and Iron Company] refuse to accede to these demands from the fact that to do so would necessarily carry up the price of coal to such a high rate that there would be comparatively little demand for it, especially when brought in competition with a superior coal selling at about the same price. There is very little coal at the mines now, hence this strike is the more unfortunate. If the miners insist upon their demand for increased wages, it is said that the company will discharge the hands and employ others. In such an event, resistance is threatened, but as some of Gen. Sigel's forces are near at hand, it will not amount to much.²³¹

The strike was short-lived for on March 18 Greene wrote from Cumberland that

We shall have a season of great trouble, I fear, in our business. The boatmen have gone to work at two dolls freight 'for the present.' I do not doubt they will make a demand for more, later in the season. The miners are concocting a strike for \$.25 a ton additional! So we go. These demands cannot be granted and I have hardly a hope of avoiding serious suspension of business.²³²

Shortly after commencement of navigation, the board on March 24 took further steps to facilitate the growing coal trade. On that date Edward Lynch proposed to erect a platform and two derricks on the towpath near the Foundry above Georgetown that were to be used for loading and unloading coal. As the structure would eliminate some of the congestion in Georgetown, the board quickly approved the idea. To make room for the new facility, it was decided to change the towpath by passing it from the south side under the canal trunk, through the culvert above the Foundry and on to the road on the north bank. The road was to be repaired and made secure, and a 3-to-4-foot high post & rail fence was to be built along the wall of the north side of the waterway.²³³

²²⁹ *Ibid*, K, 370, 373–374.

²³⁰ Lowe to Ringgold, March 14, 1864, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

²³¹ Washington *National Republican*, March 17, 1864, quoted in Harvey, "Civil War and Maryland Coal Trade," 372–373.

²³² Greene to Ringgold, March 18, 1864, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

²³³ *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, K, 374–375, 387.

The canal was in full operation by late March with fifteen to twenty boats leaving Cumberland every day. However, repairs on the towpath and other structures were still underway. Included in the repairs were the replacement of the gates at Lock No. 72 and the substitution of a causeway for the bridge across the canal opposite the mouth of Patterson Creek, both of which had been burned by Confederate cavalry raiders under Brigadier General Thomas L. Rosser during a sweep of the Patterson Valley in January and February.²³⁴ Among other projects, the company carpenters were put to work building new gates for use in case of an emergency. Because of the war, labor for the work crews was scarce throughout the Potomac Valley, particularly in Montgomery County. The maintenance of the waterway was hindered also by the government's use of some of its scows for the purpose of "moving and building block houses at the different fords on the river in order that the canal may be strongly-guarded this coming season." Company officials continued to face the demands of its employees for higher wages as a result of the war-time inflation.²³⁵

Heavy rains in scattered parts of the Potomac Valley in early April caused some flood damage to the canal, particularly on the Monocacy and Williamsport Divisions. On the former, a heavy earth and rock slide occurred near the Marble Quarry about one mile below Lock No. 26. The level was drained and the rock blasted into powder and removed with wheelbarrows. Although the high water had covered most of the towpath from Seneca Creek to Lock No. 26, the canal banks were not washed badly. As a number of lock gates and balance beams had been broken, a large quantity of timber was purchased at Orleans and Harpers Ferry with which to build replacements. Since the damage was generally light, the division was reopened for boat traffic within a week.²³⁶

On the Williamsport Division the only damage suffered by the canal was the number of sand bars washed into the trunk by the flood waters. Although the high water had covered the towpath on the slackwater behind Dam No. 4 for an unheard-of 15 days, the banks had not been washed significantly. Accordingly, the division was ready for navigation within five days.²³⁷

The board made two significant decisions on April 15 that reflected the rising inflation of the period. After May 1 the toll on the coal would be increased from 5/16 to 3/8 of a cent a ton per mile.²³⁸ At the same time, a new set of wage increases for the company employees would take effect. The pay raises would be as follows:

Collector of Tolls, Georgetown	\$900 (annual)
Division Superintendents	\$1,000 (annual)
Lock-Keepers at Locks Nos. 6–62, 67–72, 75	Present pay plus \$5 per mo.
Lock-Keeper at Locks Nos. 63 1/3–66	\$600 (annual)
Lock-Keeper at Locks Nos. 73–74	\$500 (annual)
Lock-Keeper at Guard Lock No. 8	\$400 (annual)
Repair Crew Bosses	\$45 (monthly) ²³⁹

The increasing trade on the canal during the spring of 1864 was reflected in the growing number of business activities along the waterway. The old Robinson Mill in Georgetown, which had been closed because of the war-induced cutbacks in demand, was purchased in early April by Benja-

²³⁴ Lowe to Ringgold, February 3, March 24, 1864, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

²³⁵ Spates to President and Directors, March 31, 1864, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

²³⁶ Spates to A. Spates, April 16, 19, 1864, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

²³⁷ Masters to Ringgold, April 13, 1864, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

²³⁸ *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, K, 382.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, K, 383.

min Darby and George Shoemaker, Jr., and quickly put back into operation.²⁴⁰ On May 12 the firm of McVeirs and Jones was granted permission to erect a store on the berm side of the canal at Edwards Ferry to sell groceries and feed to the passing boatmen.²⁴¹ That same day the board responded to the inquiry of J. Phillip Roman by authorizing him to build a steam packet and to commence passenger service on the waterway. As an inducement for such an undertaking, the directors agreed to permit the boat to navigate the canal free of tolls and to pay him an annual sum of \$200 as long as the vessel was well-maintained.²⁴² To aid in the repair of the growing number of boats on the waterway, John Ellis was permitted on June 2 to commence construction of a dry dock above Lock No. 14.²⁴³

The canal company stockholders were informed at their annual meeting on June 6 that navigation on the waterway was proceeding at a brisk pace. Although there had been brief interruptions from high water in April, no material injuries had been inflicted on the canal by the frequent and unusual rising of the river during the spring. The rising price of coal in 1863–64 had allowed the company to raise its toll on that product. It was believed that the

advanced rates will not injuriously affect the coal interest, will materially increase the revenues of the Company, enable them to keep the Canal in good condition, make permanent improvements upon it, insure to a greater extent than heretofore, uninterrupted navigation, and to materially reduce during the present year, pressing and meritorious pecuniary obligations, which have been an incubus upon its revenues, and greatly restricted essential improvements during the past three years.

Many new boats had been built during the past year, and it was predicted that the higher coal prices would encourage the construction of more vessels. Up until May 31, 101,390 tons of coal had been shipped on the waterway, producing \$74,988.58 in toll receipts.²⁴⁴

During the month of July, more requests from local valley residents reached the canal board, asking for permission to build warehouses and grocery and feed stores along the waterway to take advantage of the increasing commerce passing over the line. On July 7 Greenbury Foot was authorized to build a feed store near Lock No. 28.²⁴⁵ That same day a request from Daniel F. Roderick to construct a grain warehouse near Lock No. 29 was referred to Superintendent Spates for comment.²⁴⁶ Later on the 28th, another proposal from Charles F. Elgin to build a warehouse at Edwards Ferry for shipping granite from the nearby quarry was submitted to Spates for a recommendation.²⁴⁷

Before any action could be taken on these proposals, the canal again became the scene of active military activities. In late June, Lieutenant General Jubal A. Early was sent to clear Union forces from the Shenandoah Valley. Having accomplished this objective, Early, with 14,000 men, was directed to cross the Potomac and march toward Washington in an effort to relieve the Northern siege of Petersburg, rail head of the roads leading to Richmond and an important industrial center of the waning Confederacy, begun on June 19.²⁴⁸ He was also to destroy the canal and the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad..

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, K, 375, 380–381.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, K, 380, 385.

²⁴² *Ibid.*, K, 387.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, K, 391.

²⁴⁴ *Thirty-Sixth Annual Report* (1864), 5–6.

²⁴⁵ *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, K, 393.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁸ Frank E. Vandiver, *Jubal's Raid: General Early's Famous Attack on Washington in 1864* (New York,

At the same time that Early was preparing to cross into Maryland, a band of guerrillas under Mosby forded the river near Lock No. 28, about one mile above Point of Rocks, on July 4. At the lock, the Confederates attacked a canal excursion boat with a number of Treasury Department officials aboard who were traveling from Harpers Ferry to Washington. All valuables were taken, several passengers were taken prisoner, and the boat was set on fire. The Rebels proceeded to Point of Rocks where they took many private possessions, burned a warehouse, robbed several stores, and burned military equipment left behind by a retreating Federal detachment. After raiding Poolesville where they committed further depredations, the raiders recrossed the river below Point of Rocks.²⁴⁹

Early reached the vicinity of the Potomac River near Harpers Ferry on July 4 and prepared to cross into Maryland. Fighting broke out at South Branch Bridge, Patterson's Creek Bridge, and Frankford, West Virginia, and a portion of the Confederate cavalry occupied Shepherdstown. As they retreated before the Rebels, Union troops under Major General Franz Sigel burned the bridge at Lock No. 38.

During the night of the 4th, the Union forces evacuated Harpers Ferry and took position on Maryland Heights after burning the railroad and pontoon bridges across the river. After finding Harpers Ferry too difficult to take because of the Northern guns commanding the town from Maryland Heights, Early began crossing the Potomac into Maryland at Boteler's Ford near Shepherdstown on the 5th. As a result, skirmishes were fought at Keedysville, Noland's Ferry, Point of Rocks, and Solomon's Gap. A portion of his men were sent to encamp near Antietam Furnace from where working parties were dispatched to destroy the Antietam Aqueduct and the nearby canal locks and burn as many boats as possible during the night. Early himself participated in the burning of several canal barges near the aqueduct.²⁵⁰ On the 6th, Early's Confederates captured Hagerstown and skirmished at Sir John's Run and Big Cacapon Bridge, West Virginia, and Antietam Creek, Maryland. The following day saw fighting at Middletown, Brownsville, and Catoctin. After encounters at Antietam, Frederick and Sandy Hook on the 8th, miscellaneous Federal units gathered under Major General Lew Wallace in an effort to halt the move on Washington. On the 9th, 6,000 bluecoats stood directly in the way of the Confederate advance on Washington. Early's 10,000 infantry moved toward the Monocacy River several miles southeast of Frederick. After a stiff fight, the Federals were routed and the way to Washington was clear. Skirmishes took place at Rockville and Gunpowder Bridge on the 10th. The Confederates reached Silver Spring the following day, and fighting ensued in the Northern outskirts of the Northern capital, particularly at Fort Stevens. Seeing Federal troops moving into the massive fortifications of the city, Early commenced a withdrawal toward the Potomac on the 13th, and after several fire fights at Rockville and Poolesville he crossed his infantry and artillery at Conrad's Ferry and his cavalry at Edwards Ferry. To delay pursuit, the Confederate rear guard burned the towpath bridge across the Edwards Ferry River Locks.²⁵¹

During the 10-day period that Early was advancing on Washington, a number of Confederate raiding parties were sent out to wreak as much havoc against the canal as possible. As a result, lock gates, bridges, and canal boats were burned in addition to the extensive damage to the Antietam Aqueduct. The principal damage to the canal occurred on the Monocacy, Antietam, and

1960), 59–88.

²⁴⁹ Mantz to Smith, July 5, 1864, in William E. Bain, ed., *B & O in the Civil War from the Papers of Wm. Prescott Smith* (Denver, 1966), 99–100.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 88, and Frank E. Vandiver, ed., *War Memories: Jubal Anderson Early* (Bloomington, 1960), 383–385.

²⁵¹ *A Memoir of the Last Year of the War for Independence in the Confederate States of America* (Lynchburg, 1867), 54–62; Long, *Civil War Day by Day*, pp.533–539; O. R., Series I, Vol. XXXVII, pt. 1, pp. 169–358; and Vandiver, *Jubal's Raid*, 89–121, 148–174.

Williamsport Divisions, while no injuries to canal structures were reported between Georgetown and Seneca and between South Branch and Hancock.²⁵²

On the Monocacy Division, the damage was concentrated on the portion of the line between Locks Nos. 24 and 29. The gates of Lock No. 24 were destroyed, while those at Lock No. 25 were “thrown down, [the] beams cut off, [and] one gate cut in two.” The bridge at the Edwards Ferry River Locks was burned and thrown into the waterway. The gates at Lock No. 26, near White’s Ford where Early’s troops had crossed the river back into Virginia, were thrown down and burned. One of the lock chamber’s walls was torn down for some 30 feet in length and from 2 to 4 feet in depth. The gates of Lock No. 29 were taken down and cut. None of the other masonry structures on the division were damaged, but many tools and wheelbarrows had been taken. Two boats had been burned—the packet *Flying Cloud* and the new ice breaker scow. Attempts had been made to burn the repair crew’s houseboat, but Mrs. Null, the cook, had defended it successfully. A large force of laborers, carpenters, and masons was soon at work on the repairs, and it was expected that the division would be ready for navigation by August 1.²⁵³

The Antietam Division suffered considerable damage. Four lock gates and between 35 and 41 canal boats were burned. The most critical damage occurred at the Antietam Aqueduct where most of the masonry on the berm and towpath parapets was destroyed. A portion of two of the arches was also torn out. As the entire countryside was in such a state of panic, workers, particularly masons were difficult to find until the end of July. Finally, on the 28th, the directors ordered Superintendent John Cameron of the Georgetown Division to proceed to the aqueduct “as early as practicable” to superintend the repairs.²⁵⁴

Considerably less injury was inflicted on the Williamsport Division. Nine boats, one of which was loaded, were burned, and six lock gates were cut at the heel posts. The railing was torn off the Conococheague Aqueduct, and the lock shanty at Williamsport was burned. The small bridge at Four Locks was also destroyed. While none of the damage was critical enough to interrupt travel for more than several days, the leaks in Dam No. 5, coupled with a summer drought, were so serious that the water on the division was too shallow to pass loaded barges. The repair crews had scattered during the raids, so it would be some time before the canal could be tightened.²⁵⁵

The Cumberland Division received some damage, primarily in the vicinity of Lock No. 68. The bridge over the lock was burned, and the masonry and gates partially damaged. Fourteen boats were captured in the vicinity of the lock and after the horses and mules were unhitched, the craft, most of which were loaded with coal, were set on fire. The Patterson Creek railroad bridge was burned as was the temporary bridge over the canal at that point. Even more serious to the operation of this division was the continuing drought which prevented the passage of boats drawing more than four feet of water.²⁵⁶

The Confederate raids had a devastating impact on canal trade and the economic fortunes of the towns along its line. Aware of what damage guerillas could do to their mule teams and boats, the boatmen at Georgetown balked at leaving the security of the town. From the Potomac Aqueduct west to Chain Bridge, their barges formed a solid chain. With no grain the mills were

²⁵² Washington *National Intelligencer*, July 15, 1864.

²⁵³ Spates to Ringgold, July 16, 1864, and Spates to President and Directors, July 25, 1864, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co. Also see John S. Mosby, *Mosby and His Men* (New York, 1867), 210–223.

²⁵⁴ Benton to Ringgold, July 20, 1864, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co., and *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, K, 392–393.

²⁵⁵ Masters to Ringgold and Miller to Ringgold, July 18, 1864, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

²⁵⁶ Lowe to Ringgold, July 25, 1864, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

closed, and with no coal or flour the coasting vessels were idled. It was reported that “Georgetown was like Sunday on Tuesday.”²⁵⁷

In view of the needed repairs and the rising price of coal, the board on July 25 ordered an increase in the toll on that product. The rate, which was to take effect on August 1, would be raised from 3/8 of a cent to 1/2 cent a ton per mile.²⁵⁸

The directors also became embroiled in a controversy with the Treasury Department at this time over the payment of a 2½ percent federal tax on the gross receipts of the revenues of the company. Congress had passed a bill on June 30 imposing such a tax on canals and other corporations to help finance the war effort. In July and August, canal officials resisted the claim, insisting that by Section 9 of the Act of the General Assembly of the State of Virginia incorporating the canal which was approved by Section 1 of the Act of Congress on March 3, 1825, the waterway was tax exempt. Refuting such an allegation, Assistant Assessor R. B. Ferguson informed Clerk Ringgold on August 27:

Section 9 of the act of incorporation by the General Assembly of Virginia declares that said canal shall ‘be forever exempt from the payment of any tax imposition or assessment whatsoever.’ This I understand to apply only so far as the State of Virginia is concerned. Section 1 of the Act of Congress above referred to ratifies and confirms the act of incorporation by the State of Virginia only so far as the District of Columbia is concerned; or in other words, the general provisions of the incorporating act is thereby extended over that part of the Ches. & Ohio Canal in the District of Columbia. I do not understand this section of the Act of Congress to say or to mean that the Ches. & Ohio Canal shall ‘be forever exempt from the payment of any tax, imposition or assessment whatsoever.’²⁵⁹

Near the end of July, the canal again became the scene of military hostilities. After routing the Federals under General George Crook at the Second Battle of Kernstown, Virginia, on July 24, Early’s Confederates in the northern Shenandoah followed the retreating bluecoats in a heavy rain to Bunker Hill, north of Winchester. Fighting erupted at Bunker Hill, Martinsburg, and Williamsport on the 25th, and the Union troops crossed the Potomac at Boteler’s Ford on the 26th and encamped near Hagerstown, leaving guards at all the Potomac River fords between Antietam Creek and Hancock.²⁶⁰

As Early carried out an operation to destroy portions of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad in the northern Shenandoah, changes were made in the Union command along the Potomac better to oppose the new Rebel threat. On the 29th Early’s cavalry under Brigadier General John McCausland crossed the Potomac at McCoy’s Ferry. Marching directly on Clear Spring, the Rebels drove a 400-man Federal cavalry unit five miles back toward Hagerstown before proceeding to Mercersburg, Pennsylvania. The following day saw the firing of Chambersburg and further skirmishing at Emmitsburg, Monocacy Junction, and Shepherdstown.

Entering Hancock early on the morning of the 31st, the Rebels under McCausland demanded a ransom of \$30,000 and 5,000 cooked rations from the town. Although this demand could not be met, the citizens collected all the money they could raise and delivered it to the Rebel commander. Among the funds handed over to the invaders were “large sums of script, bonds,

²⁵⁷ *Washington Evening Star*, July 9, 1864, and *Washington Daily Intelligencer*, July 22, 1864.

²⁵⁸ *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, K, 395.

²⁵⁹ Ferguson to Ringgold, August 27, 1864, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

²⁶⁰ O. R., Series I, Vol. XXXVII, pt. 1, 326–331, and Long, *Civil War Day by Day*, 545–546.

and acceptances of the [canal] company” that were taken from Jacob Snively, the collector at the town.²⁶¹

Federal cavalry under Averell pursuing the Confederates attacked them at Hancock later in the day. The Rebels pulled out to the northwest toward Cumberland. Here on August 1 the Confederates staged an assault on the Union lines stretched along the heights two miles east of the city near Folck’s Mill overlooking the valley of Evitts Creek.²⁶²

During the night the Rebels abandoned the field and on August 2 they proceeded down the Oldtown Road toward the Deep Cut. Here the 153d Ohio, after destroying Cresap’s Bridge over the canal, had taken position on Alum Hill. While Confederate artillery softened the Federals, several Virginia battalions marched toward a section of the canal that had been left unguarded by the bluecoats. Wrecking a nearby building, the Confederates used the timbers to bridge the waterway. Crossing the canal, the Rebels quickly turned the Ohioans’ flank and forced them to flee across the Potomac. On the south side of the river some of the Union soldiers were posted behind the railroad embankment while others boarded an ironclad train that had been brought down from Cumberland. The train, consisting of four armored cars with three guns on each, was soon knocked out by the Confederate artillery, and the Ohioans were forced to surrender.²⁶³

Meanwhile, the Confederates had begun to sense trouble as more Federals were moving into the area. Moreover, Major General Philip H. Sheridan had been named commander of the Army of the Shenandoah on August 1 with the specific task of ridding the Valley of Early and all Confederates. Thus, while the Ohioans were surrendering at Oldtown, Early’s cavalry were fighting a rear-guard action at Hancock as they recrossed the Potomac. After a day of rest on the 3rd, Early’s men skirmished at Antietam Ford, Maryland, on the 4th, as they remained a bane of the Federal forces in Virginia.²⁶⁴ The following day skirmishing broke out at Keedysville, Williamsport, and Hagerstown as Confederate units once more entered Maryland in a brief foray. Following a period of maneuvering on the Shenandoah as Sheridan attempted to destroy the Confederate guerillas under Early and Mosby, Early advanced toward the Potomac in late August but found all the fords between Shepherdstown and Williamsport well guarded.²⁶⁵

The Confederate raids into Maryland and the Federal attempts to quash the guerilla movements took their toll on the trade of the waterway. The Washington newspapers reported on the dismal fortunes of the canal during this period. On August 9 the *Chronicle* observed that the damage done to the waterway and to the boats along its line would “keep back over a hundred thousand tons of coal from the Washington market this season.” Although repairs had commenced on the Antietam Aqueduct, Rebel forces in the vicinity had driven the crews away by firing across the river.²⁶⁶

The *Evening Star* of August 22 gave even a darker picture of the effect of the military activities on the canal. The plight of the waterway was described as follows:

Business upon the canal amounts to nothing comparatively. All that was received since the 1st of August by the canal was wood from farms within 20 miles of town. Ice from Middleton’s ice-houses, 12 miles distant [at Widewater], and a few hundred bushels of grain from points on the canal, the most distant of which is Berlin, 55 miles. The total number of arrivals was 20, an average of one daily up to last Saturday.

²⁶¹ *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, K, 398–399.

²⁶² O. R., Series I, Vol. XXXVII, pt. 1, 188–189, 354–355.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*, and Lowe to Ringgold, August 25, 1864, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

²⁶⁴ Long, *Civil War Day by Day*, 549–551.

²⁶⁵ Joel J. Williamson, *Mosby’s Rangers* (New York, 1896), 220–222.

²⁶⁶ *Washington Chronicle*, August 9, 1864.

The prospect of reopening of the coal trade this season is regarded by the agents of the companies as very unpromising.²⁶⁷

As there was no through navigation at all during the month of August, only \$398.80 in tolls was collected giving the canal its new low for a single month since July 1861.²⁶⁸

As a result of effective Federal cavalry operations the Potomac Valley was quiet by early September, and the scene of small military skirmishes and raids moved well back into the Shenandoah Valley. On the 8th the board, taking cognizance of the return of calm to the valley, commenced to place the canal back into operation. The directors determined

That the payment of toll be required on such boats as were destroyed by burning, only for the distance which the cargo was transported, and that the several Supts. be directed to deliver such coal as has been removed from the canal, as far as practicable, to the several owners thereof.²⁶⁹

The prospects for reopening the canal to boat traffic were more encouraging by mid-September than they had been for nearly two months. In an article on the 13th, the Washington *Evening News* reported that:

The news from the western divisions of the canal is cheering. The repairs are progressing rapidly, and it is hoped that the empty boats which are lying at Georgetown, about fifty in number, will be able to go through to Cumberland before the close of the week, and that next week the coal trade will be reopened, and all the docks be as noisy as ever, with the busy beavers employed in receiving the cargoes for shipment at the wharves.

Up to this date [during the month of September] the arrivals by the canal were an even dozen. Of these, three were rafts bringing iron from Cabin John Bridge; six were boats laden with wood from points within twenty miles of town; two boats laden with grain and flour, and one with hay, all from landings within forty-five miles of town. In the same time there were twenty-one departures, three of these boats, venturing to try to pass through to Cumberland; the others were bound for nearer landings.

Of these five only carried cargoes, principally dry goods, groceries, lumber and fertilizers. The resumption of trade through to Cumberland will restore to Georgetown the appearance of life which was visible just before the rebel raid which suspended the trade by this route.²⁷⁰

Encouraged by these developments, the representatives of the Allegany County coal companies met in mid-September to agree upon joint action with reference to the demands of the miners and boatmen for higher rates. The result of the conference was that the demands of both groups were met. The price for mining was fixed at \$1 per ton and that for transportation was set at \$3 per ton.²⁷¹

²⁶⁷ Washington *Evening Star*, August 22, 1864.

²⁶⁸ *Thirty-Seventh Annual Report* (1865), C & O Co., Appendix B, 10.

²⁶⁹ *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, K, 398.

²⁷⁰ Washington *Evening Times*, September 13, 1864.

²⁷¹ Cumberland *Alleganian*, September 21, 1864, quoted in Harvey, *Civil War and Maryland Coal Trade*, 376.

Meanwhile, the repair crews which had commenced work shortly after the Confederate withdrawal had the canal ready for navigation by September 20. However, the repairs and clean-up details continued at their jobs until the end of the month. Superintendent Benton of the Antietam Division reported on October 1 that he had just completed the removal of 24 loaded coal boats that had been burned and sunk between Dams Nos. 3 and 4. Moreover, four new lock gates had been installed at Lock No. 37, and the Antietam Aqueduct had been completed with the aid of Superintendent Cameron of the Georgetown Division.²⁷²

Superintendent Masters of the Williamsport Division informed canal officials on October 3 that he had commenced repairs as soon as the Rebels had left the country. Considerable damage had been done to the upper portion of the Conococheague Aqueduct during the last raid. However, the major problem on the division was the leaks in Dam No. 5 which had resulted in a shortage of water for passing loaded boats down to Dam No. 4. After some boats were partially unloaded at Guard Lock No. 5 on September 30 to allow them to proceed down the canal, a rain storm on October 1 had raised the level of water behind the dam. Repair crews were at work tightening the structure and hopefully would succeed in patching the leaks before the water level fell again.²⁷³

Periodic night forays across the Potomac by Confederate guerilla units under Mosby and White continued to hamper canal operations during September and October. Known as "Mosby's Rangers," and "White's Battalion" or the "Loudoun Rangers," these roving bands numbering some 400 men spread fear among the boatmen along the canal as they staged a series of lightning raids into Maryland to steal horses and mules, burn barges, destroy Baltimore & Ohio trains, and cut the telegraph wires leading from Washington.²⁷⁴ On September 29, the company officials received word from A. C. Greene at Cumberland that the

Rebs are stealing the horses from the Boats clear to Cumbd. Two boats have been robbed within ten miles of Cumbd. and last night a gang of McNeill's men crossed at Black Oak bottom, passed over Will's Mountain into the valley of Georges Creek and swept the coal mines of their horses. The American Co. lost sixteen.

Greene went on to complain that the Union army commander at Cumberland was doing nothing to counter the tactics of the guerrillas:

In the meantime Gen. Kelly sits in Cumbd. surrounded by thousands of men but takes no steps to prevent or to punish their maraudings. I wish you would impress upon [Secretary of War] Stanton the facts and the consequences resulting from them. The canal trade is paralyzed by reason of them.²⁷⁵

The most notorious raid occurred on the night of October 14 when some 80 of Mosby's men under Captain William Chapman crossed the Potomac at White's Ford, four miles below the mouth of the Monocacy River. Moving up the towpath, the marauders burned some ten canal boats loaded with freight after stealing about 20 horses and mules from the boatmen. They also wreaked havoc on the Noland's Ferry Bridge by tearing loose its superstructure and throwing the debris into the canal. The Rebel band then passed through Licksville to Adamstown, cutting the telegraph wires along the route. After fighting off a Union cavalry unit near Point of Rocks, the

²⁷² Benton to President and Directors, October 1, 1864, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

²⁷³ Masters to President and Directors, October 3, 1864, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

²⁷⁴ Williamson, *Mosby's Rangers*, 249–250.

²⁷⁵ Greene to Spates, September 29, 1864, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

Rebels reached the canal only to find a detachment of Federal infantry tearing up the bridge across the waterway and throwing the timber into the prism. Quickly routing them, Chapman had his men relay the bridge and recross the river at Cheek's Ford. The Confederate unit reached the Virginia shore in safety without having any injuries throughout the entire operation.²⁷⁶

Two days after the raid, on the 16th, Superintendent Spates of the Monocacy Division informed canal officials of the consequences of the foray. Many boatmen between Dams Nos. 2 and 3 were refusing to move their vessels as there were no Union guards between Muddy Branch and Nolands Ferry. Unless Federals were posted along the river between those two locations, navigation on that stretch of the canal would stop.²⁷⁷

Two weeks later, on the 30th, Superintendent Spates informed the directors that the canal was functioning very well. Federal army units had been placed along the river from Muddy Branch to Nolands Ferry, and the boatmen were making every effort to use the remaining balance of the season to the best advantage. However, there were several problems on his division. The bridge over the canal at Nolands Ferry that had been destroyed by the Rebels had not been replaced. As the military was no longer using the ferry at that location, he had ordered his crews to gather up the timbers and put them in a secure place until the ferry was reopened and the bridge was needed. The feed store at Lock No. 28 was being utilized as a picket station by Northern troops, thus depriving the owner of its use. The Baltimore & Ohio Railroad had placed a stationary engine along the berm side of the canal at Sandy Hook to pump a considerable quantity of water from that portion of the trunk to supply a heavy trade on their line. This action, which he had not approved, was reducing the level of the water in the canal to such an extent that some loaded boats were scraping the bottom.²⁷⁸

The normal functioning of the canal during the remainder of the boating season was reflected in the expanding business ventures along the line. Consideration was given to a request by Cyrus Dellinger on November 10 to erect a feed store at Williamsport to cater to the needs of the passing boatmen.²⁷⁹ On December 9 the directors granted permission to Dan S. White to occupy and use the warehouse that he had constructed at Conrad's Ferry prior to the summer Confederate raids for the receipt, storage, and transportation of coal on the waterway.²⁸⁰

Perhaps the most ambitious project to be undertaken at this time was the decision of the Consolidation Coal Company to install new hoisting machinery and make other improvements for the transshipment of coal at the Linthicum-owned wharf in Georgetown. As water from the canal would be needed to operate the new hoisting apparatus, the directors determined to allow the coal company

to take so much water from the canal, not exceeding the quantity necessary to pass a loaded boat into the river and back again as may be needed to make their experiment with the pneumatic cylinder in transferring coal from the canal to the river.

The water was to be leased from the canal company on terms similar to those that had been granted earlier to William Ray and the Swanton Coal Company for the installation of unloading machinery.²⁸¹

²⁷⁶ Williamson, *Mosby's Rangers*, 264–267, and Spates to Ringgold, October 16, 1864, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

²⁷⁷ Spates to Ringgold, October 16, 1864, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

²⁷⁸ Spates to President and Board of Directors, October 30, 1864, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

²⁷⁹ *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, K, 406.

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, K, 410.

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*, K, 406–407.

Despite the quickened pace of business activity on the canal, there were still numerous reports of discouraging developments along the waterway. On November 10 the directors were informed by W. C. Smith, a civil engineer who was under contract to the company, that he had measured recently the amount of water used by various mills and coal wharves at Georgetown. He had found that most of the establishments were using large amounts of water in excess of the quantities allowed by their leases. Accordingly, the Superintendent of the Georgetown Division was authorized to install new water gauges that were approved by Smith at each of the mills. The cost of the new devices was to be paid by the mill owners. Henceforth the canal company would initiate action against those millers who continued to disregard their leases.²⁸²

On the same day that the board received word of the water problem, it was notified of other events along the line that were related to the military situation in the Potomac Valley. Superintendent Spates of the Monocacy Division reported that he had been robbed recently of \$50 by several Union soldiers while carrying out his duties.²⁸³ George Hardy, the tender of the important Harpers Ferry locks, Nos. 35–36, had been drafted into the Federal army, and his wife and children were operating the locks in his absence.²⁸⁴ Obadiah Barger, an old man who had tended Locks Nos. 45–46 for a number of years until Susan Newcomer was appointed to the position in September 1864, complained that she had never worked at the locks but instead had assigned her job to an inexperienced youth without informing the division superintendent. As he was an aged man who could not support himself in another occupation, he requested and received his old lock-tender job back.²⁸⁵

More discouraging news arrived from Superintendent Spates on November 30. Although the Monocacy Division was operating, the locks, waste weirs, and flumes were showing signs of considerable decay. The feeder outside Guard Lock No. 3 was almost filled with sediment and there were large sand bars inside the feeder for some 200 yards. The Union soldiers stationed along the canal had filled up the towpath and berm sides of several culverts, and when he had ordered his repair crews to clear the culvert barrels the soldiers had prevented the work. The family of the lock-keeper at Lock No. 33 was “much annoyed and almost driven from the lock by the offensive odor arising from the embalming of dead bodies” in a nearby company-owned house that had been rented to the embalming parties by Messrs. Robias and Rogers, its tenants. Allen M. Benson, the keeper at Lock No. 27 had been fired “for disobedience of orders and for destroying and threatening to destroy the Company’s property.”²⁸⁶

After the canal was closed by ice in early December, President Spates began to press the military for the removal of obstructions in the culverts. Accordingly, Brigadier General E. B. Tyler informed Spates on December 21 that orders had been issued to open all the culverts that had been closed by the military. As he fully appreciated “the importance of the canal to both the Government and the public,” Tyler promised that he would not permit his men “to interrupt its workings.”²⁸⁷

Despite the Confederate raids and the lingering uneasiness of the military situation in the Potomac Valley, the year 1864 was a profitable one for the Cumberland coal trade and the canal company. Writing in the *Merchants’ Magazine and Commercial Review* in May 1865, concerning the rising demand for coal to support the Northern war effort, C. B. Conant stated that

²⁸² *Ibid.*, K, 407, 419, 422–423.

²⁸³ *Ibid.*, K, 405.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁵ Barger to Brengle, Spates, and Watson (three letters), November 4, 1864, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

²⁸⁶ Spates to President and Directors, November 30, 1864, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

²⁸⁷ Tyler to Spates, December 21, 1864, in Spates Papers.

more coal was demanded [in 1864] by private manufacturers and carriers engaged in making and transporting arms, munitions, and supplies for Government.

The federal government itself increased its consumption of coal by 200,000 tons in 1861 to 1,000,000 tons in 1864.²⁸⁸

The prosperous year also saw an increase in the coal trade statistics on the canal. The total tonnage on the line rose by nearly 10 percent over the 1863 figure to 290,772 tons. The amount of coal shipped over the canal increases by some 12 percent over the total for the previous year to 260,368 tons. The rise in trade, as well as the increase in tolls on coal, enabled the company to realize a 32 percent increase in revenue from tolls over the previous year's totals to \$225, 897.34. All told, the year 1864 saw the highest total tonnage carried on the waterway since 1860, and it was the third best year in that respect in the history of the company. In terms of the revenue derived from the tolls, it was the most profitable in the history of the canal to date.²⁸⁹

At the annual meeting of the stockholders held on June 5, 1865, President Spates reported on the progress of the waterway during 1864. He observed that

We have the satisfaction to state that the business of the Company for the past year has been more prosperous than any preceding year since its organization; that the condition of the Canal has been better than for many years previously; and that the transportation upon it was more regular and less interrupted, until the invasion of the enemy in July last, when material damages were sustained, and the navigation was suspended for three months of the most active and profitable portion of the year. The cost of repairs from the destruction of the works did not exceed \$12,000, but it was estimated that the revenues of the Company were diminished by the casualty to the extent of \$200,000, and about eighty boats were destroyed, thus reducing the means of transportation after the resumption of navigation.²⁹⁰

²⁸⁸ C. B. Conant, "Coal Fever: The Price and Prospects of Anthracite Coal," *Merchants' Magazine and Commercial Review*, (May 1865), 359.

²⁸⁹ Sanderlin, *The Great National Project*, 307.

²⁹⁰ *Thirty-Seventh Annual Report* (1865), 3.

VI. PEACE COMES TO THE CANAL: 1865

The extreme severity of the 1864–65 winter closed the canal to navigation earlier than usual in December and precluded the commencement of repairs until spring. The Potomac River and the canal were still frozen in late February arousing fears that the spring coal trade would be hindered, and even worse, that an ice freshet might sweep down the valley when warmer weather broke up the ice. The Hagerstown *Mail* reported on February 25 that:

It has been hoped that there would be a speedy reopening of the navigation to Cumberland, and some of the dealers have expected to receive supplies of coal by the 1st of March; but this is considered by the superintendent of the canal as an impossibility. The ice on the western levels is very thick and bank high. A sudden freshet is dreaded, and not without reason, for such a freshet, bringing down the ice, would be very dangerous to the lower sections, and might so damage the canal as to delay navigation for a considerable length of time. It is ordered by the Canal Commissioners that the water shall be drawn off at this terminus on the 22d instant, and the workmen will proceed at once to repair damages, which will probably require ten days to complete the work. After which the route will be opened as soon as possible, and the coal and produce trade will be resumed. The quantity of supplies at the western depots will require a large number of boats for transportation.²⁹¹

Not only were the Potomac Valley residents concerned about the weather, but they were also alarmed by two daring Confederate raids at Cumberland and Edwards Ferry in late February. On the night of February 21–22, some 65 men, known as McNeill's Rangers, crossed the Potomac near Brady's Mills and entered Cumberland while approximately 8,000 Federals were encamped in the city. After destroying the office of the military telegraph, the Rebels captured Generals Kelly and Crook while they were sleeping and took them, along with their horses, down the canal towpath to Wiley's Ford, where they crossed the river into Virginia. A Federal cavalry company pursued the guerrillas to Romney, where a skirmish occurred, but the prisoners were already on their way to Richmond.²⁹² Relative to the foray at Edwards Ferry, the New York *Times* reported on February 26:

A night or two ago a squad of White's guerrillas crossed the Potomac River, in the neighborhood of Edward's Ferry, and drove in our pickets. They shot three men of the First Delaware Cavalry, who are on duty there, and carried off a number of horses. A part of the gang visited a store in the neighborhood, and took from it all the articles they could carry off. They then retired across the river into Virginia, not however, without loss, for one of their number was killed and two others so seriously wounded as to render it necessary to hold them upon their horses while recrossing the river. One of our men is supposed to be mortally wounded.²⁹³

Early in March the anxieties of the Potomac Valley residents were realized when a heavy freshet resulted from the simultaneous breaking up of the large ice flows in the river and considerable downpours of rain. The canal banks and the towpath were washed in many places, but with the

²⁹¹ Hagerstown *Mail*, February 25, 1865.

²⁹² Lowdermilk, *History of Cumberland*, 420–422, and New York *Times*, February 26, 1865.

²⁹³ New York *Times*, February 26, 1865, and Ray Eldon Hiebert and Richard K. MacMaster, *A Grateful Remembrance: The Story of Montgomery County, Maryland* (Rockville, 1976), 175.

exception of some logs being removed from the cribs on the Virginia side of Dam No. 5, there were no serious breaches or injuries to the masonry work. After quick remedial repairs, the canal was ready for navigation about March 20. However, business was not actively resumed until April 1, because the coal shippers had not made satisfactory arrangements for transportation.²⁹⁴

Following a period of negotiations, the canal company agreed on March 9 to rent the property on the west side of the Rock Creek Basin to the federal government until the end of the war. Earlier on September 8, 1864, the New York-based Mayer interests that had rented the land in March notified canal officials that they were no longer interested in the property as a result of the delay in gaining possession of it. Accordingly, the company issued writs of ejectment against the defiant tenants, who then rented their properties to the Quartermaster Department. On November 14 the Circuit Court of the District of Columbia ruled in favor of the canal company by dispossessing the tenants of their claims to the land. However, the military already had established facilities on the property, and the canal company was forced to continue renting the land to the government at the same monthly rates that had been negotiated by the ex-tenants.²⁹⁵

Meanwhile, the Civil War was drawing to a close. After completing his “march to the sea,” Union General William T. Sherman struck northward through the Carolinas on February 1 to unite with Grant in Virginia. Within six weeks, the capitals and major cities of both North and South Carolina were in Federal hands. On April 2 Grant broke the Confederate position at Five Forks, 16 miles southwest of Petersburg, and Lee’s Army of Northern Virginia was forced to retreat westward. After the ragged 28,000 man army was surrounded near Appomattox Court House, Lee surrendered his command to Grant on April 9.²⁹⁶

After the commencement of navigation on April 1, commerce on the waterway proceeded at a slow pace and came to a standstill by April 26. The end of the war meant the reduction of choice government contracts for manufactured goods with an inevitable reflection on the coal trade. With the restoration of normal competition, the Cumberland coal interests began to look for ways to decrease costs and attract customers in the northern markets. The high rates previously paid for mining and transportation of coal could not be continued. As the miners and the boatmen were unwilling to see their wages and profits reduced, wage disputes between the miners and the coal companies led to a month-long suspension of mining in the coal fields. At the same time, the boatmen put pressure on the canal board to aid their cause on the declining coal trade by reducing the toll on coal shipments, but it rejected such recommendations. As a result of these developments, the amount of coal shipped on the canal up to June 1 was 61,677 tons compared to 101,390 tons during the same period in 1864. The total revenue collected from tolls for the current season was \$65,097.44 compared with \$74,988.58 over the same period the previous year.²⁹⁷

In his annual report to the company stockholders on June 5, President Spates provided information on the condition of the canal and the state of its financial affairs. Among his observations were the following:

The canal is now in good navigable condition, but to put it in thorough and permanent order, make it reliable for uninterrupted navigation, and afford proper facilities to the largely increasing trade upon it, considerable expenditures will still be required. It is pro-

²⁹⁴ *Thirty-Seventh Annual Report* (1865), 3, and Masters to Board of Directors, March 2, 1865, Ltrs. Recd., C & O Co.

²⁹⁵ *Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors*, K, 399–400, 402–403, 486, and Ringgold to Moore, March 9, 1865, Ltrs. Sent, C & O Co.

²⁹⁶ Allan Nevins, *The War for the Union* (4 books, New York, 1971), Book IV, 309–312.

²⁹⁷ *Thirty-Seventh Annual Report* (1865), 6–7.

posed to do this during the present season as far as the revenues of the Company will admit consistent with other indispensable obligations....

Since the accession of the present Board in February 1862, the state of the country bordering the Canal, owing to the various military operations and restrictions, has been such as to render all matters connected with its business very precarious. The aggregate revenues of the Company for the years 1861 and 1862, were respectively in 1861, \$75,741.90, in 1862, \$72,624.95, whilst the maintenance of the Canal restricted by these inadequate means and the exhausted credit of the Company, was in 1861, \$105,607.82, in 1862, \$86,651.26, thus increasing the already overburdened debts of the Company for these two years, a further sum of \$43,892.23 in addition to accumulating interest on obligations of the Company for repairs &c., which had hitherto been regularly paid, amounting to about \$30,000.

During the years 1863 and 1864 however, notwithstanding the frequent interruptions and restrictions still continued by the course of the war, these disadvantages have been overcome in a great measure, and after the payment of all obligations incurred by the incumbent Board, [\$171,367.10 of] claims previously existing have been liquidated and paid...

There still remain floating or current debts of the Company [\$301,024.25] to be provided for from their surplus revenues, after the proper maintenance and improvements required to render the Canal effective and durable, which it is proposed to liquidate as early as practicable....²⁹⁸

²⁹⁸ *Ibid*, 3–5. In response to an order of the Speaker of the Maryland House of Delegates, Spates had delivered a similar report to that body on March 13. Spates to Speaker, House of Delegates, March 13, 1865, Ltrs. Sent, C & O Co.

VII. THE CANAL IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE CIVIL WAR

The canal emerged from the Civil War on both a depressing note and a promising one. The waterway itself had suffered great physical damage from the military operations of the opposing armies. Furthermore, the military continued to occupy the Potomac Aqueduct and part of the Rock Creek mole, to the detriment of the canal's business. When the Quartermaster Department continued to insist on its right to occupy a portion of the wharves on the mole for a government coal-ing station, the canal company testily reacted by filing claims against the War Department for losses sustained as a result of military use of the waterway during hostilities. On May 2, 1866, the company informed Maryland Congressman Francis Thomas, a former canal president that

during the whole war the canal was freely used by the Government for transportation without compensation being made in the payment of tolls, that considerable damages were done to the works by the operations of the military and great losses sustained by restrictions imposed by them upon general transportation, and for these the Company have filed claims in the War Department for the years 1861 and 1862 \$75,391.96—1863 & 1864 \$292,330, making an aggregate sum of \$367,721.96.²⁹⁹

Later on September 5, 1866, the directors appealed directly to President Andrew Johnson

to relieve from military occupation and turn over to the Alexandria Canal Company the Potomac Aqueduct, which belongs to that Company, and is at present the obstacle to the early opening of that Canal.³⁰⁰

On the other hand, the financial condition of the company had measurably improved as a result of the revival of trade after 1863. Bankruptcy, which had threatened the company in the late 1850s, no longer seemed to be so near. The improved commercial and financial status of the company made it possible to undertake the sorely needed improvements such as the raising of the Georgetown bridges, that had been postponed and those in progress, such as the new masonry Dam No. 5, that had come to a halt during the war years.³⁰¹

The physical condition of the canal in 1865 was much worse than it had been before the war. Despite growing trade and revenues and some increase in repair expenditures toward the end of the conflict, the waterway had been generally neglected. The destruction of its works during the hostilities had been serious, and in addition, it had not received the attention required for normal maintenance. Only the most necessary repairs had been made, and then often in a hasty and slipshod fashion. Evidence of the general state of the canal's deterioration was demonstrated by the occurrence of numerous breaches on the Georgetown, Monocacy, Antietam, and Cumberland Divisions between April and August in 1865.³⁰² It was reported that there were many trees bor-

²⁹⁹ Ringgold to Thomas, May 2, 1866, Ltrs. Sent, C&O co. Also see, Ringgold to Rucker, May 29, 1866, Ltrs. Sent, C&O Co., and Moore to Ringgold, May 28, 1866, Ltrs. Recd., C&O Co. After further negotiations, the military finally agreed to relinquish its claims to the mole wharves on January 31, 1868. Godey to Ringgold, January 10, 1868, Ltrs. Recd., C&O Co. and Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors, L, 56.

³⁰⁰ Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors, K, 511. After a number of similar appeals and considerable negotiations, the military relinquished control of the aqueduct. In July 1868 construction was begun on a wooden highway toll bridge built over the rewatered trunk.

³⁰¹ Sanderlin, *Great National Project*, 222–223.

³⁰² Ringgold to Greene, December 1, 1865, Ltrs. Sent, C&O Co., and Proceedings of the President and

dering the canal that had overgrown to the point that they were interfering with the passage of boats and the use of the towpath.³⁰³ Many of the lock gates needed to be replaced, and the heavy horse traffic on the towpath had worn it down at many points.³⁰⁴ The tidelocks in Georgetown were out of repair after being damaged by government occupation and mismanagement, and the Rock Creek Basin was largely filled in by the deposits of the creek. Moreover, the prism of the trunk was shrinking as a result of siltation deposits accumulating on the inner slopes and the floor of the canal. Hence it was no longer possible for two loaded boats to pass at many points along the canal.³⁰⁵

In November 1865 the canal company hired Charles P. Manning, a reputable civil engineer, to examine the waterway and to report on its condition and the repairs and improvements that were needed.³⁰⁶ In a comprehensive report filed on May 31, 1866, he made the following observations:

It is unnecessary for me to remind the Board that for several seasons previous to the last period of suspended navigation, no repairs beyond those of absolute necessity were either attempted or accomplished; nor that, consequently, the need of repairs during the past winter, and prospectively, for the current season of navigation has been and still is excessive.

Though I feel confident that free navigation can and will be maintained, without much difficulty during the current season, I fear that the ordinary gradual deposit of sediment added to the large amount which has already accumulated to an extent sufficient, in many places, to reduce the channel of the Canal to an area much less than is required for the passage of two loaded boats, will, at no far distant period, cause an entire suspension of navigation, during the business season of, possibly, a whole year, in order that the original proper dimensions of the trough may be thoroughly restored.

To mitigate, if not to effectively prevent the occurrence of this apprehended misfortune, the active and constant employment of a number of dredging boats, during the season navigation, is deemed essential, therefore, I advise the immediate construction of two more of these valuable machines, similar to the four now in use upon the line of the canal.

In general the trough of the Canal is free from dangerous, or even injurious leaks; but that portion of it which traverses the cavernous lime-stone district between South and North mountains, has always been, and still is subject to very dangerous leaks and consequent breaches, for which there appears to be no effectual remedy, short of the elevation of the entire body of the Canal (bottom, tow-path, &c.,) to a height of two feet or more above its present levels, wherever the most obstinate and dangerous of these leaks are known to exist, or continually threaten to break forth.

In general the masonry of the aqueducts, culverts and Locks is both substantial and in good repair, the only exception requiring special remark being the aqueduct that spans the Conococheague River, which fine structure was wantonly and most seriously injured by rebel soldiers during the late rebellion. At present

Board of Directors, K, 442

³⁰³ Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors, K, 438

³⁰⁴ Cameron to President and Directors, November 9, 1865, Ltrs. Recd., C&O Co.

³⁰⁵ Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors, K, 489–490

³⁰⁶ *Ibid*, K, 465

the navigation is maintained over this dilapidated aqueduct by means of a substantial wooden trunk which is supported upon the original arches of the masonry and quite secure from the damaging effects of ordinary floods.

Generally speaking the lock gates are in excellent condition; but there are many that should be taken out and replaced by new ones as rapidly as circumstances may permit, and numbers thus removed might then be sufficiently repaired to answer all the purposes of reliable substitutes, or duplicates in cases of accident. These perishable appendages of the Canal are liable to great abuse at the hands of reckless boatmen, and therefore are a constant source of both anxiety and expense.

In relation to the dams, I have to say, that the "Little Falls" and "Seneca" (Nos. 1 & 2,) are in a somewhat dilapidated and inefficient state; and that the one at Harper's Ferry (No. 3,) commonly known as "The Government Dam," is in ordinarily good condition. The two first named of these structures are composed of brush and loose stones, and the last named of wooden crib-work, filled with loose stones and sheathed with timber and planks. Dam No. 4 is not only in sound condition, but being exclusively a structure of stone, is regarded as thoroughly permanent, if not quite imperishable.

Two thirds of Dam No. 5 are new, and made exclusively of stone, the remaining third being composed partly of temporary crib work filled with loose stone, but mainly of the original structure, which was built after the fashion of the one at Harper's Ferry.

Dam No. 6, is in general good condition, and regarded as a permanent structure, though formed of crib-work, filled with loose stones and sheathed with timber and planks, similar in most respects to Dam No. 3, but of better form and more substantial construction. The remaining Dam (at the terminus of the Canal in Cumberland) is exclusively of stone, and in perfect order.

Of these Dams Nos. 1 and 2 need unusual repairs, requiring altogether an expenditure of perhaps, no less than twenty-five thousand dollars, in order to restore them to thorough usefulness.

Dam No. 5 should be completed without delay, and preparations have been made and are now in progress to accomplish the major part, if not all of the unfinished stone-work during the coming summer and autumn. To complete this work an expenditure of about sixty thousand dollars will be required.

Of the remaining Dams, No. 3 needs only ordinary repairs. No. 4 a little back-filling of loose stones or gravel, and the one at Cumberland substantially nothing.

Owing to the great draught of water from Dam No. 1, chiefly requisite for milling, rather than the legitimate purposes of the Canal, the time is rapidly approaching, if it has not already arrived, when the construction of a new and larger feeder-canal, in lieu of, and entirely apart from the existing narrow and unsubstantial one at this Dam, should be commence and diligently prosecuted to an early completion.

At present the consumption of water for milling purposes in Georgetown exceeds four millions of gallons per hour, or enough to furnish lockage to tide water for *forty loaded boats* and a like number of *empty ones back again*.

The cost of constructing the proposed new feeder will probably be less than, but will not exceed twenty five thousand dollars.

Many of the lock keepers' houses need considerable repairing, and nearly all of these buildings, more or less restoration to a condition of necessary comfort. The expenditure of perhaps, five thousand dollars for this purpose, would accomplish all that is pressingly needed.³⁰⁷

The restoration and improvement of the canal began almost immediately after the conclusion of the war. On April 12, three days after Lee surrendered to Grant at Appomattox Court House, the board received word that the Corporation of Georgetown had agreed that the bridges over the canal east and west of the Market House were to be raised to a height of 11 feet above the water line. Accordingly, a contract was let to C. C. Carman for the raising and repair of the bridge west of the Market and the reconstruction of the bridge east of the Market.³⁰⁸ In July the bridges at Lock No. 68 and at Patterson's Creek that had been destroyed by the Rebels were ordered to be rebuilt.³⁰⁹ Construction of the masonry dam replacing the temporary structure at Dam No. 5 was soon resumed. By June 4, 1866, some 400 feet had been completed from the Virginia abutment with about 300 feet remaining to be done before it was finished to the Maryland shore. Plans were also considered for the improvement of Dams Nos. 1-3.³¹⁰ During the winter of 1865-66, many portions of the canal were dredged, and large amounts of sediment were removed from the prism. Other winter projects included repairs to the masonry works, the replacement of deteriorating lock gates, and work on the waste weirs.

In June 1866 the canal company finally came to an agreement with the corporate authorities of Georgetown concerning the manner of raising the bridges over the canal. After the Georgetown aldermen authorized the substitution of permanent iron bridges for the stone structures at Congress, Jefferson, Washington, and Greene Street, a contract was let to Duvall & Co. on August 9. The new structures, costing \$22,000 were completed by early 1867.³¹¹

In anticipation of the resumption of trade through Georgetown, the company hired an engineer in the spring of 1867 to draw up plans and estimates for the restoration of the tidelock and tumbling dam at the mouth of Rock Creek. A contract was let to Deeter & Maynard for the work that was to cost an estimated \$9,000.³¹² At the same time, the company employed its dredging machines to restore the canal to its original dimensions from the mouth of Rock Creek to the Foundry above Georgetown.³¹³

The repair of Civil War damages to the canal continued until 1869. In June of that year the stockholders were informed that during the preceding twelve months \$169,258.40 had been spent on ordinary repairs and \$10,453.42 on extraordinary repairs. Commenting on these large expenditures, President Spates stated:

Whilst the above-mentioned expenditures may be considered heavy, yet the condition of the canal was such after the close of the war, from the fact of its being

³⁰⁷ *Thirty-Eighth Annual Report* (1866), C&O Co., 6-9

³⁰⁸ Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors, K, 422; Smith to Spates, April 10, 1865, Ltrs. Recd., C&O Co.; and *Ordinances and Resolutions of the Corporation of Georgetown, from January, 1865, to January, 1866* (Georgetown, 1866), 19. For more information on this topic, see Edwin C. Bearss, "The Bridges, Historic Structures Report—Part II" (NPS Mss., 1968), 40-42.

³⁰⁹ Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors, K, 434

³¹⁰ *Thirty-Eighth Annual Report* (1866), C&O Co., 4-5

³¹¹ Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors, K, 501-502, 508; Ringgold to Wallack, October 20, 1866, Ltrs. Sent, C&O Co.; and Ordinance of the Corporation of Georgetown, June 26, 1866, Ltrs. Recd., C&O Co. Also see, Bearss, "Bridges," 42-44

³¹² *Thirty-Ninth Annual Report* (1867), C&O Co., 5

³¹³ *Fortieth Annual Report* (1868), C&O Co., 4

continually damaged by the contending armies, as to employ a large force to enable the Board to place its condition beyond any ordinary contingency. This, the Board, with judgment and discreteness, have done; and they now have the pleasure of reporting to the Stockholders the canal fully recovered from all damages growing out of the war. The whole line is now in thorough, complete, and safe condition.

During the past ten years little or nothing had been done towards repairing and improving lock-houses, bridges, culverts, aqueducts, locks, lock-gates, and waste-weirs of the Company; many of them had become entirely unfit for use and were becoming worthless, rendering it absolutely essential to the requirements of the Company to have them repaired. This the Board have done, and, although at heavy cost, they now present a comfortable and substantial condition, and the fact may now be confidently stated that the condition of the canal in all its departments is such as to justify a largely decreased expenditure during the current year, unless overtaken by unseen and unexpected disaster.³¹⁴

Despite the progress in the restoration of the waterway, the canal company faced numerous difficulties during the postwar years. Heavy water freshets occurred in the Potomac Valley in 1865 and 1866, and a severe ice freshet in the spring of 1868 did considerable damage to the waterway.³¹⁵ The wage disputes between the Allegany County miners and the coal companies that had interfered with the coal trade in May and June 1865 again erupted in the spring of 1866.³¹⁶ As a result of the deflationary tendency of coal prices and the decreasing demand for that product, the board reduced tolls from ½ cent to 4/10 of a cent a ton per mile in September 1866 and to 1/4 of a cent in March 1868.³¹⁷

The state of flux in Maryland politics during the Reconstruction era also had detrimental effects on the canal company. The Union coalition which had ruled the state since 1862 was undermined by the collapse of the Confederacy. Soon, political forces moved to establish a more natural realignment, a conservative reaction to the Radical Constitution of 1864 appeared, and Democrats commenced efforts to revitalize their decimated party. By 1867 Maryland's period of "Self-Reconstruction" had come to an end and a more stable party alignment had emerged. Augmented by Conservative Unionists, new voters, and returning veterans, the Democrats became the dominant party in Maryland and would remain so for many years to come under the leadership of Arthur P. Gorman.³¹⁸

The political instability in Maryland during the period of party realignment in the aftermath of the war was demonstrated by the return of local political influence to the canal. The brief postwar period between 1865 and 1870 witnessed four changes in canal administration. Alfred Spates, who had served as president since January 1861, was replaced by Jacob Snively in June 1865 only to return in August 1867. In June 1869 Josiah Gordon became president, but he was replaced in June 1870 by James E. Clarke.³¹⁹

Along with the frequent political upheavals, charges of fraudulence were placed against former canal officials. On December 9, 1869, the company's Committee of Accounts accused

³¹⁴ *Forty-First Annual Report* (1869), C&O Co., 4–5

³¹⁵ *Thirty-Ninth Annual Report* (1867), 5–6; *Fortieth Annual Report* (1868), 7; and Mans to President and Directors, July 11, 1868, Ltrs. Recd., C&O Co.

³¹⁶ *Thirty-Eighth Annual Report* (1866), 3–5, and *Thirty-Ninth Annual Report* (1867), 3

³¹⁷ Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors, K, 511, L, 82

³¹⁸ Richard Walsh and William Lloyd Fox, eds., *Maryland: A History, 1632–1974* (Baltimore, 1974), 377–392.

³¹⁹ Sanderlin, *Great National Project*, 224, 304.

Alfred Spates with nine separate charges of falsely obtaining for his own purposes appropriations amounting to between \$5,000 and \$80,000 for work already paid for during the period from February 1865 to October 1868. Division Superintendent George W. Spates was also charged with one count of misappropriation of funds.³²⁰ Both men maintained their innocence, claiming that they were the victims of the fractious political infighting then taking place in the state.³²¹ Alfred Spates appeared to vindicate himself by being elected to the State Senate from Allegany County in 1869, but the controversy continued unabated.³²² On February 9, 1870, the board ordered the company counsel, George A. Pearre, to demand from the two men the money they owed the company or face court suit.³²³

When the two accused men rebuffed the counsel, formal suits were initiated in the Circuit Court of Allegany County against Alfred Spates and in the Circuit Court of Montgomery County against George W. Spates. Although the evidence presented indicated a strong probability of misconduct, a citizens' committee from Cumberland appealed to the directors on October 12 to drop the charges.³²⁴ Although they refused to do so at that time by a 4-3 vote, all charges were finally dropped without further investigation on December 8. The action was taken on the grounds that the suit had been brought by ex-president Josiah Gordon and thus was "not authorized by the present or the former Board, and there being no prospect of successful prosecution."³²⁵

Despite unsettled trade conditions, political interference, and the expenditure of large sums of money for the restoration of the waterway, the financial condition of the company continued to improve. Canal trade increased each year with tonnage totals of 372,335 in 1865, 383,408 in 1866, 521,402 in 1867, 552,987 in 1868, and 723,938 in 1869.³²⁶ Receipts from tolls averaged nearly \$340,000 a year during the same period, thereby allowing the company to pay off its floating debt and enabling it to resume the payment of its long-term obligations.³²⁷ Thus, the stage was set for the "golden years" of the canal's history in the early 1870s when the waterway would experience its most stable and prosperous period.

³²⁰ Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors, L, 233–246. Earlier in July 1866, Alfred Spates had come under suspicion when it was found that in February 1865 he had withdrawn the \$13,000 appropriation from the U. S. Treasury that had been authorized by Congress for the raising of the Georgetown bridges. After he was voted out as president of the company in June, he kept the Treasury check without making any account of his transaction in the company's financial records. Under the threat of a suit in the federal courts, Spates returned the check to Jacob Snively, his successor, in September 1866. Ringgold to Roman, July 28, 1866, and Ringgold to Snively, September 19, 1866, Ltrs. Sent, C&O Co., and Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors, K, 507–508

³²¹ A. Spates to Poe, November 15, 1869, and Garden to Stockholders, February 5, 1870, in Spates Papers.

³²² A. Spates to Poe, November 15, 1869, and Gordon to Stockholders, February 15, 1870, in Spates Papers

³²³ Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors, L, 281, and *Baltimore American*, February 18, 1870, in Spates Papers

³²⁴ *Ibid.*, L, 370

³²⁵ *Ibid.*, L, 381

³²⁶ Sanderlin, *Great National Project*, 307

³²⁷ *Ibid.*, 307,309; *Thirty-Ninth Annual Report* (1867), 6; and Proceedings of the President and Board of Directors, L, 226–231.

APPENDIX A

DISCOVERY AND DEVELOPMENT OF GOLD VEINS NEAR GREAT FALLS

During the past 110 years more than 5,000 ounces of gold, valued at more than \$150,000, have been produced in Maryland. Almost all of this total has been extracted from small mines in the southern part of Montgomery County. The extensive group of workings near Great Falls was the most productive of the vein systems. Here were located the Ford, Watson, and Maryland mines, the latter being the largest and furnishing the greatest yields.¹

As early as 1827, Professor Ducatelle, a noted mineralogist of the period, stated that the region around Great Falls gave strong indications of the presence of gold.² Several years later, when Mrs. Trollope, the outspoken Englishwoman who was traveling in America preparatory for her publication on American manners, visited the residence of a German consul near Great Falls, she noted that traces of gold were found.³ However, it was not until the Civil War period that actual free samples of gold were found in the area. Although there is some controversy surrounding the discovery of gold near Great Falls, most authoritative sources agree that the discovery was made in 1861 near the present site of the Maryland mine by a member of a regiment under the command of Colonel Edward A. Baker, a United States Senator from Oregon and a close friend of President Lincoln.⁴

Shortly after the firing on Fort Sumter, Baker was commissioned by Lincoln to raise three regiments or infantry in Philadelphia. One of these, the 71st Pennsylvania, was placed under his command and was referred to informally as the "First California Regiment." This designation was apparently in honor of Colonel Isaac J. Wistar of Philadelphia, who was in charge of the enrolling work and who had commanded Indian Rangers in California and Oregon in the late 1840s during the Mexican War. The regiment was moved to Fortress Monroe, where it remained until after the Battle of First Manassas on July 21, 1861. Following that northern defeat, the regiment was transferred to the Virginia side of the Potomac opposite Washington, where it was engaged, along with other commands, in building Fort Ethan Allen near Chain Bridge and strengthening the capital's defenses. The 71st Pennsylvania crossed the Potomac on September 30 and marched nine miles to Great Falls, where it camped for the night. On October 1, it reached Rockville, and after spending the next night at Seneca Mills, the regiment encamped near Poolesville from the 3rd to the 20th. During this period, it is likely that small detachments remained on picket duty along the river from Great Falls to Seneca Creek. After the bloody Union defeat on October 21 in the Battle of Ball's Bluff, in which the regiment lost its leader and 312 men, the reorganized 71st Pennsylvania was assigned to picket duty along the Potomac between Conrad's Ferry and Point of Rocks until the spring of 1862.⁵

Following the war, several members of the 71st Pennsylvania organized a group that bought the farm on which the original discovery was made. Considerable prospecting and devel-

¹ John C. Reed, Jr., and John C. Reed, *Gold Veins Near Great Falls, Maryland*, (Geological Survey Bulletin 1286, 1969), 1. The location and annual production of the Montgomery County gold mines may be seen on the map and graph on the following pages.

² John Thomas Scharff, *History of Western Maryland* (2 vols., Philadelphia, 1882), I, 676.

³ James E. Mooney, ed., *Domestic Manners of the Americans by Mrs. Trollope* (Barre, 1969), 183–202, 227–234

⁴ Reed and Reed, *Gold Veins Near Great Falls*, 4. and Edgar T. Ingalls, *The Discovery of Gold at Great Falls, Maryland* (N. P., 1960), 1–17. Map and chart from Reed and Reed, *Gold Veins Near Great Falls*, 2–4

⁵ Charles H. Banes, *History of the Philadelphia Brigade* (Philadelphia, 1876), 2–32.

oping work was done, and in 1867 a shaft was sunk to a depth of about 100 feet at the future site of the Maryland mine. At least 7 ounces of gold were produced in 1868 and 4 ounces in 1869, but the work was soon abandoned.⁶

FORD MINE

During the 1880s, gold was discovered in the vicinity of the Ford Mine by George Kirk, a Georgia prospector. By February 1890, the veins were being worked by extensive open cuts on both sides of Cool Spring Branch, and a small mill was in operation near the mouth of the branch. Underground development at the Ford Mine commenced about 1890.

WATSON MINE

In the early 1900s considerable prospecting and development work were done on the veins along Carroll Branch, between the Maryland Mine and the Ford Mine, by the Great Falls Gold Mining Company. That area, which included the site of the Watson Mine, contained seven veins, the most important being the Potomac Vein that was explored by a 135-foot adit. The operations in that area, which continued until 1909, consisted of numerous pits and trenches and a few shallow shafts with short drafts and crosscuts.

MARYLAND MINE

About 1900 the property on which the Maryland Mine is located was taken over by the Maryland Gold Mining Company. A 135-foot shaft was sunk, and the mine was explored by drifts on the 50-foot and 100-foot levels. In 1903 a new shaft was started west of the vein and south of the old shaft. This shaft intersected the vein at a depth of 200 feet and was bottomed at 210 feet in 1906. The mine was shut down in 1908, but it was reopened briefly by the Empress Gold Mining Company of Philadelphia in 1912.

The most systematic exploration of the Great Falls veins began in 1915 when the Atlantic Development Company acquired the Ford Mine. Within three years the company had acquired tracts totaling 2,100 acres that included nearly all the known vein system. A. A. Hassan, a mining geologist and consulting engineer, directed an exploration program of extensive trenching, vein stripping, and diamond drilling. Reportedly, the operations found that a vein north of the Maryland Mine extended to a depth of 456 feet and that veins near the Ford Mine were at least 500 feet in depth.

American entry into World War I led to the closing of the mines in the fall of 1917. The Maryland Mine was reopened in the spring of 1918, and some development work and mining was conducted until 1922 when the mine was closed and the property sold.

After the price of gold was increased to \$35 an ounce in 1934, the Maryland Mining Company was organized in October of the following year. The Maryland Mine was reopened, and a new mill was installed. Between 1936 and 1940 about 6,000 tons of ore was produced, yielding more than 2,500 ounces of gold valued at \$90,000. The mine was closed in 1940, and no operations have been undertaken in the area since that time with the exception of some individual prospecting.⁷

⁶ Reed and Reed, *Gold Veins Near Great Falls*, 5, and Ingalls, *Discovery of Gold*, 1–17

⁷ Reed and Reed, *Gold Mines Near Great Falls*, 5–7 and Ingalls, *Discovery of Gold*, 1–17. Other sources that are of value in interpreting the “gold mine” story at Great Falls are: S. F. Simmons, “Notes on the Gold Deposits of Montgomery County, Maryland,” *American Institute of Mining Engineers Transactions*, XVIII,

APPENDIX B

STATEMENT OF BOATS & NAMES OF OWNERS & C HELD BY
THE U. S. GOVERNMENT FROM BOOKS OF THE QUARTERMASTER, U. S. A.,
WASHINGTON, D. C., APRIL 17, 1861[2]

BOAT NAME	OWNER	BOAT VALUE	FURNI- TURE VALUE	DATE SEIZED	WHERE LYING
P. B. Petrie ¹	John Rinehart	\$900	—	—	Georgetown
John Humbert	John Rinehart	\$1,000	\$4	Feb. 17, 1862	Alexandria
F. & A. H. Dodge ¹	John Moffutt	\$800	\$2.50	Feb. 16, 1862	Liverpool Point
Kate McCormack	John McCormack	\$900	\$3	Feb. 17, 1862	Georgetown
S. B. Harrison ¹	Daniel Shives	\$500	—	Feb. 17, 1862	Liverpool Point
Capt. Wm. T. Aud	Not Known	\$1,300	—	Feb. 16, 1862	Fortress Monroe
Molly	Pat Broderick	\$1,200	—	Feb. 16, 1862	Fortress Monroe
Dr. J. Robertson	Mertens & Snyder	\$600	—	Feb. 18, 1862	Liverpool Point
G. Brent	Benjamin Mitchell	\$1,000	—	Feb. 16, 1862	Georgetown
Independence ¹	Jacob Zeigler	\$700	\$5	Feb. 18, 1862	Liverpool Point
R. R. Gregory ¹	Nancy Bowers	\$700	\$3	Feb. 16, 1862	Liverpool Point
Odd Fellow ¹	John Snyder	\$500	\$7	Feb. 13, 1862	Liverpool Point
Emperor ¹	John Young	\$850	\$2	Feb. 13, 1862	Liverpool Point
Geo. W. Hetsyer ¹	John H. Martin	\$600	—	Feb. 18, 1862	Liverpool Point
J. Murray	Patrick Broderick	\$1,000	—	Feb. 16, 1862	Georgetown
John Fitzpatrick ¹	A. J. Boose	\$400	\$6	Feb. 13, 1862	Liverpool Point
Union ¹	A. J. Boose	\$400	—	Feb. 20, 1862	Liverpool Point
Hard Times ¹	A. J. Boose	\$700	\$6	Feb. 13, 1862	Liverpool Point
John F. Bear	Frederick Bear	\$800	\$8	Feb. 13, 1862	Georgetown
Jane Louisa	American Coal Co.	\$700	\$4	Feb. 22, 1862	Georgetown
Samuel Luman	J. H. Kindle	\$700	\$4	Feb. 22, 1862	Georgetown
J. Arnold ¹	W. W. Faulkwell	\$700	\$4	Feb. 18, 1862	Liverpool Point
Juniatta ²	William Elder	\$700	\$3	Feb. 13, 1862	Liverpool Point
Maria Thompson ¹	American Coal Co.	\$400	—	Feb. 18, 1862	Liverpool Point
Stephen Castleman ²	George Hughes	\$500	\$5	Feb. 13, 1862	Liverpool Point
G. Hough	C. Hughes	\$800	\$10	Feb. 18, 1862	Georgetown
L. V. Savins ¹	John Savins	\$850	\$6	Feb. 18, 1862	Liverpool Point
J. M. Barnes	S. B. Barnes	\$800	\$1.50	Feb. 18, 1862	Fortress Monroe
Kate Barnes	S. B. Barnes	\$1,100	—	Feb. 18, 1862	Georgetown
Mt. Savage	American Coal Co.	\$700	\$5	Feb. 18, 1862	Georgetown
W. E. Webster	John A. Reid	\$1,000	—	Feb. 18, 1862	Georgetown
Three Brothers	John Spencer	\$1,000	\$4	Feb. 18, 1862	Fortress Monroe
Wm. Kissner ²	Abner Meryman	\$700	—	Feb. 18, 1862	Liverpool Point
M. E. Stonebreaker	American Coal Co.	\$700	\$5	Feb. 18, 1862	Georgetown
Thos. James	John A. Rinehart	\$700	\$5	Feb. 18, 1862	Georgetown
Geo. H. Mandy ¹	Peter Snyder	\$900	\$5	Feb. 18, 1862	Liverpool Point
D. Morrissey	Not Known	\$750	\$4	Feb. 26, 1862	Georgetown
Three Sisters	John Byroads	\$1,000	\$10	Feb. 21, 1862	Fortress Monroe
Y. Marmaduke ¹	Salem Cooper	\$800	\$8	Feb. 19, 1862	Liverpool Point

¹ Blst. Plaster

² Blst. Stone

Document in Spates Papers

391–411; C. W. Ostrander, “Gold in Montgomery County, Maryland,” *Maryland Natural History Society Bulletin*, IX, 32–34; Titus Ulke, “Gold Mining Past and Present Near Washington, D. C.,” *Rocks and Minerals*, XIV, 299–305; and W. H. Weed, *Notes on the Gold Veins Near Great Falls, Maryland* (U. S. Geological Survey Bulletin 260), 128–131.