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A history of the Chesapeake Bay ferries to Virginia's Eastern shore prior to the Civil War

Clarence Lee Beebe

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A HISTORY OF THE CHESAPEAKE BAY FERRIES
TO VIRGINIA'S EASTERN SHORE PRIOR
TO THE CIVIL WAR

A Thesis
Presented to
the Graduate Faculty of the
University of Richmond

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in History

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by
Clarence Lee Beebe

August 1954

PREFACE

The decision of the Pennsylvania Railroad Authorities to abandon the ferry service of the Elisha Lee, prior to the boats annual inspection by the United States Coast Guard in March, 1955, created a bit of excitement on the part of the Eastern Shore Inhabitants. This ferry service connected the Shore with Old Point Comfort and Norfolk, Virginia. The ferry made two trips a day across the Bay, carrying the mail, freight, cars, and passengers.

Two Coast Guard Inspectors, from Marine Inspection in Norfolk, stated the Elisha Lee needed some costly repairs before the Coast Guard could issue a Certificate of Inspection declaring the vessel safe as a ferry. The Pennsylvania Railroad Authorities did not believe the income from this commercial enterprise would compensate for the expense of these repairs. Therefore, the ferry was discontinued in violation of a court order rendered by the Honorable Jeff Walter, of Northampton County Court.

The writer of this thesis was serving an enlistment in the United States Coast Guard at this time, and was stationed in the Marine Inspection Office in Norfolk, Virginia. The ferry controversy created an interest and desire to do some detailed research in the ferry systems

which connected the Eastern Shore of Virginia with the State.

The importance of proper ferry service connecting the two isolated counties on the Shore with the State of Virginia can't be overestimated in the present day. The ferry system was equally important to the inhabitants of the Shore in the past. From the time of the first settlements on the Peninsula, there was a constant demand for some type of ferry service. From 1705, to the present day there has been an established ferry crossing the Chesapeake Bay from the Shore. The purpose of this history is to show that there was a constant need and effort to maintain contact with the people on the western side of the Bay, for economic, political, and social purposes.

My indebtedness is acknowledge to Dr. Susie M. Ames, a noted historian and authority on Eastern Shore History, and to Mr. James E. Mears, who has spent much of his time in historical research concerning the Shore; for their time and kindness in corresponding with me, and giving both information and suggestions. I am grateful to my professors, Dr. Ralph C. McDanel and Dr. Wesley N. Laing, for their guidance and leadership in directing my research, reading and correcting my manuscript, and giving constructive criticism. My thanks is expressed to Mrs.

Henry Baldwin in permitting me to see the Severn Eyre
Memorandum Book. To the staffs of: the State Library of
Virginia, the Norfolk Public Library, the University of
Virginia Library, and the University of Richmond Library;
I shall ever remember your kindness and willingness to
assist in every way possible in making my research a
pleasant adventure.

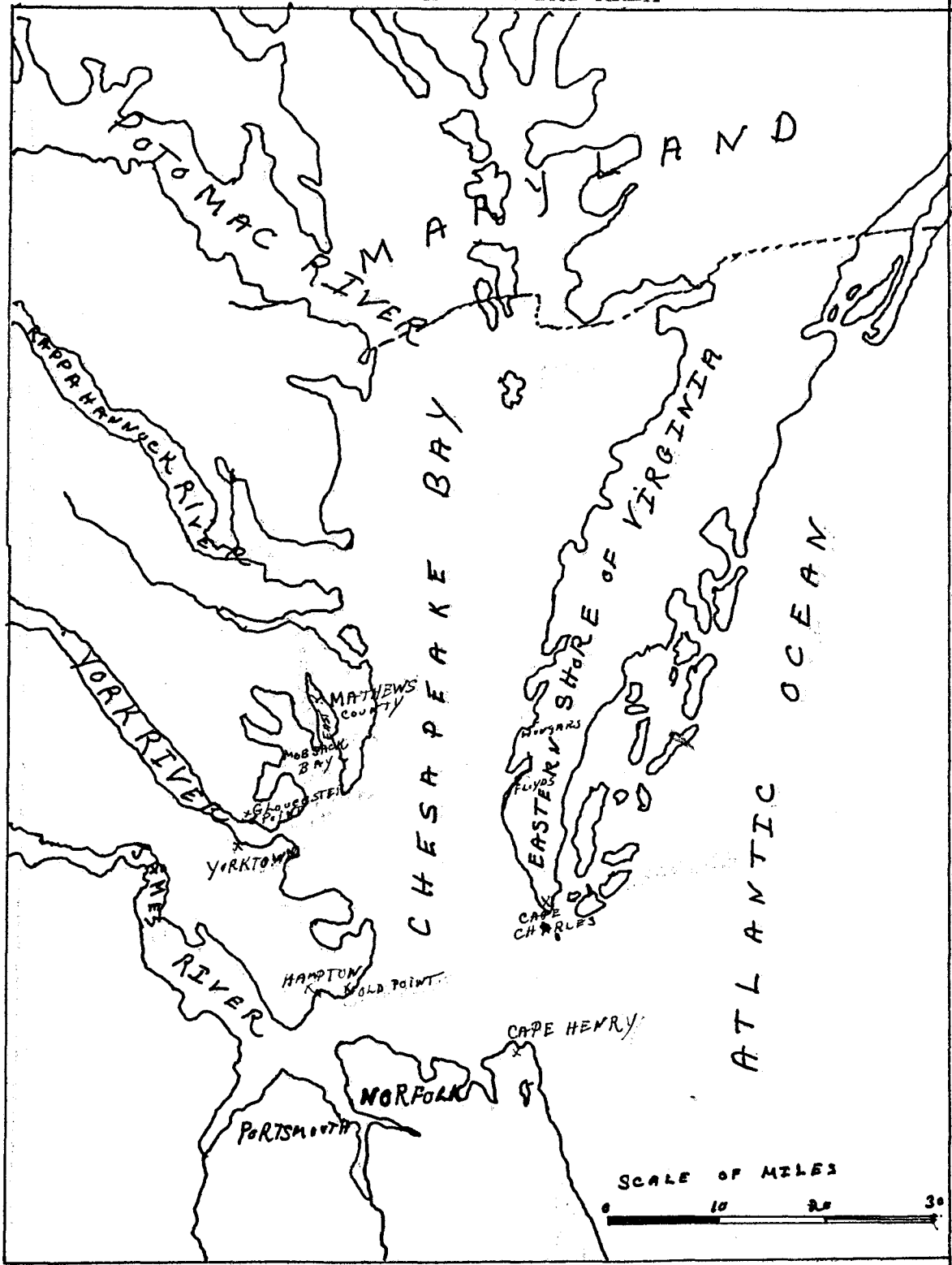
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August, 1954

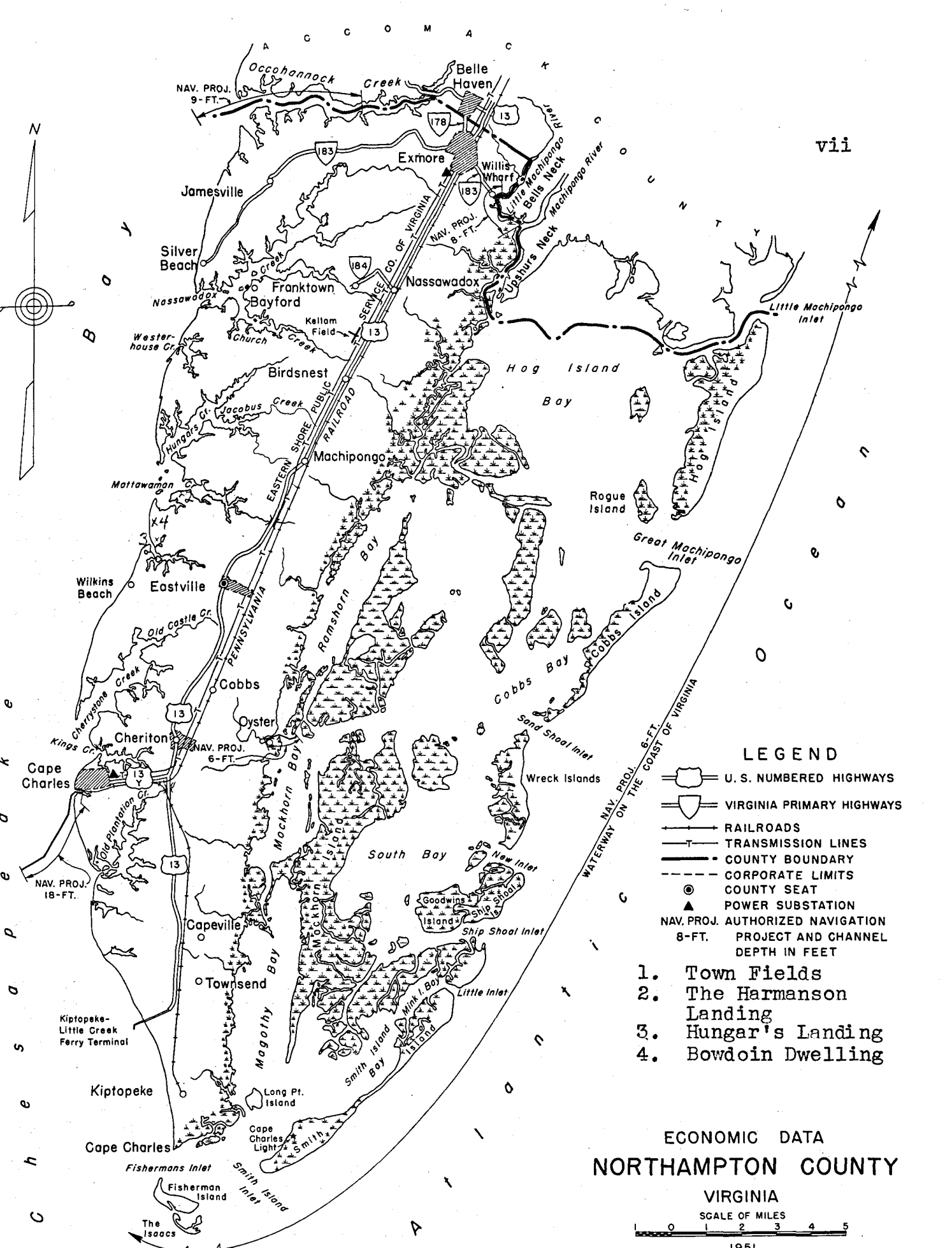
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THE CHESAPEAKE BAY AREA

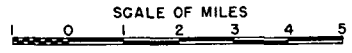




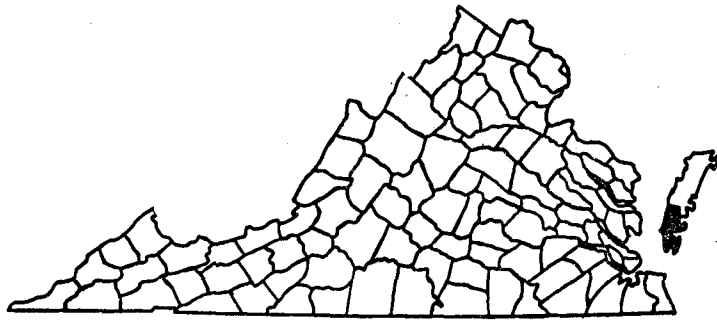
- LEGEND**
- U. S. NUMBERED HIGHWAYS
 - VIRGINIA PRIMARY HIGHWAYS
 - RAILROADS
 - TRANSMISSION LINES
 - COUNTY BOUNDARY
 - CORPORATE LIMITS
 - COUNTY SEAT
 - POWER SUBSTATION
 - NAV. PROJ. AUTHORIZED NAVIGATION
 - 8-FT. PROJECT AND CHANNEL DEPTH IN FEET

1. Town Fields
2. The Harmanson Landing
3. Hungar's Landing
4. Bowdoin Dwelling

**ECONOMIC DATA
NORTHAMPTON COUNTY
VIRGINIA**



1951



INDEX TO COUNTY LOCATION

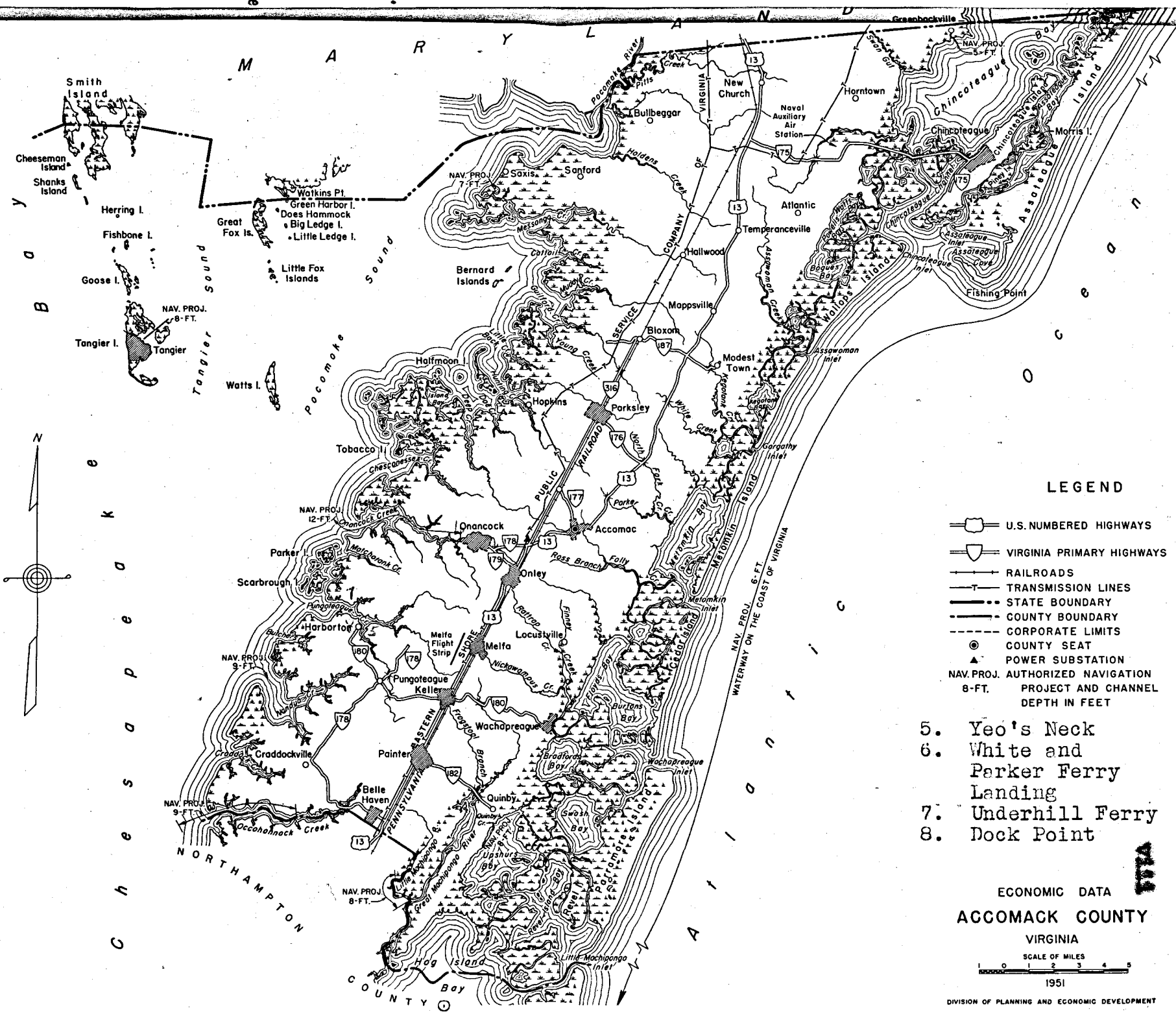
Northampton County, first called Accawmack, was one of the eight original Virginia shires of 1634. In 1642 the name was changed to Northampton, perhaps for an English county. The earliest English exploration of this area was made by Captain John Smith in 1608, and the first settlement was probably in 1614. Court records from 1632 are said to be the oldest continuous series in America. The first county seat was Townfield near present Cheriton where a courthouse was built soon after 1664. Later the county seat moved several times before being permanently set at Eastville where the old courthouse, still standing, was built in 1731. Also standing here are the clerk's office and debtors' prison, built around 1770.

In 1950 the population of Northampton County was 17,300; that of Eastville was 311. This county lies on Virginia's "Eastern Shore," the peninsula between the Atlantic Ocean and Chesapeake Bay. It has a land area of 226 sq. mi. or 144,640 acres and a water area of 131 sq. mi. On the ocean side it consists of islands, bays, and inlets. Temperatures average 39° in January, 78° in July. Precipitation is 43 inches annually. Over one-third of the generally flat land is wooded; there is a good deal of lumbering. There are no minerals except beds of sand, gravel, and clay. Fine oyster beds and other commercial fisheries furnish a livelihood for many.












Northampton is one of Virginia's leading farm counties and in value of products sold it ranked ninth in 1949. The productive sandy loam soil, aided by long growing season and mild climate, permits intensive cultivation to the extent of two and sometimes three vegetable crops a year. Truck crops and field crops are the chief sources of income. In 1949 Northampton was the top county in vegetables raised for sale. There is a great variety of these — tomatoes, green beans, lima beans, cabbage, sweet corn, green peas, sweet peppers, broccoli, spinach, and others. Irish potatoes and sweet potatoes constitute the biggest field crops, but corn, soybeans, and small grains are also raised. Northampton has long been one of the leading potato counties of the nation. A large annual crop of strawberries is shipped direct to big eastern city markets. In the nursery business Northampton ranks sixth among Virginia counties; it specializes in fruit trees, ornamental shrubbery, cut flowers, and potato and tomato plants. The Eastern Shore Produce Exchange provides a local market for potatoes, berries, and vegetables.

Most of Northampton's manufacturing is closely tied to its natural resources. Large packing houses produce canned and packed oysters and other seafoods and many kinds of canned vegetables. A large plant packages frozen foods, both vegetables and seafood. Nonfood manufacturing includes a growing enterprise that makes radio and television electronic equipment, a newly established shirt factory, and numerous lumber plants.

The tourist trade is an important industry. Ocean Highway, U. S. 13, runs the length of the county and brings hundreds of travelers through here each year. Kiptopeke is the Eastern Shore terminal for the ferry steamers that ply across Chesapeake Bay to Little Creek near Norfolk. In addition to beach and saltwater sports, Northampton has points of historic interest. The Northampton Memorial Library is at Cape Charles. The Northampton-Accomack Memorial Hospital at Nassawadox serves the entire Eastern Shore. Fort John Custis of the U. S. Department of Defense is near Kiptopeke.

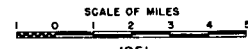


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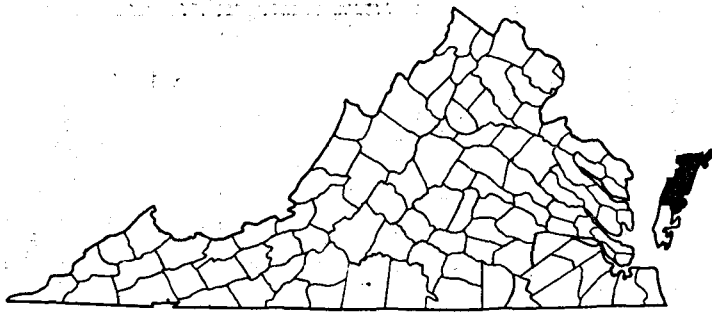
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5. Yeo's Neck
6. White and Parker Ferry Landing
7. Underhill Ferry
8. Dock Point

**ECONOMIC DATA
ACCOMACK COUNTY
VIRGINIA**



1951



INDEX TO COUNTY LOCATION

The Eastern Shore of Virginia, originally known as "Ye Kingdom of Accawmacke," was explored by Captain John Smith in 1608, settled in 1611, made one of the original eight shires of Virginia in 1634, and divided into Accomack County and Northampton County in 1663. The first county seat of Accomack County was at Pungoteague. Later it was moved to Onancock, and in 1786 to Drummondtown, now the town of Accomac. In 1950 the county's population was 33,832 and the county seat's was 500. In the American Revolution,

militia barracks were at Onancock, and in the War of 1812 a British fleet and 12,000 troops were stationed on Tangier Island and moved out to action in Chesapeake Bay to attack Fort McHenry. A battle was fought on Pungoteague Creek between the British and the Eastern Shore militia.

This county (land area 470 sq. mi. or 300,800 acres - water area 132 sq. mi.) is the northern of two counties on Virginia's Eastern Shore peninsula between the Atlantic Ocean and Chesapeake Bay and is a flat or gently rolling region, fringed by islands and cut by countless creeks, bays, and inlets. Temperatures average 39° in January, 78° in July. Precipitation is 43 inches a year. More than one-fourth of the land is wooded; there is much lumbering. The only minerals are deposits of sand, gravel, and clay. The productive sandy loam soil, aided by the unusually mild climate, is capable of more than one vegetable crop a year. The extensive beds of excellent oysters and clams form a rich natural resource which provides a livelihood to many local people.

Accomack ranked third among Virginia counties in value of all farm products sold in 1949. Principal sources of income were field crops, especially Irish and sweet potatoes, poultry and poultry products, and truck vegetables. Not only in Virginia but in the nation is this county a leader in the production of Irish and sweet potatoes, broilers, green beans, and tomatoes. Its strawberry crop is important also, and forest products such as standing timber and poles, posts, and firewood, produce considerable farm income. The Eastern Shore Produce Exchange at Onley, the Farmers' Exchange at Tasley, and the Seaboard Supply Company at Onley, and other local organizations are outlets for potatoes, berries, and all types of vegetables, and there are direct rail and truck lines to Baltimore, Philadelphia, and New York.

Second to agriculture in giving employment are manufacturing and trade which employ about equal numbers. Large lumber plants, seafood packing houses, and vegetable canneries utilize Accomack's raw materials. Other manufactures are men's shirts and cinder and concrete building blocks. Trade employment is found in many wholesale houses and in retail stores of the numerous small but thriving towns, many of them located along the busy Ocean Highway, U. S. 13, running the length of the county and bringing hundreds of north-south travelers through here.

Not only is there the transient tourist trade, but more and more vacationists are coming to enjoy the beaches, yacht harbors, deepsea fishing, hunting, and seashore eating-places for which Accomack has long been known. There are colonial homes and churches to be seen. Tangier Island in Chesapeake Bay is a unique community which, as yet, has been almost undiscovered by tourists. Settled in 1686, it was formerly so isolated from the mainland that it still retains much of the quaint appearance, customs, and dialect of earlier days.

The Northampton-Accomack Memorial Hospital at Nassawadox serves the area. There are public libraries at Onancock and Tangier. The U. S. Naval Auxiliary Air Station is a large military establishment at Chincoteague.

CHAPTER I

A HISTORICAL SKETCH OF THE EASTERN SHORE OF VIRGINIA IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

A history of Virginia would not be complete without a study of the Eastern Shore, yet this Peninsula in the early written histories has merely been mentioned by the historians. There had been no detailed research done on this section of Virginia's history prior to 1911. In fact, few people know where the Eastern Shore is located, and still less of its people and its history. In spite of this fact the Eastern Shore can boast of a history almost equal to that of Jamestown. Captain John Smith declared, "Heaven and earth seemed never to have agreed better to have framed a place for man's Commodious and delightful habitation....,"¹ as could be found on this Peninsula.

The Eastern Shore of Virginia is located on the east side of the Chesapeake Bay. It is separated from the rest of Virginia by approximately fifteen miles of water to Hampton, Virginia, and twenty miles to Princess Anne County; where the present ferry runs from Kiptopeke to Little Creek, Virginia. The southern part of the

1. Jennings Cropper Wise, Ye Kingdom of Accawmacke or Eastern Shore of Virginia In The Seventeenth Century (Richmond: The Bell Book and Stationery Company, 1911), p. 2.

Shore is very narrow in width, having the Chesapeake Bay on the west side, and the Atlantic Ocean on the east. The length of the Peninsula from the Capes to the Maryland line is approximately seventy-five miles. The Eastern Shore of Virginia has an area of 696 square miles, or 445,440 acres of land, and 263 square miles of water area; this comprises the two counties of Accomack and Northampton.² The geographical location of this Peninsula, with its many harbors, made it an excellent place for shipping products to foreign ports in the Colonial Era.

The first exploration of the Peninsula was made by Captain John Smith in 1608.³ On this first voyage they encountered, "...two grim and stout Salvages upon Cape Charles; with long poles like Javelings, headed with bone..."⁴ These Indians brought Captain Smith and his crew before their chief at the village of "Accomack."⁵ The Chief of the Indian tribe on the Shore was named "Debedeavon," or

2. "Economic Data of Accomack County," April, 1953; and "Economic Data of Northampton County," May, 1953, Pamphlets, Printed by Virginia Division of Planning and Economic Development.

3. Edward Arber, Travels and Works of Captain John Smith President of Virginia and Admiral of New England 1560-1631 (The A.C. Bradley edition. [Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, Printers], 1910), I, 109.

4. John Smith, The Travels, Adventures and Observations of Captain John Smith In Europe, Asia, Africke and America (From the London edition of 1629. Richmond: The Franklin Press, 1819), I, 173.

5. This name is spelled many different ways as:

"Laughing King of Accomack."⁶ His tribe was connected to the tribe of Powhatan and they spoke the Powhatan language.⁷

Captain Smith continued his exploration of the Peninsula northward on the Bay side as far north as the Pocomoke River.⁸ Here he was overtaken by a squall, which came upon them suddenly. After this frightening storm Smith's crew insisted that he return to the colony at Jamestown, and the explorers rowed across the Bay and down the western shore of the Chesapeake to Kecoughtan; now known as Hampton, Virginia.⁹

The friendship created with the Eastern Shore Indians by Captain Smith and the later white inhabitants who settled on the Peninsula proved a very valuable asset to the settlers at Jamestown, for on several occasions when Powhatan's tribe was plotting to destroy the white settlers,

Accohawmake, Accomack, Accomacke, Accahawmake, Accomac, and Achomat. The correct spelling is Accomack for the county, and Accomac for the town within the county. The correct spelling will be used in this thesis.

6. Arber, op. cit., II, 657; and Robert L. Swain Jr., "The Chesapeake Bay-Origin of the Name and The First Explorers," The Eastern Shore of Maryland and Virginia, Charles B. Clark, editor (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, Inc., 1950), I, 12.

7. Arber, op. cit., I, 110.

8. Ibid., Smith calls this River with ~~W~~Accocomoco.

9. Ibid., pp. 111-114.

the Indian Chief Debedeavon and his tribe were faithful to the white men in revealing these plots and providing food for the Colony.¹⁰

Robert Tyndall, made a trip to the Eastern Shore of Virginia in 1610, to obtain fish for the Colony.¹¹ In 1612, Captain Argall and Sir Thomas Dale visited the Shore and Smith's Island to determine the possibility of making a settlement on the Peninsula.¹² These men reported that the Shore was a very good place for a settlement and abundantly supplied with fish.¹³

John Pory, Secretary of the Colony, sent Lieutenant Craddock with approximately twenty men to make a settlement on the Peninsula in 1614, for the purpose of making salt and catching fish for the Colony. This first settlement was at Old Plantation Creek and called, "Dale's Gift."¹⁴ The "Dale's Gift" settlement was one of six

10. Susie M. Ames, Studies of the Virginia Eastern Shore in the Seventeenth Century (Richmond: The Dietz Press, 1940), p. 5; and Ralph T. Whitelaw, Virginia's Eastern Shore, A History of Northampton and Accomack Counties (Richmond: Virginia Historical Society, Whittet and Shepperson, Printers, 1951), I, 18.

11. Alexander Brown, The First Republic In America (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1898), p. 132.

12. Ibid., p. 173.

13. Ibid.

14. Wise, op. cit., p. 22; and Brown, op. cit., p. 229.

settlements in Virginia by 1616.¹⁵ The salt factory established on the Shore ceased to function after a few years, but its supporters in the Colony had great optimism in the possibility of such a plan even in the 1620's.¹⁶ Secretary Fory was given five hundred acres of land on the Shore in 1621,¹⁷ and in 1622 Governor Yeardley placed one hundred tenants on Captain Wilcock's Plantation near Accomack.¹⁸ There were approximately seventy-six persons on the Shore in 1623 and 1624, and the settlement ranked fifth among twenty-three places in the Colony.¹⁹

The large body of water that separated this section of Virginia from the other settlements made it necessary to develop some sort of water connection between the Peninsula and the Jamestown area. The seclusion of this

15. "Virginia in 1616," Reprinted from the Southern Literary Messenger for June 1839, cited in The Virginia Historical Register and Literary Advertiser, William Maxwell, editor (Richmond: Macfarlane and Fergusson, 1848-1853), I, 110.

16. Wise, op. cit., pp. 24-25; and Edward D. Neill, History of the Virginia Company of London with Letters to and from the Colony never Before Printed (Albany: Joel Munsell, 1869), p. 249.

17. Arber, op. cit., II, 567; and Brown, op. cit., pp. 411, 463.

18. Brown, Ibid., p. 420; and Ames, op. cit., pp. 4-5.

19. Virginia D. Harrington and Everts B. Greene, American Population Before the Federal Census of 1790 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1932), p. 143.

part of the Colony can be noted by the manner in which the King of England addressed his decrees to the people of Virginia. "To our faithful subjects in Ye Colonie of Virginia and Ye Kingdome of Accavannacke."²⁰

In 1613, a ship built under Captain Argall's supervision in the Hampton area, made its maiden voyage to the Eastern Shore of Virginia.²¹ This was perhaps one of the first vessels constructed in the Colony. The early type of boat used in crossing the Bay to the Shore was called a shallop.²² This type of vessel was a very light open boat, propelled by oars, sails, or both. The voyage to the Shore, which Captain John Smith made in 1608, was in a two ton open barge propelled by oars.²³

The need for transportation of goods and people across the rivers and the Bay was evident as early as 1621, when the Governor and the Council of Virginia wrote to the London Company urging that ship builders be

20. Wise, op. cit., p. vii.

21. Philip A. Bruce, Economic History of Virginia in the Seventeenth Century (New York: Macmillan Company, 1896), II, 427.

22. Arthur P. Middleton, Tobacco Coast, A Maritime History of Chesapeake Bay in the Colonial Era (Newport News: The Mariners' Museum, 1963), p. 62; Brown, op. cit., pp. 175-176.

23. Arber, op. cit., I, 109.

transported to the Colony:

...for the building of Shippes, Pynnaces, and small vessells, without the wch [sic] wee cannott well psecute our discoverie and seekinge to Trade wth our neighbours, or Transporte eyther ourselves, or our Goodes from one Place to another.²⁴

The early settlers established themselves along the shores and creeks on the Peninsula and they were soon engaged in building their own small crafts and having their private landings along these creeks and rivers. Some of these settlements were found on Old Plantation Creek, Kings, Craddock, Nandua, Cherrystone, Mattawaman, Hungars, Nassawadox, Cocohannock, Fungoteague, Onancock, Hunting,²⁵ and Deep Creek.

The first ferry to be mentioned was across King's Creek in 1634.²⁶ William Ward made a complaint to the court of Northampton that according to the agreement of the Old Plantation inhabitants he had been keeping a ferry on King's Creek, but would have to be reimbursed for keeping this ferry or else discontinue the same. The court gave Ward the power to attach the property of those

24. Neill, op. cit., p. 285.

25. Ames, op. cit., pp. 2-3.

26. Accawmack County Orders, Wills, Deeds, Etc., No. 1, 1632-1640, p. 24. (Transcript). Original on page 89.

who did not pay him for their transportation across the creek, according to their agreement. These small ferries across the creeks were an absolute necessity for the transportation and communication from one plantation to another in the Seventeenth Century. The method by which these ferries came about and by whom they were constructed must have varied a great deal; for John Pope was presented before the court in 1638, on the charge of committing fornication with Olive Eaton, and was compelled to build a ferry within a month "...for the passing of people over the Old Plantation Creek."²⁷ If Pope did not desire to build the ferry, he was to have forty lashes and acknowledge his fault before the congregation on the next Sabbath.

Accomack was one of the eight original Virginia shires established in 1634, and had a population of approximately 396 persons in that year.²⁸ The county changed its name to Northampton in 1642;²⁹ preferring to have an English name. In March of 1663, the county of Northampton was divided to form two counties, the northern

27. Ibid., p. 123. Original p. 160.

28. Harrington and Greene, op. cit., p. 145.

29. William W. Hening (ed.), The Statutes at Large Being a Collection of all the Laws of Virginia from First Session of the Legislature in the Year 1619 (Philadelphia: Thomas Desilver, Printer, 1809-1823), I, 249. This was in 1645 according to the present calendar.

one to be called Accomack and the southern part of the
 Peninsula retaining the name of Northampton. With the
 continuous influx of settlers on the Shore the population
 had reached approximately one thousand by 1649, and the
 white man began to settle throughout the Peninsula.

The House of Burgesses passed an Act in January of
 1641, establishing ferries in order to provide better
 transportation within the Colony. These ferries were
 to be kept at public expense.

That all the country respectively provide and
 maintain fferry's and bridges and the leavy for
 payment to the fferryman to be made by the
 Commissioners where the fferry is kept, And where
 one creeke parts two counties, there each of them
 to contribute towards the maintenance of the said
 fferries.... And that all passengers whether
 strangers or others should be freed from payment
 otherwise then by the leavies, and that the
 fferemen should give their dug attendance from
 sunne rising to sunne setting.

This Act was repealed by the Assembly in 1647, and
 permission was granted to the county courts to establish

30. Northampton County Order Book, No. 8, p. 165.
 The date was March 23, 1662/63 according to the old calendar.

31. "A Perfect Description of Virginia," Printed in
 London 1649, cited in The Virginia Historical Register and
 Literary Advertiser, William Maxwell, editor (Richmond:
 Macfiorlane and Fergusson, 1848-1853), II, 67.

32. Hening, op. cit., I, 269.

33. Ibid.

34

ferries where necessity demanded. The rates to be charged were also set by the county at this time. In 1654/55, the power to license a ferry keeper and ordinaries was granted to the county courts, with the county Commissioners³⁵ granting the licenses.

Colonel Norwood made a trip to Virginia in 1649, and passed through Northampton County. He states the site is the "...best of the whole for all sorts of necessaries for human life."³⁶ The Colonel resided at Yeardley's house while waiting for a passage across the Bay. He remained there for ten days and crossed the Chesapeake in February, by sloop, to Ludlow's Plantation on the York River.³⁷

The Eastern Shore was represented in the House of Burgesses for the first time in 1623, by John Wilcookes and Henry Watkins.³⁸ As the transportation from the

34. Ibid., p. 348

35. Ibid., p. 411. An ordinary was a tavern or eating house for public convenience during the Colonial Era.

36. Norwood, Colonel, "A Voyage to Virginia in 1649," Reprinted in Churchill's Collection of Voyages and Travels, cited in The Virginia Historical Register and Literary Advertiser, William Maxwell, editor, II, 155.

37. Ibid., P. 156

38. John Pendleton Kennedy (ed.), Journals of the House of Burgesses of Virginia, (Richmond: The Colonial Press, 1903-1915), I, The names are listed at the front of the volume.

Peninsula to Jamestown was difficult and at times impossible, the Northampton County Court was given a great deal more authority to try different types of cases than the average courts in the Colony. The General Court at Jamestown granted the Northampton Court the power to handle all cases not exceeding the sum of "twenty pounds sterling or four hundred pounds of tobacco," provided Argall Yeardley, or Nathaniel Littleton were present.³⁹

The General Assembly in 1676, passed a law that the members of the House representing the counties of Accomack and Northampton, should receive sixty pounds of tobacco-half as much as the other members-per day plus an allowance "...for the charge of a sloop two men to sayle [sic] the said sloop, and their provisions...."⁴⁰

The Eastern Shore of Virginia was soon producing tobacco and other crops in large quantities by the latter part of the Seventeenth Century, and there were a number of warehouses for the storing of tobacco, and several ports of entry for the Colony on the Shore. In Accomack County, the most prominent port was at Calvert's Neck on Anchor's

39. H. R. McIlwaine (ed.), Minutes of The Council and General Court of Colonial Virginia (Richmond: State Library of Virginia, 1934), p. 474.

40. Hening, op. cit., II, 398-399.

Creek, and in Northampton County the flourishing port was
 "...on the land belonging to Mr. Secretaryes Office,"⁴¹
 which was located on the north side of King's Creek.

The Act for establishing ports in the Colony where vessels
 could load and unload their cargo, allowed for a tremendous
 expansion in commerce for the newly created ports. By the
 Eighteenth Century the prominent ports for the Eastern Shore
 were located at Cherrystone, Nassawadox, Hungars,
 Pungoteague, Pitts, and Guilford.⁴²

The population of the Eastern Shore at the end of
 the Seventeenth Century was more than five thousand persons.⁴³
 These people were primarily farmers, but many of them were
 also shipbuilders. A large number of the inhabitants of
 the Peninsula owned their boats, which could be used for
 transporting their families or others across the Bay when
 so desired. These vessels would range in size from a
 small canoe, used on the creeks, "...to the three-masted
 vessels, the bark..."⁴⁴ There were several types of vessels
 used at this time by the settlers of the Shore, some of these

41. Ibid., p. 473.

42. H. R. McIlwaine (ed.), Executive Journals of
 The Council of Colonial Virginia (Richmond: State Library
 of Virginia, 1930), IV, 237-239.

43. Wise, op. cit., p. 246.

44. Ames, op. cit., p. 144.

types were: "The pinnace, the sloop, the shallop, the ketch,
the brigantine, the galiot, and the frigate."⁴⁵ The size
of the sloop and the other vessels varied, yet some were
large enough to carry thirty-five hogheads of tobacco and
ranged as heavy as fifty tons.⁴⁶

Regardless of the fact that there were a great many
privately owned vessels by the end of the Seventeenth
Century, there was a need for a ferry service. The
tremendous amount of business and the steady increase of
tobacco shipping, made some sort of public ferry system a
necessity in order that these people might keep in constant
contact with the Virginians across the Chesapeake Bay.

45. Ibid., A "galiot" was a small swift galley, and
a "ketch" was similar to a yawl; having the mainmast and
the mizzenmast, but the mizzenmast slightly larger and more
forward than on the yawl.

46. Ibid., p. 142.

CHAPTER II

THE FERRY SYSTEM IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

The General Assembly of Virginia passed an Act for the regulation and establishment of new ferries in 1702.¹ This Act was for the dispatch of Public Expresses and to make it possible for a quick transportation of troops in the Colony across rivers and creeks in time of danger.² Ferry sites and rates were set forth by the Assembly in this Legislative Act.³

In 1705, the General Assembly re-enacted the 1702 ferry law. In this law a ferry to the Eastern Shore of Virginia was first established.

From the Port of Northampton to the Port of York.⁴
From the Port of Northampton to the Port of Hampton.

The fare charged for crossing the Bay was fifteen shillings for a man, and thirty shillings for a man and a horse. The ferry was to be constantly maintained at the place specified by the Assembly.⁵

1. Hening, op. cit., III, 218.

2. This was during Queen Anne's War.

3. Hening, op. cit., III, 218 et seq. Subsequently, when discussing a particular Act or petition, a footnote at the end of the paragraph will indicate that the authority for all the material within that paragraph can be found within the footnote.

4. Ibid., p. 473.

5. Ibid.

The county courts where the ferries were located had the power to issue licenses to the ferry keepers, and they had the authority to prescribe the number of boats to be used. If a ferry was established on one side of a river by the Assembly, then the county courts had the power to appoint a ferry on the opposite side. The ferry keepers were required to perform their task properly and if there was any evidence of neglect or omission of duty, the county court could take their ferry franchise and grant it to someone else.

The ferry keeper was to give bond in the sum of twenty pounds for security. He was to be "...free of Public and County levies, and from all other Public services, as musters, constables, clearing highways, being impressed, and other things of the like nature...." In addition to these privileges the ferry proprietor could obtain his license free of charge; this was done in order to encourage the development of privately owned ferries.

The county court could grant the ferry keepers permission to have an ordinary. Once such ordinary was established at a ferry there could not be another for a distance of five miles; unless the county court or a

6. Ibid., pp. 473-474. et passim.

7. Ibid., p. 474.

8. Ibid.

town required the licensing of additional taverns.⁹

When a ferry system was established at a given point, no other person was permitted to transport any travellers across the rivers or Bay for a fee. If anyone violated this part of the Act he was subject to a fine of five pounds; one half of this sum was to go to the nearest ferry-man where the offense occurred, and the other half to the person who reported this violation. If the ferry keeper had reported the act he received the five pounds. The violator of this law was required to pay any court expenses which might have been charged for making the proper settlement of the violation. The one exception to this case was the transporting of a parish Priest, who could require immediate ferriage to attend church.¹⁰

The ferry keeper was to make an agreement with the county court to put his ferry at the disposal of the militia on muster days and at any other time when necessity required such transportation. The county court was to pay the ferry keeper for the transportation of the militia. All official mail, the sheriffs of the counties, and military officials down through the rank of major were to

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid., pp. 474-475.

be transported on these ferries free of charge.¹¹

The ferry system established at the Port of Northampton in 1705, was located at "the mouth of King's Creek," upon the Secretary's Land.¹² In August 1707, the establishment of the "Port or Town known or called Town Fields" was made in accordance with the Act of the General Assembly passed October 23, 1705, which allowed for the establishment of towns and ports in the Colony.¹³ Town Fields was located on the land formerly owned by the Secretary of the Colony on Cherrystone Creek, hence it appears that the first ferry system was from the same site as Town Fields.¹⁴ This ferry connected the Shore with the Ports of York and Hampton.¹⁵

The Act of 1705, establishing ferries in the Colony

11. Ibid., p. 475.

12. Ibid., p. 415. The Secretary for the Colony in 1705, was Edmond Jennings, and it was on his land that in 1707 the establishment of Town Fields was made. The name is also spelled Townfields, but the spelling Town Fields will be used in this thesis.

13. Northampton County Orders and Wills, Etc., No. 14, 1698-1710, p. 354.

14. Ibid., Town Fields was located on the point of land where King's Creek and Cherrystone Creek (called then Cherrestone) empty into the Chesapeake Bay; therefore, the town could be referred to as being located on either King's Creek or Cherrystone Creek.

15. Hening, op. cit., III, 473.

of Virginia, was made perpetual in 1715. By this time, the production and transportation of tobacco on the Eastern Shore of Virginia had become a very profitable business. There were storehouses and other ports of entry established for the transporting of this crop from the Shore. George Harmanson, an inhabitant of Northampton County, was an agent for a storehouse in 1715, "on Mattawaman's Creek. The size of this building was forty feet in length and it had two sheds on each side for the viewing and receiving of tobacco."¹⁷

Advancement in the field of transportation within the Colony can be noted in the Act passed by the General Assembly in 1720, concerning ferries. Ferry keepers were encouraged to provide convenient boats for transporting coaches, carts, and waggons; in addition to horses and passengers as had been provided for in the 1705 Act. The established rates for the transporting of these carriages were:

For every Coach, Chariot, or Chaise with four wheels, or waggon, the same rates as or[sic] by law established, at such ferries respectively, for the ferriage of six horses; and for every two wheel Chaise, or Cart, the same rate as is by law

16. Hening, op. cit., IV, 46.

17. Ibid., p. 268; and Ralph T. Whitelaw, Virginia's Eastern Shore, A History of Northampton and Accomack Counties (Richmond: Virginia Historical Society, Whittet and Shepperson, Printers, 1951), I, 298.

established for the ferriage of four horses and no more.¹⁸

With the steady increase of traveling vehicles, an Act was passed, in 1722, in which the county courts were to see that enough boats were kept at the established ferries to provide adequate transportation for waggons and ¹⁹carriages.

From the time the ferry system was established to the Eastern Shore of Virginia, until 1724, there is no record of its success or ownership. However, it appears that the first ferry service was not managed properly, or furnished inadequate transportation across the Bay; for John Masters petitioned the court of Northampton County on September 11, 1724, to keep a ferry from the port of Hungars to the ports of York and Hampton. His petition was granted provided he would keep a good boat for "men and passengers," and another boat for "men and horses."²⁰ Colonel Harmanson was to assume the security of the ferry on behalf of John Masters, and see that all the duties ²¹of the ferry keeper were properly executed.

This changed the location of the ferry from Town Fields to a site approximately five miles farther north on

18. Hening, op. cit., IV, 93-94.

19. Ibid., pp. 112-114. et passim.

20. Northampton County Court Order Book, No. 18, p. 142.

21. Ibid.

the Shore. The location of the new ferry landing increased the distance across the Bay to the Port of Hampton about seven miles, but the distance to the Port of York remained approximately the same. The ferry was to dock at the Port of Hungars for the remainder of the Eighteenth Century, as several efforts to re-establish a ferry from Cherrystone Creek and King's Creek to the ports across the Bay were to prove unsuccessful. The new ferry site was probably located at George Harmanson's Landing, for Colonel Harmanson had assumed the security for John Masters. This would place the ferry landing at the mouth of Mattawaman Creek where the Harmanson warehouse was located.

An interesting account of a trip across the Bay was made by George L. Campbell while on a voyage from New York in 1736. Campbell states that the roads on the Eastern Shore were as good or equal to those in England. He describes the Chesapeake Bay as large enough to harbor the British, French, and Dutch Fleets at one time, and he estimates the distance from the ferry landing on the Peninsula to the entrance of the York River as approximately
 22
 twenty miles. The trip down the Peninsula was made by two stages from "Acomoco [sic] Court House," to "Pongoteag [sic]"

22. G. L. Campbell, Itinerent Observations in America, Reprinted from the London Magazine, 1745-1746 (Savannah: J. H. Estill, Printer, 1878), p. 52.

the first night, and then to the "Ferry House at Magidi Bay"; where a "Chaloupe attends to transport Passengers and their Horses to York, Norfolk, Gloucester [sic], James Town, or other Ports, at a Pistole a Horse and Man...."²³

Traveling was often hazardous on the ferries in the Colonial Period, and especially on the ferry across the Bay, as can be seen by the following experience:

No sooner the Morning dawns'd than we rous'd from our Beds, and address'd ourselves to our Voyage....

After being Victualled for our Voyage, which generally employs three or four Hours, and we had gotten our Baggage and Part of our Attendants on board, we ourselves step'd into a small Punt (a very small and dangerous Sort of Canoe [sic], liable to be overturn'd by the least Motion of the Sitters in it. The Negroes manage them very dextrously, with a Paddle), and put off to the Shellop; which by Reason of the Shallowness of the Water, lay at Anchor near a Mile from Shore, and beyond a very ugly Reef, on which the Waves broke with great Fury; attended by Scores of Porpoises, who were wantoning about us. We had very nearly gained the Vessel, when two of these stupid Hogs came souse against one Side of the Punt, and overturn'd us just upon the Back of the Shoal.²⁴

It was with great difficulty that the writer of this account was rescued, when the Punt was overturned,

23. Ibid. A pistole was the old quarter doubloon of Spain, worth about \$4. The Chaloupe was French for sloop, being a deep draft vessel.

24. "Observations in Several Voyages and Travels in America in the Year 1736," From the London Magazine July, 1746, cited in William and Mary College Quarterly, First Series, Lyon G. Tyler, editor (Williamsburg: William and Mary College, 1892-1920), XV, 217-218.

and with such an experience he gives the following advice to future travellers:

Here, then, is one principle Qualification of a Traveller, so to conduct his Steps as to be ready at every Stage to enter that Eternal Mansion or Resting Place, where Pain shall lose their Sting, and cares shall vex no more.²⁵

An Act of the General Assembly, in 1745, gave Littleton Eyre the ferry franchise for the Eastern Shore. This ferry was to run from the land belonging to Littleton Eyre to the towns of York, Hampton and Norfolk. Mr. Eyre was to maintain the proper boats for convenient transportation of waggons, coaches, and carriages. The rates to be charged were: twenty shillings for a man passing singly, for a man and his horse fifteen shillings each, for each coach, chariot, or waggon and the driver, the rate was the same as for six horses, for every cart or four wheeled chaise and the driver the rate was equal to four horses passing across the ferry, and for every two wheeled chaise or chair the rate was the same as for two horses.²⁶

In 1749, the General Assembly passed an Act which repealed all previous Acts relating to ferries. This Act was to become effective after June 10, 1751, and it set new rates for the ferry running from the land of

25. Ibid., pp. 218-219. [This Gentleman was later to lose his life in Jamaica.]

26. Hening, op. cit., V, 364-365.

Littleton Eyre to the ports of York, Hampton and Norfolk. The rates as established in this Act included the transportation of tobacco and other types of animals besides horses, and were as follows:

For every hogshedd of tobacco as for one horse.
 For every head of neat cattle as for one horse.
 For every sheep, goat, or lamb, one fifth part of the ferriage of one horse.
 For every hog, one fourth part of the ferriage of one horse.²⁷

The 1748 Act provided for the free transportation of public messengers, expresses, sheriffs of the counties and military and governmental officials, as the previous Acts had provided; and a fine of five pounds was set for the illegal transporting of passengers by non licensed persons across any place where a ferry had been established. If a violation of this type occurred, half of the five pounds went to the nearest ferry keeper where the act was committed and the other half to the person who had reported the violation.²⁸

Littleton Eyre was given the monopoly for transporting passengers and maintaining the ferry system across the Chesapeake by a Legislative Act in 1755.

Be it enacted, by the authority aforesaid, that no person whatsoever shall for reward, set any person or persons over the said Bay, from the said

27. Ibid., VI, 19-23, et passim.

28. Ibid., p. 23.

county of Northampton, to the said towns of York, Hampton, or Norfolk, or any other place adjacent to the said Towns; and if any person shall offend herein, he or she, so offending, shall forfeit and pay five pounds current money, for every offence, to be recovered by the keeper of the said ferry, for his own use, by action of debt or information, in any county court in the dominion.²⁹

The inhabitants of Accomack County felt that a ferry running from one of the towns in the northern part of the Peninsula would be more convenient for them than the Eyre Ferry, hence Levin Rogers and sundry inhabitants of Accomack petitioned the General Assembly on November 5, 1764, for the establishment of a ferry.³⁰ This ferry was to run from the town of Onancock to the towns of "...York, Hampton and Norfolk, and adjacent places."³¹ John Wise Jr. and sundry inhabitants of Accomack County also submitted a petition at this time to the Assembly. Wise desired to establish a ferry from his land on Chesconoseaux Creek to the towns of York, Hampton and Norfolk.³² Littleton Eyre and his son Severn submitted a petition to the General Assembly in opposition to the petitions of Levin Rogers and John Wise Jr.³³

29. Ibid., p. 496.

30. John P. Kennedy (ed.), Journals of The House of Burgesses of Virginia, 1761-1765 (Richmond: The Colonial Press, 1905-1915), X, 257.

31. Ibid.

32. Ibid.

33. Ibid.

The three petitions were referred to the Committee of Propositions and Grievances in the House. The Committee reported their decision concerning the petitions to the House November 8, 1764.⁵⁴ The petitions of John Wise Jr. and Levin Rogers were rejected, and Littleton and Severn Eyre's petition was declared as reasonable.⁵⁵

Severn Eyre was a member of the House of Burgesses in 1766.⁵⁶ On November 10, 1766, he and his father, Littleton Eyre, submitted the following request to the General Assembly in order to gain the ferry monopoly from Accomack County: that, "...no skipper or owner of Vessels may be allowed to carry passengers from the Eastern Shore over the Bay to York, Hampton or Norfolk."⁵⁷

In spite of the Eyre request, Luke Lucker submitted a petition to the Assembly on December 3, 1766, "...praying that he may be admitted to keep a ferry from Fungoteague, in the said county [Accomack] to York, Hampton, and Norfolk, and the places adjacent."⁵⁸ The Eyres request and the Lucker petition were brought before the House by the

34. Ibid., p. 245.

35. Ibid.

36. Ibid., 1766-1769, XI, 15.

37. Ibid., p. 21.

38. Ibid., p. 49.

Committee of Propositions and Grievances December 10, 1766,
 39
 and declared as reasonable.

Again Littleton and Severn Eyre submitted a petition
 in March, 1767, to the Assembly in opposition to Luke
 Lucker's petition. They stated:

They have been at a great expense in erecting
 convient [sic] Houses for the Entertainment of
 Travellers and Commodious Boats for their speedy
 Passage from the Public Ferry at Hungar's in
 Northampton County, to York, Hampton, and Norfolk,
 and praying that the people of Accomack may be
 prohibited from transporting Travellers from
 the said county.
 40

This petition was also reported as reasonable by
 the Committee, and was to be incorporated in a Bill for
 increasing the ferriage at Jamestown and Swans Point.
 41

The General Assembly passed the Act in 1767, which gave
 the petitioners the ferry monopoly for Accomack County.
 42

This monopoly was similar to the one Littleton Eyre had
 been granted by the Assembly for Northampton County in
 1755. Luke Lucker's attempt to gain a ferry franchise

39. Ibid., pp. 60-61.

40. Ibid., p. 97.

41. Ibid., p. 103.

42. Hening, op. cit., VIII, 263-264. "That no
 person whatsoever shall for reward set any person or persons
 over the said bay from the county of Accomack (other than
 the inhabitants of the said County) to the said Towns of
 York, Hampton, or Norfolk, or other places adjacent to
 the said Towns...." This Act is dated 1766, as the
 Session of the Assembly began in that year.

for the inhabitants of Accomack was defeated like those of Levin Rogers and John Wise Jr.

The Severn Eyre Memorandum Book has recorded the number of passengers crossing the Bay, their destination, and the amount received for ferriage from November 15, 1766 to February 27, 1767. There were twenty trips made in this period; transporting approximately fifty-two persons, seventeen horses, one chariot and some letters. The amount collected by Severn for the period was forty nine pounds and two shillings. The destination of the passengers were as follows: one to Gloucester, seventeen to York, two to Hampton, thirty-one to Norfolk, and one passenger returned from Norfolk to Hungers, but couldn't pay his ferriage. Three Indians were passengers going to York on December 2, 1766, and it appears that they were not charged any ferriage. The rate at this time was one pound for a passenger or horse passing singly, or fifteen shillings for each if there were more than one.⁴³

Littleton Eyre was in business partnerships with John Bowdoin and Isaac Smith at the time of his death.⁴⁴ Bowdoin and Severn Eyre settled the estate and took an

43. Severn Eyre Memorandum Book. Owned by Mrs. Henry Baldwin, a descendent of the Eyre Family. Eyre Hall, Northampton County, Virginia.

44. Northampton County Wills and Inventories, No. 24, 1766-1772, p. 174.

inventory of the property. The inventory shows that he owned half of a schooner named Betsy.⁴⁵ Eyre's Hungars⁴⁶ Plantation was left to his only son Severn.

The ferry system appears to pass from the Eyre Family in the 1770's to the Bowdoin Family. Severn Eyre sold the Hungars tract of land, which was 486 acres, to John Bowdoin.⁴⁷ At John Bowdoin's death in 1775, he left the Hungars Plantation to his son John.⁴⁸ John Bowdoin Jr. died intestate and the ferry passed to his daughter Frances Bannister Bowdoin.⁴⁹ Peter Bowdoin, brother to John Bowdoin Jr., was superintendent of the ferry from 1786 until 1793, and became sole tenant or ward for his niece Frances in 1795.⁵⁰

45. Ibid., pp. 225-226. 46. Ibid., p. 175.

47. Whitelaw, op. cit., I, 294.

48. Northampton County Wills and Inventories, No. 25, 1772-1777, p. 456. It appears that the ferry landing was located on this 486 acres of land that Severn Eyre sold to John Bowdoin, as the Hungars ferry was referred to from this time on as being located on the land of the Bowdoin heirs. Severn Eyre was in business partnership with John Bowdoin as can be seen in John Bowdoin's Will in 1775. Whether the ferry was owned in partnership between these two is not known, however, it appears that Severn had sold his ferry rights to John Bowdoin prior to his death in 1775.

49. Whitelaw, op. cit., I, 294; and Northampton County Deeds, No. 24, 1800-1805, p. 18.

50. Petition of Peter Bowdoin to the General Assembly of Virginia, December 21, 1798 (Legislative Petitions, State Library of Virginia).

An Act for establishing several new ferries passed, in 1772, by the General Assembly subjected the ferry keepers in the Colony to a fine of ten shillings, for overcharging any person the amount that had been established by the Legislative Acts of the Assembly. The ferry keeper was to forfeit the amount charged to the person he had offended, plus the ten shillings and any court expenses which might be incurred.⁵¹

During the Revolutionary War the Chesapeake Bay Ferry was in danger of being captured by the British Fleet. It was an absolute necessity to take every precaution in making the trips across the Bay. The armed forces of the Virginia Colony stationed on the Eastern Shore were authorized to purchase or procure enough boats for the transporting of troops across rivers and creeks on the Shore.⁵² A petition to the General Assembly by John F. Turner reveals that his schooner the Susanna was captured by the British in 1777, while transporting troops across the Bay. Mr. Turner requested the Assembly to pay him for transporting the troops and the loss of his vessel.⁵³

51. Hening, op. cit., VIII, 555.

52. Wm. P. Palmer (ed.), Calendar of Virginia State Papers and Other Manuscripts, 1652-1781 (Richmond: R. F. Walker, Superintendent of Public Printing, 1875-1893), VIII, 119.

53. Petition of John F. Turner to the General Assembly of Virginia, November 21, 1794. (Subsequently, all Legislative Petitions cited will be found in Virginia State Library.)

The General Assembly in 1778, passed another ferry Act, which repealed the Act of 1748.⁵⁴ This Act allowed the county courts to authorize a fixed rate for the ferries within the jurisdiction of their counties, if the present rate was found insufficient to allow the ferry keeper to provide for the proper boats and hands in order to maintain immediate passage of public expresses and other travellers. The ferry keeper on the Shore took quick advantage of this Act, as he requested that the Court of Northampton allow him to increase his rates to "...six pounds for a single man...and four pounds and ten shillings if two or more."⁵⁵ The court granted the request.

The present generation has learned by experience that during a war there is inflation, and during the Revolutionary War inflation was especially prevalent in the Eastern Shore Ferry system. The ferry proprietor was granted permission by the Northampton County Court to increase the rates again on December 15, 1779.⁵⁶ This was the second time the ferry rates had been increased within less than a year. The rates were increased from

54. Hening, op. cit., IX, 546-547.

55. Northampton County Minute Book, 1777-1783, p. 145.

56. Ibid., p. 218.

six pounds for a single passenger to twenty pounds, and if there were more than one the increase was from four pounds and ten shillings to fifteen pounds.⁵⁷ From these figures it is quite evident that the risk of making this voyage across the Bay during the war was great, and from these rates established for a passage there were probably very few trips made.

William Wise and sundry inhabitants of the county of Accomack submitted a petition to the General Assembly November 4, 1788, for the establishing of a "Packet Boat" to carry passengers from the town of Onancock to the towns of York, Hampton, and Norfolk, and also to the city of Richmond.⁵⁸ This petition reveals the status of the Hungars' Ferry in 1788, and makes the following criticism:

The distance of the sd ferry Hungars from the County of Accomack, the uncertainty of finding the ferry boat on this side the bay, the expence necessarily incurred in case of a disappointment, the difficulty of procuring horses or other means of conveyance upon a return from the Western Shore, render the sd ferry so inconvenient to the Inhabitants of the County of Accomack, that they rarely make use of it, but rather, as they are allowed by law, hire vessels in their own county wherever their occasions require to transport them across the Bay: such vessels when hired, being calculated for other purposes, are generally but

57. Ibid.

58. Petition of William Wise and Sundry Inhabitants of Accomack to the General Assembly of Virginia, November 4, 1788.

ilily accomadated [sic] for passengers: the inhabitants of the County of Accomack therefore suffer a real inconvienece [sic] in this respect.⁵⁹

This petition was signed by John Teackle, Chas. Bagwell, George Corbin, John Burton, John Custis and 119 other persons of the county. A notice of the petition was published in the Virginia Gazette and Independent Chronicle for three weeks prior to being submitted to the Assembly.⁶⁰

The House of Delegates read the Wise petition and it was referred to the Committee of Propositions and Grievances for study.⁶¹ The Committee reported the petition back to the House with the following resolution:

Resolved, that in the opinion of this Committee petition of divers inhabitants of the said county, across the bay, to the Towns of York, Hampton, and Norfolk and to the City of Richmond, be deferred to the next session of Assembly.⁶²

The deferment was agreed upon by the House and there is no mention of this petition in the next session of the Assembly.

The population of Accomack County in 1790 was 13,959, and Northampton County had a population of 6,889;

59. Ibid.

60. Affidavit of Augustine Davis, publisher of the Virginia Gazette and Independent Chronicle (Richmond), 1783-1789, November 5, 1788.

61. Journal of the House of Delegates of the Commonwealth of Virginia, 1786-1790 Sessions (Richmond: Thomas W. White, Printer, 1828), p. 24.

62. Ibid., p. 94.

making a total population of 20,849, as compared with 747,610 for the State of Virginia.⁶³ Due to the remoteness of the inhabitants of the Peninsula from regular State Lines and Public Post Offices there was a need for some sort of transportation to be established on the Shore. In 1790, the inhabitants of the Shore submitted a petition to the state legislature on behalf of Joseph Wilsey of North Carolina, James Rosekrans, of New York, and Robert Twiford of Accomack County, for the establishment of a stage-line to run from Northampton Court House to Snow Hill, Maryland and Philadelphia.⁶⁴

The exclusive privilege for this stage line was requested for seven years, and the rate was to be three pence per mile for each passenger. The success of this line would depend a great deal on the efficiency of the ferry across the Bay to Norfolk; therefore, these petitioners requested permission to keep a "Packet Boat" at Cherrystone in Northampton for transporting passengers to Norfolk. The price set for this new ferry line was to be twelve shillings for each passenger, the same for a horse, and three shillings for a slave. The petition was

63. Census for 1790: Department of Commerce and Labor Bureau of The Census, 1790 Virginia (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1908), p. 9.

64. Petition from Inhabitants of the Eastern Shore to the General Assembly of Virginia on behalf of Joseph Wilsey, James Rosekrans, and Robert Twiford, November 11, 1790.

signed by Edward Ker, John Rogers, Elijah Watson and
 eighty-seven other inhabitants of the Shore.⁶⁵

A duplicate of the petition was submitted to the
 House of Delegates containing forty-nine more signatures.⁶⁶
 These two petitions were referred to the Committee of
 Propositions and Grievances for the proper consideration.⁶⁷

Grace Bowdoin, the wife of John Bowdoin Sr.,
 submitted a petition to the Assembly in opposition to the
 petition from the inhabitants of the Shore on behalf of
 Wilsey, Rosekrans, and Twiford. She declared that the
 granting of such a ferry franchise to the proprietors of
 the new stage-line would "...terminate in the entire
 destruction of the present established ferry."⁶⁸ The
 Hungars' Ferry derived its support from the few travellers
 going north and south by way of the Eastern Shore and the
 consequence of such a new ferry line would mean that future
 passengers would use the new line in preference to the
 ferry at Hungars. This petition was submitted to the

65. Ibid. The manuscripts are not numbered.

66. Ibid. A duplicate, not dated.

67. Journal of the House, op. cit., 1790 Session,
 pp. 24, 51.

68. Petition of Grace Bowdoin to the General
 Assembly of Virginia, November 16, 1790.

same Committee to which the others had been referred for study.⁶⁹

On December 1, 1790, the Committee presented its opinions to the House of Delegates concerning the two Eastern Shore petitions. They resolved that the petition of the inhabitants of the Shore in the interest of the stage line and packet boat across the Bay was reasonable, and that Grace Bowdoin's petition in opposition to the establishing of this new packet boat be rejected.⁷⁰ The House resolved itself into a Committee of the whole House December 13, 1790, concerning the Bill "...giving Joseph Wilsey and others the exclusive privilege of Conveying Persons in stage carriage, and for other purposes."⁷¹ Mr. Beckinridge, a member of the Committee of Propositions and Grievances, reported the Bill. After several amendments had been made to the Bill, it was read and delivered to the Clerks table, where it was reread and agreed upon⁷² by the House.

The Bill was made a law on December 21, 1790, and Joseph Wilsey, James Rosekrans and Robert Twiford got the

69. Journal of the House, op. cit., 1790 Session, p. 65.

70. Ibid., p. 106.

71. Ibid., p. 133.

72. Ibid.

exclusive franchise for the stage-line to run from Northampton Court House to the Maryland Line. The ferry at Hungars was to retain its exclusive right of transporting passengers across the Bay to Norfolk and other ports, provided: the ferry keeper of the established ferry would give bond in the sum of five hundred pounds on or before the coming July, and that the proprietor would faithfully execute his duties in attending the established stage. If the ferry keeper at Hungars failed to execute these duties he would lose the ferry monopoly, and Wilsey, Rosekrans, and Twiford would be permitted to establish a ferry on Cherrystone Creek.

In the Act which established the stage-line on the Shore, Richard Towns and John Woolfolk were given the right to convey passengers traveling northward from Portsmouth, Virginia, to the Eastern Shore when the Hungars' Ferry was not in Portsmouth to transport them. They were permitted to charge the same rate as the Shore ferry received for transporting passengers.

The ferry rates across the Chesapeake were set at \$3.53 for a man or horse passing singly and \$2.50 for each,

73. Hening, op. cit., XIII, 194-196, et passim.

74. Ibid., pp. 196-197.

if there were more than one, by a Legislative Act in 1793.
After the stage-line had been established in 1790, the
Court of Northampton felt that one ferryboat was in-
sufficient, and required the proprietor at Hungars to
maintain two boats.⁷⁶ Peter Bowdoin, who was acting ward
for his niece Frances Bannister Bowdoin, submitted a
petition to the General Assembly in December 1797, for
an increase in the Hungars' Ferry rates.⁷⁷

The petitioner informed the Assembly of the
considerable expense incurred in providing the necessary
boats for the transporting of persons, horses, carriages,
and other commodities. The present rates were not
sufficient to provide for the maintenance of the boats,
and paying the wages of the skillful navigators. Mr.
Bowdoin requested that the proprietress of the ferry be
given the exclusive right to run the ferry from the Shore
to the ports of York, Hampton and Norfolk.⁷⁸

The petition was received by the House of Delegates
and an Act was passed December 29, 1797, which allowed

75. Samuel Shepherd (ed.), The Statutes at Large of Virginia from October Session 1792, to December Session 1806 (Richmond: Samuel Shepherd, Printer, 1855), I, 152.

76. Petition of Peter Bowdoin to the General Assembly of Virginia, December 21, 1793.

77. Petition of Peter Bowdoin to the General Assembly of Virginia, December 7, 1797.

78. Ibid.

for an increase of the ferry rates. The new rates established were: for a man or horse passing singly \$5., for more than one, but less than five \$5.50 each, for more than four \$3. each, for every coach, chariot, or waggon and the driver the same as for five horses, and for every two wheeled chaise or chair the same as for two horses. Miss Bowdoin was granted the monopoly of the ferry rights across the Bay, and a fine of twenty dollars was to be imposed upon anyone who transported passengers for a fee across the Chesapeake. This law did not prohibit the inhabitants of Accomack County from conveying each other in their own boats.

79

As the stage-line franchise from Northampton County Court House to the Maryland Line was granted for a seven years period, in 1798, the owners of this stage petitioned the Assembly of Virginia for the establishment of a permanent stage-line on the Shore. This petition contained four depositions and one hundred and five signatures.

80

Robert Twiford of Accomack County and Coventon

79. Acts Passed by the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Virginia, 1797-1798 session (Richmond: Augustine Davis, Printers, 1798), p. 36.

80. H. J. Eckenrode, "A Calendar of Legislative Petitions arranged by Counties, Accomac-Bedford," in the Fifth Annual Report of the Library Board of the Virginia State Library, 1907-1908, H. R. Mollwaine, editor (Richmond: Davis Bottom, Superintendent of Public Printing, 1908), p. 10. Petition number A-35.

Simkins of Northampton, petitioned the Assembly on December 14, 1798, for themselves and the other proprietors of the stage-line running from Philadelphia to Hungers' Ferry, to establish a packet boat across the Chesapeake from the harbor of Cherrystone.⁸¹ Thomas Kendale granted the proprietors of the stage-line on the Shore the permission to have their ferry landing on his "Town Fields Plantation," if they were granted the franchise by the Assembly. He declared that he would keep a Public House and provide, "...entertainment for the Passengers."⁸²

With the transportation furnished by the stage on the Eastern Shore in 1798, a passenger was able to make a trip from Hungers to Philadelphia—a distance of approximately 220 miles—in three days. The proprietors of this line desired to accelerate the time in making this trip to forty-eight hours, or three days including the passage across the Bay to Norfolk. The success of such a plan depended on the accommodations received from the

81. Petition of Coventon Simkins and Robert Twiford to the General Assembly of Virginia, December 14, 1798. The name Simkins is also spelled Sempkins and Simpkins, but Simkins appears correct and will be used in this thesis.

82. Affidavit of Thomas Kendale taken December 8, 1798. The name is also spelled Kendall in the petition of Coventon Simkins and Robert Twiford, December 14, 1798. (This and subsequent affidavits, depositions, statements, and letters can be located in the Virginia State Library, with the Legislative Petitions for the counties of Accomack and Northampton.)

ferry keeper at Hungars, and they believed that these accommodations were not being provided for properly by the Hungars' Ferry. The following complaints were made concerning the Bowdoin Ferry:

The Smallness of the Pacquets now kept do not admit Cabins sufficiently Commodious: that the Furniture within as to bedding and other Particulars have been greatly Complained of: that no Provisions or liquors are laid in by the Proprietors to be furnished to Passengers at reasonable rate in case of a Tedious Passage by adverse winds or foul weather: that the Said Pacquets are Commanded and sailed only by Negro Slaves and that the Fare, as lately raised, is more more [sic] than a reasonable Compensation for the Services rendered. Upon some of these heads Pertiularly as to the Command by Negro Slaves remonstrances have been made to the present Proprietor of the said Ferry, but without Effet [sic].⁸³

If the Assembly would grant Simkins and Twiford a franchise to keep a packet across the Chesapeake, they proposed the following:

...that there Shall be kept three Packets, each of a burthen not less than thirty Six Tons, well built for for [sic] Sailing and completely equipped, to be commanded by decent white men of competent responsibility: that the Said Pacquets Shall have large and Commodious Cabins, Containing each not less than ten Berthe furnished with good and decent Beds and covering with Curtains; and that each Cabin Shall be devided into two rooms for the accommodations of female Passengers; that they be Supplied, also, with Sufficient Quantities, from Time to Time of good provisions and Liquors, to be, furnished to Passengers as they may require for a reasonable Compensation, and that in no Instance there shall

83. Petition of Coventon Simkins and Robert Twiford to the General Assembly of Virginia, December 14, 1798.

be demanded or taken, from any Passenger for his Ferrriage more then Two dollars and fifty cents whether there be one only or more.

The petitioners presented the advantages of the harbor of Cherrystone over the harbor at Hungars, as to its location, depth of water and the protection it would provide for vessels during a storm. They desired that the General Assembly give careful consideration to their petition in establishing the new packet route across the Bay. The petition was submitted to the Committee of Propositions and Grievances after it had been read before the House.⁸⁵

Peter Bowdoin submitted a petition to the House of Delegates on December 21, 1798, on behalf of his ward, Miss Bowdoin, in opposition to the Coventon Simkins and Robert Twiford petition.⁸⁶ There were five affidavits submitted at this time also, to substantiate the Bowdoin petition. The affidavits of Thorogood West and Henry Harmanson were taken at the Northampton County Court House December 7, 1798, in the presence of Peter Bowdoin and

84. Ibid.

85. Journal of the House of Delegates of the Commonwealth of Virginia, 1798-1799 Session (No publisher and no date of publication given), p. 24.

86. Petition of Peter Bowdoin to the General Assembly of Virginia, December 21, 1798.

and Coventon Simkins and were witnessed by J. Watson.⁸⁷

The deposition of Isaac Smith was made in the presence of Peter Bowdoin, Coventon Simkins, and Robert Twiford at the Court House of Northampton on December 8, 1798.⁸⁸ Henry

Grey's and William Eyre's depositions were taken in the presence of Isaac Smith, a Justice of the Peace, on the 10th and 14th of December 1798, respectively.⁸⁹

It is interesting to note in these depositions that four of the men declared they were satisfied with the present ferry conditions and had found the services rendered very satisfactory. Three of the men declared that Hungars' Harbor was superior to that at Cherrystone, and the road to Hungars was much better for the transporting of passengers by the stage-line than that to the Cherrystone Harbor.

The question of using Negroes as Commander, or pilots, on these ferries was defended by these depositions. The use of Negro deckhands aboard these ferries can be noted as early as 1736, when a traveller made a voyage

87. Affidavit of Thorogood West, December 7, 1798; and the Affidavit of Henry Harmanson, December 7, 1798. Thorogood is also spelled Thorgood and Thorowgood, but his signature is written Thorogood.

88. Affidavit of Isaac Smith, December 8, 1798.

89. Affidavit of Henry Grey, December 10, 1798; and the Affidavit of William Eyre, December 14, 1798.

across the Chesapeake Bay. On that trip, the traveller declared the Negroes handled the Punt—a small boat which transported the passengers to the sloop—with skill.⁹⁰ The names of these Negro slaves used as Commanders of the Bowdoin ferry were: Jam Gray, Jam Buck, and Tony. These men were owned by Peter Bowdoin.⁹¹

Peter Bowdoin had used white men as pilots for his wards ferries at first, but they proved unsatisfactory in the majority of cases; then he began to use his Negroes for pilots aboard the ferries. The slaves proved "...most able and skilful Pilots for those parts of the Bay and River to which those Boats are by law confined," and they were, "...expert watermen."⁹² Thorogood West had been a Commander of the Hungars' Ferries for two years, and he was well acquainted with the Negro hands used aboard these vessels. West knew the slaves to be, "...skillful Pilots, and expert hands, and thinks them in these particulars greatly superior to any white-men which can possibly be got."⁹³

Isaac Smith stated that he had crossed the Bay many

90. Cf. ante, p. 21.

91. Affidavit of Isaac Smith, December 8, 1798.

92. Petition of Peter Bowdoin to the General Assembly of Virginia, December 21, 1798.

93. Affidavit of Thorogood West, December 7, 1798.

times while Jam Gray was skipper of the ferry, and with the other slaves as commanders also. Smith had found them to manage the ferries with great skill.⁹⁴ William Eyre defended the efficiency of the slaves used aboard the ferries and stated that he had been satisfied with the "...skill...attention and good conduct of the Commanders' of the said Boats, who have, in general been, the black men, who now Command said Ferryboats."⁹⁵

The Negro pilots were accused of being addicted to strong drink by Simkins and Twiford. William Eyre declared, "Jam Gray, is fond of strong-drink," but he had not seen the slaves intoxicated on board the boats to the extent of being incapable of performing their duty; and he felt at ease while under the pilotage of Jam Gray.⁹⁶ Thorogood West remarked that he had seen these Negroes drunk on shore, but not aboard the vessels, so as to be incapable of performing their duty. West believed they were no more addicted to strong drink than were, "...many other Seafaring men."⁹⁷

To the accusation that these slaves had embezzled

94. Affidavit of Isaac Smith, December 8, 1798.

95. Affidavit of William Eyre, December 14, 1798.

96. Ibid.

97. Affidavit of Thorogood West, December 7, 1798.

property while on board the ferries, West declared, there was only one time when such offense occurred to his knowledge. Jam had ⁹⁸ "...drawnout of a Cask of Rum, some of the contents." When West had questioned Jam, he acknowledged he "...had taken five or six quart Bottles-full and a case Bottle-full." ⁹⁹ This was approximately two gallons of the rum. Isaac Smith defended the honesty of Jam Gray by declaring that he had intrusted Gray to take money on thirty-six different times to merchants in Norfolk, Virginia, in the total amount of 1587 pounds and 14 shillings without ¹⁰⁰ any loss.

Peter Bowdoin's petition of December 21, 1798, on behalf of his ward Frances B. Bowdoin, gives a strong defense for his ferry, the use of his slaves as deckhands, and commanders, the expense of maintaining three ferry boats, and the superiority of Hungars' Harbor over that of Cherrystone. This petition reveals that the average profit per year of the Hungars' Ferry from 1766, until two boats ¹⁰¹ were maintained as ferries, to be one hundred pounds.

98. Whether it was Jam Gray, or Jam Buck is uncertain, but it appears to be Jam Gray, as most of the accusations are against him.

99. Affidavit of Thorogood West, December 7, 1798.

100. Affidavit of Isaac Smith, December 8, 1798.

101. Two ferries were maintained after 1790. Cf. ante, p. 37.

After the two ferries were established the profits averaged
 102
 approximately 195 pounds annually. As the Bowdoin Ferry
 had been established for years with a good record, Peter
 Bowdoin requested that the Assembly continue to grant his
 ward the monopoly of the ferry route to the ports of York,
 103
 Hampton and Norfolk.

The Bowdoin petition was submitted to the Committee
 104
 of Propositions and Grievances by the House. Mr. Tazwell,
 105
 a Delegate of Norfolk, was a member of this Committee, and
 106
 a defender of the Bowdoin Ferry franchise. The Committee
 reported that the petition of Coventon Simkins and Robert
 Twiford should be rejected, and Peter Bowdoin's petition
 107
 on behalf of his ward was considered to be reasonable.

On January 16, 1799, an Act to amend an Act was

102. The petition shows that a three was written instead of a two in regards to the number of boats, but had been erased. This could mean that the third ferry had only been used for a short period of time prior to this petition.

103. Petition of Peter Bowdoin to the General Assembly of Virginia, December 21, 1798.

104. Journal of the House of Delegates of the Commonwealth of Virginia, 1798-1799 Session, p. 30.

105. Ibid., p. 38.

106. Peter Bowdoin's letter to Joseph Prentis Jr., August 11, 1821, Bowdoin Papers (University of Virginia Library). The letter makes reference to Mr. Tazwell who helped Peter Bowdoin maintain the ferry franchise in 1798.

107. Journal of the House, 1798-1799 Session, p. 42.

passed by the General Assembly concerning the ferry on
 the Shore.¹⁰⁸ This Act allowed Miss Bowdoin to retain the
 monopoly of the ferry. The efforts of Twiford and Sinkins
 to break the Bowdoin monopoly were to no avail. The Act
 provided for a fifty cent reduction in fare if there were
 more than one passenger making the trip across the Bay, and
 the bond to be posted as a security was reduced from five
 hundred pounds, as had been established in 1790, to two
 hundred dollars. This law repealed all previous laws
 concerning the Chesapeake Bay Ferry to the Eastern Shore
 of Virginia.¹⁰⁹

The type of boats used as ferries across the
 Chesapeake were very different from the type of boats
 used by the majority of ferry systems within the Colony
 of Virginia during the Colonial Era. The ferryboats used
 in crossing the rivers or creeks were called "scows."¹¹⁰
 The scows were a large flat-bottomed type boat with broad
 square ends, and drew very little water which permitted
 them to get near the shore or the bank of a river for

108. Acts Passed at a General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Virginia, 1798-1799 Session (Richmond: Kerliwether Jones and Joan Dixon, Printers, 1799), p. 19.

109. Ibid.

110. Arthur Pierce Middleton, Tobacco Coast, A Maritime History of Chesapeake Bay in The Colonial Era (Newport News, Va.: The Mariners' Museum, 1963), p. 60.

taking on carriages, horses and passengers. This type of boat was not able to withstand the distance across the Bay, where squalls and rough seas were often encountered. The ferry vessels used in crossing the Chesapeake were rigged as sloops, schooners or shallops. These sailing vessels were more seaworthy and larger than the average ferry used in the Colony. They were referred to as, ¹¹¹ "Passage-Boats," "Packet Sloops," or "Packet-Boats."

The Chesapeake Bay ferry had to provide for the accommodation of passengers for a longer period of time than the ordinary ferry, as it often took a complete day or even longer to make the trip of approximately twenty ¹¹² miles. The necessity for having provisions aboard and the proper cabin was evident, as the time it would require in making the trip depended upon the conditions of the weather. There was a Packet Sloop in Virginia in 1769, which was built exactly for the purpose of a ferry and claimed to have "...the largest and best Cabin of any boat ¹¹³ in the Colony." The tonnage of the three sailing vessels

111. *Ibid.*, p. 62; and the term "Packet-Boat" is referred to in the petition of Simkins and Twiford.

112. Palmer, *op. cit.*, IV, 379. Citing extracts from a journal kept by Bolling Stark, in describing a trip across the Bay in 1787.

113. Middleton, *op. cit.*, p. 62. Citing V.G.(R&D), September 7, 1769.

used as ferries across the Bay in 1798 was: 35 7/95 tons, 34 45/92 tons, and 29 tons. The largest of these ferries had six berths and the other two had four berths each to accommodate their passengers.¹¹⁴

The sailing vessel used as a ferry across the Chesapeake in 1786, was called a "Chaloupe," and being a deep draft vessel it was unable to come near the shore to load and unload its passengers or horses. A smaller type of boat was used in transporting passengers or horses to and from the larger vessel. This small boat was called a "Punt."¹¹⁵ Isaac Weld, who travelled in the Colony of Virginia in 1795, describes the crossing of a ferry from Hampton to Norfolk as, "...a most irksome piece of business."¹¹⁶ "There is not one ferry in six where the boats are good and well manned," Weld declared, "and it is necessary to employ great circumspection in order to guard against accidents."¹¹⁷

In order to transport a horse across the Bay, it

114. Petition of Peter Bowdoin to the General Assembly of Virginia, December 21, 1798.

115. Campbell, op. cit., p. 52.

116. Isaac Weld Jr., Travels through the States of North America and the Provinces of Upper and Lower Canada During the Years 1795, 1796, 1797 (Second edition, London: Printed for John Stockdale Piccadilly, 1799), I, 170.

117. Ibid.

was necessary to put the animal on a small flat type of boat, which was able to maneuver near the shore. This small boat was then brought along side of the sloop or schooner, and the animal was forced to jump aboard the larger vessel. Weld stated, that he had "...heard of numberless instances of horses being drowned, killed and having their legs broken, by getting in and out of boats,"
 118
 in this manner.

The Bowdoin Ferry at Hungars was not only used to transport passengers, but tobacco and other needs of the inhabitants on the Shore. Preeson Bowdoin, of Norfolk, Virginia, in a letter dated June 18, 1785, requested that his relatives on the Shore send him, "...a few pounds of good fresh Butter weekly by the Packet which we are told
 119
 is to be brought in Market...." Due to the expectation of a slave revolt in 1792 on the Shore, Smith Sneed, the Northampton County Magistrate, requested that the governor of the State send him a hundred pounds of gun powder and four hundred pounds of lead; to be transported to the
 120
 Shore by the Hungars' Ferry.

118. Ibid.

119. Preeson Bowdoin letter, June 18, 1785. (This and subsequent Bowdoin letters are part of the Bowdoin Papers at the University of Virginia Library.)

120. Palmer, op. cit., V, 534.

In spite of the efforts throughout the Eighteenth Century to establish new ferries across the Chesapeake Bay, the ferry franchise remained in the hands of a few families for the complete Century; with the Eyre and the Bowdoin Families having this monopoly for fifty-five years. The ferry system was to remain in the hands of the Bowdoin Family for almost a quarter of a century longer, but the monopoly was to be broken in the first quarter of the Nineteenth Century.

CHAPTER III

THE CHESAPEAKE BAY FERRIES FROM 1800 TO 1815

Frances Bannister Bowdoin was the owner of the Hungars' Ferry at the close of the Eighteenth Century. Her Uncle Peter Bowdoin had been her ward and the caretaker of the ferry since 1786. On September 4, 1800, Miss Bowdoin¹ made an agreement with John Stratton to sell her Hungars' Plantation for the sum of thirty-three hundred pounds. John Stratton agreed to pay the sum in the following manner: thirteen hundred pounds on January 1, 1801, one thousand pounds on January 1, 1802, and the remainder on the first day of 1803, without interest. This agreement was witnessed by Elizabeth Savage, Sarah Digges, William Eyre, Thomas L. Savage, and J. Winder.²

Exactly why Frances Bowdoin did not make her sale of the Hungars' Plantation to her Uncle Peter, rather than John Stratton, is unknown. However, on the 8th of September Peter Bowdoin made an agreement with Stratton to purchase

1. In all references prior to 1800 the name of John Bowdoin Jr.'s daughter appears as Frances Bannister Bowdoin, but in this agreement and the deed made to Peter Bowdoin on September 8, 1800, the name appears as Fanny B. Bowdoin. Fanny is probably the diminutive of Frances, but for the purpose of this thesis the name Frances will be used.

2. Northampton County Deeds, No. 24, 1800-1805, p. 18.

the plantation on the same terms that Stratton had agreed to obtain it from Miss Bowdoin. This agreement was hardly necessary, for it was on the same day that Stratton released Frances Bowdoin from the agreement made between them on September 4, 1800. This release permitted her to sell³ the plantation to Peter.

The purchase of the 486 acres of land contained in the Hungars' Plantation was made by Peter Bowdoin for the sum of thirty-three hundred pounds in current Virginia money, on the same day that Stratton had made the agreement with Peter and also released Frances from the agreement of sale. With the purchase of this plantation Peter Bowdoin obtained, "...the ferry thereto belonging and all ways, waters and appurteances [sic] to the same belonging or in any wise appertaining unto...forever."⁴ Isaac Smith, William Eyre, and John Stitt swore that this property⁵ belonged to Frances Bowdoin.

Peter Bowdoin's correspondence with his nephew Joseph Prentis Jr., a lawyer residing in Williamsburg and later in Suffolk, Virginia, has revealed a great deal of information concerning the ferry system while Peter was the proprietor. In a letter to Joseph from Hungars dated

3. Ibid., p. 19.

4. Ibid., pp. 19-20.

5. Ibid., p. 20.

February 17, 1803, Peter states:

Dear Joseph/

I dispatched my Boat a day sooner than Mr. Bassett asked, that a day might be allowed you to get the trees, but a head wind...detained her a day in Mobjict Bay & thus I got disappointed & no person to blame.

...I cannot now send to York, as this dreadful Snow Storm has put two of my Boats on Mr. Whites point up the Culph, rather, but have suffered no injury except parting all their Cables. I think I never knew it to blow so hard in all my life for so long a time say two days & nights & they rode it out untill the second evening, I shall 6 be plagued to get them off at this cold season....

More convenient service was provided by the Bowdoin Ferry for passengers when Peter began to maintain a packet on each side of the Bay. ⁷ This prevented any undue delay in waiting for a ferry as had been experienced by many passengers in the Eighteenth Century. In spite of this fact, the distance from Hungars to the towns of York, Hampton, and Norfolk, plus the weather conditions, made it almost impossible to maintain a constant ferry schedule. The uncertainty of the ferry service can be seen in the following letter to Joseph:

I recd your and my sisters letter a few days since the 13th and have had no opp to say when the boat will go the day appointed she shall be sent if at home otherwise as soon as she does come and shall

6. Peter Bowdoin to Joseph Prentis Jr., February 17, 1803.

7. Petition of Peter Bowdoin to the General Assembly of Virginia, December 21, 1813.

order up a letter to give notice hope it will be on Saturday she will go, or Sunday.⁸

The number of passengers travelling to the port of York was less than those bound for Norfolk, making it hardly worth while for the ferry to stop at York on each trip to and from Norfolk. The Bowdoin Ferry appears to have made one trip a week to York as its regular schedule. When anyone desired passage to the Shore from York at any time other than the regular weekly trip, the custom was to inform some of Peter Bowdoin's relatives living in Williamsburg, who would write to Peter requesting the packets to stop for the passengers.⁹ Often the weekly schedule was not even maintained as can be seen from a letter dated May 25, 1807:

Judge Tyler wrote me on the Sixteenth recd the 21st he had been waiting at York from the 12th and supposed some accident had prevented the Boats going for him. I had no order to send her of cours [sic] 10 its a standing rule not to send over unless ordered....

Once the ferry had been requested to stop at York, it was customary to pay the ferry keeper five dollars, whether the passage was made across the Bay or not. Mr. Bowdoin

8. Peter Bowdoin to Joseph Prentis Jr., May 19, 1803.

9. Peter Bowdoin to Joseph Prentis Esqr., May 25, 1807. Peter was to be informed by his Sister or Niece.

10. Ibid.

believed it was not worth sending the packet from Hungars to York for any sum less than ten dollars, and for even this sum he probably would not make extra stops at York for passengers.¹¹

The General Assembly of Virginia passed an Act on January 22, 1802, which placed a fine of two dollars against any ferry keeper who demanded a ferry rate higher than the rates established by the Assembly.¹² This penalty was increased to five dollars in an Act passed January 2, 1805.¹³

The county courts of Virginia were given the power to establish ferries and to regulate the rates of ferriags within their respective counties by an Act of the General Assembly passed January 17, 1807. This Act explained in detail the proper procedure in petitioning the county courts in order to be granted permission to keep a ferry. Any person who owned land on both sides of a river where a road was located, or where a road was to be established, could petition the court for the keeping of a ferry across the river. The court would then order the sheriff to impanel a jury of twelve "disinterested free holders,"

11. Peter Bowdoin to Joseph Prentis Jr., September 20, 1803.

12. Shepherd, op. cit., II, 379.

13. Ibid., III, 158.

whose duty was to determine whether such a ferry establishment would be a convenience to the public. The jury's opinion was delivered to the sheriff who informed the court of the decision. The court would then decide upon the petition, and if approved would establish certain rates for the new ferry. The established rates were to be the same for a man, horse, or a head of neat cattle. For every wheel of a carriage the rate was to be the same as for a horse, and for every hog, sheep, or goat, one fifth¹⁴ the rate set for a horse.

The applicant was required to advertise his intention of establishing a ferry by posting a notice at the court house door on two court days. This same procedure was to be followed if the applicant did not own the land on both sides of the watercourse where he desired to have his ferry. When a river or watercourse separated two counties, then the approval of the other county court must be obtained before a ferry franchise could be granted, or the rates changed for passage across any such ferry. If any person felt himself aggrieved by the decision rendered in a county court he was permitted to appeal the decision to the District

14. Acts Passed at a General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Virginia, 1806-1807 Session (Richmond: Printed by Samuel Pleasant Jr., n.d.), p. 14.

15
Court.

The penalty for failure to transport passengers within a reasonable time was two dollars, half of this fine was to go to the informer and the other half to the poor of the precinct where the offense was committed. The ferry keeper was not required to transport passengers when any danger might have been incurred by ice or rough weather. All the county magistrates were required to be summoned and a majority present in order to act under this law. ¹⁶ On the bases of this Act, an attempt was to be made in establishing a ferry from the Eastern Shore.

The Bowdoin Ferry was used to transport freight over the Bay, as well as passengers. There were no set rates for transporting freight as the General Assembly of Virginia had passed concerning carriages, horses, or passengers; hence Mr. Bowdoin was able to set his own rates and to obtain a considerable profit in this commercial enterprise with his ferry. ¹⁷ The vast variety of products transported to and from the Shore is shown in a letter to Joseph Prentis Esqr. dated March 7, 1807:

15. Ibid., pp. 14-15.

16. Ibid., p. 15.

17. Petition of Northampton County Citizens on behalf of John K. Floyd, Jacob G. Parker, and Severn E. Parker, December 5, 1821.

My Boat will go up to the Capitol Landing for the purpose of bringing a number of trees from Belletts for myself and friends and I will take a few hundred bus. of oats to sell as I suppose they will command a price there which will serve to pay for the trees.

.....

Dr. Lyon requested me to write you and ask the favor of you to select such trees as you would recommend for him sending four of each kind to the amount...of twenty Dolls....

What I wanted and J and Wm Eyre I have enclosed a memo of. You will not forget the calicanthos and sweet Bay you were so good to promise me and Leah begs if you have any flower Roots or seed to spare to send her some. If you can spare some Nasturtium seed & Asparigus sic roots will be much indebted sic to you....

You will please accept the half of a mutton and some cockles the weather has been so bad or would have gotten more.¹⁸

The passage across the Bay was often slow and tedious, depending on the weather conditions. In a letter dated May 25, 1807, Peter Bowdoin states, "...we shall set out in the morning for York if the wind and weather is favorable to make a good passage,"¹⁹ but the trip wasn't completed until the following day. When the packet arrived at Yorktown, Mr. Bowdoin wrote the following letter to his brother-in-law:

18. Peter Bowdoin to Joseph Prentis Esqr., March 7, 1807.

19. Peter Bowdoin to Joseph Prentis Esqr., May 25, 1807.

We arrived here last night at 12 o'clock after a smooth but tedious passage will you be so good as to send a carriage [sic] down for the Girls [from Williamsburg] on the rect of this, as also a cart for their baggage.... My situation is such I am obliged to return home this morning....²⁰

Other trips across the Bay were made in much less time.

J. T. Bowdoin went to Yorktown on July 22, 1812, for Peter's sister, Susan, and made the return trip to Hungars in seven

hours.²¹ There could be no assurance given as to the length of time necessary in making this trip across the Bay. Mr. Bowdoin, himself, disliked the voyage for he declares, "I am old & dislike crossing the bay so often."²²

Sometimes complaints were made by the passengers of the Bowdoin Ferry, but these complaints were not considered seriously by the proprietor; for there was no other alternative in getting over the Bay except by this ferry.

Mr. Fauleon, who was crossing the Bay with a group of passengers on July 21, 1811, made a complaint to Mr. Thomas Savage concerning the packet boat Old Jims. Mr. Savage informed the ferry proprietor of the complaint who sent

20. Peter Bowdoin to Joseph Prentis Esqr., May 28, 1807.

21. Peter Bowdoin to Joseph Prentis Jr., July 23, 1812.

22. Peter Bowdoin to Joseph Prentis Jr., November 22, 1812; and in a letter to Joseph Prentis Jr., December 18, 1812, Peter says: "No consideration can induce or tempt me to cross the bay...."

²³
 Jim to inform Mr. Fauleon that, "...the Boat Old Jims
 ...is the best Sailor and best accommodation the don't look
 so large, nor is she. ...The other Boat is at Norfolk and
 must clean when she returns."²⁴

The Act of January 1807, which granted the county courts the power to establish ferries and regulate rates, was amended January 4, 1809. The section of the 1807 Act which had based the rates for all types of carriages according to the number of wheels, was repealed. The county courts were given the power to regulate the rates for all types of vehicles, provided a majority of the magistrates of the county were present when such change of ferriage was made. This Act became effective on or after May 1,²⁵ 1809. Another amendment was passed to the 1807 Act on January 14, 1813. A majority of the county magistrates were not required to be present in order for the county court to establish a new ferry, or change the

23. Jim was probably one of Peter's slaves. Mr. Bowdoin owned eighteen slaves in 1811, as shown in the Northampton County Personal Property Tax List for 1811.

24. Peter Bowdoin to Joseph Prentis Jr., July 21, 1811.

25. Acts Passed at a General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Virginia, 1808-1809 Session (Richmond: Printed by Samuel Pleasant Jr., n.d.), p. 4.

ferry rates. However, all of the magistrates were to be summoned by the county sheriff, before the court could act on any application concerning ferries.²⁶

As the Legislative Act of 1807 had granted the county courts the power to establish new ferries, Thomas R. Joynes, Henry Parker's attorney, made application to the county court of Accomack for the establishment of a ferry on behalf of Mr. Parker. This application was presented to the quarterly session of the court held on September 3, 1812. The ferry was to run from Henry Parker's land on Pungoteague Creek, in Accomack County to York, Hampton, and the Borough of Norfolk. It was proved to the court that Mr. Parker had advertised his intention as required by law. Peter Bowdoin on a motion of his two attorneys, Major S. Pitts and Severn E. Parker, was declared a defendant to this application. The court ordered that the sheriff, "inpannel [sic] a Jury of twelve disinterested freeholders who shall view the place proposed for the keeping such Ferry and make return of the inquisition so taken to the court."²⁷

The jury rendered a favorable opinion concerning the

26. Acts Passed at a General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Virginia, 1812-1813 Session (Richmond: Printed by Samuel Pleasant, 1813), p. 23.

27. Accomack County Orders, 1812-1814, pp. 153-154.

establishment of a ferry from Henry Parker's land, and the sheriff presented the opinion to the court on December 2, 1812.²⁸ The court, upon receipt of the opinion, ordered that the sheriff summon all the Justices of Accomack County to appear at court on February 2, 1813, in order to act upon the Parker application.²⁹ At a session of the county court held February 23, 1813 the sheriff reported that a summons had been presented to all of the Justices of the county as ordered. In spite of this fact, there was not a majority of the Justices present in order to act on the establishment of a new ferry across the Bay. Again, the county court ordered the sheriff to summon all the Justices in Accomack County to appear at the next court session on March 2, 1813, for the purpose of acting on the ferry application.³⁰

At the quarterly session of Accomack County Court, held March 30, 1813, a majority of the Justices were present and the ferry application was acted upon. Arguments against the establishment of a new ferry were presented by Peter Bowdoin's attorneys. After the court had heard all the arguments for and against the new ferry, it was decided

28. Ibid., pp. 180-181.

29. Ibid., pp. 181-182.

30. Ibid., pp. 208-209.

that public convenience would be promoted in the establishment of a new ferry from Parker's land in Accomack County to Norfolk, Hampton, and York. The new ferry keeper was to abide by the following regulations:

There shall be constantly kept two boats of at least twenty five tons burthen, the Captain of each of which and at least one hand of each shall be white persons. The rates of ferriage shall be as follows: For a Horse or man passing Singly five dollars, for a man or horse if there be more than one less than five three dollars fifty cents, for a man or horse if there be more than four three dollars, for every coach chariot or waggon fourteen dollars, for every two wheeled carriage or chaise seven dollars.³¹

The court of Accomack ordered that the courts in the counties of York, Elizabeth City, and Norfolk be notified of this decision, with a copy of the rates and regulations sent to each county court in order that these courts could act on the application.³²

The decision of the court establishing a new ferry was not acceptable to Peter Bowdoin and he requested an appeal to the Superior Court of Law of Accomack County. The appeal was granted by the court and Major S. Pitts and Severn E. Parker, Peter Bowdoin's attorneys, gave an appeal bond for two hundred dollars.³³

31. Ibid., pp. 222-223.

32. Ibid., et passim.

33. Ibid.

The appeal case came before the Superior Court, or District Court, on May 6, 1813, and the Honorable Thomas Evans was the Judge. The attorneys for both Henry Parker and Peter Bowdoin presented their case before the Judge, and with careful inspection of the records the court decided that the county court did not have the power to establish a ferry across the Chesapeake Bay. The Superior Court considered the decision of the county court to be erroneous in granting Henry Parker a ferry franchise and declared the decision should be, "...revised and annulled."³⁴ All expenses incurred by Mr. Bowdoin in defense of his ferry monopoly were to be recovered from Henry Parker in the county court.³⁵

Even though Henry Parker had failed to obtain a ferry franchise through the county court, he was still determined to break the ferry monopoly which had been held by the Bowdoin Family for more than forty years. He decided to petition the General Assembly of Virginia, requesting an Act to be passed granting him the privilege to maintain a ferry. The odds were against the Parker petition, for this method had been used unsuccessfully

34. Accomack County Order Book, District Court, 1805-1816, p. 320.

35. Ibid., pp. 319-321, et passim.

36

since 1764.

A notice of Henry Parker's intentions was published in the Norfolk Gazette and Publick Ledger beginning May 26, 1813, and appearing in every issue of the paper, except four, until September 25, 1813.³⁷ The notice read as follows:

A Petition will be presented to the General Assembly praying that a Law may pass to establish Ferries from the Lands of Henry Parker, in Accomack County, to the towns of Norfolk, York and Hampton.³⁸

The petition submitted to the General Assembly by Mr. Parker on December 21, 1813,³⁹ placed an emphasis on the extensive foreign trade carried on from the Eastern Shore of Virginia to all parts of the world, making it an absolute necessity to keep in contact with Norfolk, the chief seaport of the State, for commercial purposes. A regularly established ferry from the county of Accomack was needed in order to transact business of a public nature in Richmond, and to attend suits in the Superior Court of

36. Cf. ante., p. 24.

37. The four issues of the Norfolk Gazette and Publick Ledger in which the notice did not appear were: July 21, 1813, August 11, 1813, August 18, 1813 and September 1, 1813.

38. Notice in the Norfolk Gazette and Publick Ledger, May 26, 1813.

39. Journal of the House of Delegates of the Commonwealth of Virginia, 1813-1814 Session (Richmond: Printed by Samuel Pleasants, n. d.), p. 70.

Chancery for the Williamsburg District.

Mr. Parker informed the General Assembly that there was no established ferry for the county of Accomack, and the residents of this county had to hire a private vessel at a considerable expense in making the trip across the Bay; or else, travel to the Hungars' Ferry. The distance to the Hungars' Ferry from the nearest point in Accomack County was approximately twenty miles, and from the most remote point in the county the inhabitants would be required to travel almost seventy miles. The establishment of a ferry in the county would enable the inhabitants of Accomack to cross the Bay in the time it would ordinarily take to make the trip to the Hungars' Ferry. There were approximately 1290 signatures to the petition which requested the Assembly to alleviate this inconvenience by establishing a new ferry from Pungoteague Creek.⁴¹

In the petition Mr. Parker made note of his attempt to obtain a ferry franchise from the county court, but states that the Superior Court of Law of Accomack,

...revised the decision of the county court, on the ground that the Act of January 17th 1607 did not give

40. Petition of Henry Parker to the General Assembly of Virginia, December 21, 1813. The majority of these petitions are not dated and the Assembly had dated them according to the time submitted to the House.

41. Ibid.

the county courts authority to establish Ferries over the Bay of Chesapeake.⁴²

Therefore, the General Assembly would have to pass an Act⁴³ in order to establish such a ferry.

Peter Bowdoin submitted a petition to the General Assembly on the same day Mr. Parker's petition was presented,⁴⁴ December 21, 1813. The Bowdoin petition was in opposition to the granting of a ferry franchise to Henry Parker. Both of these petitions were referred to the Committee of Propositions and Grievances, to be reported back to the House after careful study and with the recommendations of⁴⁵ the Committee.

The vehement arguments of the Bowdoin petition relate that the Hungars' Ferry had always rendered a beneficial service to the inhabitants of the Shore. The initial cost of the ferry had been high, Mr. Bowdoin states, and in providing a speedy passage across the Bay the operating expenses had increased. Peter thinks the benefits and conveniences gained by the establishment of a ferry from Pungoteague Creek for the inhabitants of Accomack would not be very great, as it was necessary to pass by

42. Ibid.

43. Ibid.

44. Journal of the House of Delegates of the Commonwealth of Virginia, 1813-1814 Session, p. 70.

45. Ibid.

Northampton County, whether the trip was made by water or land, in going to Norfolk. The majority of all business transactions between the Eastern Shore and other places across the Bay was in Norfolk, and the thirty miles difference between the Pungoteague Harbor and Hungars could be travelled by land in five hours on a good road during all the seasons of the year. Hence, the advantages gained in going this distance by boat was not equal to that in going by land.⁴⁶

The distance across the Bay would be increased for the ferry running from Pungoteague. This increase in distance would make the passage over the Bay more difficult and also mean an added expense in maintaining the ferry. Peter Bowdoin reminded the Assembly that the inhabitants of Accomack had always been allowed by law to hire private transportation across the Bay if they did not desire to use the Hungars' Ferry. This privilege was prohibited to the people of Northampton County. The receipts of the ferry in the past twelve years had convinced Mr. Bowdoin that two ferries could not be established on a profitable basis and one or the other would be forced out of business.⁴⁷

46. Petition of Peter Bowdoin to the General Assembly of Virginia, December 21, 1813.

47. Ibid.

To substantiate the statement that the profits received from the ferry would not support two ferries, an account of the yearly profits of the Hungars' Ferry was submitted with the Bowdoin petition to the Assembly. The statement showed the profits of the ferry from 1801 through December 31, 1812, and was certified to be correct by John Eyre, a Justice of the Peace in Northampton County, on November 19, 1813. ⁴⁸ The account shows the following:

1801	Amount of net profits this year.	\$ 1066.17
1802	" " " " " "	959.90
1803	" " " " " "	656.12
1804	" " " " " "	1143.62
1805	" " " " " "	1081.74
1806	" " " " " "	1224.14
1807	" " " " " "	1138.94
1808	" " " " " "	643.39
1809	" " " " " "	580.15
1810	" " " " " "	921.94 ¹
1811	" " " " " "	1299.20 ²
1812	" " " " " "	1200.00

Total \$11,945.32 ^[49]

The Parker and Bowdoin petitions were reported to the House by the Committee on December 31, 1813. ⁵⁰ Mr. Parker's petition was declared to be reasonable, but the Bowdoin petition was to be rejected. Both resolutions from

48. An Account of the Yearly Profits of the Hungars' Ferry from 1801 through 1812, November 19, 1813.

49. Ibid.

50. Journal of the House of Delegates of the Commonwealth of Virginia, 1813-1814 Session, p. 99.

the Committee were to be laid on the table. Mr. Wise, a member of the House, made a motion on January 21, 1814, that the Committee's resolution concerning the Parker petition be brought before the House again. Mr. Wingfield, another member of the House, made a motion that the words "is reasonable" be obliterated and the words "be rejected" inserted in the resolution concerning the Parker petition. This question was put to a vote and the House decided in the negative. The House voted, at this time, in the affirmative to have the resolution reported as a bill.⁵¹ The Bill was reported on January 24, 1814 before the House, and by January 31, 1814 had passed both the House and the Senate.⁵²

The Act of 1814 provided:

That it shall and may be lawful for Henry Parker, his heirs assigns, and he is hereby authorized and empowered, to establish and constantly keep a Public ferry from his land on Fungoteague Creek in the County of Accomack, across the Bay of Chesapeake to the Towns of Hampton, Norfolk, and York; and he may demand and receive the same rate of ferriage for passing the same as is allowed and prescribed by law at Bowdoin's ferry across the said Bay to the places aforesaid.⁵³

51. Ibid., p. 139.

52. Ibid., pp. 141, 147, 151; and the Acts Passed at a General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Virginia, 1813-1814 Session, p. 93.

53. Acts of the General Assembly, Ibid.

Mr. Parker was required to keep two boats of twenty five tons burden or more, and the Captain and one deck-hand of each were to be white persons. A penalty of twenty dollars would be charged the proprietor of the ferry for overcharging any passenger. The sum was to be recovered before a Justice of the Peace. The privilege of the ferry franchise would be denied the ferry keeper if he failed to maintain the boats properly, or to furnish constant transportation. The Act became effective after February 1,⁵⁴ 1814.

When the United States declared war against Great Britain in June, 1812, the Chesapeake Bay Ferry was again placed in a constant fear of being captured by the British Fleet, which maneuvered in the Bay. Peter Bowdoin's letter of February 14, 1813, refers to his boats going to Norfolk on February 7th and being retained there until the 13th,⁵⁵ because of the danger of being captured by the British. Throughout the war attacks were made by the British against vessels in the Chesapeake Bay. Peter relates to his Nephew such an attack in the following letter:

...One of their Tenders [British] on Monday last captured a vessel in sight of Hungars a party of

54. Ibid.

55. Peter Bowdoin to Joseph Prentis Jr., February 14, 1813.

Ladys who dined with your aunt saw the engagement [sic] which lasted one hour and twenty mts eight miles off the B. [British] prevailed and carried her prize down.

I am fearful of loosing my Boats and all is alarm &c here....⁵⁶

Lt. Col. John Cropper, of the Second Regiment on the Eastern Shore, addressed a letter to the Governor of Virginia on March 20, 1813 stating that the Shore was in need of more troops to defend it from the British Fleet. Ships were entering the harbors and plundering the property of the inhabitants, taking anything they desired.⁵⁷ On March 9, 1813, a British tender and some barges had entered Cherrystone Harbor. They "...took a cargo of flour out of one Schooner and set fire to another; but as soon as the militia collected, the enemy fled, taking with them, however, two milch cows from Mr. Savage."⁵⁸

As the danger of capture increased, the Bowdoin Ferries stopped running on April 4, 1813, and the ferry service from Hungars to the towns across the Bay was discontinued until March 1, 1815.⁵⁹

In 1814 the number of British vessels located in

56. Ibid.

57. Palmer, op. cit., X, 208.

58. Ibid.

59. Statement of the Hungars' Ferry Accounts for 1802 to 1821, November 30, 1821. (Filed with Northampton County Legislative Petitions, Virginia State Library)

the Chesapeake had increased. A Norfolk newspaper in April, 1814, stated the enemy forces in the Bay consisted of "...three ships of seventy four guns, seven frigates, one brig, and two tenders."⁶⁰ A letter from the Eastern Shore of Virginia dated May 31, 1814, printed in the Norfolk Gazette and Publick Ledger gives the following description of a British attack on Pungoteague Creek:

On Sunday morning, about sun-rise eleven men, effected a landing on Pungoteague Creek, near the house of Mr. Smith, where stationed a guard of fifty or sixty men, who fought bravely for half an hour and retreated, with the loss of one piece of artillery. The enemy took possession of Smith's house, and plundered him of everything - at 1 o'clock, about 1000 militia and volunteers assembled, attacked the enemy at Smith's house who made their⁶¹ escape and got on board their barge in a few minutes....

It was during this period that James, Peter Bowdoin's Son, attempted to cross the Bay in one of the packets. James Bowdoin had recently graduated in medicine and he was trying to get across the Bay in order to start a⁶² business. This attempt failed with a loss of the Bowdoin packet to the British. Peter described the attack on his ferryboat to his nephew Joseph in a letter dated June 1, 1814.

60. News in the Norfolk Gazette and Publick Ledger, April 16, 1814.

61. Ibid., June 4, 1814.

62. Whitelaw, op. cit., I, 297.

The letter reads as follows:

Dear Joseph/

I enclose you a letter written to go by James, but poore fellow he got into the Bay a few miles & was chased by a B. [British] Tender & after he got within the harbour, the hands were so scared they run the Boat aground, too far to be protected from the shore & after saving his cloathes, boy & 2 horses & books left the boat not until the barg was within 60 yards of them the Tender constantly playing an 18 pounder on them with Grapes &c & the muskets as soon as they got near enough, the Tender lay within a Quarter of a mile, Poor James lost all his medicin, Shop furniture, Chair harnis, wheels &c to the amount of 300\$ at least and now to ride round the Bay will make it too late in the Season, he thinks of going round & settling in Gloster or Mathews....

My loss in the Boat is for 900\$ its the first time I have risked her since the war and nothing could have induced me to risk now but to have gotten James over & saved him 100\$ riding round the Bay.⁶⁵

By the summer of 1814 the British had established a fort on Tangier Island, in the Chesapeake Bay, and were constantly making attacks against the inhabitants on the Shore.⁶⁴ Lt. Col. Thomas M. Bayley, of the Second Regiment on the Shore, requested that militia supplies be sent by way of Annapolis to Cambridge in Dorchester County, Maryland,⁶⁵ and then brought to Accomack and Northampton. In May, 1814,

63. Peter Bowdoin to Joseph Prentis Jr.

64. Charles Bagwell letter to Governor of Virginia, June 9, 1814, cited in Palmer, op. cit., X, 337.

65. Lt. Col. Thomas M. Bayley letter to Governor of Virginia, June 11, 1814, cited in Palmer, op. cit., X, 339.

he had all small boats and canoes on the coast of the two counties seized and moored. All travellers were required to give an account of themselves before entering Accomack County. The island inhabitants on the Atlantic side of the Peninsula were not allowed to come to the mainland, since it appeared that the islanders were giving the British aid, and for compensation were supplying them with fish.

The proprietor of the Hungars' Ferry was not the only inhabitant on the Shore that suffered a loss of property to the British during the war. For after the war many petitions were submitted to the General Assembly by citizens of the Eastern Shore asking for compensation for property seized by the British. The Schooner Betsy, owned by William Jones had been impressed for the transporting of the Twenty-seventh Regiment across the Bay in 1814, and had been captured by the enemy. Mr. Jones requested that the State compensate him for the loss of the schooner. The British had taken William Scott's horse when making an attack on Cherrystone Harbor. Thomas

66. Ibid., pp. 340-341.

67. Ibid.

68. Petition of William Jones to the General Assembly of Virginia, December 23, 1818.

69. Petition of William Scott to the General Assembly of Virginia, December 24, 1827.

Underhill requested that the Assembly pay him for duty performed in the defense of the Pungoteague Harbor from the British.⁷⁰

In 1813, the Legislature of Virginia placed a tax on the ferry keepers for the support of the State Government.⁷¹ An Act passed December 21, 1814, continued the tax on ferries.⁷² If the yearly rental rate, or the value of the ferry exceeded five hundred dollars, it was subject to taxation. The owner of a ferry was no longer exempted from military service after January 10, 1815.⁷³

Many slaves had taken advantage of the numerous small boats in the harbors of the State during the war in order to make their escape and had allied themselves with the British forces. To prevent slaves from using such boats for the purpose of desertion, the State Legislature granted the military leaders of the State permission to station guards at places where the presence of enemy forces prevented the owners of ferries or boats to render

70. Petition of Thomas Underhill to the General Assembly of Virginia, January 1, 1845.

71. Acts Passed at a General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Virginia, 1812-1813 Session, p. 4.

72. Ibid., 1814-1815 Session, pp. 12-13.

73. Ibid., p. 39.

the proper protection of their property.

Due to the circumstances of the war it appears that Henry Parker's Ferry was not put in operation until after the enemy forces were removed from the Chesapeake Bay. The Bowdoin Ferry had taken a large loss for the years of 1813 and 1814. There had been a loss of \$315. in 1813, and the loss of a packet valued at \$1050 in 1814.⁷⁵ The continued expense of keeping the ferry in proper condition and manned by deckhands, caused a complete loss of profit during the year of 1814.⁷⁶ The Hungars' Ferry began to make its regular trips across the Bay after March 1, 1815, and it was in this year that Mr. Bowdoin purchased a new packet for \$841.⁷⁷ The expenses for the year of 1815, including the new boat, were estimated to have been \$2041; while the credits were \$2234, giving the proprietor a profit of \$193.⁷⁸

With the close of the war between the United States and Britain, commercial transactions between the Eastern Shore and the towns across the Chesapeake could be resumed.

74. Ibid., pp. 53-54. Act passed January 6, 1815.

75. In the Peter Bowdoin letter to Joseph Prentis Jr., June 1, 1814, the boat is estimated at nine hundred dollars.

76. Statement of the Hungars' Ferry Accounts for 1802 to 1821, November 30, 1821.

77. Ibid.

78. Ibid.

The ferry established from Henry Parker's land on Pungoteague Creek could now give the Hungars' Ferry sharp competition. The two ferries, one from each county, were able to provide more convenience for travellers and the residents of the Shore.

CHAPTER IV

THE CHESAPEAKE BAY FERRIES TO 1824

The next nine years in the history of the Eastern Shore Ferries running to York, Hampton, and Norfolk were to be marked by two important events; The establishment of a new ferry in Northampton County, and the discontinuance of the Hungars.

The General Assembly of Virginia reduced all prior ferry Acts for the regulation and settlement of this type of public conveyance into one Act passed January 30, 1819. All ferries named in this Act were to be constantly kept and properly maintained. This Act established the following rates for the Bowdoin and Parker ferries:

...For a man or horse passing singly five dollars; for a man or horse if there be more than one three dollars; for every Coach, Chariot, or Waggon, and the driver thereof the same as for five horses, for every ¹ two wheeled Chaise or Chair the same as for two horses.

A penalty of twenty dollars was to be placed on either proprietor who overcharged passengers. Two boats were to be kept at each ferry, of not less than twenty five tons, and the Captain and one deckhand of each boat was required to be a white person. Unless the ferries were constantly

1. Enrolled Bills of General Assembly of Virginia, 1818-1819 Session (In the Archives of the Virginia State Library), I, 100.

kept in proper order, the ferry keeper's franchise might
be revoked.²

The proprietors of the Eastern Shore Ferries were not required to send both boats, owned by the same ferry, across the Bay to the same place on the same day; nor were two boats, owned by the same ferry, compelled to leave either Norfolk, York or Hampton at the same time. The Bowdoin Ferry could not land or take on passengers, horses, or any type of vehicle in Accomack County, nor could the Parker Ferry do the same in Northampton County; unless weather conditions necessitated such discharge of passengers, horses or vehicles. For violation of this regulation the ferry keeper was to pay to the other ferry proprietor twenty dollars. This sum was recovered by warrant before a Justice of the Peace.³

A fine was imposed upon any person in either Accomack or Northampton who transported any person, horse, or carriage across the Bay for compensation. The ferry keeper injured by such violation could recover the twenty dollars by warrant before a Justice of the Peace.⁴

The proprietor or keeper of each ferry was to have

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., pp. 100-101.

4. Ibid., p. 101.

at least one person as his security, and he was required to give a bond of five hundred dollars to the county court within a month after the passage of the Act. This bond was:

...payable to the setting justices and their successors, with condition, that he will keep his boats, or packets, in complete order in their hull and rigging; keep the cabins and the beds and bedding used therein, in cleanly and comfortable order; keep sober and skilful Captains, and hands to navigate said Boats; and that he will in all things so keep, or cause to be kept, his boats or Packets, as to conduce to the Comfort and safety of Passengers.⁵

When any person was injured because of neglect to perform any of the above conditions, he could bring suit against the ferry and recover the full penalty. The bond did not become void upon the first recovery.⁶

If the ferry proprietor failed to give bond within a month he was to be fined ten dollars for every month in which he delayed in giving the bond. When the security or proprietor of a ferry died then the court was to require a new bond to be given, and if this bond was not given within a month then he was subject to a fine of ten dollars for each months delay. Before this fine could be levied the court must summon the proprietor to show any reason why the fine should not be levied against him. The fines

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.

received in this manner went to lessen county taxes.

In order to encourage ferry keepers, they were freed from all county levies, public services as constables, clearing highways, improvements, and works of like nature. No charge was made by the county court to ferry keepers for giving a bond, and for the granting of a ferry or tavern's license.⁸

When any ferry was not in use for a period of two years it could be discontinued. A period of six months was allowed to reactivate a ferry, or to obtain the proper equipment in establishing a new ferry. When a ferry was to be discontinued the proprietor of the ferry was to be summoned to present any reasons he might have in not desiring the court to discontinue his ferry.⁹

The majority of the ferries in the State under the Act of January 30, 1819, were required to pay a penalty of seven dollars for not giving a bond within the proper time, as compared to the ten dollars required from the two ferries running across the Bay. The bond required for the river ferries was only sixty dollars, while it was five hundred for the Chesapeake Bay Ferries. The Act was to be effective after January 1, 1820.¹⁰

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid., p. 115.

9. Ibid., p. 116.

10. Ibid., pp. 115-116.

The Assembly also reduced the several Acts giving the county courts power to establish ferries and regulate the rates of ferriage into one Act passed February 10, 1819.¹¹ This Act is particularly interesting in that it sets forth in detail all the procedures necessary in obtaining a ferry franchise from the county courts, except for the ferries running across the Chesapeake. Concerning the ferries on the Eastern Shore of Virginia the Act states the following:

Nothing in this Act contained shall be construed to authorize any county or Corporation Court, upon or adjacent to the Chesapeake Bay, or the waters thereof to establish any ferry across the said Chesapeake Bay, or to increase the rates of ferriage at those ferries already established, or which may here after be established across the said Chesapeake Bay; nor shall any of the Provisions of this act be construed to extend to the ferries now established, or which may here after be established across the Chesapeake Bay.¹²

This was the first reference showing that Chesapeake Bay Ferries were exempt from the provisions of the Act passed January 17, 1807, which had granted the county courts power to establish ferries.¹³ However, as has already been shown, the Superior Court of Accomack County had rendered a decision on May 6, 1815, stating that the 1807 Act did not grant the county court of Accomack such

11. Ibid., p. 157.

12. Ibid., p. 158.

13. Cf. ante., p. 56.

authority to establish the Parker Ferry on Fungoteague
¹⁴
 Creek.

Henry Parker's Ferry was located at "Locust Grove"
 in "Yeo's Neck," on Fungoteague Creek. This tract of land
 consisted of approximately 127 acres, and was located in
 the fork of Fungoteague and Taylors Creek, in Saint George
 Parish. ¹⁵ "Yeo's Neck" was purchased by Henry Parker on
 October 30, 1799, for 450 pounds of current Virginia money,
 from George Ker, John Shepherd Ker, and David Bowman, all
¹⁶
 of Accomack County.

The progress of the Parker Ferry is not known, but
 it appears that Mr. Parker was successful as a ferry keeper
 until his death. In his will recorded January 25, 1819,
 the "Locust Grove" plantation was left to his son George
 West Parker,

...together with the right to the Ferry established
 from my Said land by an Act of the General Assembly,
 to the Towns of Norfolk York and Hampton together
 with my two Packet Boats Accomack and Norfolk and
 everything belonging to said Boats.¹⁷

14. Cf. ante., p. 65.

15. James E. Mears, "Hacks Neck and Its People, Past
 and Present" (Unpublished, Virginia State Library, c1937),
 p. 35. (Mimeographed.); and Accomack County Deeds, No. 9,
 1797-1800, p. 377.

16. Accomack County Deeds, Ibid., p. 378.

17. Accomack County Wills, 1818-1819, pp. 221, 225.

18

Mr. Parker left his wife Agnes all rights she would have been entitled to had he died intestate.¹⁹ There were two Negro boys named Natt and Patrick, who were left to two of his daughters. These two slaves had been deckhands on the ferries and Henry requested that they be allowed to remain on the boats until his son George became of lawful age. For the use of these two boys, George's guardian was to pay eighteen dollars annually. If the ferries should be rented to any other person, except his wife, the two slaves were to go to the two daughters for their own use.²⁰

The majority of Henry Parker's children were minors at the time of his death, and Agnes, his wife, was made guardian of Sarah, Anna, John, George, Elizabeth, and Henry by the county court on April 1, 1819.²¹ On February 28, 1820, Agnes gave a bond to the court for the sum of five hundred dollars, with William R. Custis as her security, for the keeping of the ferry left to her son George.²² The profits of the Parker Ferry from January 1, 1821 through December 8,

18. This name is spelled Agness in the court records.

19. Accomack County Wills, 1818-1819, p. 220.

20. Ibid., p. 224.

21. Accomack County Orders, 1817-1819, p. 334.

22. Accomack County Orders, 1819-1822, p. 79.

1821, were \$1160.²³ The two boats, Accomack and Norfolk, were still being maintained; although the Accomack had been blown ashore on September 3, 1821, and was not used for a month.²⁴

A petition signed by approximately 441 citizens of Northampton County, plus three minors, was in circulation²⁵ during the months of August through December of 1821. This petition was in favor of establishing a ferry from the land of John K. Floyd on King's Creek, or Town Fields,²⁶ to Norfolk,²⁷ Hampton, York, and the East River in the county of Mathews. John Stratton, a native of Northampton County, declared that the names on this petition had been, "...fairly [sic] and publicly [sic] obtained and it expresses the will of the people."²⁸

23. Certified Account of Agnes Parker's Ferry for 1821, made by Isaac Smith, December 8, 1821. (Filed with the Legislative Petitions of Northampton County, Virginia State Library)

24. Ibid.

25. Petition of Northampton County Citizens to the General Assembly of Virginia, on behalf of John K. Floyd, Jacob G. Parker, and Severn E. Parker, December 5, 1821; and Peter Bowdoin letter to Joseph Prentis Jr., August 11, 1821.

26. John K. Floyd purchased the tract of land called Town Fields, for two thousand pounds of Virginia currency, from John Stratton on August 29, 1801, as found in Northampton County Deed Book, No. 24, 1800-1805, p. 106.

27. Petition of Northampton County Citizens, loc. cit.

28. Statement of John N. Stratton, not dated.

One of the reasons for desiring the establishment of another ferry in Northampton County was to alleviate the inconvenience in obtaining a passage across the Bay for the inhabitants of the southern part of Northampton. These residents were required to go to the Hungars' Ferry or the Parker Ferry in Accomack in order to get to the towns of York, Hampton, or Norfolk. Often these residents were able to obtain passage on a merchant vessel going into Norfolk, but if they were required to travel the Hungars' Ferry, which was in the northern part of the county, the distance for a round trip to Norfolk or any other place on the western side of the Bay would be increased by approximately sixty miles. Therefore the new ferry would have been a great convenience to the people in the lower part of the county.

The petitioners believed there was a need for more competition with the Hungars' Ferry in Northampton County. The one ferry system had proven sufficient for the past, but with the increase in commerce, travellers, and the population on the Shore, there was a demanding need to provide for more convenient and speedy transportation than was being furnished by the two established ferries. The Hungars' Ferry obtained considerable profits from freight,

and all types of goods being shipped from Norfolk via the Eastern Shore to Philadelphia and New York; and many articles for personal consumption were purchased in Norfolk by the residents of the Peninsula. These commercial profits received in trading with the ports across the Chesapeake were thought to be sufficient to maintain two ferries. However,

If one ferry gains superiority of its system over the other due to better vessels and convenience then it would reveal that it is serving the convenience of the people of the county better than the other.³⁰

These statements were presented by the petitioners in order to show that the relationship between Norfolk and the Shore required more competition for the purpose of gaining a more efficient ferry service.³¹

The harbor on King's Creek was closer to the towns across the Bay, and the passage could be made in much less time. The petitioners believed the passengers would rarely have to spend the night aboard the boats in making a trip from King's Creek, and the ferry would be able to dock at Floyd's wharf for the loading and unloading of passengers, horses, and carriages. There had been other ferries established by the Assembly closer than this new ferry would be to Hungars. The distance across the Bay was

30. Ibid.

31. Ibid.

greater than the average ferry route in the State, and
 would compensate for the proximity to the Bowdoin Ferry. 32

Peter Bowdoin was disturbed when he heard of the petition, which was to be submitted to the General Assembly. In a letter to his nephew, Joseph, he declares:

Dear Joseph/

I have to call on you for your friendly aid and assistance in a matter that will come before our next Genl Assembly; A petition is drawn up to be presented Praying for a ferry to be established on Kings Creek a branch of Cherry-Stones at the Landing of a Mr John K. Floyds they have been handing it industeriously about, before I hardly knew it was drawn, Nay I applyd to J.K.F. for a Copy on a Saturday and he said it was not made out but on Monday he commenced geting Subscribers by going from house to house and on Saturday night I was informed of this and that he had even treated on that day at the tavern below where there were thirty or forty persons assembled & he had scoured from the point to Scotts branch a distance of fifteen miles- The petitioners are Severn E. Parker, Jacob G. Parker and John K. Floyd. In a day or two after this I sent a Gentlemen to Doctr J.G. Parker to ask the favor of a Copy of his petition he swore I should not have one, they have been now three weeks in motion and by their cunning and lying artifices, obtained two hundred subscribers and still I can't get a Copy so as to answer it; my whole dependence is on the Assembly their Justice &c. ³³

Peter Bowdoin believed the petition was drawn up because of personal animosity. He had not supported Severn E.

32. Ibid.

33. Peter Bowdoin to Joseph Prentis Jr., August 11, 1821.

Parker as a candidate for an appointment as clerk of the court. "All this is done from envy hatred and malice to me....," Peter told Joseph. John K. Floyd had stated, that he did not expect to make any profits with the ferry until Mr. Bowdoin's death.

Floyd and the Parkers advertised their intention of establishing a new ferry in Northampton in four issues of The American Beacon, published in Norfolk. The notice read:

A Petition will be presented, to the next General Assembly, praying that a Ferry may be established from the lands of John K. Floyd, on King's Creek, in the County of Northampton, to the towns of Norfolk, Hampton and York, and to East River, Mathews County.

Peter Bowdoin was determined to prevent the establishment of the new ferry from King's Creek, so he began to collect depositions to support the petition which he would present to the General Assembly in opposition to the Floyd and Parkers petition. There were six depositions taken showing the superiority of the Bowdoin Ferry and harbor to that of the ferry to be established on King's

34. Ibid.

35. Ibid.

36. Notice in The American Beacon and Norfolk and Portsmouth Daily Advertiser, October 9, 1821, October 11, 1821, October 13, 1821, and October 16, 1821.

37. Ibid.

Creek, and several other substantiating documents.

A deposition was taken from Captain George Eshon on November 13, 1821, before Levin Y. Winder, a Justice of the Peace, supporting the Bowdoin Ferry. Captain Eshon estimated the distance from the mouth of Cherrystone Harbor to Floyd's landing on King's Creek to be $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles. The depth and narrowness of the creek would not permit the ferries to land at Floyd's wharf, and the distance from the Floyd landing to Eastville, where the stage line stopped, was seven miles; whereas, it was only three from the Hungars' Ferry landing.

John Floyd and Jacob Parker swore before Scuthey Goffigon, a Justice of the Peace, that they had not been present and did not receive any notice that Peter Bowdoin was taking a deposition from Captain George Eshon. Mr. Bowdoin had notified these two men that a deposition was to be taken from Captain Thomas Evans on two different occasions, and they had attended, but the deposition was not taken as Captain Evans had been sick and could not

38. The depositions were taken from Captain George Eshon, William Frost, Josias Willes, George Holt, Major S. Pitts, and Robert Cordy. (These and subsequent depositions are filed with the Northampton County Legislative Petitions in the Archives of the Virginia State Library.)

39. Deposition of Captain George Eshon, November 13, 1821.

testify. As of December 11, 1821, these two men swore they did not know whether Peter Bowdoin had later taken a deposition from Captain Evans to support his cause.⁴⁰

Mr. Bowdoin gave notice to Jacob Parker and Floyd on November 20, 1821, that a deposition would be taken from Captain William Frost at Mr. Southey Giffigon's house between twelve and four on that day. The deposition was taken in the presence of William Satchell, Peter S. Bowdoin, Peter's son, and John K. Floyd.⁴¹

Captain Frost testified that it was more difficult to navigate a sailing vessel to Floyd's landing than to the Bowdoin landing, but in all other respects the Floyd landing was the better. The passage across the Bay from Old Point to Cherrystone Creek was approximately four hours less than Hungars, and often vessels could sail to Cherrystone when they would not be able to reach Hungars.⁴²

If the new ferry anchorage was to be at the "Grassy Ground," in Cherrystone Harbor, then Josias Willes believed that harbor to be the best in Northampton County. However,

40. Statement of John K. Floyd and Jacob G. Parker, concerning the King's Creek Ferry, December 11, 1821. (All statements and notices used in this thesis are filed with the Legislative Petitions of Accomack and Northampton Counties, in the Archives of the Virginia State Library.)

41. Notice of Peter Bowdoin, concerning the deposition of Captain William Frost, November 20, 1821.

42. Deposition of Captain William Frost, November 20, 1821.

if the vessels were to maneuver in King's Creek it would be difficult to get a sailing boat out of the creek except with poles and only then at high tide. Willes stated that grain vessels would run from Old Point to Cherrystone,⁴³ when they wouldn't attempt to cross to Hungars.

In the interest of Peter Bowdoin's Ferry, George Holt testified on December 1, 1821, that the distance from the entrance of Cherrystone Creek to the Floyd landing was much greater than to the Hungars' landing. The depth of water at Floyd's wharf was about $4\frac{1}{2}$ feet at low tide, and there was a sand bar at the entrance of the creek. Hungars was more in the center of the county and closer to Eastville by three miles. "He considers Cherrystone and Kings Creek above Sandy Point a better Harbour than Hungars, but that Hungars is equally safe...."⁴⁴

Major S. Pitts, with the consent of the petitioners for the new ferry and the proprietor of the Bowdoin Ferry, stated under oath before Thomas S. Satchell that if there were sufficient depth of water in King's Creek then he would believe the new ferry landing superior to Hungars. The slope of the sand hill from the Bowdoin landing to the

43. Deposition of Josias Willes, December 1, 1821.

44. Deposition of George Holt, December 1, 1821.

house caused great difficulty for teams pulling loaded waggons and carts, even though the ascent was gradual. However, he doesn't believe public convenience required two ferries, nor would support them:

...since the establishment of the Steamboat, that plies between Norfolk and Baltimore the communication between North and South by the Eastern Shore rout, is much out off.⁴⁵

The deposition of Thomas Rippen in support of the Bowdoin petition estimates the distance from Floyd's landing to the "Grassy Ground" to be four hundred yards. A vessel could not maneuver this four hundred yards without great difficulty and only on high tide would the ferry be able to get to the landing. The passage across the Bay to Cherrystone Creek is estimated to be one hour shorter, or five hours shorter when any difficulties would be encountered in going to Hungars. Yet, he believed Cherrystone was more likely to be blocked by ice than Hungars in the winter months.⁴⁶

Peter Bowdoin circulated six copies of an "Expression of Opinion Concerning Floyd's Ferry," in order to obtain signatures to support his cause before the General Assembly. These six documents contained a total of 238 signatures and

45. Deposition of Major S. Pitts, December 3, 1821.

46. Deposition of Thomas Rippen, not dated.

47

read as follows:

We the undersigned having understood that a petition will be presented to the next General Assembly of Virginia by John K. Floyd Jacob G. Parker & Severn E. Parker for the establishment of a ferry, from Cherriton [Cherrystone] or Kings Creek Harbour in the County of Northampton, to the Towns of Norfolk Hampton & York, & being called upon for an expression of our opinion, feel no hesitation in giving it as our opinion that public convenience will not be promoted by the establishment of a ferry from any port of Cherriton, there being already one, amply sufficient for general convenience at Hungars- A place from its contiguity to the Court House where the stage stops & Its central situation in the County aforesaid in our opinion greatly to be preferred.⁴⁸

John K. Floyd had solicited signatures for the petition to establish a ferry on King's Creek. Floyd would read the petition aloud first, and then request those who thought it reasonable to sign their names. Severn and Jacob Parker did not solicit any signatures. William Dunton describes Floyd's attitude in presenting the petition to the public as, "...humble, fair and without any attempt to mislead or impose upon anyone and it [petition] expresses [the] will of [the] people."⁴⁹

Mr. Dunton, a native of Northampton, states there were several minors' names on Peter Bowdoin's petition, and

47. The number of signatures on each copy was: eighty-two, forty-six, eighty-six, fourteen, two, and eight.

48. Expression of Opinion Concerning Floyd's Ferry.

49. Statement of William Dunton concerning the King's Creek Ferry.

Mr. Bowdoin had attempted to get the people who had signed his opponents petition to withdraw their names. He was successful in getting a few people to withdraw their names from the petition requesting the new ferry. There were two copies of the following statement circulated in the interest of the Bowdoin Ferry; the first signed by Robert Cordy and the second copy having nine signatures:

We the undersigned, having subscribed our names to a petition intended to be Presented to the next General Assembly of Virginia by John K. Floyd Jacob G. Parker & Severn E. Parker Esquires for the establishment of a ferry from Kings Creek on Cherriton [Cherrystone] to the towns of Norfolk Hampton & York & to East River, upon further & more mature consideration and with better information in relation to the Comparative advantages of the two harbours of Hungars and Cherriton feel no hesitation that injustice to the Public-to the Proprietor of Hungars' Ferry & particularly we owe it to ourselves to state, that in subscribing the aforesaid petition we acted hastily and without due reflection- We therefore feel no hesitation in giving it as our opinion that Public convenience will not be promoted by the establishment of a ferry from any Port of Cherriton, there being already one, amply sufficient for general convenience, at Hungars- A place from its Central situation in the County aforesaid, in our opinion greatly to be preferred.⁵²

On November 30, 1821, Levin Y. Winder, a Justice of the Peace in Northampton County, examined the Bowdoin

50. Ibid.

51. The name is spelled Coody in the Personal Property Tax List for Northampton County, 1821.

52. Statement of Opinion signed by Robert Cordy, not dated; and the second copy dated December 18, 1821.

Ferry Account Books and made a statement of the profits
 and losses from 1802 through November, 1821. This state-
 ment included the money obtained from:

...ferrriages, freights & the Carriage of the Mail
 & by charging the same with all expenses original
 or incidental, which they may have incurred including
 the boats, originally purchased & the riggen from
 time to time wanted, repairs, hands waxes...the
 statement...omitting fractions of a dollar in the
 aggregate of each year.⁵⁴

The statement shows the average profits for the nineteen
 years to be \$279.56. This account of the profits varies
 in several incidents with the statement given by Mr.

Bowdoin in 1815. The statement on the following page shows
 the profits and losses of the Hungars' Ferry as presented
 by Peter Bowdoin to the General Assembly in December, 1821.

The expenses incurred in the maintenance of the
 Hungars' Ferry, as shown by the Bowdoin accounts, was

53. Certified Statement of the Profits and Losses
 for the Bowdoin Ferry from 1802-1821, November 30, 1821.
 (Filed with Northampton County Legislative Petitions in the
 Archives of the Virginia State Library.)

54. Ibid.

55. Ibid.

56. Cf. ante., p. 70.

The profit variation is as follows:

	Profits as given in 1813.	In 1821.
Years: 1802	\$ 959.90	\$ 750.
1806	1224.14	1332.
1808	643.39	943.
1811	1299.20	1599.
1812	1200.00	1142.

STATEMENT OF PROFITS AND LOSSES FOR THE BOWDOIN
FERRY FROM 1802 THROUGH NOVEMBER 30, 1821

YEAR	CREDITS	DEBITS	PROFITS
1802	\$ 2415.	\$ 1685.	\$ 730.
1803	2173.	1557.	636.
1804	2370.	1226.	1143.*
1805	1991.	910.	1081.
1806	2196.	864.	1332.
1807	2465.	1276.	1189.
1808	1837.	944.	943.
1809	1755.	1175.	580.
1810	2749.	1627.	922.
1811	2754.	1155.	1599.
1812	2062.	920.	1142.
1813	337.	650.	(Loss 313.)
1814	[THE FERRIES DID NOT RUN THIS YEAR.]		
1815	2234.	2041.	193.
1816	2565.	1463.	900.
1817	2289.	1289.	1000.
1818	2397.	1257.	1140.
1819	2301.	1300.	1001.
1820	2155.	1225.	930.
1821	1731.	1169.	562.
		TOTAL	\$ 16,710.

*Correct Total \$1144.

thought to be rather high in the Assembly. Mr. Richard L. Morriss, a Delegate of the House from Gloucester in 1821, stated that he had owned vessels of thirty five tons for four years. His boats were manned by two men and two boys, but the expense had never exceeded four hundred dollars.⁵⁷ Mr. John P. Drummond, a Delegate from Accomack County, testified that he had been engaged in the West Indies trade for ten years, and with this experience, he felt that eight hundred dollars should have been ample to cover all the expenses of the Bowdoin Ferryboats.⁵⁸ Mr. William Dunton, a native of Northampton County, owned two boats almost the same size of the Bowdoin boats. He states, that with the same number of deckhands as were used aboard the ferryboats, the expenses in the maintenance of his boats had never exceeded \$350. each per year.⁵⁹

There were three depositions taken to support the petition of John K. Floyd, Severn and Jacob Parker.⁶⁰ On November 10, 1821, Captain Thomas Hosier, of Northampton County, in the presence of John C. Parramore, a Justice of

57. Statement of Richard L. Morriss, January 26, 1822.

58. Statement of John P. Drummond.

59. Statement of William Dunton.

60. These were the Depositions of Captain Thomas Hosier, Thomas Downs, and Southey Goffigon.

the Peace, John K. Floyd and Peter Bowdoin, testified that he had sailed on the Chesapeake Bay for the past twenty years, and he considered King's Creek a better harbor than Hungars. He believed King's Creek sufficiently wide enough to maneuver vessels in and out, and the depth of water at the Floyd wharf to be deep enough for the boats to dock even at low water. Vessels returning from across the Bay had often been required to take shelter during rough weather in King's Creek. There was better anchorage in Cherrystone and it was easier to land passengers than
61
at Hungars.

Thomas Downs had sailed out of Cherrystone and Hungars' Harbors for twelve years and thought Cherrystone to be superior to Hungars. The distance from Cherrystone to the towns across the Bay was much shorter, and the navigating of a vessel into this harbor was much easier than at Hungars. Mr. Downs has estimated the time saved in making a passage to Cherrystone, rather than to the Bowdoin landing during rough weather or unfavorable
62
conditions, to be five hours.

Southey Goffigon testified as to the advantages and

61. Deposition of Captain Thomas Hosier, November 10, 1821.

62. Deposition of Thomas Downs, November 24, 1821.

superiority of the Cherrystone and King's Creek Harbor, as compared with Hungars on December 3, 1821, in the presence of Thomas S. Satchell, a Justice of the Peace of Northampton. ⁶⁵

John K. Floyd had Southey Goffigon to survey the course from the mouth of Cherrystone Harbor to Floyd's landing, and measure the distance for the same. ⁶⁴ The survey was presented to the Assembly to settle the disputes as to the course and distance from Floyd's wharf to the Bay, in comparison with the Hungars' Harbor.

Peter Bowdoin submitted a petition to the General Assembly of Virginia on December 5, 1821, in opposition to the petition on behalf of Floyd and the Parkers. ⁶⁵ The three main arguments of his opponents petition were refuted.

63. Deposition of Southey Goffigon, December 3, 1821.

64. Certificate of Survey taken of Cherrystone Creek by Southey Goffigon, November 6, 1821. (Filed with Northampton County Legislative Petitions, Virginia State Library.) The Survey reads as follows:

From the Point shoals which is at the entrance of Cherrystone Channel the course is North 5° East distance 113 four Poles Chains from the Elbow to P. Sandy Point 18 Chains of four Poles from P. Elbow to the Anchorage at the Entrance of Kings Creek course East distance 41 Chains from thence to Jno K. Floyd's landing 400 Yards from the Entrance of Cherrystone to Entrance of Hungars Course North 15° East distance 8 miles and 20 poles-from the Entrance of Hungars to the Anchorage 134 Poles Chains. [A Pole Chain is sixty-six feet.]

65. Journal of the House of Delegates of the Commonwealth of Virginia, 1821-1822 Session (Richmond: Printed by Thomas Ritchie, 1821), p. 16.

The arguments included:

1. The natural advantages of the Cherrystone Harbor as compared with the Hungars Harbor.
2. The facility of getting on board the boats at Floyd's landing.
3. The greater proximity of Cherrystone to Norfolk.⁶⁶

Peter felt that the three joint owners of the new ferry would force him out of business as they were wealthy men. He was skeptical as to the amount of influence his petition would carry in the Assembly, and to substantiate the petition he forwarded a remonstrance with several other documents to the Assembly on December 18, 1821.⁶⁷ The concluding paragraph of the remonstrance is Bowdoin's final plea to maintain the ferry monopoly for Northampton County, and states the following:

Your remonstrant flatters himself that upon a due consideration of the premises your honorable body will be sensible of the great public injury independent of the injustice to himself that must attend the establishment of another ferry and as the one kept by your remonstrant has been conducted so long with general satisfaction he indulges the pleasing hope, that the Public Convenience as involved, at Present in the Particular interest of himself may still be consulted by your honorable body in the rejection of the Prayer of the Petitioner.⁶⁸

66. Petition of Peter Bowdoin to the General Assembly of Virginia, December 5, 1821.

67. Journal of the House, op. cit., 1821-1822 Session, p. 55. The six copies of the "Expression of Opinion Concerning Floyd's Ferry," and the two copies of the Statement of Opinion signed by William Cordy and others were submitted at this time.

68. Remonstrance of Peter Bowdoin to the General Assembly of Virginia, December 18, 1821.

All of the petitions, depositions, statements of facts, and expressions of opinions concerning the ferry to be established on King's Creek, were submitted to the Committee of Roads and Internal Navigation in the House.⁶⁹ The Committee reported their opinion to the House on January 5, 1822, in favor of the establishment of the ferry from Floyd's landing, and they resolved that the Bowdoin petition be rejected.⁷⁰ Mr. Stratton, a member of the House, made a motion that the petition in the interest of a ferry from Cherrystone be taken up on January 8, 1822.⁷¹ The petition was taken under consideration on that day, and a Bill ordered to be brought before the House on the same.⁷² The Bill was written by the Committee of Roads and Internal Navigation, brought before the House, passed and sent to the Senate.⁷³ The Senate passed the Bill and it became a law January 30, 1822.⁷⁴

69. Journal of the House, op. cit., 1821-1822 Session, pp. 16, 55.

70. Ibid., p. 104.

71. Ibid., p. 109.

72. Ibid.

73. Ibid., pp. 111, 131, 133, 139.

74. Journal of the Senate of the Commonwealth of Virginia, 1821-1822 Session (Richmond: Printed by John Warrock, 1821), pp. 61, 62, 65, 69, 71, 72; and the Acts Passed at a General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Virginia, 1821-1822 Session (Richmond: Printed by Thomas Ritchie, 1822), p. 50.

The legislative Act permitted the Floyd Ferry to go to York, Hampton, Norfolk, and the East River in Mathews County. The rates for a man or horse were set at three dollars, for a coach, chariot or waggon, ten dollars, and the driver of the vehicle two dollars. All two wheel chaises were charged five dollars. During rough weather the Hungars and Pungoteague ferries were allowed to land passengers, horses, or any type of carriage at King's Creek, and these two ferries were granted the same privileges as the Floyd Ferry in going to East River in Mathews County. The ferry proprietors on King's Creek were allowed twelve months to put their ferry in operation.⁷⁵

Mr. John P. Drummond, a Delegate from Accomack County, had been detained for eight days at the Pungoteague Ferry landing while on his way to Richmond, as the ferry packets were absent from the Shore. He had been informed that the proprietor of the Pungoteague Ferry did not object to the establishment of a ferry in Northampton, and believing that such a ferry would prove beneficial to the inhabitants of the Eastern Shore, he voted in favor of the new ferry.⁷⁶

75. Acts Passed at a General Assembly, Ibid., pp. 50-51.

76. Statement of John P. Drummond, not dated.

Mr. Tully R. Wise, also a Delegate from Accomack County in 1821, had been unable to obtain passage across the Bay from the Fungoteague Ferry. He was forced to wait from Sunday evening until Tuesday morning at Hungars before leaving the Shore for Richmond. Mr. Wise felt that he expressed the opinion of his constituents in voting for the establishment of the proposed ferry from King's Creek. The new ferry, Mr. Wise believed, would excite competition and promote the public convenience.⁷⁷

John K. Floyd and Jacob G. Parker, proprietors of the public ferry from King's Creek, entered into and acknowledged a bond for five hundred dollars, with Severn E. Parker as their security before the Northampton County Court November 11, 1822.⁷⁸ Floyd was granted an Ordinary's license for the maintenance of a public house, by the county court May 12, 1823.⁷⁹ This license was renewed upon his giving a bond and security in the county Clerk's Office June 14, 1824, and again on May 9, 1825.⁸⁰

The new ferry landing was located at Town Fields.⁸¹

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77. Statement of Tully R. Wise, January 25, 1822.
 78. Northampton County Orders, No. 37, 1822-1826,
 p. 11.
 79. Ibid., p. 39. 80. Ibid., pp. 121, 217.
 81. Cf. ante., p. 87.

John K. Floyd built a house on this tract of land in 1809, which goes by the name of Town Fields also, and it was at this house that ferry passengers were entertained while waiting for a passage across the Bay. One of the ferries owned by Floyd was a schooner named General Jackson.

Bishop Meade, the Protestant Episcopal Bishop for the Diocese of Virginia, in one of his visits to the Shore was required to wait for several days at the Floyds for passage across the Bay, due to bad sailing weather. The story is related, that while having prayer one morning with the Floyds,

Captain Jake Outten, master of the ferry vessel then in use, rushed in, saying "Bishop Meade, git up off your marrow bones; wind's ready and tide's ready, and wind and tide waits for no man, not even a bishop." 84

The ferry established from King's Creek soon became known as the Floyd Ferry, and it appears that John K. Floyd became the sole proprietor of this ferry by 1824. E. Parker had no interest in the ferry but lent his name to the petition in order to win influence in the Assembly,

82. Whitelaw, op. cit., I, 175. The name "Town Fields" is spelled in Whitelaw as "Townfields."

83. Ibid., p. 174.

84. Ibid., pp. 174-175.

85. Petition of John K. Floyd to the General Assembly of Virginia, November 23, 1824. This petition makes reference to Jacob G. Parker being a part owner to the ferry.

as Mr. Parker had been a member of the House, Senate and
⁸⁶
 Congress. Jacob G. Parker had agreed with John K. Floyd
 that if Floyd desired to be the sole owner of the ferry
⁸⁷
 he would release his rights to him.

Peter Bowdoin had made a trip to Richmond in an
 effort to defend his ferry monopoly in the county of
 Northampton. He describes his stay in Richmond as, "...
⁸⁸
 very long and to no purpose...." He states that his
 opponents won by, "...every mean, dirty untruth and
⁸⁹
 electioneering out of the House...." But he had not
⁹⁰
 condescended to such "horse means." Believing that one
 of the ferries in the two counties must fail, he thought
 his chances were as good as the new ferry in getting
 passengers in Norfolk, and on the Shore he would have less
⁹¹
 competition.

The steamboat service between Norfolk and Baltimore
 was maintaining a regular schedule by 1820, as can be seen

86. Peter Bowdoin to Joseph Prentis Jr., August 11,
 1821; and the Statement of William Dunton.

87. Peter Bowdoin letter, Ibid.

88. Peter Bowdoin to Joseph Prentis Jr., April 6,
 1822.

89. Ibid.

90. Ibid.

91. Ibid.

92

in the Norfolk newspapers. The steamer Virginia, with Captain John Ferguson as the skipper, left Norfolk at 9 a.m. for Baltimore on Mondays and returned on Thursdays, leaving Baltimore at 9 a.m. that day.⁹³ Major S. Pitts had testified that there was no need for a ferry from King's Creek since the establishment of regular steamboat service between Norfolk and Baltimore had taken a great deal of the trade from the Eastern Shore Packets.⁹⁴

The steamboat services between Norfolk and Baltimore did not make regularly scheduled stops to the Eastern Shore of Virginia in the 1820's. However, passengers were transported from Baltimore to the Shore as early as 1821, by the steamboat; for The American Beacon gives the following news on May 19, 1821:

Arrived: Steam-Boat Virginia, Brown, Baltimore, 23 Hours - 16 Passengers - was detained a little beyond the usual hour having stopped to land Passengers on the Eastern Shore of Virginia.⁹⁵

Occasional stops were made on the Shore by the steamboat going from Norfolk to Baltimore, as the following advertisement appeared in The Norfolk and Portsmouth Herald:

92. Advertisement in The American Beacon and Norfolk and Portsmouth Daily Advertiser, June 5, 1820.

93. Ibid.

94. Cf. ante., p. 95.

95. News in The American Beacon and Norfolk and Portsmouth Daily Advertiser, May 19, 1821.

The Steam Boat Norfolk, Capt. Owen, will leave Norfolk at 6 o'clock, a.m. on Thursday, 22 inst. (for this trip only) - touch at the Eastern Shore of Virginia for passengers, and arrive in Baltimore in time for the morning boat to Philadelphia.⁹⁶

The two ferries in Northampton County sustained a loss of \$450. for the year of 1823.⁹⁷ The cost to establish the Floyd Ferry had been six thousand dollars, and the expenses incurred for the maintenance of the ferry in 1823, including the interest on the original cost, had been sixteen hundred dollars.⁹⁸ The receipts obtained from the ferry for that year had been approximately fourteen hundred dollars, including the carriage of the mail.⁹⁹ The Bowdoin Ferry had sustained a loss of approximately \$250.¹⁰⁰ This was sufficient evidence to convince both the proprietors of the Hungars and Floyd ferries that the two men could not maintain their ferries at a profit.

As Peter Bowdoin was quite old by 1824, he did not feel qualified to maintain a ferry across the Bay, and to

96. Advertisement in The Norfolk and Portsmouth Herald, June 19, 1826; and John C. Emerson, Jr., Steam Navigation in Virginia and Northeastern North Carolina Waters, 1826-1836 (Lithoprinted from a typed copy, c1950), p. 13.

97. Petition of John K. Floyd to the General Assembly of Virginia, November 25, 1824.

98. Ibid.

99. Ibid.

100. Ibid.

cope with all the problems involved in being a ferry keeper. With three ferries running from the Eastern Shore across the Chesapeake Bay, the competition was too great to render any profits for the ferry services, and Peter Bowdoin proposed to sell his ferry to John K. Floyd for three thousand dollars.¹⁰² The agreement for the sale of the Bowdoin Ferry was made April 12, 1824.¹⁰³

In the memorandum of agreement made between John K. Floyd and Peter Bowdoin, Bowdoin conveyed all his rights and titles as ferry keeper to Floyd, and was not to be engaged in any further commercial transportation as a ferry owner. Mr. Bowdoin also conveyed to Floyd in fee simple all the land on the Hungars' Plantation, "...as lies between ordinary high water mark and ordinary low water mark throughout the whole extent of the said Bowdoin shores...."¹⁰⁴

101. An illustration of the long drawn out business affairs as ferry keeper can be seen in the six dollars owed Peter Bowdoin by John Grey—"...a worthless debtor," Mr. Bowdoin declares. Grey had crossed the Bay on May 22, 1819, and again on January 16, 1820, in the Hungars' Ferry. Later he married a lady with some property and left the Shore still owing Bowdoin the ferriage for these two trips. The debt was finally collected after six years. Cited in Peter Bowdoin letter to Joseph Prentis Jr., April 6, 1823; and a letter to Joseph Prentis Jr., January 12, 1825.

102. Petition of John K. Floyd to the General Assembly of Virginia, November 23, 1824.

103. Northampton County Deeds, No. 27, 1819-1824, pp. 532-534.

104. Ibid.

This did not deprive Peter Bowdoin from using the shore, except for the right to land passengers, horses or any type of carriages. The conveyance of the shore was for a period of two thousand years. Mr. Floyd was forbidden to use the shore as a ferry landing also, as the purpose of the conveyance was to prohibit any person from establishing a ferry from Hungars. This gave the Floyd Ferry on King's Creek a monopoly for Northampton County. The agreement became effective April 20, 1824.¹⁰⁵

Floyd paid Peter Bowdoin three thousand dollars, and the receipt was given for the abolishing of the Hungars' Ferry on April 17, 1824.¹⁰⁶ The deed was signed and recorded on April 20, 1824.¹⁰⁷

Hence, the year of 1824 marks the end of the ferry franchise in the hands of the Bowdoin Family. The franchise had been held by this family for more than fifty-two years. From this period on, the sailing packets used in crossing the Chesapeake Bay changed ownership very rapidly until they go out of existence and the steamboat takes their place.

105. Ibid.

106. Ibid., pp. 534-536.

107. Ibid.

CHAPTER V

THE CHESAPEAKE BAY FERRIES TO 1840

The number of ferry proprietors running packets from the Shore greatly increased between 1824 and 1840. This sixteen year period saw the establishment of four new ferries from the Peninsula, the discontinuance of three, and the failure of two Shore citizens to obtain licenses. In spite of the many changes, by the end of the period there was still a ferry in operation from each of the two counties to York, Hampton and Norfolk.

John K. Floyd had invested half of his estate in the ferry, with the purchase of the Bowdoin Ferry rights.¹ These investments amounted to nine thousand dollars.² Floyd had constructed a new wharf on King's Creek at considerable expense in order to provide better loading facilities for carriages and horses. The two packet boats were furnished with the best accommodations and had skillful captains. The rates charged were below those set by the law. For the accommodation of his passengers, the rates were as follows:

Three dollars [for] Merchant or Tradesmen, two dollars if a Labourer, Sailor or Servant, dollar and half, for

1. Petition of John K. Floyd to the General Assembly of Virginia, November 23, 1824.

2. Ibid.

a horse three dollars, and for a carriage a dollar and half per wheel.³

The tavern prices at Town Fields were of a moderate scale. The neighbors and county residents rarely paid anything, and strangers were charged anywhere from 18 3/4 cents to twenty-five cents for a meal, and 12½ cents for their lodging. Ordinary liquors were furnished without charge, and the passengers were transported free of charge from the landing on King's Creek to Eastville by the Floyd carriage; a distance of approximately 6½ miles. A horse could be obtained for fifty cents a day, a horse and gig for seventy five, and a carriage with two horses for a dollar and half a day.⁴

Floyd had scarcely put his ferry in operation when Mr. Arthur Upshur, a citizen of Northampton, decided to petition the Legislature for a ferry franchise. The Upshur ferry was to run from Hungers Creek, with the landing located closer to the mouth of the creek than the Bowdoin landing. The petition was circulated successfully for signatures, although Floyd had been informed that the petitioner was not serious in his attempt to obtain the franchise.⁵

3. Ibid., Cf. ante., p. 105.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

When Floyd realized that he had been misinformed concerning the Upshur petition, he prepared a petition in opposition to his opponents for submission to the Assembly. Floyd apprised the Assembly as to the considerable expense incurred in establishing his ferry and the accommodations, rates and improvements. He stated that: "He is opposed to monopolies but he believes that his profits will not be taken to encourage a useless spirit of speculation in others."⁶

An account of the Floyd Ferry receipts for the first ten months of 1824, reveals that the income was \$1512.37 $\frac{1}{2}$. For the two remaining months of the year Floyd estimated to receive approximately three hundred dollars. The total receipts for 1824, including two hundred for the transportation of the mail, was estimated to be \$2012.37. The expenses were estimated at \$1840.; being \$400. for the maintenance of the two packets, \$540. for interest on the establishment cost, and \$900. including all other expenses. This would give a net profit of \$172.37, which Floyd claimed would not compensate him for the transportation of the passengers to Eastville.⁷

The Floyd and Upshur petitions were presented to

6. Ibid.

7. Statement of the Floyd Ferry Accounts for 1824.

the House of Delegates December 14, 1824, and referred to the Committee of Propositions and Grievances.⁸ The Committee reported their opinion to the House December 28, 1824, in favor of the Floyd petition and resolved that Mr. Upshur's petition "be rejected."⁹ Mr. Upshur was given permission on January 3, 1825, to withdraw his petition and the accompanying documents, which requested the ferry franchise from Hungars Creek.¹⁰

As Peter Bowdoin had sold his ferry rights to Floyd, the House ordered on a motion made by Mr. Upshur, that a Bill be prepared to repeal the law which had established a ferry from the Bowdoin lands in Northampton County. Messrs. Upshur, Dunton, Drummond, Fletcher of Accomack County, Collier, James, Diggs, Jones of York, and Russell,¹¹ all members of the House, were to prepare the Bill. The Bill was reported by Mr. Upshur to the House January 10, 1825, received and laid on the table.¹² By January 24, 1825, the Bill entitled, "An Act to discontinue the ferry from the lands of Peter Bowdoin in [the] County of Northampton to Norfolk, Hampton, York and East River," had passed the

8. Journal of the House of Delegates of the Commonwealth of Virginia, 1824-1825 Session (Richmond: Printed by Thomas Ritchie, 1824), p. 38.

9. Ibid., p. 76.

10. Ibid., p. 94.

11. Ibid., p. 105.

12. Ibid., p. 107.

House and was sent to the Senate.¹³ In the Senate the Bill passed two readings, but was rejected on the third reading and never became a law.¹⁴

John K. Floyd died in 1828, and William S. Floyd, his son, gave a bond of forty thousand dollars in certificate to the county court, with Jacob Parker, Severn E. Parker, and George F. Wilins as his securities, for a letter of administration on the estate of his father.¹⁵ William became the proprietor of his father's ferry, and gave a bond of five hundred dollars to the court March 9, 1830, as required by law, with his brother Samuel as his security.¹⁶

The twenty-first section of the ferry Act passed by the General Assembly January 30, 1819, which exempted any ferry-men, or owners, from the assessments and payment of county levies was repealed. This amendment to the 1819 Act became effective February 3, 1829.¹⁷

13. Ibid., pp. 118, 122, 128.

14. Journal of the Senate of the Commonwealth of Virginia, 1824-1825 Session (Richmond: Printed by John Warrock, 1824), pp. 69, 73, 77.

15. Northampton County Orders, No. 33, 1826-1831, p. 259.

16. Ibid., p. 398.

17. Acts Passed at a General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Virginia, 1828-1829 Session (Richmond: Printed by Thomas Ritchie, 1829), p. 44.

The transportation facilities to and from Norfolk had greatly increased by 1829.¹⁸ For the convenience of travellers The Norfolk and Portsmouth Herald published "The Traveller's Guide." The information given by the Guide included the different conveyances by land and water to and from Norfolk. The Guide gave the following information concerning the ferries from the Shore:

The Eastern Shore Packets arrive and depart for Northampton and Accomac [sic], generally three times a week. They lie at Newton's Wharf.¹⁹

The number of passengers and profits received by the Floyd Ferry at York and East River in Mathews County, did not justify sending packets to these places in 1829. To relieve Floyd of the responsibility of stopping at these two ports, Mr. Dunton, a Delegate in the House and a member of the Committee of Roads and Internal Navigation in the 1829-1830 session,²⁰ was given the permission to enter a Bill amending the Act which established the Floyd Ferry.²¹ The Bill was prepared and passed the House and Senate to

18. "The Traveller's Guide," in The Norfolk and Portsmouth Herald, November 18, 1829; and Emerson, op. cit., pp. 130-133.

19. Ibid.

20. Journal of the House of Delegates of the Commonwealth of Virginia, 1829-1830 Session (Richmond: Printed by Thomas Ritchie, 1829), p. 11.

21. Ibid., p. 12.

become a law on December 17, 1829.²² This Act provided that the Floyd Ferry would not be compelled to go to Yorktown and East River, but would continue the regular trips across the Bay to Norfolk and Hampton.²³

The first regularly scheduled steamboat service to be established between Norfolk and the Eastern Shore of Virginia was begun in 1830.²⁴ The Maryland and Virginia Steamboat Company, upon a request of several gentlemen on the Shore, decided to run the Steamboat Pocahontas from Norfolk to Cherrystone, once a week, beginning June 10, 1830.²⁵ The Pocahontas had been used on regularly scheduled runs between Baltimore and Norfolk, but was idle at the time this new service was proposed.²⁶ The weekly trips to the Shore were on Tuesdays of one week and Thursdays of the next; leaving Norfolk at 8 a.m., and departing Cherrystone at 1 p.m. the same day. The vessel stopped at Old Point Comfort to receive passengers going and returning,

22. Ibid., pp. 19, 20, 22, 27; and the Journal of the Senate of the Commonwealth of Virginia, 1829-1830 Session (Richmond: Printed by John Warrock, 1829), pp. 18, 19.

23. Virginia General Assembly Enrolled Bills, 1829-1830 Session, p. 1.

24. Advertisement in The Norfolk and Portsmouth Herald, June 11, 1830.

25. Ibid.

26. Ibid., November 18, 1829; and the Remonstrance of William S. Floyd to the General Assembly of Virginia, December 26, 1832.

and the ferriage was three dollars. All baggage was taken at the risk of the owner. The proposed schedule for four months was:

	June		August
Thursday,	10th	Thursday,	5th
Tuesday,	15th	Tuesday,	10th
Thursday,	24th	Thursday,	19th
Tuesday,	29th	Tuesday,	24th
	July		September
Thursday,	8th	Thursday,	2nd
Tuesday,	15th	Tuesday,	7th
Thursday,	22nd	Thursday,	16th
Tuesday,	27th	Tuesday,	21st
		Thursday,	30th 27

The Maryland and Virginia Steamboat Company advertised this ferry service in The Norfolk and Portsmouth Herald from June 11, 1830 through August 20, 1830. The receipts from this enterprise did not justify its continuation. William S. Floyd stated that, "...two short months demonstrated its folly in point of profits." ²⁸ The service was evidently discontinued after September 30, 1830, as the Pocahontas was put back on the regular schedule running between Norfolk and Baltimore by October 5, 1830. ²⁹

Norfolk steamboats often made excursions to the

27. Advertisement in The Norfolk and Portsmouth Herald, June 11, 1830.

28. Remonstrance of William S. Floyd to the General Assembly of Virginia, December 26, 1832.

29. News in The Norfolk and Portsmouth Herald, October 6, 1830.

Eastern Shore of Virginia, giving their passengers a full
 30
 days entertainment at a low cost. These pleasure cruises
 often stopped in Cherrystone Harbor and went as far north
 as Chincoteague Island on the ocean side of the Peninsula.
 The following is an advertisement of such a cruise:

The splendid Steam-Boat Pocahontas will leave
 Marsden's Wharf on Thursday, the 5th August [1830],
 at 8 o' clock A.M. for Chincoteague, Eastern Shore,
 (Va.) returning the same evening. Pleasure parties
 can be accommodated at \$1.50 per each individual fare
 included.³¹

The excursion to Chincoteague was described by The Norfolk
and Portsmouth Herald as follows:

AS was expected the Pocahontas had a very numerous
 and agreeable party on her last week's trip to the
 Eastern Shore; about twenty-five ladies and gentlemen
 were received on board at Fortress Monroe, with the
 elegant Band of that place, the sea breeze was delight-
 ful, and the company returned highly gratified with
 their excursion....³²

The ferry which had been established by an Act of
 the General Assembly of Virginia from Henry Parker's land
 on Pungoteague Creek in 1813, and had been left to his son,
 33
 George W. Parker, was discontinued by 1831. With only the

30. Advertisements in The Norfolk and Portsmouth Herald, August 9, 1830; and June 22, 1831.

31. Ibid., August 2, 1830.

32. Ibid., August 9, 1830.

33. Petition of the Citizens of Accomack County on
 behalf of William Parramore Jr., and John W. Custis, February
 8, 1831; and the Remonstrance of William S. Floyd to the
 General Assembly of Virginia, December 26, 1832. The Floyd

one ferry running from King's Creek in Northampton County, the inhabitants of Accomack were required to travel farther than when the Bowdoin monopoly had been held, in order to obtain passage across the Bay.

The citizens of Accomack County submitted a petition to the General Assembly on February 8, 1831, requesting that William Ferramore Jr. and John W. Custis be permitted to run a ferry from the lands of "Raymond Riley on Chesconessex Creek."³⁴ Ferramore and Custis were willing to run a ferry provided they were granted the exclusive privilege and obtained the same protection as had been given the proprietor of the Parker Ferry. They requested permission to run only one boat, rather than two as the Parker franchise had stipulated, and the ferry was to make only one trip a week across the Bay. The Assembly was to set the certain day on which the ferry would go to Norfolk,

Remonstrance states that in 1829, upon application of the proprietor of the Parker Ferry from Pungoteague, the Legislature discontinued that ferry. However, there is no record of such in the Journal of the House, Senate, or the Acts of the Assembly for 1829, or the county court order book.

³⁴. Journal of the House of Delegates of the Commonwealth of Virginia, 1830-1831 Session (Richmond: Printed by Thomas Ritchie, 1830), p. 153. There is some doubt as to whether the ferry would run from Chesconessex Creek or Pungoteague Creek. In a letter written by George Scarborough to Wm. Ferramore Jr. dated March 1, 1831, Scarborough states: "Having agreed to join you and Jno W. Custis Esqrs. in running a Packet [sic] from Pungoteague Creek I am willing that such Packet should be run from the land lately devised to me by my father."

and the proprietors were to be permitted to land and take on passengers at Old Point and Hampton. The signers of the petition believed that the use of a single boat on a specified day of each week would prove more convenient--to the ferry keepers--than being required to make constant trips across the Bay at the passenger's request. There were fifty-one signatures on the petition.

When the petition was submitted to the House, it was referred to the Committee of Propositions and Grievances for study. On February 22, 1831, the Committee reported the petition back to the House as reasonable. The House ordered the Committee to prepare a Bill, which was received and laid on the table of the House. The House later voted favorably on the Bill and forwarded it to the Senate, where it was passed in an amended form and sent back to the House for concurrence. The Bill was then sent to the Committee of

35. Petition of the Citizens of Accomack County on behalf of William Parramore Jr., and John W. Custis, February 8, 1831.

36. Journal of the House, op. cit., 1830-1831 Session, p. 153.

37. Ibid.

38. Ibid., p. 275.

39. Ibid., pp. 277, 282.

40. Journal of the Senate of the Commonwealth of Virginia, 1830-1831 Session (Richmond: Printed by John Warrock, 1830), pp. 213, 214, 242.

41

General Laws in the House, and on a motion of Mr. Bayly,
 was again voted upon April 14, 1831.⁴² The first amendment
 was rejected, but the second amendment made by the Senate
 was accepted. The Senate was then requested to concur on
 the amendment, but on a motion made by Mr. Joynes, in the
 Senate, the Bill was laid on the Senate table where it died.⁴³

William Parremore Jr. and John W. Custis had failed
 in their effort to obtain a ferry franchise, but Samuel
 C. White, of Accomack County, was not to be discouraged by
 this failure. Mr. White petitioned the Assembly to grant
 him a franchise to run a packet from the town of Onancock
 to Norfolk, with such restrictions as the Legislature thought
 proper. There were twenty-two signatures to the following
 paragraph in the petition:

We the undersigned believe a Packet as above
 prayed, would be a great convenience to the citizens
 of Accomack County, and others and as the village of
 Onancock is nearly central in the said county, We
 cordially unite in the said petition.⁴⁴

Samuel White's petition was submitted to the House
 December 17, 1831, and was referred to the Committee of

41. Journal of the House, op. cit., 1830-1831 Session,
 p. 301.

42. Ibid., p. 305.

43. Journal of the Senate, op. cit., 1830-1831 Session,
 p. 280.

44. Petition of Samuel C. White to the General
 Assembly of Virginia, November 5, 1831.

45

Roads and Internal Navigation. The Committee reported the petition as reasonable and a Bill was prepared granting a franchise to Mr. White. The Bill passed the House and Senate and became a law January 21, 1832.⁴⁶

The Act empowered Samuel C. White to keep a public ferry from Onancock to Norfolk. The rates were to be the same as for the Floyd Ferry, and White was, "...entitled to all privileges and rights as granted in January 30 Act of 1819, and subsequent Acts relating to Public ferries."⁴⁷ The same regulations were required of the Onancock Packet as had been established for the Floyd Ferry, with the exception that the new ferry keeper was, "...compelled to send his packet from the town of Onancock every Tuesday to Norfolk, and returning shall leave Norfolk every Friday, unless prevented by the weather...."⁴⁸ He was not compelled to send his boat across the Bay at any other time. Mr.

45. Journal of the House of Delegates of the Commonwealth of Virginia, 1831-1832 Session (Richmond: Printed by Thomas Ritchie, 1831), p. 67.

46. Ibid., pp. 72, 74, 79, 82, 105; Journal of the Senate of the Commonwealth of Virginia, 1831-1832 Session (Richmond: Printed by John Warrock, 1831), pp. 52, 53, 66, 67; and the Acts Passed at a General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Virginia, 1831-1832 Session (Richmond: Printed by Thomas Ritchie, 1832), P. 211.

47. Acts of the General Assembly, Ibid.

48. Ibid.

White was given the privilege to change the days of leaving either Norfolk or Onancock, provided he published such change of schedule in a Norfolk paper. Any citizen of Accomack was given the privilege of transporting passengers from the county to Norfolk, whenever the White Packet was absent from the Shore or the captain refused to sail.⁴⁹

The county court of Accomack was given the power in the Act of January 21, 1832, to grant licenses upon application to vessels of not less than twenty-five tons, to run as Packets from any creek or harbor in the county to Norfolk. Before the applicant could be granted a license he was required to give a five hundred dollar bond with someone as his security. All of the restrictions and regulations set for the Samuel White Ferry were to apply to any person who was granted a ferry license by the court. Once the applicant was granted a license he was required to run his packet for one year.⁵⁰

It is evident by an Act passed in 1832, that the steamboat service between Norfolk and Baltimore at this time was causing the privately owned ferries on the Eastern Shore to have difficulty in maintaining their business on a profitable basis. Mr. Fisher, a Delegate from the Shore,

49. Ibid.

50. Ibid., p. 212.

on a motion made before the House, was given the privilege of preparing a Bill to amend the Act which established the Floyd Ferry on King's Creek. The Committee which prepared the Bill consisted of Messrs. Fisher, Drummond, Grinalds,⁵¹ Jones, King, Smith, Shield, and Holyburton. The Bill was prepared, passed the House and the Senate, and became⁵² a law February 7, 1852.

This Act provided that the proprietor of the Floyd Ferry was no longer required to send his boat across the Bay every day if required by passengers, but he could designate two days in each week, "...on which one of his boats shall cross the Bay to Norfolk or Hampton; and two days in each week on which one of his boats shall return⁵³ to King's Creek." If he accepted this provision he was to advertise the days on which the boats would leave both Norfolk and King's Creek, and he was compelled to send one of his ferries across the Bay on the days advertised, unless prevented by weather conditions. If the boats failed to leave the places as advertised, any person

51. Journal of the House, op. cit., 1851-1852 Session, p. 105.

52. Ibid., pp. 116, 119, 124, 126, 135; Journal of the Senate, op. cit., 1851-1852 Session, pp. 79, 82, 91; and the Acts Passed at a General Assembly, op. cit., 1851-1852 Session, p. 212.

53. Acts Passed at a General Assembly, Ibid.

aggrieved could recover twenty dollars before a Justice of
 the Peace in Northampton County. ⁵⁴

Carter M. Braxton of Northampton County thought monopolies were destructive to public interest, therefore he decided that the ferry monopoly as held by William S. Floyd should have competition. ⁵⁵ Mr. Braxton had been a member of the State Senate representing the District which was composed of the counties of Gloucester, Mathews, Middlesex, Accomack, and Northampton. ⁵⁶ Since Peter Bowdoin's death, he had purchased part of the land where the Bowdoin Ferry had been located in order to establish a ferry from the same public landing. ⁵⁷

Carter Braxton's intention of petitioning the Assembly for permission to establish a ferry was published in The American Beacon. Mr. William C. Shields, of the Shields and Ashburn Publishing Company, publishers of the Beacon, certified that the following notice was published weekly in that paper from November 12, 1832 through December

54. Ibid.

55. Although the privilege of maintaining a ferry from Accomack County had been granted Samuel C. White by the Assembly, White's Ferry was not in operation at the time. Cf. post., p. 134.

56. Journal of the Senate, op. cit., 1821-1822 Session, p. 15.

57. Petition of Carter M. Braxton to the General Assembly of Virginia, November 20, 1832.

58

1, 1832:

will be Presented to the next Legislature, a Petition for the establishment of a Ferry from Hungar's Creek, in Northampton to East River, York, Old Point, Hampton, and Norfolk.⁵⁸

The Braxton petition makes reference to the fact that the Floyd Ferry will bear inquiry, "...to the number of boats as required by law and if they are kept in proper order for the public use."⁶⁰ John K. Floyd had stressed the harmfulness of the Bowdoin monopoly in 1821, Mr. Braxton declared, but after the Floyd Ferry was put in operation the horrors of a monopoly had ceased for the proprietor. The petitioner believed two ferries were necessary for four reasons:

1. General convenience of passengers.
2. Competition will insure dispatch and comfort.
3. Mail can be transported more cheaply and with greater regularity.
4. If two ferries were necessary in 1821 when there was only one circuit, and commercial profits of Norfolk and Portsmouth were low, then there is a need for two now, since the new arrangement of the judicial system, and since Hampton, Old Point, Portsmouth and Norfolk are more industrialized.⁶¹

The epilogue of the petition noted the advantages

58. Certified Statement of William C. Shields, December 5, 1832.

59. Notice in The American Beacon and Norfolk and Portsmouth Daily Advertiser, November 12, 1832, November 19, 1832, and November 26, 1832.

60. Petition of Carter M. Braxton to the General Assembly of Virginia, November 20, 1832.

61. Ibid.

of two ferries in providing for, "...Social intercourse, the political connections, and the...commercial benefits which flow from an easy communication between different parts of the same state or community."⁶²

Arthur Upshur, whose petition for a ferry franchise in 1824 had been rejected by the General Assembly, was a firm supporter of the Braxton petition. He was convinced that another ferry was absolutely necessary for public convenience, for the Floyd Ferry had gradually deteriorated since the purchase of the Bowdoin Ferry rights. There had been many complaints with respect to the accommodations of the ferry from King's Creek. Mr. Upshur states:

It is within my knowledge, that a great number of persons have absolutely refused to cross on his [Floyd's] boats, in consequence of the extensive uncertainty of their movements, and the little attention which is paid, to the Comfort and accommodations of the passengers. Not unfrequently ten days elapse, without a mail from Norfolk, although we are entitled to two every week. Indeed, it has been publicly stated & cannot I believe be denied, that one of the Packets is often diverted from her proper employment, & used as a lading vessel to Baltimore and other places. I decidedly sic think that the very worst condition of Bowdoin's Ferry was not so bad as the present condition of Floyd's.⁶³

Such condition of the Floyd Ferry was the effects of a

62. Ibid.

63. Arthur P. Upshur to Carter M. Braxton, November 24, 1832. This letter was used as a supporting document to the Braxton petition. (Filed with Northampton County Legislative Petitions in the Archives of the Virginia State Library.)

monopoly, Mr. Upshur believed, and he felt he expressed public sentiment in supporting the Braxton petition.⁶⁴

Mr. Dunton, a Delegate, presented the Braxton petition to the House on December 17, 1832.⁶⁵ The Committee of Roads and Internal Navigation took the petition under consideration. Mr. Dunton presented a remonstrance from William S. Floyd to the House, December 26, 1832, in opposition to the Braxton petition.⁶⁶

The remonstrance reveals that the Parker Ferry had been discontinued because there wasn't enough commercial transactions between the Shore and the town across the Bay to support the enterprise. Mr. White's Ferry was required to have only one boat and to cross the Bay from Accomack once a week. The Floyd Ferry had been granted the right to make only two trips a week across the Bay to Norfolk and Hampton, as most of the trade from the Shore was between these two places. Floyd claimed that many persons obtained free passage to Norfolk by trading vessels, which had reduced the ferry profits a great deal.⁶⁷

64. Ibid.

65. Journal of the House of Delegates of the Commonwealth of Virginia, 1832-1833 Session (Richmond: Printed by Thomas Ritchie, 1832), p. 41.

66. Ibid., p. 56.

67. Remonstrance of William S. Floyd to the General Assembly of Virginia, December 26, 1832.

Even if the public demand required another ferry, Mr. Braxton could not establish such from the land purchased from Leah Bowdoin, Peter's wife. The deed made between Peter Bowdoin and John K. Floyd in 1824,⁶⁸ had granted the shore land of the Hungars' Plantation to Floyd and his heirs for two thousand years, with the stipulation that no ferry could be established from that shore. The site where Mr. Braxton desired to establish his ferry was the exact place mentioned in the deed. William S. Floyd apprised the Assembly of this deed and suggested that the granting of a ferry right to Carter Braxton from Hungars would be breaking the "obligation of contracts."⁶⁹

On December 31, 1832, the House Committee of Roads and Internal Navigation reported the Floyd remonstrance as reasonable, and to be discharged from further consideration of the remonstrance, but the Braxton petition was to be rejected. Both requests were laid on the table of the House.⁷⁰

The expediency of amending an Act establishing a ferry from Onancock was brought to the attention of the

68. Cf. ante., p. 112.

69. Remonstrance of William S. Floyd to the General Assembly of Virginia, December 26, 1832.

70. Journal of the House of Delegates of the Commonwealth of Virginia, 1832-1833 Session, p. 61.

Committee of Roads and Internal Navigation February 8,
⁷¹ 1833. The Committee presented a Bill to the House
 concerning the Onancock Ferry, which was passed upon and
 forwarded to the Senate.⁷² The Bill became a law March 5,
⁷³ 1833.

The title of the Act was, "An Act to amend the Act
 entitled, 'An Act establishing a ferry from Onancock Town,
 in the County of Accomack to Norfolk, and for other
 purposes.'⁷⁴" This Act provided that all of the provisions
 and regulations as established for the Floyd Ferry, both
 in the 1822 Act and the amending Act of 1832, were to
 apply to the Onancock Ferry.⁷⁵ This meant that Samuel White
 would be required to keep two packets and make two trips
 across the Bay a week, rather than the one ferry and the
 one trip as required by the 1832 Act, which granted him the
⁷⁶ franchise.

In an advertisement of the Summer schedule for the

71. Ibid., p. 159 [160].

72. Ibid., pp. 173, 217, 228, 241.

73. Journal of the Senate of the Commonwealth of Virginia, 1832-1833 Session (Richmond: Printed by John Warrock, 1832), pp. 171, 177; and the Acts Passed at a General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Virginia, 1832-1833 Session (Richmond: Printed by Thomas Ritchie, 1833), p. 114.

74. Acts Passed by the General Assembly, Ibid.

75. Cf. ante., pp. 105, 127. 76. Cf. ante., p. 125.

Steamboat Richmond running between Norfolk and Old Point Comfort twice a day in May, 1833, there appeared the notice of a contemplated weekly run to Hungars on the Eastern Shore.⁷⁷ This service to the Shore was begun in June of 1833, and the boat left Norfolk for Cherrystone rather than Hungars at 6 o' clock Tuesday and Saturday mornings,⁷⁸ returning from the Shore at 1 p.m. on the same day.⁷⁸ However, it is believed that this service was discontinued by the end of the summer.

Samuel C. White had been granted permission to establish a ferry from the town of Onancock to Norfolk by the General Assembly January 21, 1832,⁷⁹ but the ferry had not been put in operation. Mr. Poulson, a Delegate from Elizabeth City County, was given leave by the House on March 5, 1834, to bring in a Bill extending Mr. White's time⁸⁰ to get his ferry in operation. The Bill passed the House⁸¹ and the Senate, and allowed Samuel White six months from

77. Advertisement in The Norfolk and Portsmouth Herald, May 20, 1833.

78. Ibid., June 19, 1833. 79. Cf. ante., p. 125.

80. Journal of the House of Delegates of the Commonwealth of Virginia, 1833-1834 Session (Richmond: Printed by Thomas Ritchie, 1833), p. 241.

81. Ibid., pp. 243, 259, 265; and the Journal of the Senate of the Commonwealth of Virginia, 1833-1834 Session (Richmond: Printed by John Warrock, 1833), pp. 216, 218.

82

March 12, 1834, to put his ferry in operation. The bond of five hundred dollars for keeping a ferry from the Shore was given by Samuel White to the Northampton County Court on February 24, 1834, with Henry P. Parker as his security.

83

84

Henry P. Parker had purchased the Onancock Ferry from White by 1835, and had requested permission from the General Assembly to maintain only one boat, since the maintenance of two ferries was forcing him to run the boats at a deficit. A petition containing twenty-three signatures was submitted to the Assembly requesting the change in ownership. This petition was introduced in the House by Mr. Drummond on December 15, 1835.

86

A Bill prepared by the Committee of Roads and Internal Improvements, permitting the ferry keeper to run one boat, was passed

87

82. Acts Passed at a General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Virginia, 1833-1834 Session (Richmond: Printed by Thomas Ritchie, 1834), p. 179.

83. Accomack County Orders, 1832-1836, p. 257.

84. Ibid., p. 312. In a court held May 29, 1834, Henry P. Parker was ordered to appear in court to show cause why the license granted to him to retail wines and spirits should not be rescinded.

85. Petition of Henry P. Parker to the General Assembly of Virginia, November, 1835.

86. Journal of the House of Delegates of the Commonwealth of Virginia, 1835-1836 Session (Richmond: Printed by Samuel Shepherd, 1835), p. 26.

87. Ibid., p. 42.

88

February 9, 1836, and entitled:

An Act further to amend the Act entitled, "An Act to amend the Act, entitled, 'An Act establishing a ferry from Onancock Town in the County of Accomack to Norfolk, and for other purposes.'"⁸⁹

Mr. Parker, supposing the Act passed in February, 1836, to be a new Act rather than an amendment to the original Act, cancelled his ferry bond on March 29, 1836. This bond had been given to the court by Samuel C. White, upon offering the court a new bond, however, Parker was informed that he had relinquished all rights granted by the General Assembly to run a ferry from Onancock to Norfolk as the assignee of White.⁹⁰ In order to regain his ferry rights, he petitioned the Assembly on January 23, 1837, for permission to give a new bond, which would entitle him to all the privileges granted by the previous Act.⁹¹

88. Ibid., pp. 45, 52, 54, 58, 109, 118; and the Journal of the Senate of the Commonwealth of Virginia, 1835-1836 Session (Richmond: Printed by John Warrock, 1835), pp. 68, 69.

89. Acts of the General Assembly of Virginia, Passed at the Session of 1835-1836 (Richmond: Printed by Thomas Ritchie, 1836), p. 236.

90. Accomack County Orders, 1832-1836, p. 592.

91. Journal of the House of Delegates of the Commonwealth of Virginia, 1836-1837 Session (Richmond: Printed by Thomas Ritchie, 1836), p. 119; and the Petition of Henry P. Parker to the General Assembly of Virginia, January 10, 1837.

The petition was sent to the Committee of Propositions and Grievances,⁹² and an Act was passed March 31, 1837, which provided:

That the said Henry F. Parker, his heirs and assigns, be restored to all benefits and privileges of the several Acts aforesaid, so that he enjoy the same to the same extent, and in like manner, as though no such relinquishment as aforesaid had been made by him.⁹³

Before the General Assembly had passed the Act restoring to Mr. Parker his rights, he sold the ferry to Thomas Underhill.⁹⁴ A sand bar had formed across the mouth of Onancock Creek, making it difficult to maneuver the sailing vessels in and out of the creek, and causing Parker to abandon the privilege of running a ferry from the town of Onancock. Mr. Underhill petitioned the Assembly of Virginia for the privilege of keeping one ferry, which was to run from a site on Pungoteague Creek to Norfolk, Portsmouth, and Hampton, with the privilege of using an additional boat if the proprietor believed business demanded such an addition.⁹⁵

92. Journal of the House, Ibid., pp. 150, 282, 303, 333, 340, 343, 344, 345, 353.

93. Acts of the General Assembly of Virginia, 1836-1837 Session (Richmond: Printed by Thomas Ritchie, 1837), p. 163.

94. Petition of Thomas Underhill to the General Assembly of Virginia, March 17, 1837.

95. Ibid.

Mr. Bayly, a Delegate from Accomack, presented the Underhill petition to the House March 22, 1837, and the House ordered that the petition be referred to the Committee of Propositions and Grievances.⁹⁶ As the request had not been submitted to the Assembly until late in the session, the Committee did not report the petition back to the House.

Thomas Underhill moved the ferry landing from Onancock Creek to his land on Pungoteague Creek in 1838, and petitioned the Assembly for the approval of this change. He also requested permission from the Assembly to keep one or more vessels as needed. Seventeen citizens of Accomack stated, "...since he [Mr. Underhill] has owned the line of Packets from this place to Norfolk he has given general satisfaction to Passengers crossing the Bay."⁹⁷ These citizens recommended that the Legislature give a favorable consideration to the Underhill petition.

The petition was submitted to the House on January 6, 1838, and sent to the Committee of Propositions and Grievances.⁹⁸ Mr. Hill, a member of the Committee, presented

96. Journal of the House, op. cit., 1836-1837 Session, p. 314.

97. Petition of Thomas Underhill to the General Assembly of Virginia, October 21, 1837.

98. Journal of the House of Delegates of the Commonwealth of Virginia, 1838 Session (Richmond: Printed by Thomas Ritchie, 1838), p. 26.

a Bill to the House on January 18, 1838 authorizing a ferry from Fungoteague to Norfolk and other places.⁹⁹ The Bill passed the House and the Senate and became a Law February 9, 1838.¹⁰⁰

The Act granted the proprietor of the ferry from Fungoteague all of the privileges and rights which had been granted to other ferry owners on the Shore and set the same rates as were established for the Floyd Ferry. The ferry was permitted to go to Norfolk, Hampton, and York. Mr. Underhill was allowed six months to put his ferry in operation, and on July 30, 1838, he gave bond to the county court for the keeping of his ferry on Fungoteague Creek, with James B. Poulson as his security.¹⁰¹

The Underhill Ferry had scarcely begun to operate when the steamboat running between Norfolk and Baltimore

99. Ibid., p. 56.

100. Ibid., pp. 100, 104, 107, 113; Journal of the Senate of the Commonwealth of Virginia, 1838 Session (Richmond: Printed by John Warrock, 1838), pp. 50, 51, 58; and the Acts of the General Assembly of Virginia, 1838 Session (Richmond: Printed by Thomas Ritchie, 1838), p. 157.

101. Acts of the General Assembly, Ibid., pp. 157-158; and the Accomack County Order Book, 1836-1840, pp. 364-365. The bond given was sixty dollars. Why the change from five hundred, as required by the 1819 law, is not known. It appears that it was a mistake on the part of the court, as no law had been passed changing the amount of the bond to be given to the county courts for the Chesapeake Bay Ferries.

began to make stops at Fungoteague for passengers and
 102
 freight. The service was continued until winter began
 and then was discontinued; but the ferry keeper at
 Fungoteague had been deprived of any profits which might
 103
 have been obtained for this period. With the loss of
 the summer profits and being forced to maintain the ferries
 during the winter months, at which time there was very little
 trade, Mr. Underhill felt that he would be compelled to
 discontinue his ferry unless his rights as a ferry keeper
 were protected. He petitioned the Assembly to grant him
 104
 this protection.

Mr. Bayly presented the Underhill petition to the
 Assembly, and it was referred to the Committee of Roads and

102. Petition of Thomas Underhill to the General
 Assembly of Virginia, January 15, 1839. The Steamboat
 Virginia was to stop at Mathews Court House and Fungoteague
 for passengers on April 15, 1838. Passage from Norfolk to
 Fungoteague was three dollars. This trip was probably the
 deciding factor in establishing the regular stops on the
 Shore for the summer months of 1838. Advertisement in The
 American Beacon and Norfolk and Portsmouth Daily Advertiser,
 April 10, 1838.

103. Advertisements in The American Beacon and Norfolk
 and Portsmouth Daily Advertiser, August 6, 1838, October 12,
 1838, October 13, 1838, and December 21, 1838, states: "Passage
 to Mathews Court House and Fungoteague, Accomack County,
 Virginia, The Steam Packet Virginia will leave as usual for
 the above places, tomorrow (Saturday) at 12 o' clock."

104. Petition of Thomas Underhill to the General
 Assembly of Virginia, January 15, 1839.

105

Internal Navigation on January 30, 1839. On a motion made by Mr. Watkins, a member of the Committee, the House discharged the Committee of the Underhill petition and it was laid on the table, therefore the proprietor of the Pungoteague Ferry received no assistance from the

106

Legislature.

The 1819 Ferry Act was amended by an Act passed January 8, 1836. This amendment prohibited any ferry keeper of another State, within a distance of two miles or opposite a ferry established or thereafter to be established in Virginia, from taking passengers, horses, or any type of carriages from the State without the consent of the owner of the established ferry in Virginia. Any violator of this amendment would forfeit twenty dollars for each offense. Half of the receipts from such violation were to go to the Commonwealth for the literary fund, and half to the informer.

107

By 1839, the slavery question had become an important issue in politics and social circles throughout the United States. The slavery issue had brought forth John C. Calhoun,

105. Journal of the House of Delegates of the Commonwealth of Virginia, 1839 Session (Richmond: Printed by Thomas Ritchie, 1839), p. 66.

106. Ibid., p. 176.

107. Acts of the General Assembly, op. cit., 1835-1836 Session, p. 66.

and his firm supporter Robert Y. Hayne, to defend the legality of slavery, while Daniel Webster was their ardent opponent. To prevent slaves from deserting and obtaining an easy passage across rivers the Assembly passed an Act prohibiting owners of ferries and bridges to allow slaves to cross certain water courses without permission from their owner.¹⁰⁸

Before a slave could cross a ferry or bridge which separated Virginia from another State, he was required to have a written permission signed by the owner, overseer, or agent and verified by a Justice of the Peace, or the clerk of the county or corporation court in which the slave resided. If any ferry keeper permitted a slave to pass without the proper credentials, he was deemed guilty of felony and subject to confinement in a jail or penitentiary from two to five years, and liable to the owner of the slave for all damages sustained.¹⁰⁹

A Ferry Act passed on March 5, 1840, made it unlawful to establish two ferries within a half mile of each other, and set the fine for illegal transportation of passengers at two hundred dollars. The two hundred dollars was to go

108. Acts of the General Assembly of Virginia, 1839 Session (Richmond: Printed by Samuel Shepherd, 1839), p. 47.

109. Ibid.

to the nearest ferry where the offense had occurred. All ferriage paid to a slave or servant of the illegal ferry keeper was to go to the said keeper; while a legally established ferry proprietor could demand the ferriage in advance of the transportation over a water course.¹¹⁰

The ferry proprietors, by 1840, had begun to feel the effects of the steamboat service between Norfolk and Baltimore. With the gradual expansion of the services, the private ferry keepers were having a difficult task in maintaining their ferries on a profitable basis. The Underhill petition had failed to check the steamboat expansion in transporting passengers and freight to and from the Shore. The conveniences of the steamers, and the greater certainty of a quicker passage, was to prove its advantages as a ferry by forcing obsolete sailing vessels out of business.

110. Acts of the General Assembly of Virginia, 1839-1840 Session (Richmond: Printed by Samuel Shepherd, 1840), pp. 58-59.

CHAPTER VI

THE SAILING PACKETS BECOME OBSOLETE

The two decades prior to the Civil War saw the Underhill Ferry go out of existence, the establishment and discontinuance of two other ferries in Accomack County, and the gradual abandonment of the Floyd Ferry in Northampton County. The privately owned ferries were forced out of business due to the superior services rendered by the steam packets running to the Shore.

William S. Floyd was trying to obtain the renewal of his contract to carry mail to and from the Shore in January of 1841,¹ and on February 8, 1841 he wrote to Mr. George T. Yerby, a member of the House, forwarding a petition with the letter.² The petition contained twenty signatures of prominent citizens in Northampton, and requested the Assembly to grant the proprietor of the Floyd Ferry permission to run a steamboat across the Bay. The petitioner did not desire any alteration in the Act which granted him the privilege of maintaining sailing vessels, but desired to be at liberty in deciding whether

1. William W. Thompson to [George T. Yerby], January 25, 1841.

2. William S. Floyd to George T. Yerby, February 8, 1841.

he would use steam or sailing packets on different occasions
 in crossing to Norfolk and Hampton.³

Mr. Yerby presented the Floyd petition to the House
 February 13, 1841.⁴ A Bill was prepared by the Committee
 of Courts of Justice, and passed the House March 17, 1841.⁵
 The Senate passed the Bill and it was made effective as a
 law March 18, 1841.⁶ The Act provided that in the event
 William S. Floyd purchased a steamboat he was granted
 permission to use the boat as a ferry, making one trip a
 week across the Bay. He was released from all fines and
 penalties incurred by law for not running his packets
 across the Bay twice a week.⁷

Whether Floyd purchased a steamboat to use as a
 ferry is not known. However, the steamer Star began to

3. Petition of William S. Floyd to the General
 Assembly of Virginia, February 13, 1841.

4. Journal of the House of Delegates of the
 Commonwealth of Virginia, 1840-1841 Session (Richmond:
 Printed by Samuel Shepherd, 1840), p. 134.

5. Ibid., pp. 146, 204, 213, 216, 218.

6. Journal of the Senate of the Commonwealth of
 Virginia, 1840-1841 Session (Richmond: Printed by John
 Warrock, 1840), pp. 175, 186.

7. Acts of the General Assembly of Virginia, 1840-
 1841 Session (Richmond, Printed by Samuel Shepherd, 1841),
 p. 118.

make regular trips from Norfolk to Cherrystone twice a week beginning May 17, 1841.⁸ The Star left Norfolk at 8 o'clock on the mornings of Monday and Friday for Old Point, Hampton and Cherrystone. Freight was carried at reasonable rates and the ferriage to the Shore was three dollars per passenger.⁹ It is believed that this service was discontinued after the summer months of 1841.

The Underhill Ferry from Pungoteague Creek had been discontinued by February, 1843.¹⁰ Sixteen citizens desiring that a ferry be kept between Accomack County and Norfolk supported a petition to the Assembly on behalf of Lewis S. Snead and Nathaniel Topping, who requested a franchise to keep one ferryboat. The ferry landing was to be located on the lands of John W. Hutchinson, on Pungoteague Creek, and the petitioners desired the same rights and privileges¹¹ as granted to the Underhill Ferry.

The petition was acted upon favorably by the General Assembly, and an Act of March 27, 1843 provided for the

8. Advertisement in The American Beacon and Norfolk and Portsmouth Daily Advertiser, May 11, 1841.

9. Ibid., The advertisement continues through June 30, 1841.

10. Petition of Lewis S. Snead and Nathaniel Topping to the General Assembly of Virginia, February 13, 1843.

11. Ibid.

establishment of a ferry in Accomack County from the land
of John W. Hutchinson or Thomas Underhill,¹² on the same
terms as the Underhill franchise had been granted. The
proprietors were required to keep only one packet in
constant use, unless they desired to maintain two; or
unless public necessity, as determined by the county court,
¹³
demanded two.

Evidently Lewis S. Snead and Nathaniel Topping were
not successful as ferry keepers. Snead sold his ferry
right to Topping,¹⁴ and Topping transferred all of the
rights and privileges as granted by the General Assembly
in the Act of March 17, 1843, to George S. Mapp, James
H. Harrison, and John H. Chandler on January 24, 1844.¹⁵

On the same day that Mapp, Harrison and Chandler

12. The wharf was called "Dock Point" on the
Hutchinson land, and was located on the south side of
Pungoteague Creek slightly east of "Underhill Creek" or
"Tar Kill Gut," as it is now called; which is on the north
side of Pungoteague Creek. Cited in Mears, op. cit., p. 55.

13. Journal of the House of Delegates of Virginia, 1842-1843 Session (Richmond: Printed by Samuel Shepherd, 1842), pp. 156, 200, 247, 248, 264; Journal of the Senate of the Commonwealth of Virginia, 1842-1843 Session (Richmond: Printed by Samuel Shepherd, 1842), pp. 160, 195; and the Acts of the General Assembly of Virginia, 1842-1843 Session (Richmond: Printed by Samuel Shepherd, 1843), p. 64.

14. Statement of Nathaniel Topping and Sarah A. S. Topping, January 25, 1844.

15. Statement of Nathaniel Topping and Sarah A. S. Topping, January 24, 1844.

purchased the Topping ferry, they drew up a petition requesting the Assembly to pass an Act granting them the Topping ferry rights. The petition included sixteen signatures of persons approving of the new proprietors. On January 28, 1844, the petition was forwarded to John B. Ailworth and Wm. H. S. Custis, in Richmond, Virginia. Mr. Ailworth, a member of the House, was the vehement supporter of a Bill which transferred the ferry rights to Mapp, Harrison and Chandler on February 15, 1844.

The Act permitted the ferry proprietors to keep their packets at either the Hutchinson landing or the land of Thomas Underhill, whichever was more convenient to Norfolk, Hampton and York. Mr. John Hutchinson's landing at "Dock Point," appears to have been the site chosen, and he was granted an Ordinary's license by the county court on May 25, 1846, which was renewed until 1849. A section of the Act provided that the ferry could pass to the

16. Petition of George S. Mapp, James H. Harrison, and John H. Chandler to the General Assembly of Virginia, January 24, 1844.

17. Ibid.

18. Journal of the House of Delegates of Virginia, 1843-1844 Session (Richmond: Printed by Samuel Shepherd, 1843), pp. 146, 180, 183, 193, 197; and the Acts of the General Assembly of Virginia, 1843-1844 Session (Richmond: Printed by Samuel Shepherd, 1844), p. 75.

19. Mears, op. cit., p. 35; Accomack County Orders, 1845-1848, pp. 353, 513; and Accomack County Orders, 1848-1851, p. 113.

proprietors heirs and assigns, or the heirs and assigns of
 either of the owners.²⁰ On June 24, 1844, a bond was given
 to the county court for the keeping of the Pungoteague
 ferry by Mapp, Chandler, and Harrison with John B. Smith
 as their security.²¹

An Act concerning ferry rates was passed March 5,
 1846, which gave the county courts the power to reduce
 ferriage on application of any person concerned; in the
 same manner as the court had been granted the authority
 to increase rates. Any person aggrieved by the reduction
 of ferry rates could appeal to the Superior Court in their
 respective county. The ferry keeper must be summoned to
 attend the next session of court and show cause why any
 reduction in ferry rates should not be made, before the
 court could actually make the reduction.²²

In the spring of 1846, the steamer Thomas Jefferson
 began to make regular stops at Old Point, Cherrystone,²³
 Pungoteague, and Whitehaven, on its runs to Baltimore.

20. Acts of the General Assembly, loc. cit.

21. Accomack County Orders, 1842-1845, p. 460.

22. Acts of the General Assembly of Virginia, 1845-1846 Session (Richmond: Printed by Samuel Shepherd, 1846), p. 75.

23. Advertisement in The American Beacon and Norfolk and Portsmouth Daily Advertiser, May 29, 1846 through July 22, 1846.

The boat left Southgate's Wharf in Norfolk on Wednesday morning at 8 o' clock and departed from Baltimore on Monday morning at 6 o' clock; stopping at the above places going to Baltimore and on the return trip to Norfolk. The passage from Norfolk to Cherrystone was \$2.25, and \$5.00²⁴ to Pungoteague. Meals were included in the passage. The steamboat also transported freight to the Shore at moderate²⁵ terms. This service appears to have been for the summer months only.

On May 26, 1847, the steamer Osiriz began making trips to the Eastern Shore of Virginia every Monday and Friday.²⁶ The boat left Wright's Wharf at 8 o' clock, stopped at Portsmouth, Hampton, and Old Point going and returning, to land or take on passengers, and returned from the Shore on the same day.²⁷ A change was made in the schedule of the Osiriz to the Shore on August 2, 1847.²⁸ After this date the steamer went to Cherrystone every Tuesday and Friday of each week.²⁹ This service was not discontinued after the summer months of 1847, but the regular schedule was maintained³⁰ throughout the winter. Repairs were made to the Osiriz in

24. Ibid.

25. Ibid.

26. Ibid., May 26, 1847.

27. Ibid.

28. Ibid., August 2, 1847.

29. Ibid.

30. Ibid., January 1, 1848 through April 14, 1848.

March, 1848,³¹ and the steamer continued to cross the Bay³² every Tuesday and Friday until November 15, 1848. A new steamer, the Coffee, replaced the Osiris on November 14, 1848, and continued to make regular trips to the Eastern Shore through June 26, 1853.³³

The Coffee was advertised for sale with all its rights and privileges in March, 1852. The advertisement stated:

The Steamer Coffee, with her valuable mail contracts for service between Hampton, Old Point and Eastern Shore, Virginia till July 1855, including-wharves, leases, privileges and interest of every kind belonging to the company is for sale.

The Boat is nearly new and has just been put in complete order for the summer travel. For speed, comfort and economy in running, the Coffee will favorably compare with any steamer of her class in the country. She is 143 feet long, 203 tons, Custom House measure, built of oak, cedar, heart pine and locust, and is in first rate condition. To close up the concern she will be sold cheap and on accommodating terms.³⁴

The steamer was evidently purchased by some other concern for its services were continued until replaced by the William Selden on June 27, 1853. This service was not³⁵

31. Ibid., March 28, 1848.

32. Ibid., November 14, 1848.

33. Ibid., Advertisements of service to the Shore runs from November 14, 1848 through April 11, 1853, and June 27, 1853.

34. Ibid., March 20, 1852.

35. Ibid., June 27, 1853.

performed by the Baltimore steamer, but by a different line going to the Eastern Shore of Virginia on Tuesdays and Fridays, to Mathews County on Wednesdays and Saturdays, and on Mondays and Thursdays to Old Point and Hampton twice daily.³⁶

An advertisement in the Baltimore Sun during the summer of 1849, stated that the Hugh Jenkins was running to Whitehaven, Maryland, and Pungoteague, Virginia. The steamer left Baltimore every Friday at 6 a. m. and departed Pungoteague at 6 a.m. on Saturday, taking passengers and freight.³⁷ In 1850, the steamer Monmouth appears to have been sailing weekly from Baltimore to:

...Pungoteague, Accomack County, East River, Mathews County, Yorktown, Gloucester Point, and all intermediate landings on the York River as far up as Walkerton, King and Queen County, Virginia.³⁸

The Monmouth returned to Baltimore by the same route; this service was in operation until 1854.³⁹

36. Ibid., May 17, 1852.

37. James E. Mears, "The Eastern Shore of Virginia in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," The Eastern Shore of Maryland and Virginia, ed. by Charles B. Clark (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, Inc., 1950), II, 584.

38. Ibid.; and John Sergeant Wise, The End of An Era (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1900), p. 40.

39. Mears, Ibid. Citing advertisements in the Baltimore Sun for years of 1852, 1853, and 1854.

The Code of Virginia for 1849 states:

Ferries shall continue as heretofore established from the Counties of Accomack and Northampton to the Towns of Norfolk, Hampton and York.⁴⁰

The Eastern Shore ferry keepers were required by the Code to give bond in the sum of five hundred dollars to the county court for the keeping of their ferries. If the proprietor failed to give such bond after a notice had been posted by the court near the ferry landing, he was to be fined fifty dollars, and ten dollars for each months further delay. The established rates in 1849 were: ten dollars for a coach, wagon or chariot, five dollars for a two wheeled chaise or chair, three dollars for a horse, one dollar and a half for a child or servant, and all other persons⁴¹ three dollars.

A change in the summer schedule for the William Selden shows that on June 26, 1854, the steamer started making stops at Fungoteague every Tuesday, while it continued its regular runs to Cherrystone every Tuesday⁴² and Friday. The Baltimore and West Point Lines were running the steamer Gladiator from Baltimore to Fungoteague,

40. Code of Virginia, 1849 (Richmond: Printed by William Ritchie, 1849), p. 331.

41. Ibid., p. 332.

42. Advertisement in The American Beacon and Daily Commercial Advertiser, June 21, 1854.

East, North, York and Mattaponi Rivers during 1855 and
⁴³1856. In May, 1856, the steamer Sea Bird made connections
 with the Gladiator at Yorktown, in transporting passengers
 from Norfolk to Pungoteague.⁴⁴ The Sea Bird departed Norfolk
 every Thursday morning at 6 o' clock, transported passengers
 to the Gladiator at Yorktown, which arrived at Pungoteague
 at four in the afternoon. Passengers to Norfolk were
 received at Pungoteague by the Gladiator every Tuesday.⁴⁵
 The ferriage was three dollars between Norfolk and
 Pungoteague.

The steamer Coffee replaced the William Selden on
 April 21, 1856, in making regular trips to the Shore every
 Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from Norfolk.⁴⁶ The boat
 departed Norfolk at 7 a.m., stopped at Portsmouth, Hampton,
 and Old Point Comfort, both going to and returning from
 the Shore, to land or receive passengers. On Tuesdays
 and Saturdays the Coffee went to Mathews County.⁴⁷

The Coffee continued to make these regular trips
 to the Eastern Shore three times a week until the spring

43. Mears, "The Eastern Shore of Virginia in the
 Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," op. cit., II, 584-585.
 Citing advertisements in the Baltimore Sun.

44. Advertisement in The Southern Argus (Norfolk,
 Virginia), May 8, 1856.

45. Ibid.

46. Ibid., April 15, 1856.

47. Ibid.

48
of 1860. The steamer Northampton was chartered June 1,
1860, to make regular trips to the Shore on Monday,
Wednesday and Friday of each week for June, July and
49
August. This service was evidently continued by the
Northampton until the beginning of the war in 1861, as can
be seen by the winter schedule advertised in The Southern
50
Argus.

Passage could be obtained on the Northampton from
Cherrystone to all stops made by the York River, James
River, or West Point Lines, and the fare to Richmond was
\$5.50. Through tickets from Norfolk to Drummondtown,
Pungoteague, Bellhaven, Franktown, and Johnstown were
sold aboard the steamer Northampton, which connected
regularly at Cherrystone with the Jarvis' Lines of stages
running to all of the above named places on the Eastern
Shore. The rates from Norfolk to these places were:
Drummondtown \$5.50, Pungoteague \$4.50, Bellhaven \$5.50,
51
Franktown \$3.50, and Johnstown \$2.75.

The Code of Virginia for 1860 states that all
ferries previously established by law from Accomack and

48. Ibid., March 30, 1860.

49. Ibid., June 1, 1860.

50. Ibid., October 12, 1860.

51. Ibid., October 12, 1860 through December 22, 1860.

Northampton were to continue with the same rates and
52 regulations. However, it appears that the privately owned sailing packets had all been forced out of existence by the steamboat service which had continuously connected the Shore with Norfolk for more than thirteen years.

This period of twenty years brought great changes in the ferry systems from the Eastern Shore of Virginia. The steamboats had proven their efficiency and advantages over the sailing vessels. Man no longer depended on the wind to maneuver his boats, but could, with the power of steam, now ply across the Bay with ease. The formation of steamboat companies had forced private enterprise to abandon the ferry business. The advantages these companies offered for public convenience were greater than those afforded by the sailing packets. The ferry services to the Peninsula were interrupted by the war, and by the latter part of 1861 the Shore was again isolated from the rest of Virginia.

52. Code of Virginia, 1860(Richmond: Printed by Ritchie, Dunnivant and Company, 1860), pp. 371-373.

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AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Clarence Lee Beebe was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on August 12, 1930. He was reared on Chincoteague, a small island on the coast of the Eastern Shore of Virginia. Beebe attended Chincoteague High School, and was graduated in June, 1947. In September of 1947, he entered the University of Richmond, where he was graduated in June, 1950, with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in History. He taught in the public school at Chincoteague for a short period of time prior to enlisting in the United States Coast Guard. After serving a three year enlistment, and having been stationed at Cape May, New Jersey, Portsmouth, Virginia, Morehead City, North Carolina, Groton, Connecticut, and Norfolk, Virginia, he was discharged on January 4, 1954. He then returned in February to the University of Richmond to work for the Master of Arts Degree.