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The York River Railroad: 1851-1881

Stuart B. Medlin

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THE YORK RIVER RAILROAD: 1861-1881

BY

STUART BOWE MEDLIN

A THESIS
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OF THE UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND
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FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS IN HISTORY

JUNE, 1968
The construction of railroads in the State of Virginia was perhaps the single most important economic development that affected the growth of the state. Connecting isolated sections of the state, railroads enabled rural and urban areas to share their respective contributions to the economic prosperity of the commonwealth. Beginning in 1836 when Virginia's first line was constructed, Virginia railroading developed rapidly from 676 3/4 miles in 1851\(^1\) to 1,984 miles in 1880.\(^2\)

One of the lines that contributed to this economic development was a short thirty-eight mile track that ran from Richmond to West Point at the head of the York River. Constructed to provide an eastern terminus for storing and shipping products and transporting passengers, the line opened in the fall of 1860. Connections were immediately established with Baltimore by steamers, and the company hoped to soon expand the railroad's route.

\(^1\)Thirty-sixth Annual Report of the Board of Public Works to the General Assembly of Virginia, With the Accompanying Documents, 1861 (no publisher or date), p. iv.

Then came the Civil War. The railroad was forced into service by the Confederate government, and served both Confederate and Union armies. The short strategic line suffered the abuse of both armies, and was so dilapidated by October, 1864, that neither side could use the route.

The line was rebuilt in 1867, and became the aspiration of Northern industrialists who envisioned the railroad serving as an outlet for transporting Southern agricultural products to West Point where they could be reloaded on steamers and shipped to Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York and other Northern ports. It was not until 1894 that this desire was achieved by J. P. Morgan who established the Southern Railway System.

Since the identity of the York River Railroad became so merged with the operations of the Richmond and Danville Railroad in 1881, the scope of this paper only covers the period from the chartering of the line to that date. West Point, however, did continue to serve as the eastern terminus of the Southern System until 1896 when the terminus was moved to the deeper water at Pinners Point, now Portsmouth.

Materials for the preparation of this paper were obtained from the State Library of Virginia, the Virginia Historical Society, the Bureau of Railway Economics, the
Library of Congress, the University of Richmond library, the Southern Railway Office, and numerous persons interested in Virginia railroading. The author is particularly grateful to Dr. W. Harrison Daniel, Associate Professor of History, University of Richmond, who directed this thesis.
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CHAPTER I

BUILDING A RAILROAD: 1851-1860

Railroading in Virginia began on February 10, 1830, when the Petersburg Railroad was chartered by the state to connect Petersburg and "some convenient point on the North Carolina line." Soon thereafter, the commonwealth, realizing the commercial value of a system of railroads, directed attention to the development of such a system.

Evidence of the state’s role in developing a comprehensive system of railroads may be found in the General Assembly session of 1836-1837. Under the leadership of Alexander H. H. Stuart of Staunton, a plan was formulated to encourage the economic prosperity of the state through a liberal system of chartering internal improvements in the state.


The stimulus that forced this legislature to act was the expansion of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad into Virginia in 1851, and, therefore, the attempted diversion of Virginia's export products to non-Virginia ports. When the Baltimore and Ohio attempted to expand its line from Winchester to Staunton in 1836, Virginia leaders realized the impact this move could have on the development of the state's economic structure. Thus, the Virginia legislature of 1836-37 refused the Baltimore and Ohio's request, and in so doing indicated its desire to encourage the establishment of state railroads. It seems rather ironic that thirty years later, the state's policy was to encourage development of interstate systems.

By 1850, twelve private railroad companies had constructed 334 miles of road within the state, most of which ran east and west. This network ran from Richmond west, with the idea of making Virginia's east coast a shipping center for western produce. As part of this scheme, a line was planned to connect Richmond with a more eastern port to facilitate the shipping of western products to

\[3\text{Ibid.}\]

Baltimore, and perhaps even foreign ports. 5

Plans for this line were initiated on March 19, 1851, when the Richmond and York River Railroad Act was passed, authorizing the building of a railroad from the City of Richmond to West Point or the vicinity. Between this date and an official report which was made in 1854, one can only speculate. Since the first report included the names, positions, and salaries of the company's officers, it may be assumed that a number of organizational meetings were held and subscriptions taken on stock.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Officer</th>
<th>Office</th>
<th>Salary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alexander Dudley</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>$1,500 per annum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allen W. Morton</td>
<td>Secretary and</td>
<td>1,000 per annum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. S. Claxton</td>
<td>Chief Engineer</td>
<td>2,500 per annum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. T. D. Myers</td>
<td>Assistant Do.</td>
<td>5.00 per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roger P. Atkinson</td>
<td>Assistant Do.</td>
<td>5.00 per day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George C. Dickinson</td>
<td>Draughtsman</td>
<td>2.50 per day</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The proof of this lay in the fact that the State of Virginia officially chartered the line on January 31, 1853, and

5 Thirty-Eighth Annual Reports of The Virginia Board of Public Works To The General Assembly of Virginia, 1853-54, Doc. XVII (Richmond, Virginia: Ritchie and Duggavant, 1855), p. 662.


7 Board of Public Works, 1853-54, p. 659.
agreed to subscribe to three-fifths of the company's stock, a procedure followed only after a company had subscribed two-fifths of the stock to private investors.

Probably the most important individual connected with the York River Railroad in these early years was Alexander Dudley, the president of the company in the 1853-54 official report. A King and Queen County attorney, Mr. Dudley's family had settled early in the area and had prospered. Throughout the line's history until it became a part of the Clyde enterprises in 1871, Dudley's name is mentioned frequently in company reports and newspaper articles.

Capital stock in the company was set at $500,000.00 of which $464,500.00 was subscribed by 1854 at $100.00 per

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9. Thomas P. Bagby, "Sketches of West Point," The Tidewater American (West Point, Virginia), January 31, 1919. In 1861 Dudley paid taxes on 613 3/4 acres of land in King and Queen County, as well as on 19 slaves over the age of twelve, 9 horses and mules, 28 cattle, 13 sheep, 22 hogs, 1 watch and 1 clock. Land Book For King and Queen County (Ms. in Virginia State Library, Richmond, Virginia), 1861; Property Book For King and Queen County (Ms. in Virginia State Library, Richmond, Virginia), 1861.
share. During the first year of operations, the company expended $10,005.39 for surveys and preliminary studies made by the chief engineer and his assistants relative to the selection of a suitable route from Richmond to or near the head of the York River. Other money in lesser amounts was spent for the purchase of surveying instruments, office furniture and supplies, and officers' salaries. 11

He was instructed to have a survey made by some competent engineer of some eligible route, crossing the Pamunkey River, and running on the north side thereof, through the County of King William, to West Point, at the confluence of the Pamunkey and Mattaponi Rivers, as well as of any other route or routes from Richmond to any point near the mouth of the Pamunkey River, or upon York River, as the said company shall designate; ... 12

A survey was also ordered to determine the depth of the Mattaponi and Pamunkey Rivers' channels to see if the largest ocean vessels could go up them. A survey of the following routes was made:

A route from Richmond to Eltham, or some point in the vicinity of Eltham, in the County of New Kent; a route from Richmond to Stony Point, on York River, in the County of York; also a route from Richmond to the waters of York River, bounding the farm now in the possession of J. Bigler, Esquire, and formerly the property of William Waller; and also a route from Richmond to the farm of Cornelius Filbates in the County of New Kent.13

10 Board of Public Works, 1853-54, pp. 657-659.
11 Ibid.
12 Ibid.
13 Ibid.
The report also stated the board had purchased lots owned by the City of Richmond for use as a western terminus for the line. They were on Henry, Pendleton and Wythe squares, with adjacent lots belonging to private individuals. These lots were situated between Cary and Water Streets, "immediately on the ship dock, and running from 22nd to 26th streets, fronting on Water Street, inclusive of cross streets, 924 feet, and running back to Cary for an average depth of 100 feet." The lots were purchased for fifty dollars per foot. Provision was made by city council that an overhead or underpass would have to be constructed to cross Main Street, the principal street in the city.

The chief engineer, F. S. Claxton, after making a careful survey and study of the projected routes, decided that the route from Richmond to West Point on the Pamunkey River was the most feasible. His second choice was a line from Richmond to Eltham, or a point in the vicinity of Eltham. According to his surveys, the line would be 42.18 miles, but later surveys somewhat reduced this figure. At the same time reports and surveys were being made of the railroad line, there were surveys being made of the Pamunkey, Mattaponi and York Rivers to determine the depth of

\[14\] Ibid., p. 662.

\[15\] Ibid.
the rivers for shipping. Two ships were sent from the naval yard at Norfolk for this purpose. The survey indicated the depth of the Pamunkey more advantageous than the Mattaponi; therefore, a complete survey of the Mattaponi was not made.  

The chief engineer seemed to suggest that West Point would make the best terminus for the eastern line of the railroad. He believed the location made it accessible for repair of ships, which would be necessary if foreign trade were to be seriously considered. Obstructions in the Pamunkey River made the chief engineer further believe that West Point would make a better terminus than Taylor's Quarter, further up the river on the King William side.  

As a harbor for the accommodation of shipping, the position of West Point was such as to offer a double water front; the waters of the Mattaponi would be safe anchorage for small vessels, while the deeper water of the Pamunkey would make it suitable for larger sea-going ships.  

The chief engineer also suggested that a pier about 1,600 feet be extended into the channel on the Pamunkey River side of town. This would give a total available front of 3,000 feet. Total cost of this wharf was estimated to be $21,670.51.  

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16 Ibid., pp. 681-682.  
17 Ibid., p. 683.  
18 Ibid.  
19 Ibid., pp. 683-701.
After all reports and surveys had been concluded, the directors held a meeting at King and Queen Court House on August 9, 1854; however, a number of the chief engineer's reports were not in printed form for use by the group. Therefore, the meeting was adjourned until September 20.

On that day all the reports and findings were made available and distributed to the stockholders, who voted in favor of selecting West Point as the eastern terminus of the Richmond and York River line. The voting as tabulated showed 1,361 in favor of West Point and 665 opposed; the approved route would cross the Pamunkey River at Retreat 20 Ferry in New Kent County.

Perhaps one event which influenced the selection of West Point as the eastern terminus was a meeting held at White Sulphur Springs in August, 1854. At this conference attended by representatives of Virginia railroad companies, West Point was considered as a suitable terminus for an east-west line that could connect Virginia via the Central Railroad, the Covington and Ohio Railroad, and Kentucky lines with the Ohio Valley and the Mid-west. Opponents who favored Norfolk also presented arguments at the meeting.

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20 Ibid., p. 701.
Indeed, the idea of developing West Point as an important rail center dominated railroad conversation until 1896 when Norfolk supporters managed to have trade channeled to Norfolk and the Hampton Roads area.

Although West Point was selected by the stockholders in September, 1854, to serve as the line's eastern terminus, the issue regarding the route to be followed from Richmond to that point was not approved. The Board of Public Works requested the company to reconsider the route which crossed at Retreat Ferry to be certain it would be the most economical. Therefore, on October 4, a called meeting was held, and F. S. Claxton, chief engineer, was ordered to prepare a report showing why the selected route to West Point via Retreat Ferry was more suitable than the route via White House landing.

On January 18, 1855, President Dudley called a meeting to consider Claxton's latest survey. A revised report regarding the line crossing at Retreat Ferry was presented. Details of the original route selected in September, 1854, the revised route and the White House line follow.


__23__Called Meeting of the Stockholders of the Richmond and York River Railroad Company, Held in the City of Richmond, on Thursday and Friday, the 18th and 19th days of January, 1855 (Richmond: Elliott and Nye, 1855), pp. 3-4.

__24__Ibid., pp. 3-6.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Original line Via Retreat Ferry</th>
<th>Revised line Via Retreat Ferry</th>
<th>White House Line</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Length</td>
<td>44.6 miles</td>
<td>42.36 miles</td>
<td>36.54 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max. Grade Ascending East</td>
<td>44.9 feet</td>
<td>39.6 feet</td>
<td>31.2 feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max. Grade Descending East</td>
<td>44.9 feet</td>
<td>39.6 feet</td>
<td>31.2 feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Rise &amp; Fall</td>
<td>1097 feet</td>
<td>1075 feet</td>
<td>427 feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avg. Rise &amp; Fall Per Mile</td>
<td>24.2 feet</td>
<td>25.4 feet</td>
<td>13.7 feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Curvature</td>
<td>2046°</td>
<td>1099°</td>
<td>898°</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Est. Cost</td>
<td>$721,863</td>
<td>$780,559</td>
<td>$787,448</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A committee headed by Colonel Alexander Fleet of King and Queen and Peyton G. Bagby of Richmond reviewed the surveys with F. S. Claxton, and submitted to the stockholders a resolution to direct the construction of the line from Richmond to West Point via White House. Even though the original cost would be more, the committee noted that maintenance would be considerably less using the White House route, and a draw-bridge across the Pamunkey River at White House would not have to be opened as frequently as one closer to West Point. The draw-bridge at White House was further supported by the argument that vessels passed through.

\[25\text{Ibid.}, p. 5.\]
the bridge area no more than twice a week, and as the river was straight a great distance on each side of the proposed site of the bridge, there was little likelihood of accidents.

In reply to a request made by the company, Lieutenant Matthew F. Maury, Virginia's naval expert of the time, made a report on the feasibility of West Point as the eastern terminus of the line. Lieutenant Maury's comments were mainly limited to a discussion of the York River and its advantages. Lieutenant Maury spoke of the York as the best river that fed the Chesapeake Bay, because no sand bar had developed at its mouth as in the Potomac, James, or Rappahannock Rivers. The absence of falls on the York and favorable wharfage locations also added to the selection of West Point. Since West Point was located between two rivers, it offered the possibility of wharfage on two rivers. "On the Mattaponi side, there is ample water and perfect shelter for coasters, steamers, and all light craft; while on the other there are good accommodations for the largest Indiamen."


27 Called Meeting, 1855, pp. 7-13; Board of Public Works, 1855, p. 1101.

28 Board of Public Works, 1855, p. 1101.
The development of shipping was a strategic part of the success of the proposed York River line. Without adequate facilities, the York River Railroad could hardly expect to do more than handle shipment of produce from the Tidewater area it would traverse.

Using all information and surveys available, the stockholders voted 1286 to 321 to adopt the route from Richmond to West Point referred to as "Route N" in the engineer's official report. The line would leave Richmond and proceed to Gillie's Creek and then to Courtney's Mill, crossing the Chickahominy River on the estate of R. R. Duval. It would continue to the flats of the Pamunkey River and follow the flats to White House in New Kent County and cross there to Indian Island on the King William side. The railroad would then follow the river to West Point. Maury estimated the cost of the line as $303,332.00 or $8,000.00 per mile, figures based on the engineer's surveys. Cost of the excavation was estimated to be $267,000.00.

Maury stated that he hoped Claxton and he could travel from White House to Norfolk on the side-wheel

29 Called Kesting, 1855, pp. 4, 22-23.
"Sea Bird," that plied the waters from White House to Norfolk bi-weekly; the trip was designed to provide Maury with information about the use of the York River as a main line for sea-going vessels. However, the vessel had grounded in the Mattaponi and the trip had to be cancelled. Although the first-hand trip was cancelled, Maury still regarded West Point as offering better port facilities than any other location in the South except Norfolk.

Meeting in Yorktown on May 8, the stockholders voted to instruct the directors to contract the grading for the entire line from Richmond to West Point. This meeting reflected the anxiety of the railroad's investors to construct the line and begin operating.

In November, 1855, the first annual meeting of the stockholders was held in the City of Richmond. At this

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31 The steamer "Sea Bird" was built at Keyport, New Jersey, in 1854 for the Pamunkey and Mattaponi Steam Navigation Company. The 202-ton vessel operated on the York River; it was purchased in 1858 by the Smithfield, Norfolk and Portsmouth Steam Packet Company, which leased the ship to the Sea Bird Company in 1859 and 1860 for operation in connection with the Richmond and York River Railroad. When the Civil War came, the vessel was outfitted for the Confederate Navy and sunk on February 10, 1862, during the Battle of Elizabeth City, North Carolina. Richard E. Prince, Steam Locomotives and Boats, p. 47.

32 Called Meeting, 1855, pp. 24-25. See p. 87 for extracts of Maury's report.

33 Richmond Dispatch (Richmond, Virginia), May 12, 1855.
meeting the stockholders approved the Board of Directors' requests that the line be graded from Richmond on a line which would eventually cross the Pamunkey River at White House. The Board further requested that application be made to the General Assembly to increase the capital stock of the company; this motion was adopted by the stockholders. It was also at this meeting that a five-foot width for the gauge of the road was set.

The adoption of a gauge for a railroad was a major issue to be resolved by a company during this period, as several gauges were possible. Although the state owned three-fifths of the stock in most lines, it did not regard a standard gauge as necessary for developing a comprehensive system of railroads in the state. Rather, decisions of this nature were regarded as internal operative policies, in keeping with the development of a free enterprise system in American business.

Alexander Dudley, president of the company, reported that construction had begun from Richmond to the Pamunkey River, but that the chief engineer had not completed his

34 Board of Public Works, 1855, p. 1119.
surveys and examinations of the line from the river to East Point. The chief engineer, F. S. Claxton, in defense of the apparent slow progress of the line, stated that inability to find suitable white or slave labor was a major factor.

A letter was distributed to the stockholders from William W. W. Wood, engineer, U. S. Navy, Tredegar Iron Works, Richmond, Virginia, which supported the use of a locomotive boiler to steam a ferry across the Pamunkey at White House. This ferry was to be used for transporting building materials for the proposed bridge to cross the Pamunkey at White House.

Although no report was available for 1856, the report of 1857 indicated that the company continued to plan for the opening of the line. Alexander Dudley was re-elected president and reported that new agreements were being considered for construction of sections of the road not already contracted.

That the York River Railroad was developing may be assumed from the role two officials of the line performed at a meeting held in Richmond on December 8, 1857.

36 Board of Public Works, 1855, pp. 1121-1129.
37 Ibid., p. 1140. For copy of letter, see p. 83.
Representatives of Virginia railroad and canal companies convened at the Exchange Hotel to discuss common problems. Colonel Edmund Fontaine, President of the Virginia Central Railroad, was elected president of the convention, and B. B. Douglas, Secretary-Treasurer of the York River line, was chosen secretary. Before Fontaine's election, Dudley served as chairman.

The two major results of the convention were the establishment of uniform pay scales for employees performing similar work, and limiting the maximum speed to 20 miles per hour to prevent damage to rails. It is rather interesting to note the internal attempt by railroad companies to exert some controls on themselves, while the state, principal stockholder in most lines, passed little legislation to develop a uniform system of rails that could serve the best interest of the state.

By March, 1868, the certainty that the railroad would be completed influenced the General Assembly to approve the increase in capital stock of the company by $200,000 to $700,000. This increase permitted the

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39 Proceedings of the Convention of Rail Road and Canal Companies of the State of Virginia, Held in the City of Richmond, December 8, 1857; To which is Appended a Letter of Charles Allen, Jr., On the Subject of Rail Road Charges for Freight and Passengers (Richmond: Big Book and Job Office, 1857), pp. 3-5.

40 Ibid., pp. 5-6. The average rate of speed with stops was eight to ten miles per hour in 1861. Today the average rate is only seventeen miles per hour. Angus J. Johnston, II, "Virginia Railroads in April, 1861," p. 323.
company to obtain funds necessary to complete the line from Richmond to White House. At a General Meeting held in West Point on June 1, the stockholders directed that the money be spent only to complete the line to White House.

On November 3, 1858, the Stockholders Annual Meeting was held in Richmond. Alexander Dudley was unanimously re-elected president and reported on the condition of the company. He noted that one of the contractors, William S. Carter, had abandoned his contract on the line because of inadequate funds but that the others remained, assuming financial assistance would be obtained.

To hasten the line's construction, the proposed route had been divided into 33 sections, 23 of which lay between Richmond and White House. Therefore, these sections could be contracted to several persons, one of whom was Carter. Without much difficulty, another contractor, William E. Henry & Company, was employed to complete that portion contracted by Carter.

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42 Proceedings of the Fourth Annual Meeting of the Stockholders of the Richmond and York River Railroad Company, held at the Office of the Company in the City of Richmond, on the 3rd of November, 1858 (Richmond: W. R. Weston, 1858), pp. 3-4.
43 Ibid., pp. 5-13.
44 Ibid., p. 7.
46 Ibid., p. 7.
E. T. D. Myers, chief engineer for the company, resigned on December 27, 1857, to accept a more lucrative position but perhaps also because of concern about the railroad's success. The department was then placed under Mr. Henry T. Douglas until June 1, 1858, when Colonel D. S. Walton accepted the chief engineer's position.

The company's financial crisis of 1859 also had its effect on obtaining iron for rails. The directors made a trip to New York in 1857 to buy iron, but lack of securities prevented their finding a supplier. When additional funds became available, the directors made a verbal agreement with the Lackawana Coal and Iron Company to supply its best grade of iron at $46.00 per ton of 2,240 pounds, payable in cash. The men ordered 2,200 tons weighing 52 pounds per linear yard to be delivered at Elizabeth Port, New Jersey; the order was regarded as sufficient to complete

47 Ibid., p. 10. Edmund T. D. Myers, a Richmonder, began his railway career in March, 1849, as a rodman on surveys for the Richmond and Danville, and later became the line's assistant engineer. From July, 1856, to December, 1857, he served as chief engineer of the Richmond and York River Railroad. Responsible for the Washington aqueduct and Georgetown, D. C., construction projects, Myers resigned during the Civil War. One of his major accomplishments was the survey for the Richmond and Danville's Piedmont line that ran from Danville to Goldsboro, North Carolina. After the war, Myers joined the Richmond, Fredericksburg, and Potomac Railroad, serving as president from 1869 to his death in 1905. Malcolm Cameron Clark, "The First Quarter-Century of the Richmond & Danville Railroad, 1847-71" (unpublished Master's thesis, George Washington University, Washington, 1959), p. 53.
the line from Richmond to White House.

It was probably in 1857 that a decision was reached to temporarily terminate the line at White House and connect there with sea-going vessels until the line began to make money, or until additional funds became available.

The treasurer’s report further indicated the company’s financial dilemma. From October 1, 1856, to September 30, 1857, the company spent $71,000.00 leaving a balance of $796.95 in cash. Of the sum obtained from sale of stock, $255,739.99 was available for further use. The report revealed that the state had subscribed to $494,150.00 in stock and private individuals, $186,100.00, leaving $9,750.00 to be subscribed by the state. The president’s salary was listed at $1,500 per year and for the directors, $4.00 per day while attending meetings and 20¢ per mile for traveling. Other salaries included $2,000 for the chief engineer; $1,000, principal assistant engineer; $600, assistant engineer; and $1,000 for the secretary-treasurer.

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48 Fourth Annual Meeting, 1858, pp. 11-12.

49 Ibid., p. 12. The contract with N. S. Carpenter for the Pamunkey River bridge was abrogated in November, 1857, because of lack of funds.

50 Ibid., pp. 14-18.
Colonel Walton, acting chief engineer, reported that
the railroad was progressing and he hoped the line would
be completed to White House by March 1, 1859. He reported
that the Lackawanna Iron and Coal Company of Pennsylvania
was supplying iron and that enough had been contracted to
build the road to White House. He submitted a total of
£254,176.94 as cost for construction to White House, and
indicated an additional £145,695 would be needed to extend
the line to West Point.

Temporary freight depots were recommended for Rich-
mond and later for West Point. To be constructed of wood,
they were to measure 140 feet by 45 feet. Passenger sheds
of wood were also suggested, 70 feet by 30 feet, and
smaller buildings to serve as way stations along the
track.

The iron rails being laid were placed on cross
ties of white-oak or heart-pine, having eight inch faces
and laid 2½ feet apart from center to center. The rails
were secured by wrought iron strips. Deterioration of

51 Ibid., pp. 19-20; annual reports of the railroad
Companies of the State of Virginia made to the Board of
Public works, for the year ending September 30, 1859,
52 Fourth Annual Meeting, 1858, p. 21.
53 Ibid., p. 22.
cross-ties and rusting of rails had a serious impact during
the Civil War on lines constructed in the 1840's and early
1850's.

As for equipment, the chief engineer reported that
the company had purchased two locomotives and one second-
hand materials engine. Sufficient rolling stock had been
acquired to carry 70,000 tons per year. A statement of
costs of equipment follows:

Rolling Stock Estimated Cost

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 eight-wheel platform cars</td>
<td>$ 5,500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 eight-wheel box cars</td>
<td>10,125.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 four-wheel dumpers</td>
<td>2,250.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 eight-wheel baggage car</td>
<td>1,500.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 eight-wheel passenger cars</td>
<td>4,800.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 eight-wheel locomotives</td>
<td>17,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 second-hand locomotive for material train</td>
<td>4,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$46,175.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With the additional state funds, progress on the
Richmond and York River Railroad made great strides in
1859. Although the chief engineer had hoped the line from
Richmond to White House would open by March 1, it was not

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54 Angus J. Johnston, II, "Virginia Railroads in
April, 1861," pp. 316-318.
55 Fourth Annual Meeting, 1858, p. 22. The first
two locomotives acquired by the company were second-
hand engines purchased from the Central Railroad Company
named "Fumunkey" and "Mattaponi." Board of Public Works,
1858, p. 519. See p. 93 for description of typical
locomotive.

until October 3 that the first train made such a trip.\footnote{57}

The financial competence of the company in 1853 may be
attested by the fact that on August 25 the deed for the
company's creation was assumed by the company and the
trustees were relieved of the responsibility for the
line's success.\footnote{58}

As the opening approached, the company made plans
for the extension of the line to West Point. Mortgage
bonds in the sum of $315,000 were issued to finance the
remainder of the line and a contract to complete the
project, including the Pamunkey River bridge, was awarded
to Daniel F. Ward. Ward was to be paid with first
mortgage bonds, payable at 7\% per cent interest. The
issuance of bonds was quite common among railroads, pay-
able at 6 per cent to 8 per cent per annum. Completion
date was scheduled for June 1, 1860.\footnote{59}

Operating a railroad meant the employment of addi-
tional personnel. Mr. Thomas R. Sharpe was appointed
superintendent of transportation with the power of appoint-
ing people to most positions and general management of

\footnote{57} \textit{Official Records, Vol. XXVII, Part III, p. 936.}
\footnote{58} \textit{Ibid.}
\footnote{59} \textit{Ibid., p. 6.}
\footnote{60} Biennial Report of the Board of Public Works to
the General Assembly of Virginia, 1856-57 and 1858-59,
Loc. xvii (no publisher or date), pp. 16-200.
the line. The only positions not appointed by Sharpe were
the conductor, Mr. Charles Yeatman, and ticket and freight
agents, Mr. Joseph M. Myers and Mr. James W. Shakesford.
Whether these men were trained railroaders is not known,
but the fact that the officers of the company were responsi-
ble for their appointment, as well as the nature of their
work, would presuppose that they were experienced personnel.

In 1859, the company's total estimated property
value was $616,457.89. The total mileage of the railroad
had been accurately determined by September 30, 1859, to
be 38.3 miles. Of this amount 23 2/3 miles of single
track had been laid and 1,150 feet of sidings and turnouts,
making a total of 23.89 miles. The report of the company
for 1859 showed ownership of two locomotives of twenty tons
each, the "Pamunkey" and the "Mattaponi," twenty-three
62
cars, one water station, one engine house, and one
89
sixty-nine-foot tunnel.

61 Fifth Annual Meeting, 1859, p. 7.
62 The twenty-three cars owned in 1859 included four
   box and ten platform cars, four gravel cars and side
dumpers, two heavy cars, two light hand cars to carry
   materials and one crank hand car. Ibid., p. 15.
63 Annual Reports of the Railroad Companies of the
   State of Virginia Made to the Board of Public Works,
   for the Year Ending September 30, 1859, Doc. XVII
Contracts had been made to purchase one passenger coach, and twelve freight cars within the month. Plans for the Pamunkey River bridge were on the board, and a formal report was to be presented to the directors upon their completion. Estimated cost of the bridge was $11,530.00.  

Although most pre-Civil War railroads were constructed using Negro labor, the York River line found such help too expensive and reported the use of white employees on the line. Wages averaged $1.12½ per day in April, 1859, to $1.40 in June of that same year.

In August, 1860, with the completion of the Pamunkey River bridge, the line was extended to West Point. The track laid at West Point was temporary and ran to the wharves on the Mattaponi side of town; this was because of the inability of the contractor to complete the embankment for the main and permanent line on the Pamunkey side until the next year.

Upon completion of the road to White House in October, 1859, the company found it desirable and practical

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64 Fifth Annual Meeting, 1859, p. 16.
65 Ibid., p. 16.
66 Annual Reports of the Railroad Companies of the State of Virginia, Made to the Board of Public Works, for the Year Ending September 30, 1860, Vol. XVII (no publisher or date), p. 468.
to establish a semi-weekly connection with Norfolk, Portsmouth and Old Point Comfort by steamer. The first steamer to operate on this route was the "Sea Bird"; the side-paddle steamer plied the winding Pamunkey to White House from Norfolk on Mondays and Thursdays, and from White House on Tuesdays and Fridays. The "Sea Bird" was not owned by the railroad company, as the legislature had not authorized it in the company's charter. The steamer made the trip regularly except for repairs in December, 1859, and January, 1860, until May 2, when it was permanently withdrawn from service. By this date the legislature had approved the railroad company's request to own and operate its own steamship line, but the company's new vessel would not be ready for use until the end of the month; therefore, the Richmond and York River Railroad and the "Sea Bird Company" jointly chartered the "J. E. Coffee," another steamship, to maintain service until the end of May.

As the line neared completion, the company began advertising its eastern terminus, West Point. A land

67 Sixth Annual Meeting of the Stockholders of the Richmond and York River railroad Company, Held in the City of Richmond, November the 7th and 8th, 1860 (Richmond: Charles H. Wynn, 1860), p. 9. See Chapter I, footnote 31.

68 Board of Public Works, 1860, p. 456.
company was organized to sell lots, and the town was advertised as a resort area, offering "sea-breeze, surf bathing, and good fish, oysters, and crabs." New's Hotel was recommended for the overnight guests, and indications were that another entertainment center would be constructed by the summer of 1861.70

Soon after the line opened to West Point in August, 1860, excursions to West Point and Yorktown were provided. The all-day trip took place on Saturdays; leaving Richmond at 11:30 a.m., the excursionists rode the train to West Point. After lunch, the group boarded the steamer "West Point" which carried them to Yorktown. After an hour in the town, the group steamed up the York to West Point to dine and dance, and then returned to Richmond by 9:00 p.m. 71 These excursions probably were a major reason the York River line earned more from passenger service than freight, a fact experienced by only three Virginia lines prior to the Civil War. 72

69 *Richmond Dispatch*, January 24, 1860.
70 Ibid.
71 Ibid., August 17, 18, 22, 1860.
72 The three lines whose passenger receipts exceeded freight receipts were the Richmond and York River, the Virginia and Tennessee, and the Richmond, Fredericksburg, and Potomac. Board of Public Works, 1854-60 and 1860-61, pp. 247, 81, and 228.
President Dudley reported several requests in the annual report submitted in September, 1860, to the Board of Public Works. One was for the replacement of the wooden structure across the Pamunkey by one of stone or iron within the next year; the estimated cost was between sixty and seventy thousand dollars. There was also a request for stone or brick culverts for the Chickahominy and filling for the trestling on the same river. The president also expressed hope that a passenger and freight house would be constructed at West Point within the next year, as well as an engine house and workshop at either Richmond or West Point. The cost for these structures was estimated at not less than $20,000. To raise the money for these additions, the president and directors recommended requesting the state legislature to loan the company $100,000 to place the line in a permanently safe financial condition.

Construction projects were progressing rapidly in 1860. A passenger shed, 200 feet by 45 feet with a platform 200 feet by 25 feet, was built in Richmond. The structure was so constructed as to house two tracks inside and one outside next to the dock. Also erected was a blacksmith's shop with two forges for minor repair on the

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73 Board of Public Works, 1860, pp. 436-457.
A number of incidents on the railroad during 1860 serve to demonstrate the apparent lack of safety measures on early lines, as well as the temporary construction practices employed. Several of these incidents follow:

On the 30th of January, a Negro, by the name of John, belonging to Mr. Phillipe of Fauquier County, employed on the gravel train, fell from the train, was run over, and had both legs cut off, about eighteen miles from Richmond. This was caused by the dumping of the body of the car on which he was sitting. He was brought immediately to Richmond, and taken to the hospital, where he died the following day.

The accident was caused by his own obstinacy, as he had but a few moments before been forbidden to ride on the dump cars; and while the back of the conductor was turned, took the position which resulted in his death.

On the 11th of February, as the evening passenger train was going east, with some freight cars attached, one of them was thrown from the track, 18½ miles from Richmond, by the inequality of the track, only breaking one of the nadeastals and detaining the train about thirty minutes.

On the 17th of February, as the evening passenger train was coming west, the baggage car was thrown from the track, twenty miles from Richmond, in consequence of the breaking of a truck, and went down the embankment. The arm of Jim Hawkins, the baggage man, was broken; from which accident he was entirely recovered. Both trucks were completely broken up, and the body of the car considerably shattered. The track was cleared at once, and the train arrived at Richmond at 11:30 p.m. 75

74 Ibid., pp. 464-465. One of two new locomotives owned by the Richmond and York River Railroad, the "York," was purchased from the Tredegar Iron Works in August, 1860. Richmond Dispatch, August 23, 1860.

Besides these incidents, the chief engineer's report indicated that the company experienced several other mishaps, the worst being the action of the tide upon the embankment along Romancoke Bluff, which caused two extensive slides, making it necessary to move the main line and reinforce it with heavy pilings. The occurrence of such events at this time was quite normal for railroads; however, during the Civil War, they effected disastrous results on many lines, particularly smaller routes like the Richmond and York River.

As 1860 came to an end, the Richmond and York River Railroad seemed to be enjoying considerable financial success and progress. A temporary track opened from Richmond to West Point in August, a total distance of 36.3 miles, and the company looked forward to enjoying a profitable season in 1861. Estimated value of the property of the company was $821,542.35 and its subsidiary steamship line was $42,900.77

When the stockholders' annual meeting was held in Richmond on November 7 and 8, 1860, Dudley declined re-election. This decision may have reflected Dudley's satisfaction that the company's future development would

76 Ibid., p. 427.
77 Ibid., p. 477. For detailed report on condition of the company in 1860, see p. 91.
be sound and progressive. Elected to replace Dudley was Mr. Robert Saunders of Williamsburg.

The stockholders further authorized the officers to negotiate connecting with the Richmond, Fredericksburg, and Potomac Railroad Company, or the coal field of the New York and Potomac Coal Company, in Henrico County. Approval of this connection was to be obtained from the coal company by January, 1862.

President Dudley reported the company had opened a temporary track in August, 1860, to West Point, running to the company's wharf on the Mattaponi River. The permanent track on the Pamunkey River side was scheduled to open in January, 1861. He further noted that a brick passenger depot, 48 feet by 64 feet, had been contracted to be completed in November, 1861.

Way stations and freight houses were erected at Meadow, Dispatch, and Tunstall stations, and plans for buildings at Summit and Chokey were in progress.

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78 Sixth Annual Meeting, 1860, p. 6; Richmond Dispatch, November 8, 9, 10, 1860; December 14, 1860.
79 Sixth Annual Meeting, 1860, pp. 7-8.
80 The unimproved condition of the streets connecting the depot with high land prevented use of the Pamunkey River in August, 1860. Board of Public Works, 1860, p. 456.
81 Sixth Annual Meeting, 1860, p. 9.
82 Ibid., p. 3; Richmond Dispatch, November 8, 1860.
tanks were erected in Richmond and 13½ miles out of the city. Also installed in Richmond were scales for weighing locomotives and cars. Thus, by the fall of 1860, the Richmond and York River Railroad was operating from Richmond to West Point, despite limited facilities at the eastern terminus.

As the nation prepared itself for war, the Richmond and York Railroad prepared itself for business. While nothing in the company's official reports indicated an awareness of the line's potential involvement in a war, this involvement was soon a reality.

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83 Sixth Annual Meeting, 1860, p. 17.
CHAPTER II

THE RAILROAD AT WAR: 1861-1864

By 1860, Virginia railroads claimed 1,350 miles of track, almost 1,000 miles more than in 1850. Therefore, for one to say that the thirty-eight-mile track from Richmond to West Point was the most important would be an absurdity, but without a doubt, its importance during McClellan's Peninsula Campaign of 1862 cannot be overstated.

Although the tracks and port facilities were not opened on the Pamunkey River in West Point until March 29, 1861, regular passenger and freight service was available after the temporary line opened on the Mattaponi River in August, 1860. One train daily made the trip between Richmond and West Point, and after March, 1861, separate

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2 Board of Public Works, 1859-60 and 1860-61, p. 234.
3 Ibid.; Richmond Dispatch, August 1, 1860.
4 Richmond Dispatch, December 6, 1860.
passenger and freight trains made the trip daily. Although regular steamer service from West Point was not available until March, 1861, the steamer "General Magruder" stopped in the town on its route from upper King and Queen to Yorktown after August, 1860. 6

During 1861, the first year of operation of the entire line, the company realized less profit than any other line in the state. Spending almost 76 per cent of its earnings on construction and equipment, the company only realized a profit of $13,039.31. President Saunders, however, noted that claims against the Confederate government for use of the line should account for an additional $3,000 in revenue. 7

Saunders further noted that the interest due on the company's bonds was due on July 1, 1861, and amounted to $16,000. Unable to pay at the time, the president reminded the stockholders that another half year's interest would be due January 1, 1862. 8

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5 Richmond Dispatch, September 28, October 2, 1861. Freight service was not provided on Sunday.

6 Richmond Dispatch, August 17, 1860, August 23, 1860.

7 Initial construction costs perhaps influenced high passenger rates of 5¢ per mile on the York River Railroad; the average rate on Virginia railroads in 1861 was 4¢ per mile for first-class passengers and 3¢ per mile for second-class passengers. Angus James Johnston, II, Virginia Railroads in the Civil War (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1961), p. 14.

8 Board of Public Works, 1859-60 and 1860-61.
That the company was not financially sound might be suggested from the directors' attempt to have the legislature appropriate $100,000 "to be rendered in such manner as the General Assembly might consider best." This request was not approved by the legislature, however, as the impending threat of war prevented such an expenditure at the time. The funds were to have been used primarily for the erection of passenger and freight depots in West Point and the enlargement of the Pamunkey River wharf.

Saunders added that some additional wharfage in West Point would have to be provided to enable a passenger and freight train to load and unload simultaneously. Also, a small passenger building and larger freight shed would have to be built immediately, despite the company's financial condition, if the railroad expected to benefit from the trade available to the line, since intercourse with the port of Baltimore had terminated. Cost of these projects was estimated at $8,000, indicating the apparent temporariness of the proposed structures.

The steamer "West Point" operated less than a month from West Point to Norfolk. On April 20, 1861, Captain Howe was ordered to remain in berth in Norfolk after the military authorities informed the company that the vessel would be fired upon if she passed Fortress Monroe. Realizing

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9 Ibid., p. 232. 10 Ibid., pp. 231-232.
11 Ibid., p. 232.
the uselessness of the steamer, and needing more money, the
directors authorized the sale of the steamer at $40,000.
The officer in charge of Norfolk, however, forbade the ship's
leaving the city; therefore, no purchaser could be found,
and the ship remained in berth.

As for the operating condition of the road, the
superintendent's report indicated the route had not been
properly prepared to sustain much traffic. A number of
slides, lack of proper ditching, and improper embankments
produced several accidents on the line, causing considerable
additional expense. Two of these serve to illustrate this.
One of the line's four engines, the "Tamunkey," purchased
from the Virginia Central Railroad, went down with a slide
at Romanoke Bluff and was heavily damaged. Repairs were
soon effected and the locomotive returned to use. On an
embankment closer to West Point, the engine "Atlantic" and
several cars fell fifteen feet below the roadbed, without
leaving the track or being damaged. 13

Two other locomotives, the "Mattaponi" and the "York,"
completed the roster. In addition, the company operated
four passenger cars, one baggage car, ten box and fifteen
flat cars, four side-dempers, and fifteen "ditching, hand

12 Ibid., p. 233.
13 Ibid., pp. 234-236.
and crank cars." Although the company built none of its cars, its repair shops could almost rebuild them, as reported by the company's superintendent, R. R. Temple.

When the war finally came in April, 1861, the Richmond and York River Railroad was not prepared. Having only recently opened, the company had not had time to establish a firm financial base that would enable the line to endure major difficulties, and yet that was what it would have to do for the next few years. Realizing the impending crisis, the stockholders reelected Alexander Dudley president of the company; and in that capacity he served throughout the war.

Another personnel change in 1861 was the resignation of the York River Railroad's superintendent; Temple resigned to accept a position in the Confederate Army, and was replaced by Thomas Dodamead of Richmond. Dodamead served only five months, however, and resigned in January, 1862, to accept a similar position with the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad. These frequent moves seem to suggest the availability of positions on most

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14 Ibid., p. 236. 15 Ibid., p. 236.
16 Proceedings of the Thirteenth Annual Meeting of the Richmond and York River Railroad Company, 1867 (Title page missing), p. 16.
17 Richmond Dispatch, August 3, 1861.
18 Richmond Dispatch, January 21, 1862.
railroads during the war, as the lines lost many competent personnel to the army.

Perhaps another reason for frequent personnel changes during the war was the effect the government had on the operations of most lines. That the Confederate government affected the York River Railroad may be evidenced by a statement published in the Richmond Dispatch on April 30 authorizing private shippers to use the railroad. Indeed, the article almost implied government monopoly of the line. Although no monopoly was officially recorded, it existed on the York River line by May, 1862. Speculation that McClellan might land at Yorktown forced a Confederate troop buildup on the Peninsula, and naturally the York River Railroad served as a major artery for transporting troops and supplies.

On May 13, 1862, a Federal gunboat proceeded up the York and Pamunkey Rivers below White House. Sand-loaded vessels anchored in the river prevented the gunboat from reaching White House and the Federal warship returned to Yorktown. The apparent ease with which the trip was made points out the absence of Confederate naval power in the area and at a time when such was most needed.

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19 The Annual Report of 1861 reported the line "chiefly employed in aid of the war of independence" to transport troops and supplies. Board of Public Works, 1859-60 and 1860-61, p. 232.

20 Richmond Dispatch, May 3, 1862.

21 Ibid., May 13, 1862.
RAILROADS IN THE "PENINSULAR CAMPAIGN," VIRGINIA 1862

Key to Railroads
1. Virginia Central
2. Richmond, Fredericksburg & Potomac
3. Richmond & York River
4. Richmond & Danville
5. Richmond & Petersburg
6. South Side
7. Petersburg
8. Orange & Alexandria
9. Virginia & Tennessee

Scale in miles

Railroads 4' 8 1/2" Gauge
Railroads 5' Gauge
Movements of Military Units
Aware of the impending crisis, the York River Railroad had ordered Captain Jasper C. Rowe, on March 14, to move the company's ship "West Point" from its berth in Norfolk up the James River to Richmond. Under orders to destroy the vessel should it be attacked, Rowe safely commanded the "West Point" to Richmond and docked her for service by the Confederacy.

As McClellan began his march up the Peninsula, Captain Carrington, C.S.A., was ordered by General Joseph E. Johnston to burn the York River line's bridges from West Point to Richmond as the Federal troops advanced. Being the only railroad east of Richmond which was north of the James and south of the Potomac, Johnston was aware of the usefulness the line could render the enemy.

McClellan too was aware of the railroad. In early March, McClellan had ordered General D.C. McCallum to load on vessels in Baltimore harbor five locomotives and eighty cars; the vessels were prepared to leave when commanded.

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24 Angus J. Johnston, *II, Virginia Railroads in the Civil War*, p. 3.
By May 20, McClellan had reached White House and established a main supply line from Yorktown. The Pamunkey and Chickahominy River bridges had been destroyed by the retreating Confederate forces, but the Chickahominy bridge was repairable. This being done hastily, McClellan requested General McClellan to deliver the equipment loaded on the vessels in Baltimore harbor. Within a few days, Union troops and supplies were being railed between White House, twenty-four miles from Richmond, to Fair Oaks station in Henrico County, and less than five miles from the Confederate capital.

The rebuilding of a bridge across the Pamunkey was ordered by McClellan to facilitate troop movements from the other side of the river, but the bridge across Cohoke pond was not reconstructed until after the war. Therefore, that portion of the line from White House to West Point was of virtually no use to the Confederacy or Union during the war.

27 Richmond Whig, June 3, 1862.
28 Richmond Dispatch, June 3, 1862.
29 Eighth Annual Meeting, 1882, p. 6.
Heavy rains in May and June prevented wagons from effectively carrying men and supplies to McClellan's lines outside of Richmond. General Burnside wrote Secretary of War Stanton, "But for the railroad, the army could not be subsisted and foraged." McClellan's 100,000 troops required 600 tons of supplies daily, more than the railroad could carry, but the small line certainly did more than horse-drawn wagons.

As McClellan's siege on Richmond began, General McDowell was ordered by Lincoln to leave Fredericksburg and move to the valley to oppose Jackson. With McDowell away, General Johnston saw an opportunity to confront McClellan, and on May 31 began the two-day battle of Seven Pines. Although indecisive, the battle had an effect on the campaign; Johnston was wounded and Lee took command.

Lee, more than Johnston, realized the strategic role the York River Railroad played in supplying McClellan's forces. While planning how he would cut off the railroad

from McClellan, Lee conceived the idea of mounting a heavy gun on a flat car for use on the Richmond and York River Railroad. The gun, a thirty-two pounder, was constructed in time to be used at the battle of Savage Station on June 29. The world’s first railroad gun, it was soon employed by both sides on many lines.

By the middle of June, Lee was planning an offensive against McClellan. To scout the area, Lee dispatched General J. E. B. Stuart and his cavalry. In his famous and daring raid around McClellan, Stuart attempted to cut off the railroad behind the Union forces. Placing logs on the track near Funstall’s Station, Stuart’s men watched the approaching train. The engineer, perceiving the plan, opened the throttle and knocked the logs aside. But twenty or more men, fearing for their lives, jumped from the train.

Stuart remained at Funstall’s Station for the night; McClellan, fearing isolation, ordered the evacuation

36 Richmond Dispatch, June 16, 1862. A Northern account reported two deaths and fourteen wounding from Stuart’s raid near Funstall Station. Letter in the New York Times, June 14, 1862, reprinted in the Richmond Dispatch, June 16, 1862.
of troops and supplies from White House to the lower James. Burning what could not be carried, the Federal forces effected an orderly retreat. When Stuart's men arrived at White House the next day, they found many supplies and stores unharmed. Stuart and his men remained there all day feasting and destroying what they could not take with them.

The Federal troops caught between Lee and Stuart began a hasty retreat, destroying the railroad as they moved toward White House and burning the Chickahominy River bridge. This left them with only a six-mile segment of track from the Chickahominy River to White House. Realizing their situation, the Union forces opened the throttle on the train trapped near Savage Station and ignited the cars loaded with munitions and powder. What followed is not clear; one account stated:

On the fiery mass rushed, every moment increasing its speed, until it reached the bridge, when it plunged headlong into the shallow stream, and a vast pillar of white smoke sprang upwards into the sky, which rose higher and higher, and continually unfolded itself from within waves of snowy vapor, until the sun was hidden from our view. The sound of the explosion instantly

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37 Supplies were piled thirty feet high with pine timber between covering a space one-quarter mile in length. This statement indicates the quantity of supplies stored at White House. Richmond Dispatch, July 5, 1862.

38 Richmond Dispatch, June 16, 1862.

39 Angus J. Johnston, II, Virginia Railroads in the Civil War, p. 64.
followed, and the earth shook and trembled as though riven by an earthquake. It was a spectacle of inexpressible grandeur, and one never to be forgotten by the few who witnessed it.40

The Richmond Dispatch on July 2 reported a different version. In that account President Dudley, Superintendent John McFarland, and Captain P. G. Coghillan, C. S. A., took a train from Richmond on June 20 about nine miles toward the Chickahominy River bridge, which along with a number of cars, had been almost destroyed by retreating Federal forces. From that point, they took a hand-car and proceeded toward the river. At the far end of the bridge, they saw an engine enveloped in smoke. They descended and approached the engine, to which were attached two flat-cars. The train and bridge were afire; the men fearing the bridge's collapse lowered kettles left by the Federal troops into the water, and after three hours extinguished the blaze. On the White House side of the bridge, eighty feet of trellising and four or five cars loaded with ammunition had exploded.41

The engine saved was of northern construction valued at ten to fifteen thousand dollars.42 Within a few days

41 Richmond Dispatch, July 2, 1862.
42 Ibid.
it was brought to Richmond to be repaired and returned to
operation.\textsuperscript{43} This fact suggests that the first account was
inaccurate in relating the engine's apparent fate.

Although the roadbed from White House to West Point
had not suffered Federal destruction, spring rains and the
loss of the Cohoke pond bridge made the line unusable.
To repair that portion of the line would have cost at least
$400 per mile. Total damages incurred on the line by both
Confederate and Union forces could not be estimated because
of the high cost of labor, supplies, and materials.\textsuperscript{44}

In the company's annual report of 1862, President
Dudley recommended the immediate construction of stone or
brick culverts across the Chickahominy River, the cost not
to exceed $12,000.\textsuperscript{45} The war, however, prevented the work
being performed. The activity of Federal troops on the
lower banks of the York also hindered plans to rebuild the
Pamunkey River and Cohoke bridges. The repair of the
station houses at Meadow and Tunstall's was recommended,
but no plans were suggested for those lying east of White
House, as the area was under Federal harassment.\textsuperscript{46}

The company's steamer "West Point" served the
Confederacy well during the campaign of 1862 transporting
men and supplies. In return for this service, the company

\textsuperscript{43} \textit{Richmond Dispatch}, July 5, 1862.
\textsuperscript{44} \textit{Eighth Annual Meeting}, 1862, p. 5.
\textsuperscript{45} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 5-6. \textsuperscript{46} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 6.
charged the Confederate government monthly rent. 47

As of October 1, 1862, the company reported an inventory of five locomotives, two of which were rented by the government, and eighty cars. One of the engines was the locomotive salvaged from the Federal retreat, and appropriately named the "Chickahominy." It was expected to be available for service on November 1. 48

The financial condition of the company as of September 30, 1862, revealed receipts of $138,337.20 for the year and disbursements of $100,363.83, leaving a balance of $37,373.27. This sum did not include the debt incurred prior to October 1, 1861, and carried on the company's account amounting to $1,046,682.01. 49

Of some interest during this period was the use of slavery in maintaining the road. Twenty-two slaves were reported in the company's service in 1862 as section-men, firemen, train-hands, and depot workers. 50 This reflects the lack of laborers, a fact that plagued southern lines during the war, and perhaps suggests that the Confederate government exercised little concern for the railroads' inability to obtain qualified help. 47

50 Ibid., p. 24.
might be that the Confederate government did not utilize
the railroads to their most advantageous assistance in
fighting the war. Rather, the railroads were expected to
serve the Southern cause with maximum capacity without
experienced personnel.

During 1863 the York River line tried to recover
from the destruction incurred in the spring and summer of
1862, but war needs prevented the company from obtaining
badly needed iron to replace worn or destroyed rails and
men to repair the road-base and bridges. Passenger and
freight service was seriously affected; thus, the function
of the line as a private commercial enterprise was vir-
tually at a standstill.

Needs of other lines were considered more important
than those of the York River Railroad. One such line was
the Piedmont Railroad, being constructed to connect the
Richmond and Danville with the North Carolina Railroad at
Greensboro. To obtain iron for the new road, smaller,

51 Charles E. Ramsdell, "The Confederate Government

52 Proceedings of the Tenth Annual Meeting of the
Stockholders of the Richmond and York River Railroad
Company with the Reports of the President and Superinten-

53 The Piedmont Railroad was the most important
Confederate railroad constructed during the war; it was to
serve as a second direct line between Richmond and the South.
Kva Swantzer, "Military Roads During the Civil War," The
less important lines were torn up, including a portion of the York River line between White House and West Point. Four or five miles of this track was also appropriated by the Confederate government for use on the Richmond and Danville line between Richmond and Burkeville. During a Union offensive in June and July, 1863, about four miles of iron were torn up from Bremley's Crossing to that point east of the Pamunkey River where the Confederate government had taken iron earlier. While Lee was invading Maryland and Pennsylvania in June and July, 1863, Union forces under Colonel Spear established a base at White House to launch an offensive against Richmond. By June 29 the locomotive "General McClellan" and seven cars were in operation between White House and Richmond. Northern precautions, however, once again enabled Confederate forces to rout the enemy and regain control of the supply

55 Angus J. Johnston, II, Virginia Railroads in the Civil War, p. 130. The Richmond and Danville opened in 1856. When the Piedmont Railroad was built, the Richmond and Danville bought controlling interest. Allen W. Berger, "Railroad Practices and Policies in Virginia After the Civil War," p. 437.
56 Twentieth Annual Meeting, 1864, pp. 2-3.
line. Therefore, in 1863 and early 1864 use of the track depended on who was in control of the area.

In June, 1864, Grant landed at White House to unload supplies for the battle of Cold Harbor. When he left the landing ten days later, the track between Bremley's Crossing and Dispatch Station was removed and used in constructing a line from City Point (Hopewell) around Petersburg. During late June and July, 1864, Confederate military authorities removed the remaining track within two and one-half miles of the company's depot in Richmond. That portion was left to supply the defense lines outside the city.

As for the company's steamer "West Point," she lay in berth in Richmond, having been used only when requested by the Confederate government. On October 29, 1863, a request was made for the steamer's use in transporting troops from Richmond to Chaffin's Bluff below the city. Upon obtaining a captain and crew to man the vessel, the trip was ordered. At the appointed time to leave, a heavy rain was in progress which made the troops overly anxious to board. With disorder and confusion, over

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61 Tenth Annual Meeting, 1864, p. 3.
1,000 men boarded the vessel before the captain received word to leave from John McFarland, superintendent of transportation.

The steamer moved into the channel and proceeded down the river. Within a few miles of the bluff, the engineer reported the ship was taking in water very rapidly. As the vessel neared the wharf, her fires were extinguished and she soon sank. The troops, however, managed to unload as she sank without any accidents.

The company speculated that the cause of the sinking was the disorder of too many troops. It was suggested that some of the men had gone below to play cards and had opened the lower portholes, as they had been closed in Richmond and were open when the vessel was raised.

To raise the vessel, a request was made by the company to the Richmond City Council for a steam fire engine to pump out the water, and to Secretary of War Seddon for a force of men to aid. Both requests were accepted and the ship was raised and returned to her wharf in the city.

Repairs were begun immediately and were progressing when the steamer was discovered to be sinking on February 65

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62 Ibid., pp. 4-5.  
63 Ibid., p. 5.  
64 Ibid., p. 5.  
65 Ibid., pp. 5-6; Richmond Dispatch, December 4, 1863.
24, 1864. Attempts to save the vessel were in vain, and in March spring waters overturned her. The vessel was sold to Mr. Nathaniel S. Carpenter from North Carolina for $31,000, which the company was trying to collect in court later in 1864. Cause of the second sinking was attributed to sabotage, but this was never proved.

In March, 1864, John McFarland resigned as superintendent of transportation. Mr. George S. Netherland, assistant superintendent of the Virginia Central Railroad, was offered the position, and he accepted. In his first report Netherland stated that the railroad was operating to Bremley's Crossing, east of the Chickahominy River. On May 18, 1864, Grant ordered the burning of the Chickahominy bridge and removal of rails east of the bridge, confining the railroad to operate on eleven miles of track from Richmond to Meadow Station.

66 It is highly possible that Mr. Nathaniel S. Carpenter is the same R. S. Carpenter who had been released from his contract to construct the Pamunkey River bridge in 1857. See Chapter 1, footnote 49.
67 Fiftieth Annual Meeting, 1864, pp. 6-7.
68 Ibid., p. 8.
69 Ibid., p. 7.
The company's rolling stock on October 1, 1864, amounted to four locomotives, three of which were in service on other lines, and seventy-four cars, most of which were also on loan to other companies. The cash balance of the company as of September 30 was $31,069.07.  

After October, 1864, the company abandoned all operations on the line. Not until 1867 was the line able to begin recovery; thus, by the fall of 1864, the Richmond and York River Railroad was virtually annihilated except for its depot in Richmond, a delapidated road-bed, scattered equipment, franchises and a debt of $347,000 accruing interest at 8 per cent per annum.  

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70 Ibid., pp. 1, 10.  

71 An annual meeting of stockholders was held in Richmond on January 3, 1865. The principal business of the meeting was the reelection of Dudley as president and the increase of his salary to $10,000 for 1865. Ibid., p. 1.  

72 Thirteenth Annual Meeting, 1867, p. 3.
CHAPTER III

THE LINE REOPENS: 1865-1973

After October, 1864, the Richmond and York River Railroad was virtually non-existent, except for the use of the company's rolling stock by other lines. The last engine to leave the company's tracks was the York, which with one baggage and several freight cars, was transferred to operations in Greensboro, North Carolina.¹

A few days prior to the fall of Richmond, President Dudley left the city to visit his family in King and Queen. When he returned on April 19, the city had been occupied, as were the offices of the railroad. On inspecting the interior, he discovered that the books and records of the company "had either been carried off, destroyed, or so mutilated and defaced as to be of little or no value."²

The condition of the railroad was such in 1865 that little hope was expressed for ever reopening the line.

¹Thirteenth Annual Meeting, 1867, pp. 1-2.
²Ibid., p. 2.
All of the track except the two miles near the Richmond depot had been removed. All of the stations and bridges between Richmond and West Point, including buildings in West Point, had been destroyed, and the rolling stock was of little value except to be sold as scrap metal. To be added to this was a first mortgage of $347,000, accruing interest at 8 per cent annually. 3

The company, however, was still corporate. Owning its depot in Richmond, franchises, roadbed, some worn-out equipment, almost 200 tons of rail and $29,000 worth of Georgia cotton, the company was faced with grave problems in 1865. To help the company decide on a future course, the officers requested the State Board of Public Works to examine the line's condition and recommend what it considered advantageous. After a series of meetings, the Board of Public Works, with the Richmond and York River Railroad officers concurring, suggested that if the holders of the company's $347,000 first-mortgage bonds could be persuaded to accept second-mortgage bonds, then the company could obtain a new first mortgage for $300,000. Encouraged by the possibility of collecting the first mortgage, the holders agreed to accept the plan. A few held out, hoping to force purchase of their claims by persons interested in the line's reconstruction; their

3Ibid., p. 3.
efforts were to no avail, however, as they were compelled to accept assignment of their claims as second mortgages.4

On December 20, 1865, the legislature authorized the issuance of 300 bonds, $100.00 per value each.5 Bearing interest of 8 per cent per year, the bonds were to be issued January 1, 1866, and payable January 1, 1886.

On April 2, 1866, the directors entered into a contract with William H. Williams of New York to reconstruct the line. Completion date to White House was given as August, 1866, and to West Point, October, 1866. Williams was further expected to rebuild bridges, depots, and wharfing at West Point, and repair useable equipment. Williams, however, faltered on the contract and abandoned the line in October. After that date, local contractors were employed to complete the project.7

The first postwar train to run from Richmond to White House was on July 20, 1867, but it was not until

4 Ibid., pp. 3-7.
5 The decision to reissue new bonds might be considered "stock-watering"; that is, the company was issuing certificates in excess of the true value of the railroad's total assets. This practice was common among early lines, particularly those that did not experience the business their incorporators anticipated. The result of this was often the bankruptcy of the company during a financial crisis. William L. Grossman, "Railroad Capitalization and Railroad Rates," American Railroads: Debates and Handbooks (Columbia, Missouri: Lucas Brothers, 1939), pp. 100-102.
6 Thirteenth Annual Meeting, 1867, p. 5.
7 Ibid., p. 7. 8 Ibid., p. 10.
July 22 that steamer connection was made. On that date the steamer "Mystic" began tri-weekly trips between White House and Norfolk, being joined on August 28 by the steamship "Admiral" which plied between White House and Baltimore semi-weekly. 10

Construction continued and on August 1, 1867, the Pamunkey River bridge was completed. The directors hoped for the line's completion to West Point early in 1868 and additional steamer connections from West Point. The company arranged for steam service between West Point and Baltimore four times a week, as well as the opening of a line to Oxford, Maryland, to connect with the Maryland and Delaware Railroad. Local shipping on the York and Mattaponi River was also planned for the near future. 11

Negotiations were underway for operating a line of steamers between West Point and New York when the line should reopen to the York River Railroad's eastern terminus. The company indicated that the nation's political and financial uncertainties were the only things preventing advancement of the railroad's interest. 12

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9 Richmond Dispatch, July 23, 1867.

10 Thirteenth Annual Meeting, 1867, pp. 10-11; Richmond Dispatch, September 16, 1867.

11 Thirteenth Annual Meeting, 1867, p. 11.

12 Ibid., pp. 11-12.
Aspirations for success of the Richmond and York River Railroad were not limited to the line and its steam connections but included connection with other rails. Development of cars that could run on tracks with four-foot eight and one-half inch or five-foot gauges prompted the company to entertain the idea of future connections in Richmond with the Virginia Central and Richmond and Danville lines. The Richmond and Danville and Virginia Central both concurred that such connections would be mutually advantageous. 13

As for the condition of business relative to the three lines, such harmonious accord was not evident. Although the Virginia Central and York River line had made satisfactory arrangements for the through shipment of freight north and west of Baltimore, no agreement had been reached by the end of 1867 between the Richmond and York River railroad and the Richmond and Danville. Rather, each company attempted to destroy the Baltimore markets of the other. Indeed, the Richmond and Danville indicated its displeasure that the York River line, in reconstructing, had adopted a five-foot gauge track, like the Richmond and Danville's, rather than employing the four-foot eight and one-half gauge used on the Virginia Central. Despite this rivalry, the York River line, anxious to have its eastern

terminus of West Point benefit from the freight and passenger business on the Richmond and Danville Railroad, offered to permit the Richmond and Danville, as well as the Virginia Central, to use its track from Richmond to West Point.

Other problems also confronted the re-establishment of the York River Railroad. When the new first-mortgage bonds had been issued, the funds were placed in the National Bank of the Metropolis in Washington, D.C., at the request of the contractor William H. Williams, who feared the financial conditions of the nation. When Williams failed to fulfill the terms of the contract, the company requested release of its securities from the bank, but claims from Williams prompted the bank to refuse.

While court proceedings were being instituted, another contractor, Thomas R. Brayton and Company, was employed. When Brayton and Company was unable to pay the Lochiel Iron Company $25,000 for iron delivered, the iron company placed claims against the York River Railroad. Therefore, completion of the line to West Point was temporarily detained until settlement could be reached on the two legal suits.

16 The Lochiel Iron Company was located in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Richmond Dispatch, January 6, 1869.
17 Thirteenth Annual Meeting, 1867, p. 16.
For the period from April, 1865, to September 30, 1867, the company reported receipts of $549,164.33 and disbursements of $296,457.79. The receipts included $29,921.70 from the sale of cotton purchased during the war; $33,911.20 from sale and use of the company's engines and cars, chiefly from the Richmond and Danville; $165,163.32 from Richmond and Danville for rails confiscated during the war; $260,000.00 from issuance of new first-mortgage bonds; and $9,848.78 from passenger and freight transportation.

Of particular interest during the reconstruction period was the growing association between the Richmond and York River Railroad and the Richmond and Danville. Although the two lines had their rivalries, the identity of the two lines with each other was developed in this period. When the war ended, Virginia had no money to lend for internal improvements. Therefore, smaller lines began approaching larger lines for assistance, generally through consolidation. The first major effort at consolidation occurred in 1868 when the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad Company was created from the Virginia Central and the Covington and Ohio. Other consolidations followed.

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18 Ibid., pp. 20-23.
20 Richmond Dispatch, January 1, 1868; January 2, 1868.
as Northern industrialists saw financial opportunities in the defeated South.

No annual reports for the York River line appear in the 1867 or 1868 annual reports to the Board of Public Works, but annual stockholders' meetings report the progress of the line. On January 7, 1868, the stockholders and officers met in the company's depot in Richmond. President Dudley reported the company needed $160,000 to complete the line from White House to West Point, which Dudley stated could be completed in sixty days. Relative to this point, one of the stockholders, Judge Cull, recommended that a committee be appointed to inquire into the feasibility of consolidating the Richmond and York River Railroad with the Richmond and Danville. President Dudley, opposing such a move, offered an alternative—that the Richmond and York River Railroad proceed to complete its line to West Point and to negotiate with the Richmond and Danville about extending the line to some point on the Chesapeake Bay.


22 Annual Reports of the Internal Improvement Companies of Virginia to the Board of Public Works for the Years 1867, 1868, 1869 and 1870 (Richmond: C. A. Schaffter, Superintendent of Public Printing, 1871).

23 Richmond and York River Railroad Company (printed pamphlet, without author, publisher, or date), February 20, 1868, p. 2.
Lualey's alternative was adopted and the meeting adjourned after Lualey was unanimously re-elected president. Cost of the company's construction to date was stated as $1,000,000.

During 1868 agreement was reached with Lochiel Iron Company over the iron company's claims against the Richmond and York River Railroad, but court proceedings continued over the funds deposited in the National Bank of the Metropolis. Of particular notice was the resignation of Alexander Dudley as president and the appointment of Dr. W. H. Gwathmey as his replacement until the next annual stockholders' meeting in 1869. Reasons for Dudley's resignation were not mentioned in the annual report of 1868, and it is only speculation that personal business or the impending financial crisis motivated his decision. As for Dudley's replacement, Dr. Gwathmey was a Richmond physician who was active in business and civic affairs, particularly the city's Young Men's Christian Association of which he served as president during 1868.

24 Richmond Dispatch, January 8, 1868.
26 Richmond Dispatch, January 6, 1869.
27 Ibid., May 15, 1868.
When the company's annual meeting convened on January 5, 1869, in Richmond, no quorum could be reached. 28 Therefore, a new meeting was scheduled for the second Tuesday in March. 29

Although no meeting was held in January, the president's and chief engineer's annual reports were printed. President Gwathmey reported that no satisfactory agreements had been reached with the Richmond and Danville, but the line was complete to within four miles of West Point. He did indicate that surveys had been approved by the Richmond and Danville, Virginia Central, and York River line for their connection in Richmond. The railroads' inability to connect with each other had been one of the typical problems faced by the South in effectively utilizing rails during the Civil War. 31

The company's chief engineer, E. T. D. Myers, reported that the line to West Point could be completed

28 1,541 votes constituted a quorum; the vote was short by 315. Ibid., January 6, 1869.

29 Ibid.

30 Ibid.


32 See Chapter I, footnote 47.
within three weeks if good weather prevailed, and that
construction of a covered wharf in West Point was pro-
gressing. The 34-by-169-foot structure would enable pass-
enger and freight trains to be brought alongside for unloading in any weather.

Late in January, 1869, the line opened to West Point, but it was not until July that daily passenger connections were made between the terminus and Baltimore. At the stockholders' meeting held in Richmond on March 9, President Swathmey applauded the opening of the line's eastern terminus and indicated the event should have beneficial effects on the company's finances. Daily freight service was available immediately on steamers owned by the Powhatan Steamboat Company.

In its final order of business, the stockholders elected a new president of the company. Since Dr. Swathmey was not nominated, it might be assumed he had earlier declined consideration. The Daily Dispatch reported the election of Thomas Dodamead, formerly superintendent of the Richmond and Danville Railroad, to the presidency.

53 Richmond Dispatch, January 6, 1869.
54 Ibid., October 5, 1870.
55 Ibid., March 10, 1869; January 5, 1871.
56 Ibid., March 10, 1869.
However, the annual report submitted to the Board of Public Works in 1869 listed Algernon Sidney Buford as the line's president and Thomas Dodamead as superintendent. The most logical conclusion is that Dodamead served until a permanent president could be selected, although this is only speculation. In any case, Buford and Dodamead mark a significant event in the history of the railroad.

Since Buford was the president of the Richmond and Danville Railroad and Dodamead its former superintendent, the policies of the York River Railroad from 1869 until it became a part of the Richmond and Danville complex in 1890 were affected by the Richmond and Danville. And yet, this period in the history of the York River line was outwardly reported as though the company were a purely independent railroad.

The first written evidence of the Richmond and York River Railroad becoming a pawn of the Richmond and Danville Railroad...

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37 Algernon Sidney Buford was born in North Carolina in 1826. His family moved to Virginia while he was young and he remained in the state. Becoming a lawyer, Buford practiced until the Civil War, at which time he enlisted in the Confederate Army. After the war, he entered railroading, serving as president of the Richmond and Danville for twenty-two years. He died in 1911. Lyon G. Tyler (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Virginia Biography* (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, 1915), pp. 223-229.

38 *Board of Public Works, 1869*, p. 67.
was in 1870. In that year the Richmond and Danville was authorized to lease the property of the York River Railroad, but this did not occur until 1890.

As for the business of the company, the railroad had gross earnings of $63,966.69 in 1869. The company's expenses were $48,370.47, leaving a net revenue of $15,596.22. In its inventory, the company reported the ownership of three locomotives, four passenger cars, three baggage, mail and express cars, and thirty-one freight cars. Persons employed by the company during the year totaled one-hundred and three.

While the company reported earnings exceeding $15,000 in 1869, its floating debt was $149,454.19. Of the amount $104,473.50 was for overdue interest, reflecting the financial problems confronting the reconstructed line. By

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40 Ibid., p. 25.
41 Of interest is that passenger revenue exceeded freight revenue: Passenger $9,915.40; Freight $5,680.82. Board of Public Works, 1869, p. 67.
42 Ibid., pp. 60-66.
43 This debt did not include the company's funded debt of $607,720.00. This funded debt was the debt on bonds held by the state and private investors. Board of Public Works, 1869, p. 59.
44 Ibid., p. 59.
1871, this floating debt had risen to $282,670.20, two-thirds of which was for overdue interest.

Further evidence of the association of the Richmond and York River Railroad with the Richmond and Danville appeared in the advertisements of the line. Reflecting common management, the York River ads mentioned the ease of connecting in Richmond to go to Greensboro, Charlotte and other North Carolina cities.

On October 4, 1870, the annual stockholders' meeting convened in Richmond. Colonel Buford reported the gross earnings of the company for the year ending September 30, 1870, as being $85,651.62, gross expenses as $61,136.00, and net revenue, $24,915.62. Although the company managed to pay the interest on its new first-mortgage bond, the floating debt of the company increased to $182,631.12, reflecting the growing financial crisis.

Buford also noted that the Richmond and Danville and Chesapeake and Ohio railroads had begun construction of spur lines to connect with the York River line's tracks in

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46 Richmond Dispatch, January 22, 1870.

47 Henry V. Poor, Manual of Railroads of the United States, for 1871-72 (New York: H. V. and H. W. Poor, 1871), p. 53; Richmond Dispatch, October 5, 1870.

48 Board of Public Works, 1871, p. 109.
Richmond, but their completion was being delayed over settlement of right-of-way.

Two of the more interesting comments made by Buford reflected different issues but were both related to money. The first was an accusation that the Richmond, Fredericksburg, and Potomac Railroad was attempting to steal the Baltimore traffic from the York River line by unethically offering better service. There was no evidence that the Richmond, Fredericksburg, and Potomac Railroad was affected by the York River line's complaint as this single rail route to Baltimore was advertising its advantages over steam travel in 1873.

The second item was the appointment of a committee to investigate why Alexander Dudley, the former president of the company, had received $25,000 in fees recently. No mention of this was reported in the annual reports available, and so its implications can only be speculative. The amount, however, would hardly have been for unpaid salary, as the president's salary while he was in office

49 Richmond Dispatch, October 5, 1870.
50 Ibid.
51 Ibid., January 1, 1873.
52 Ibid., October 5, 1870.
never exceeded $10,000, and the annual reports never indicated Dudley was not paid.

Buford was unanimously reelected president in October, 1870, and adjourned the meeting until the stockholders' annual meeting on January 3, 1871. The only business of the company transpiring between October, 1870, and January, 1871, other than regular service, was the negotiations to extend the company's line from West Point to the Chesapeake Bay.

Regarded as a necessary step to successfully counter the Richmond, Fredericksburg, and Potomac Railroad's competition, the company ordered surveys to be conducted to some point on the Piankiskank River, twenty-six miles from West Point. When the stockholders met on January 3, Buford reported that the officers were concerned about the York River Railroad's ability to finance additional construction, in view of its own indebtedness. Therefore, the directors recommended the creation of a new company, with authority to build a line from West Point to or near the bay. Buford reported that a charter had been received.

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53 Dudley's salary was generally $1200 to $1500 per year; however, he was paid $5,000 in 1863, and $10,000 in 1864. The almost worthless value of Confederate currency can be realized from the salary increment between 1863 and 1864. Tenth Annual Meeting, 1864, pp. 1, 22.

54 Richmond Dispatch, January 4, 1871.

55 Henry V. Poor, Manual of Railroads, 1871, p. 53.
 authorizing the creation of the West Point and Chesapeake Railroad Company. The directors recommended and the stockholders approved the Richmond and York River Railroad's purchase of 500 shares of stock in the new company, which the directors concluded would enable the new company to borrow the money necessary to construct the proposed line. Scheduled for completion within a year, the York River Railroad was a bit too late to save its corporate existence. 56

A further development in the company's financial dilemma may be evidenced by the Powhatan Steamboat Company's decision to connect in West Point tri-weekly rather than daily. The steam company provided steamers to transport freight and passengers between West Point and Baltimore. Buford implied that the action was an attempt to divert freight traffic from the York River to the James and accused the Powhatan Company of violating its contract. 57 No satisfactory settlement was reached until 1873, when the Clyde Enterprises were managing both the York River line and Powhatan Steamboat Company. 58

The company filed its annual report with the Board of Public Works in 1871 as required by law, but no annual meeting was held as a quorum could not be obtained. 59

56 Richmond Dispatch, January 4, 1871.
57 Ibid., January 5, 1871.
58 Richard E. Prince, Steam Locomotives and Boats, p. 48.
59 Richmond Dispatch, November 15, 1871; December 12, 1871.
However, the company's official report revealed that the York River Railroad's net revenue was $16,366.18 for the year ending September 30, 1871, almost $6,030.00 less than the preceding year. The financial situation can further be witnessed from the growth of the floating debt from $135,681.12 in 1870 to $282,670.20 in 1871. This immense increase reflects the company's inability to pay interest on its debt outstanding during the year.

The company's failure to connect with the Richmond, Fredericksburg, and Potomac Railroad possibly promoted Thomas Dodanead to resign as superintendent. To replace him, Buford recommended William N. Bragg, superintendent of the Richmond and Danville, and Bragg accepted.

No reports were filed during 1872 reflecting the company's financial crisis. Near bankruptcy, the railroad continued to operate, but whether any profit was realized cannot be ascertained. It may be stated with certainty the debt was not paid off.

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60 Board of Public Works, 1871, p. 103.
62 Richmond Dispatch, January 4, 1871; January 5, 1871.
63 Ibid., January 14, 1872.
64 Board of Public Works, 1871, p. 116.
65 Richmond Dispatch, November 12, 1872.
The climax to the railroad's crisis occurred in May, 1873. Unable to meet its obligations on its debts, the Richmond and York River Railroad was ordered to be sold by decree of the Chancery Court of the City of Richmond. Its purchasers were Mr. R. S. Burrows of New York, and Mr. Thomas Clyde of Philadelphia. On June 24, the line began operating as the Richmond, York River, and Chesapeake Railroad Company with Buford serving as president and Bragg as master of transportation.

As the Richmond, York River, and Chesapeake Railroad Company, the line operated at the manipulation of northern investors who were seeking to include the line in a southern railroad empire that would direct the trade of the south to northern cities. Therefore, one can conclude that after 1873, the operation of the York River Railroad could not be viewed as a single line competing to transport passengers and freight, but rather the line was to become an outlet for shipping southern products to the northern industrial cities of Baltimore, Philadelphia, and New York.

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66. Annual Reports of the Internal Improvement Companies of Virginia to the Board of Public Works for the Year 1873 (Richmond: Richard H. Walker, Superintendent Public Printing, 1874), p. 151.

67. Richmond Dispatch, June 24, 1873.

68. Richard E. Prince, Steam Locomotives and Boats, p. 11.

CHAPTER IV

THE LINE BECOMES A SYSTEM: 1873-1881

Perhaps the most complicated era in American railroading occurred between 1870 and 1900. Northern industrialists invested in southern rail lines in the 1870's and 1880's, while southern states had little capital to offset the movement. Even in Virginia where the state had purchased three-fifths of the stock in most railroads, reconstruction costs prevented further investments and necessitated sale of stocks held before the Civil War.¹ Therefore, to understand the operations of the York River Railroad during the 1870's, it is necessary to be aware of the impact northern capital had on the small line.

When the Richmond and York River Railroad became bankrupt in 1872, northern investors, organized by Thomas Clyde of Philadelphia, bought the line. Reorganized in

1873 as the Richmond, York River and Chesapeake Railroad
Company, the new line was to serve as a connecting link
between Clyde's northern steamships and the southern rail-
roads he and his associates hoped to control. The reor-
 ganized company began operating on June 2, 1873, connecting
with the steamers in West Point that made bi-weekly trips to
and from Baltimore, and by June 24, tri-weekly trips.

This interest in steamships was further advanced in
1874; the Richmond, York River and Chesapeake Railroad
Company formally organized the Baltimore, Chesapeake and
Richmond Steamboat Company with Thomas Clyde as president.
Investing $195,000 in the steam line, the railroad gained
control of the steamboat company and elected common offi-
cers for both companies. The side-wheel steamers "Sue,"
"Havana," and the "Louise" were transferred to the new
company having operated for several months by agreement
with the Richmond, York River, and Chesapeake Railroad.
The first of the three vessels to run between West Point

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2Richard E. Prince, Steam Locomotives and Boats, pp. 8-11.

3Richmond Dispatch, June 2, 1873.

4Ibid., June 24, 1873.

5Annual Reports of The Internal Improvement Companies
of the State of Virginia to the Board of Public Works, for
the Year 1874 (Richmond: R. F. Walker, Supt. Public Print-
ing, 1874), p. 133.
and Baltimore was the "Louise." Constructed by Harlan & Hollings of Wilmington, Delaware, and costing $300,000, the steamer ran for several years in the Gulf of Mexico between Mobile and New Orleans until the completion of the New Orleans and Mobile Railroad. Built for the Morgan line, the two-hundred and fifty-foot vessel began operating between West Point and Baltimore on June 16, 1874. The "Sue" and "Havana" had joined the "Louise" by 1875 when Clyde decided to invade the Norfolk market, monopolized by the Old Bay Line of the Baltimore Steam Packet Company, an affiliate of the Seaboard and Roanoke Railroad. The rivalry continued until January 11, 1877, when the York River line agreed to withdraw from the James River and Hampton Roads area, and the Old Bay Line agreed to keep away from the York and Delaware Rivers. This gentlemen's agreement was kept until J. P. Morgan created the Southern Railway System and decided in 1896 to move the shipping terminal from West Point to Pinners Point, now a part of Portsmouth. Evidence of the agreement


7The steamer "Sue" was advertised as running between West Point and Baltimore in June, 1873. Richmond Dispatch, June 24, 1873.

between the Old Bay Line and York River line may be wit-
nessed from the Old Bay Line's selling the York River
line an almost new steamer "Shirley" in 1877. The
"Shirley" burned in 1880 and was renamed "West Point"
after being rebuilt; the steamer operated until December,
1881, when it was destroyed by fire.

When Clyde bought the York River Railroad in 1873,
he also assumed its debt. The railroad's bonded debt
totaled $234,000.00, accruing interest at eight per cent
per annum, from a total debt, including interest not paid,
of $296,230.00. The railroad was reported by Clyde to be
in a state of disrepair when bought at public auction in
May, 1873. He noted the bridges needed repair, ditches
filled, cross-ties replaced, depots rebuilt, wharves
improved, and the rolling stock replaced or repaired.
This debt was eventually to prove too much for Clyde,
who was forced to sell to J. P. Morgan in 1894.

Perhaps one of the more significant issues relative
to the sale of the railroad in 1873 was the loss of the

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10 *Richmond Dispatch*, November 30, 1880.
12 *Board of Public Works*, 1874, p. 132.
state's investment in three-fifths of the company's stock. The company's annual report for 1874 indicated the State of Virginia had sold its stock in Richmond and York River Railroad to the investors in the Richmond, York River and Chesapeake Railroad. This was done when the Clyde investors purchased the line in 1873, as the state had adopted by this year the policy of selling railroad stock to pay reconstruction debt. 14

During 1874, the company earned $75,858.47, of which $57,901.66 was appropriated for operating expense; therefore, the company netted only $17,956.81. 15 It might thus be noted that the newly incorporated line did not enjoy unusual profit increments merely from a change of management and a new name. Indeed, the new company retained some of its former officers.

A. S. Buford remained president of the Richmond and Danville, but was replaced as president of the newly incorporated Richmond, York River and Chesapeake by Roswell S. Burrows, a New York investor and associate of Clyde's. The stockholders, however, continued to elect Dr. W. H. Gwathmey 16 a director as well as W. W. Gordon who had


15 Board of Public Works, 1874, p. 131.

served on the earlier line’s board. 17

It would thus appear that the close affinity which had been developing between the Richmond and York River Railroad and the Richmond and Danville was terminated. Indeed, the contrary was the case. Part of the Clyde scheme of developing a rail-steam system of transportation to connect southern markets with the north lay in control of the Richmond and Danville, sixty per cent of whose stock had been sold in 1871 by the State of Virginia to the Southern Railway Security Company, a post-Civil War Pennsylvania holding company. The holding company was attempting, by investing in lines that lay south of the Pennsylvania Railroad, to promote the creation of a north-south rail route. 18 Control of this holding company in the 1870’s was regarded to be with Thomas A. Scott, president of the Pennsylvania Railroad. 19

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17 Board of Public Works, 1874, p. 132.


19 The Railroad Gazette [Washington, D.C.], March 9, 1872.
After the financial panic of 1873, investors in the Southern Railway Security Company began selling; one of the lines sold was the Richmond and Danville, which was purchased by the Pennsylvania Railroad, headed by Scott. By 1880 the Pennsylvania Railroad realized it would be unable to acquire lines between itself and the Richmond and Danville; therefore, it sold its interest to a New York syndicate headed by William P. Clyde, son of Thomas Clyde of Philadelphia. Thus, a north-south route seemed highly possible in 1880.20

As for the Richmond, York River and Chesapeake's operations during this period, it can be stated that the line operated as part of a plan to develop a southern railway system. Between 1874 and 1877, the company received annual net revenues of only $11,000.00, while gross earnings only increased $4,000 during the period, from $75,000.00 to $79,000.00.21 In 1873, the company's gross earnings


increased to $82,803.01, but expenses reduced the net revenue to $1,956.52. The only development of significance between 1874 and 1877 was the creation of the Piedmont Air-Line Route, a produce of an agreement between Clyde and the Richmond and Danville to create a direct route from Baltimore to New Orleans via West Point and Richmond.

Although the tracks of the Richmond and Danville and Richmond, York River and Chesapeake Railroads were not connected until 1879, the creation in 1875 of the Piedmont Air-Line Route enabled Clyde to advance his north-south route. Traffic could leave Baltimore on a steamer, board a train in West Point, transfer in Richmond, and journey to points as far south as Atlanta or New Orleans. After 1879, the transfer in Richmond was unnecessary.

Not until 1879 does the company report a large expenditure for construction. In its annual report to the railroad commissioner, the Richmond, York River and Chesapeake Railroad notes the replacement of five-hundred tons of rail during the year. Also reported was the construction of a

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23 Richard E. Prince, Steam Locomotives and Boats, p. 49.
24 Ibid.
freight shed, coach house, and smith shop in Richmond, and
the addition of two large platforms and a shed over the
large wharf in West Point. 26 The company also reported
replacement of 400 feet of trestle on the Chickahominy
River bridge. Without a doubt, however, the most signifi-
cant accomplishment during the year was the completion
of the connection with the Richmond and Danville Railroad in
Richmond, reflecting the Clyde influence over both roads
which had been advanced in 1875 with the creation of the
Piedmont Air-Line Route.

The connection undoubtedly had the greatest effect
on the line netting $41,074.40 on gross earnings of
$124,034.81.28 In 1879, Thomas Clyde became president of
the railroad, but it is unlikely that his election affected
the larger sales as R. S. Burrows, the line's former presi-
dent, remained a director with men who had functioned as
such since the incorporation of the Richmond, York River
and Chesapeake Railroad.29

26 The two platforms measured 350 feet by 50 feet
and 100 feet by 260 feet; a shed was constructed over the
larger platform. Third Annual Report, 1879, p. 69.
27 Ibid.
28 See p. 95 for company's financial report of 1879.
29 Third Annual Report, 1879, pp. 157, 159.
This association between the York River Railroad and the Richmond and Danville was further advanced when the General Assembly on March 8, 1860, approved the creation of the Richmond and West Point Terminal Railroad and Warehouse Company. The new company was necessary as the Richmond and Danville Railroad could only purchase connecting lines; therefore, to create a major railway complex, a new corporation with broad powers was needed. 31 Of interest is that one of the incorporators was Mr. A. S. Buford, president of the Richmond and Danville. 32

The new company was empowered to

erect and construct at or near the city of Richmond, and at or near the town of West Point, Virginia, wharves, piers, docks, basins, warehouses, elevators, cotton presses, suitable for the accommodation of steamships, vessels and boats, and for the convenient loading, unloading, shipping, receiving and storing of all kinds of merchandise and personal property for safekeeping. . . . 33

The corporation was further empowered to operate railways between Richmond and West Point and to connect with any lines constructed or that may be constructed in Virginia,


32 Acts Passed by General Assembly, 1879-80, p. 231.

33 Ibid., p. 232.
South Carolina, Tennessee, Kentucky, Georgia, Alabama, or Mississippi. In February, 1882, the company was authorized to also operate on the James River and in Hampton Roads, as well as to make rail connections with Florida, Louisiana, Arkansas, or Texas. In March, 1882, the name of the company was changed to the Richmond, Danville, and Southern Railway Company, a further step toward the creation of the Southern Railway System finally effected in 1894 by J. P. Morgan.

Of special interest after the creation of the Richmond and West Point Terminal Railway and Warehouse Company in 1880 was a disaster that struck West Point on November 28, 1880. A fire erupted on the 175-foot steamer "Shirley" which was docked. The crew was unable to release the vessel and the wharves were quickly ignited. Within an hour, the company had lost $250,000 worth of property, including its wharves, sheds, twenty-one cars, 2,663 bales

34 Ibid.
37 Richard E. Prince, Steam Locomotives and Boats, p. 5.
of cotton, as well as numerous other items being stored or loaded. One of the most spectacular incidents was the explosion of a car containing gunpowder and fireworks; residents for several miles around were awakened by the noise. The town itself was saved only because of recent rains which prevented sparks easily igniting other buildings. The salvage of one pier enabled the tri-weekly Baltimore service to continue to operate to and from West Point, but freight service was temporarily relocated at the Richmond and Danville depot in Richmond. Complete service was not restored to West Point until May, 1881. This loss was reflected, not only in merchandise destroyed, but also in the line's volume of business.

On August 8, 1881, the Richmond, York River and Chesapeake Railroad ceased to operate as a separate line. After that date, all business was transacted from the depot of the Richmond and Danville Railroad in Richmond.

38 Richmond Dispatch, November 30, 1880.
39 Ibid., December 1, 1880.
42 Richmond Dispatch, August 7, 1881.
Thus, one can say that after August 8, 1891, the operation of a separate line from Richmond to West Point officially ended.

The success of the Richmond and West Point Terminal Railway and Warehouse Company may be evidenced from noting the financial report of the railroad in 1882. Gross earnings were $230,382.12; gross expenses, $134,478.62; and net revenue $95,903.50. Until 1898, the town of West Point benefitted from the location of a major shipping terminus in the town. But in that year, the Southern Railway System abruptly moved its terminus to the deeper waters of Hampton Roads, and the small railroad from Richmond to West Point was reduced to a local line, serving the industry that might develop in that area.


44 Richard E. Prince, Steam Locomotives and Boats, p. 5.
Dear Sir,

Your letter of 18th inst. giving the outline, and asking my opinion of, the feasibility and details of your plan for "using the steam from a locomotive boiler when on board of a boat to propel her across a ferry three-quarters of a mile wide, the propelling machinery being permanent fixtures; also, by means of a similar attachment, and in connection with "nothington's steam pump, to supply water stations on a railroad," is before me. In reply I have to say, that some time since, after a full discussion of this subject, I gave it as my opinion that the plan was feasible. Since then, applying Fredgold's formula to the locomotive engines of 22 tons weight built at this establishment, I find the capacity of the boilers to be about 140 nominal horse power, which in the usual ratio of tonnage to power on board of river steamers, would propel a boat of more than double the capacity of the one which would serve your purpose. The connections of the steam exhaust and supply pipes can be readily and quickly made, involving no material loss of time, whilst the economy of operating
such a ferry, to say nothing of the saving in first cost and in boiler room, will be very great.¹

I am sir, very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

Sr. W. W. Wood,
Eng. U. S. N.

At a meeting of the stockholders of the Richmond and York River Railroad Company, held in the city of Richmond on the 18th and 19th days of January, 1855, convened by order of the Board of Public Works for the purpose of selecting the route and eastern terminus of their railroad.

According to the request made and promise given, I proceeded in the last days of December to Richmond, and thence to York River, for the purpose of examining as to the most suitable point on its waters for the terminus of the Richmond and York River Railroad.

YORK THE NOBLEST

... The object of your railway is, I take it, to afford the produce which is brought to Richmond on its way to market a cheaper and more speedy conveyance thence to the sea than that which the James River affords. From Richmond down to City Point, the head of ship navigation, the distance by the river is counted 50 miles. At City Point the sea-going ships are loaded from lighters alongside, which convey produce and merchandise to and from the wharves of the city at from 75 to 100 cents the ton, or from 1½ to 2 cents per ton per mile, averaging 1 and 3/4 cents. From City Point to the mouth of the river, the distance is 78 miles, and the average rate of freight may be taken at half a cent per ton per mile. At least
this is the rate of North river freight, and that by the
James will scarcely be less. From Richmond to York River
the distance is from 32 to 40 miles according to the point
finally to be determined on as the terminus of the road,
and the distance thence to the mouth of the river is
from 45 to 35 miles.

**York River Route the Shortest**

Now, the problem proposed is to find a route by rail-
road and York River by which produce and merchandise may be
conveyed between Richmond and the Bay both cheaper and
quicker than it can be conveyed between Richmond and the
Bay by ships and lighters up and down James River.

Every route by the York is quicker than that by the
James, and, therefore, that route alone will best fulfill
the conditions of the problem which will afford the cheapest
transportation of them all, not proportionally the cheapest,
so far as the railroad alone is concerned, but really and
absolutely the cheapest when both railroad and river transpor-
tation and all expenses are taken into the account.

West Point, being between the two rivers which form
the York, has also the rare advantage of double wharfage.
On the Mattaponi side there is ample water and perfect
shelter for coaster, steamers, and all light craft; while
on the other there are good accommodations for the largest
Indiamen. Observe the advantages thus afforded; vessels
of light draft will not occupy the room in deep water which
may be required for large vessels. Where the small craft will lie, there the water is the right depth for them; the wharves of easy construction, and the wharfage fees will be light. On the deep side the water is not deeper than the large ships require it to be, consequently in building wharves there your engineer will not have to go to the expense of piling or filling a single foot in the waste spaces of deep water. This double water front of West Point being so treated, your road, terminus, and route, will afford all the conveniences for ingress and egress, loading and unloading, receiving, warehousing, and discharging, that can be desired.

In selecting this point regard was also had not only to the present but to the future wants of trade with and through Virginia. And in the respect as well as in others, West Point is superior to all of its competitors, and commanding, for it has capacities for wharfage sufficient for the accommodation of any amount of shipping.

I submit no estimate as to the actual amount of business anticipated for the route, but it would be a blunder not to plan its termini with an eye to the accommodation of all the business that time, improvements and enterprise shall call forth between Richmond and the sea, between Richmond and the West. If one ton of merchandise, on arriving at Richmond from the interior, shall take this route on account of cheaper transportation and easier access
to the sea, I do not see why it would not be cheaper and
easier for every other ton of produce to do the same, and,
consequently, I perceive no reason why every other ton of
merchandise bound seaward from Richmond should not take the
same route. In this point of view, West Point, with accommo-
dations and capacities, stands, in the language of your
engineer, "preeminent," and it would be a singular over-
sight to ignore those capabilities of meeting all of the
emergencies which its own success and the business of trade
may call for.¹

¹West Point, Virginia and King William County, 1888
(Richmond: Everett Wadley, 1888), pp. 7-13.
STATISTICS CONCERNING THE RICHMOND AND YORK RIVER RAILROAD, 1860

Classes of Funded and Bonded Debt

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>$370,000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date of Issue</td>
<td>January 1, 1857</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date of Payment</td>
<td>January 1, 1877</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Estimated Value of the Property of the Company

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>$821,542.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The estimated value of steamboat, etc. owned by Company</td>
<td>$42,900.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Statistics Concerning the Richmond and York River Railroad

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Length of road unfenced on both sides</td>
<td>38.3 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of cattle guards</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of switches</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of locomotives owned by the company</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of cars owned by the company</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggregate miles run by all the passenger cars</td>
<td>41,708</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggregate miles run by all the freight cars</td>
<td>39,561</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average speed adopted by passenger trains, including stops</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average speed of same when in motion (miles per hour)</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average rate of speed adopted by freight trains, including stops</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rate of same when in motion</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average number of passenger cars run per train during the year</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Average number of freight cars run per train during the year

During the year a total of 4,515 first class passengers used the lines for a total distance of 351,434 miles.

During the year a total of 2,436 second class passengers used the lines for a total distance of 51,217 miles.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Earnings</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>From Passengers</td>
<td>$16,983.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From Freight</td>
<td>6,203.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From Other Sources</td>
<td>4.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross Earnings</td>
<td>$23,202.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expenses</td>
<td>$29,442.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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1 Annual Report of the Board of Public Works to the General Assembly of Virginia, For the Year Ending September 30, 1860, Doc. XVII (no publisher or date), pp. 475-139.
GIBLE WAR LOCOMOTIVES

At the beginning of the Civil War, there were approximately 180 engines in Virginia. All of the engines were wood-burners, and fuel was obtained by local contractors who used slave labor. Most of the locomotives were of the American or 4-4-0 type, so called because they had been designed by Horatio Allen in 1829 to run on sharper curves than their European predecessors. The term 4-4-0 meant the engine had two sets of wheels, four small wheels on a swivel to better negotiate sharp curves, and four larger wheels to supply power and support the engine. The "0" indicated the engine did not have a second four-wheel swivel which was common in later locomotives. These two sets of swivel wheels were referred to as leading and trailing wheels.

Weighing from nine tons to thirty-one tons, Civil War locomotives averaged thirty-five feet in length, and the top of the smoke-stack reached fourteen feet above the rails. Engines built in the 1850's lasted twenty to twenty-five years, and those in Virginia had an average value of $7,000.

3Angus James Johnston, II, Virginia Railroads in the Civil War, p. 11.
Most Virginia locomotives were of Northern construction, but of the ones constructed in the South, most came from the Tredegar Iron Works in Richmond, Virginia. 5

The Richmond and York River Railroad Company owned fewer locomotives in 1861 than any other Virginia line. The York River line reported in 1861 the ownership of four locomotives—Mattaponi, Pamunkey, York, and Atlantic. 6

5Angus James Johnston, II, Virginia Railroads in the Civil War, pp. 11-12.

6Annual Reports of the Railroad Companies of the State of Virginia, Made to the Board of Public Works, for the Year Ending September 30, 1861, Doc. XVII (Richmond: n. p., 1861), p. 236.
**Statistics Concerning the Richmond, York River and Chesapeake Railroad, 1879**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of enginehouses and shops</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of engines</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of first-class passenger cars</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of second-class passenger cars</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of baggage, mail and express cars</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of freight cars</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggregate miles run by passenger trains</td>
<td>25,562</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggregate miles run by freight trains</td>
<td>30,693</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of passengers carried</td>
<td>20,360.52¹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of tons of freight carried</td>
<td>83,408.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rates per mile per passenger</td>
<td>3.6¢-4¢</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rates per ton per mile</td>
<td>3.6¢-5¢</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Earnings**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>From passengers</td>
<td>$16,953.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From freight</td>
<td>102,424.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From mail</td>
<td>1,776.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From other sources</td>
<td>2,820.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross Earnings</td>
<td>124,034.91</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Expenses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
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<th>Amount</th>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Net Revenue: $41,074.40²

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¹ Figure is the result of computing adults as whole numbers and children as fractions.

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VITA

The writer was born in 1942 in Richmond, Virginia. Educated in the public schools of West Point, Virginia, he graduated from the University of Richmond in 1964 with a B.A. in history.

He was married in 1965 to the former Jane Garland Norton (B.A., Westhampton College, 1964) of Deltaville, Virginia, and the couple resides in Richmond.

He has taught school at Pleasant Hill High School, Collegiate School for Boys, and West Point High School, where he also served as Assistant Principal. He is currently with the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia.