

GLENWOOD 1852. WHY?  
THE CONTEXT FOR AN HISTORIC HOUSE

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## Glenwood 1852. Why? The Context for an Historic House

Why would James Madison Laidley (1809-1896), who was born in Parkersburg, resided as a teenager with his uncle in Cabell County after the death of his father, and then successfully practiced law, move to Charleston with a new wife in 1840 and later purchase in 1850 the 366 acre Glenwood site from Mrs. James Lovell? Similarly, why would George W. Summers II (1804-1868), who came to the county as an infant, graduated from Ohio University, also studied law and became another successful lawyer, buy this place a few years later in 1857? A generation earlier, Laidley's paternal grandfather had come to Monongalia County, and his maternal grandfather, Alexander Quarrier, had moved to the Valley as early as 1811 and to Charleston by 1816. The Summers family had come to Putnam County by 1813. Laidley not only practiced law but also engaged in the Valley's salt industry and participated in politics. Summers' elder brother Lewis early on moved to Charleston to practice law, and George, 26 years younger, followed to read law with his brother. Both Lewis and George became very prominent lawyers, legislators, and judges. What motivated these people not only to come to Charleston and prosper, but also to build and occupy this house so symbolic and significant to the Valley's history?<sup>1</sup>

While this paper will not presume to read the minds of Laidley and Summers, it will attempt to help us understand how this historic site came to be. It will discuss several factors, many well known, others perhaps less so, that at least describe the context in which these people operated and in which this house was built. Stated more broadly, what were Charleston and the Valley like during the first half of the nineteenth century?

### Geography.

Let us begin with geography, an essential but sometimes forgotten factor shaping history. John Williams in his bicentennial book on West Virginia included a simple map that showed so clearly the problems colonial settlers faced making their way over the mountains to the Ohio Valley and how that directly influenced the Kanawha Valley. (See Fig.1 below.) Because, foreign powers, France then England, blocked the St. Lawrence River route to the north, and Spain in Florida threatened any route around the mountains to the south, settlers used three river corridors to the interior: the Hudson/Mohawk, the Potomac/Monongahela, and the James/Kanawha. George Washington's life-long efforts notwithstanding, these did not favor his beloved Virginia. Pittsburgh, not Point Pleasant, became the gateway west, and New York City, not Richmond, became the commercial center for reasons of war and ease of development.<sup>2</sup>

The Mohawk River alone actually cut through the Appalachian chain and provided the only direct connection to the interior that could be fairly easily developed. New York state exploited this route when it built the Erie Canal (1819-1825). Being the first to tap the Ohio region, New York City quickly emerged as the premier commercial, shipping, insurance and banking center of the country, surpassing Philadelphia. Philadelphia had held that premier position (and Baltimore also had benefited) partially because of the French and Indian War (1754-1763) during which British armies cut two routes across

the mountains that later took settlers from the east to Pittsburgh: Braddock's Road from Cumberland, and Forbes' Road across Pennsylvania. In spite of George Washington's explorations and continuing interest, the Potomac route never panned out to significantly benefit Virginia. Braddock's route ultimately became the basis for the National Road from Cumberland to Wheeling (1811-1818) which did benefit the Wheeling area, but not the Kanawha Valley or eastern Virginia. Thus, the one true Virginia route, thought of as early as the Point Pleasant battle as having real potential to benefit Virginia's quest to tap the Ohio trade, was surpassed by events. Nevertheless, it was Virginia's best route, and it played an important role not only for the state's development but for the Valley's as well.

To understand Charleston's development, we need to say a word about why towns develop where they do. Sometimes towns grow up at points of military necessity, as the location of county government, at a significant commercial site such as a mill, or some combination of influences. Very frequently, however, towns develop at a point of inter-modal transportation change, a place where there is an interruption in one means of transportation requiring the transfer of goods to another, such as occurs at a port city, a river town, or on the fall line.<sup>3</sup> Wheeling gained greatly by being located where the National Road reached the Ohio River and goods had to be unloaded and reloaded, while people had to be housed and fed until their journey continued. Similarly, where the military in 1774 had to cross the Elk River, George Clendenin observed the spot and later bought the land, began a ferry, and laid out a town recognizing the similar need to change modes of travel to cross the water. And since frontier expansion moved east to west, the town of Charleston was located on the east side of the Elk leaving the west side of the Elk as agricultural land for the Laidley and Summers families two generations later.

Finally, the natural resources of the Kanawha Valley were central to its development. Although the James River-Kanawha River corridor proved to be the third best national route, it was still the primary east-west land route for Virginia, and its river connection to the Ohio provided the major outlet for the Valley's industries. Further, the Valley had the very important resources of salt brines, timber and coal readily available for early exploitation. These provided the unique basis for the famous Kanawha Salt industry which in turn became the economic engine for the Valley's growth and development.

### Early Charleston

In spite of this potential, Charleston was not much of a town in its early years. Charleston's founder was George Clendenin, a Greenbrier County resident who marched with General Lewis to Point Pleasant in 1774. Some years later, as a legislator with an eye toward development, he helped survey and authorize the "Old State Road" from Lewisburg to the Kanawha Valley in 1786, and he purchased the absentee-owned Charleston site in 1787. By spring 1788, he had built a substantial two-story log house, surrounded by a stockade that became his home and Fort Lee. When Kanawha County was erected the following year, the local government held its meetings there. Within a few years he obtained formal approval for his town plat from the state legislature in 1794, and the same year he obtained approval for a ferry operation. (See Fig. 2.) Military security, the seat of local government, and the necessity of inter-modal transfers all provided the basis for Charleston's initial development. Nevertheless, there was little to

stimulate population growth in the early years, and Clendenin sold out to Joseph Ruffner in 1796 and moved to Ohio where he died shortly thereafter.<sup>4</sup>

Early descriptions of Charleston are not particularly glowing to say the least. One estimate suggests perhaps 35 people lived here in 1790; that may have doubled to 65 or so by 1800 but grew only to 100 by 1810 and to 500 by 1820. John Bowyer recalled Charleston was a “very small village, embracing not more than a dozen houses” in 1810. However, an 1803 description by a resident, Samuel Williams, agreed that Charleston was “an inconsiderable village” but “with a population of about 150 souls.” “The houses,” he continued, “were constructed of hewn logs, with a few frame buildings” located primarily along the half-mile long Front Street situated some 40 feet above the low water level. A few other houses were on the partially opened and parallel Main Street or on the few numbered cross streets. “Immediately in the rear of the village lay an unbroken and dense forest of large and lofty beech, sugar, ash and poplar timber, with thickets of paw-paw.”<sup>5</sup>

It is not surprising that growth was slow for the first few decades. Western expansion in general went by fits and starts. Until 1794, the year Charleston was established, there was still a threat from Native Americans until Gen. Anthony Wayne’s victory at Fallen Timbers in northwestern Ohio. That year, western opposition to the whiskey tax reached its climatic confrontation. By then, England and France had begun their two decades of conflict growing out of the French Revolution and Napoleon’s exploits until 1815. These caused periodic uncertainty about whether or not western goods could be floated down the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers to New Orleans for international commerce.<sup>6</sup>

So, too, did President Jefferson’s Embargo in 1808 during the Napoleonic conflict and the disruptions of the War of 1812. Westerners, believing England most at fault, strongly supported that ineptly led war, but the war’s end did remove the foreign threat to western downriver commerce. There followed a wave of western settlement just after the war supported by easy credit from the new Second National Bank (1816) and a number of new state banks. Then, just as quickly the expansion boom collapsed with the Panic of 1819, which retarded growth for the next four or five years. Nevertheless, uncertain trade and wartime shortages had a benefit; they stimulated domestic production in many areas of the country and led to the nation’s first protective tariff legislation in 1816. This sequence of events was particularly true for the salt industry in the Kanawha Valley after 1810, and salt became the driving force for the Valley’s rapid development thereafter.

### The Rise of the Salt Industry

The existence of salt springs around the mouth of Campbell’s Creek was long known. Not only had animals visited the licks for ages, but Native Americans regularly visited to make salt. Actual salt production, however, scarcely existed until Joseph Ruffner, Sr. purchased the site in 1795 and two years later leased it to Elisha Brooks, who sank three hollow trees about ten feet into the ground to gather brine. Boiling the brines, he could produce three bushels a day. Soon others added their efforts, especially Tobias Ruffner, and somewhat stronger brines were found at 32, 43, and 55 feet that allowed production of 25-30 bushels a day by 1808. William Whitteker, joining with Isaac Noyes in 1810,

brought greater mechanical skill to drilling, and by the end of that year, 16 facilities were producing more than 200,000 bushels annually. Production was still expensive, however, because of the relative weakness of these early brines and associated transportation costs, but the potential was great.<sup>7</sup>

The great stimulus to production came from shortages of salt caused by the War of 1812. According to John Stealey, this led to “rapid overdevelopment” as the number of furnaces grew from 16 to 52 in the boom years 1810-1815. Production quadrupled to 2500-3000 bushels a day and over a million per year by 1815. Consolidation in the industry was already evident as nine entities controlled 33 furnaces. With the end of the war and the return of cheap imported salt, particularly from the West Indies, the industry confronted the problem of over production and famously searched for ways to control production and protect its markets. The formation of the Kanawha Salt Company, the famous 1817 “trust,” or pooling agreement, was but the first of many attempts to protect the salt makers from both domestic and foreign competition.<sup>8</sup> The fundamental goal was to stabilize production so as to maintain reasonable prices in down river markets like Cincinnati, but including every producer in these efforts was very difficult. The Company lasted but one year, and the Panic of 1819 dried up needed credit as banks collapsed in Cincinnati and elsewhere causing salt makers to search for temporary expedients. Many faced bankruptcy, and a major flood in December 1822 added to their financial woes.<sup>9</sup> (See Fig. 3.)

As the industry slowly revived, issues of overproduction and increasing competition kept pressure on the Kanawha salt makers. They responded by increasing technological improvements, turning to the state for aid, and creating a series of additional organizations to control production. More sophisticated drilling techniques, especially the slip drilling mechanism developed by William Morris in 1831, allowed wells to reach much richer brines hundreds of feet below the river. Henry Ruffner in 1817 was the first to switch completely to coal for evaporation by successfully solving the slag removal problem. Within five years, all furnaces used coal, and by 1841, some used natural gas. Steam pumps were also used in all operations by the early 1830s. Half the stationary steam engines in the entire state of Virginia were located at the salt works by 1836.<sup>10</sup>

The salt makers constant need for great sums of capital to upgrade their furnaces and to fund their market protection schemes led them to seek state help. After successful petitioning, a branch of the Bank of Virginia located in Charleston in 1832, with James C. McFarland, a very successful merchant and salt maker, as its president. Dissatisfied with the bank’s limited capital, agitation ultimately brought the Bank of Kanawha to The Salines in the mid-1840s with several salt makers serving as trustees. Bank credit was thus eased, if not sufficient, for the salt makers, their direct conflicts of interest notwithstanding. With the advent of steamboats on western rivers after the War of 1812, improved river navigation was essential if they were to serve the growing salt industry. The James River Company was reorganized, and by dredging and building wing dams provided some benefits; steamboats could reach Charleston and The Salines by the mid-1820s. Nevertheless, river conditions remained less than desired, and by the 1840s, after much lobbying, the salt makers had largely given up on an adequate state response and

continued to rely on flatboats to supplement the steamers. Salt makers even tried to get the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad routed through the Kanawha Valley.<sup>11</sup>

The pressures on price were a constant problem. Competition from additional producers in other parts of the country, who were benefiting from the growing national transportation system, forced the Kanawha producers continually to search for mechanisms to control their own production and marketing. Armstrongs, Grant and Company in the late 1820s was followed for two years by Dickinson, Armstrongs and Company as a marketing agency. More successfully, Hewitt, Ruffner & Company, a joint stock company, controlled production and sales for five years beginning in 1836, but the deepening effects of the Panic of 1837 brought market chaos in the early 1840s. As prices fell, production soared, and efforts to control the market again failed. Kanawha salt production exceeded 1.4 million bushels in 1840, passed 2.1 million by 1843, and reached its all time high of 3,224,786 bushels in 1846.<sup>12</sup> Finally, formation of the Kanawha Salt Association in 1847 brought a brief measure of stability. Its collapse in December 1850 led to another joint stock company, Ruffner, Donnally and Company in 1851, which again had some success. Twenty-two individual manufactures plus six firms formed the company which lasted until dissolved in 1856, and further negotiations collapsed in 1857, another year marked by national financial panic. Dickenson and Shrewsbury, the single largest producer, generally remained outside these organizations, but enjoyed the benefits nonetheless.<sup>13</sup>

In reality, the difficulties of the 1850s proved to mark the decline of the salt industry. Production in 1850 still involved 33 operating entities producing 3.1 million bushels of salt. By 1857, however, there were only nine operations producing 1.2 million bushels. A number of dismantled and deserted engines dotted The Salines in 1857.<sup>14</sup> Madison Laidley could hardly have known when he purchased the Glenwood property in 1850 that the salt industry he had invested in had peaked; he had witnessed it fall only to rise again. Even George Summers in 1857 had seen the Valley weather a number of economic setbacks, and even if salt was not quite what it had been, coal and especially the recently discovered cannel coal looked promising. Neither man could have known the ultimate impact of the Panic of 1857, nor the damage done by the great flood along the Kanawha in September 1861, nor the destruction the Civil War would bring. Besides, Charleston, powered by the salt industry, had made great strides during these years and seemed certain to continue its steady growth. Once a stepchild to The Salines in population, Charleston was attracting people. As the salt industry grew, The Salines became a very dirty, noisy place. Laborers were rowdy, and the black slave population was extensive. Some of those who had the means moved to nearby Charleston for a more comfortable existence, and they in turn attracted others.

#### Charleston Emerges as a Genuine Town

Indeed in the years after 1815, Charleston began to take on the appearance of a real town. At the same time as the salt industry began in earnest, it will be recalled that the Quarrier and Summers families came to the area. Tradesmen and professional people began to trickle in after 1810 and continued to arrive in greater numbers in the 1820s.<sup>15</sup> The first physician came in 1811, and Spicer Patrick began his long career as physician-

businessman in 1816. 1813 brought the first general merchandise store. In education, Mercer Academy opened in 1819, a library committee was incorporated in 1821, and a private school for girls and one for boys opened by 1823. The Methodists, Presbyterians and Episcopalians all had organized congregations by that date. By 1820, Charleston had its first newspaper. Although it soon changed hands and name, and several others came and went, the city was rarely without one, and often two newspapers. Madison Laidley, in fact, edited a paper as a young man in 1829 before heading off to study law in Virginia. New construction began to change the look of the town when the log court house was replaced by a brick structure in 1817-1818, and solid frame and brick houses began to appear. By the mid-1820s, a genuine building boom of sorts was evident. By the 1830s, a number of stately homes, like the McFarland House, lined Front Street, and Holly Grove and Cedar Grove, Ruffner family houses, stood just east of town—all three still standing.

Improving transportation certainly helped the town grow. The old Clendenin ferry across the Elk was followed by one by John and Langston Hart. In 1809, John Ward crossed the Kanawha from Ferry Branch to the mouth of the Elk. Two more crossed by 1820: one by Alexander Quarrier (later run by George Goshorn from the street currently bearing his name), and one by James Wilson crossing the Kanawha from today's Capitol Street. Steamboats reached the town with some regularity by the mid-1820s, but equally important was the turnpike superseding the old state road. When the James River and Kanawha Turnpike crossed the mountains reaching Kanawha Falls in 1826 and soon was authorized to continue to the Ohio, it aided not only freighters and drovers, but even made possible regular stagecoach service to Lewisburg beginning in 1827. (See Fig. 4.)

Two institutions of note indicated that by the 1830s Charleston had arrived as a real city. The first was, of course, the Charleston Branch of the Bank of Virginia, which opened in 1832. Although merchants and salt men had provided certain quasi-banking services, having a genuine bank for business transactions and credit gave a necessary stability to the Valley's economy. Equally significant was the opening in 1834 of The Kanawha House, a real first class hotel. There had been taverns and lesser hotels for some time, but the four-story, brick, 30-room hotel opposite the steamboat landing announced to all travelers that the city now could provide excellent accommodations to its discriminating guests. (See Fig. 5.)

By the 1830s, one could argue that the foundations for what was to become the Charleston of the future—government, banking, extractive industry, even some early education and medical services—were all present. The census takers even separated out Charleston's population from the rest of the county for the first time in 1830, allowing one to gain a quite revealing perspective of the new town that seemed to have arrived.

#### Charleston and the 1830-1850 Census

As one examines the census records for 1830, 1840, and 1850, two factors quickly become obvious. First, the population estimates give by the standard local histories were generous; second, that most Charlestonians were slave owners. Instead of population estimated at 750, 1200, 1500, the census numbers turn out to be 683 in 1830, 1100 in

CHARLESTON POPULATION 1830-1850

TOTAL POPULATION

Population	1830	1840	1850
White population	429 62.8%	657 59.7%	674 68.8%
Free Black population	10 1.5%	28 2.6%	54 5.5%
Slave population	<u>244</u> 35.7%	<u>415</u> 37.7%	<u>252</u> 25.7%
Total population	683 100%	1100 100%	980 100%

SLAVE OWNERSHIP

Households	1830	1840	1850
White households	70	109	133
Free Black households	<u>1</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>7</u>
Total households	71	117	140
White households with slaves	58	57	68
Percentage with slaves	83%	52%	51%

Note: One Free Black household also contained slaves in both 1840 and 1850. Thus, 58 and 69 total households contained slaves in those years.

DISTRIBUTION OF SLAVES BY HOUSEHOLD

No. of Slaves	Households, Free Black and White, with Slaves		
	1830	1840	1850
0	12	59	71
1	15	11	25
2	14	8	10
3	6	7	12
4	6	6	4
5	4	5	3
6	4	4	2
7	1	4	3
8	2	2	3
9	0	0	4
10	1	1	0
11	0	1	0
12	0	1	0
13	1	3	0
14	1	0	1
15	0	0	0
16	1	0	1
17	0	0	1
18	1	0	0
19	0	0	0
20	0	0	0
Other	<u>1</u> (21)	<u>5</u> (21,22,23,27,85)	<u>0</u>
Total	71	117	140



1840, but only 980 in 1850, and approximately a third of this population was black, overwhelmingly slaves. However, the spike in population in 1840 followed by a drop off in 1850 seems counterintuitive, especially since there was a small annexation in 1846. Two factors may help to explain these numbers.<sup>16</sup> First, one must ask whether all the slaves attributed to Charleston in 1840 actually lived in the city, or were some owned or leased by persons in the salt industry who lived in the city, but the slaves were actually living at the salt furnace where they worked. To take the most glaring case, salt maker Joseph Friend in 1840 was listed with a white family of eight and 85 slaves. Fifty of these 93 people, presumably all slaves, were attributed to manufacturing under a separate column on the census. Surely not all 85 slaves were living in Charleston. This point seems confirmed by the slave schedule of the 1850 census which lists slaves owned by Friend living at two separate places in the county outside Charleston. Similarly salt maker Frederick Brooks was listed in 1840 with 27 slaves in addition to 10 members of his household, and 17 of these people were attributed to manufacturing. Twelve of Robert Thompson's 23 slaves and 7 members of his household were attributed to manufacturing. Should at least these 79 slaves attributed to manufacturing be excluded from the Charleston population? Further, there are many children in these slave population numbers. Among Frederick Brooks 27 slaves, 17 were indeed adult males, but three were adult females and seven were children. Might some of them be living outside Charleston with some laboring men? What do we make of the entry for William Gillison that listed 22 slaves, but not even one entry for himself? Squire Gillison, a magistrate at least as early as 1838, lived on the hillside just west of where Glenwood would be built.<sup>17</sup> Only one of his slaves was an adult male, however, and 15 were children under 10 years of age. Did they live in Charleston or just outside the town like he did? At the very least, some of the 415 slaves found on the Charleston portion of the 1840 census probably were not actually living in the town.

On the other hand, the fact remains that more than half the population owned slaves, many of whom clearly resided in the town. Grocer-baker John Allen had a single slave, surely living in town. The same seems true for the one slave owned by merchant-saw mill operator, Thomas Whitteker, or the three owned by ferryman-inn keeper George Goshorn. Bank president-merchant James C. McFarland owned 11 slaves, but six were children and only one an adult male, all presumably city residents. Also, our lawyers Madison Laidley and George Summers both owned four slaves each. There is even a slave mother and child living with a free black woman. Nevertheless, it would seem safe to eliminate the 79 slaves that can be attributed to manufacturing, plus some additional number assuming there are slave families with children among them. The 415 slaves listed might be reduced by 100 and perhaps there are others not so obvious, but the number still seems proportionately higher than those attributed to Charleston in either of the other two censuses. That leads to the second question.

For reasons not clear, it appears that some of the white population counted in Charleston in 1840 were not counted as living in Charleston, but in the general county figures for 1850. Most obviously, neither Madison Laidley nor George Summers are included in the 19 pages labeled for Charleston. One has to scroll through 2000 households to find both of them in the county listings. One also finds such prominent names as bank president

James C. McFarland, County Clerk A.W. Quarrier, and salt maker Frederick Brooks, all appearing on the 1840 census for Charleston. Although the white population for Charleston in 1850 did increase some over 1840, it also seems that the white population of Charleston was undercounted on the 1850 census, and/or perhaps over-counted in 1840. In the end, we can confirm the two initial observations, (1) that Charleston probably had fewer people than the traditional population estimates have suggested, and (2) that a majority of Charleston residents owned slaves. We also know that there were 18,462 people in Kanawha County in 1850, 12,214 (66.2%) of whom were white or free black people, and 6,248 (33.8%) of whom were slaves, but unfortunately we cannot provide a precise population figure for Charleston during these years.

The census can provide some other insights, however. (See Fig. 6.) For example, just where did people live, for not all lived in independent households? Using the 1850 census which provides the greatest detail, one finds carpenter John Wilson had an apprentice living with him, his wife and four children, and saddle maker William Kelly also had an apprentice living with his family. Judy Grinnum, a free black woman, had the free black Spears family of six living with her; he was a cooper. Some lived in the taverns or hotels. Tavern keeper Orestes Wilson, his wife and five children (one just three months old) had a 23 year old teacher, a 19 year old clothing merchant and a 17 year old bar keeper listed with them. At the hotel where George Patrick was the tavern keeper, in addition to his wife and five children, there resided a deputy sheriff, a merchant, a clerk, a steam boat captain, a coal merchant, four young lawyers all in their twenties, a 42 year old man with “none” given as his occupation, plus a 19 year old free black female, presumably a servant.

Charleston did indeed have a quite diverse labor force by 1850. In brief summary, 54 people were in commerce, including 20 merchants, 3 tavern keepers, as well as bar keepers, clerks, grocers, butchers, a baker, millers, and bank officers. Another 64 were in the trades including 23 carpenters and 5 cabinet makers, a brick layer, a brick mason, a mill wright, plasters, painters, and 22 coopers—most likely servicing the salt trade. One can add another 16 associated with the river including 5 boat builders, 9 boatmen, plus 2 ship’s captains. The service trades add another 16 who were tailors, shoemakers, saddlers, blacksmiths, and a wheelwright, a wagon maker, and a watch maker. Among the 29 professional people were 11 lawyers, 3 teachers, 4 physicians, 3 clergy, a druggist, a judge, 2 constables, the sheriff, a salt agent, a river toll collector, and an editor. Only two salt makers were identified, although other residents clearly invested in the industry. There were 21 common laborers including four draymen, and there were 16 persons whose occupations were given as “none” and two women, perhaps widows. Remembering the small size of the town, and that much of the present flat land was not yet built upon, there were also three farmers identified in the town.

From looking at the census data, it appears that Charleston grew moderately from 1830 to 1850 and was a diverse and rather dynamic community when Madison Laidley decided to build Glenwood on the west side. He had become a successful lawyer, a significant investor in the salt industry, and was an established member of the community. Certainly there was capital available, if he needed credit, the craftsmen were available, and having

a slave quarters was quite the norm. Yet, this was also a community facing problems, some not yet known. The salt industry had peaked and was struggling to maintain its position against the competition. Dark clouds were on the horizon for the nation as deep issues divided North and South. Perhaps the tenuous resolution of these political threats by the Compromise of 1850 that passed Congress in September gave Laidley some reassurance to proceed.

### The Play of Politics: Whigs or Democrats?

Between the 1830s and 1850s, the nation developed its second two-party political system. The *nobles oblige* approach to government that characterized the founding generation gave way after 1815 to a more rowdy politics featuring professional politicians and a greatly expanded electorate. During the Presidency of Andrew Jackson in the 1830s, the parties took form: the Democrats personified by the President, and the Whigs, personified by his great rival Henry Clay.<sup>18</sup> Each of these parties had distinctive ideologies that directly impacted the people of the Kanawha Valley.

The Whig Party formed around the principles advocated by Henry Clay throughout his political career. Clay had visions of a great national market that would tie the country together into something he called his American System. He advocated support for transportation systems, river improvements, sound banking and financial institutions, and tariff protection of industries from foreign competition. Whigs believed that an active central government overseeing the nation's economic development was the best means of providing opportunity for all citizens to prosper, a policy goal that historian Lee Benson has called the positive liberal state. Democrats held contrary views, emphasizing the primacy of the states and distrusting the national government, which they viewed as a threat to the freedoms of individual citizens, a viewpoint Benson associated with the negative liberal state.<sup>19</sup>

Whig willingness to use government power meant they tended to include the reformers of the day, from temperance and public education to women's rights and abolition. They saw themselves as the "good" people as opposed to the broader populous appealed to by Jackson. Democrats appealed more to immigrants, individualists, and those with their strong states rights views. Democrats also tended to be the pro-slavery party, protecting that local "domestic" institution from any restrictions imposed by federal power.

For the salt makers of the Kanawha Valley, the Whig Party was clearly attractive. They early and often called for tariff protection of their highly competitive industry. They were, in fact, strongly attacked by the powerful Democratic Senator Thomas Hart Benton (Missouri) for causing high prices on a necessity common folk needed.<sup>20</sup> So too, they and other western Virginians frequently demanded from their legislature support for banking, transportation and educational policies they believed necessary for their development, but which were often denied by the Democratic planter oligarchy of the Tidewater and Piedmont that normally controlled the Virginia legislature. It is not surprising that both James Madison Laidley and George W. Summers II, members of the economic elite of Charleston, were prominent Whigs in Virginia politics. Laidley served in the Virginia legislature in the late 1840s and was the Whig/American Party candidate for Congress in

1858. Summers, too, served in the Virginia legislature, in the U.S. House of Representatives, and was the losing Whig candidate for Governor in 1851.<sup>21</sup>

Yet Charleston and the Valley were deeply involved with Slavery, and much of Kanawha County and western Virginia was a rural agricultural area. Agricultural and planter interests had little reason to support those calls for tariff protection in the 1830s and 1840s that only raised the prices of goods they had to purchase, and both they and the salt makers clearly had reason to protect their investments in slavery as that issue heated up in the 1850s. Herein lay the fatal flaw in the Whig Party both nationally and locally. As long as slavery was contained as a national issue, the Whig Party could thrive in both the South and North and was popular in the Valley. During the 1850s, however, the expansion of slavery became THE burning issue of national politics and destroyed the Whigs, split the Democrats, gave rise briefly to the American (Know Nothing) Party and the new Republican Party, all of which fundamentally restructured national politics. Not surprisingly, party politics in the Valley became very heated as this crisis deepened in the 1850s. Bitter exchanges between partisans occurred in the pages of the Whig Kanawha Republican and the Democratic Kanawha Valley Star.<sup>22</sup>

For many Whigs, nationalism remained a strong value. George Summers was a delegate to both the Virginia Peace Conference attempting to compromise issues between North and South in early 1861, and to Virginia's secession convention. Having failed to prevent secession, he retired from public life to his new home at Glenwood. For others in the Valley, however, state loyalties remained strong and support of slavery fierce. Perhaps most symbolically, Summers' law partner, George S. Patton, became chief organizer and first Captain of the Kanawha Riflemen, staunch supporters of the Southern cause. The list of names of those who filled out the ranks of the Riflemen included a number from salt-connected families. In spite of its Whig-like economic policies, neither Summers nor Laidley found the Republican Party of Lincoln, with its northern constituency and emancipation policies, attractive. Summers remained in retirement and died shortly after the war in 1868. Laidley became a soft-money Democrat after the war and was the Greenback candidate for Governor of West Virginia in 1876.<sup>23</sup>

It was in the midst of these crisis years of the 1850s, specifically 1857, a year of heated national political strife and the onset of another economic panic, that Madison Laidley decided to sell Glenwood and George Summers decided to buy it. Why they did so, I can not say. Was Summers already thinking about retiring from the turbulence of political life as he did four years later? Did Laidley want to give up his farming duties for the city life he thereafter pursued, or was he pressured by failing salt investments? Might the March 1857 Dred Scott decision, which confirmed the Southern view of slavery, again give both men false reassurance that all would be well? Perhaps future scholars can give us more complete answers.

### Some Final Thoughts

Glenwood is a fitting artifact of antebellum Charleston. Its ownership families were prominent members of the initial generation that laid the true foundations for the city. They flourished when opportunities were real, when institutions were developing, when a

great salt industry was thriving, thus providing significant opportunity for their children. The two owners of Glenwood exhibited and benefited from the dichotomy of a capitalistic elite rooted in slave labor. They were also part of Charleston's cultural elite that was attuned to the fashions of the day, including the Greek Revival architectural style, already evident, as we know, in the Bank of Virginia, the McFarland House and the Craik House.<sup>24</sup> How very symbolic, even ironic, then, that these slave-owning advocates of nationalist policies would build and retire to this house, whose architectural style celebrated freedom and democratic values, even as its accompanying slave quarters did not.

I hope that this Glenwood Project, which we recognize today, will be the source of many studies of Charleston and the Valley. The truth is that we really do not have a good study of antebellum West Virginia since Charles Ambler. There is much more that can be learned about Charleston and the Kanawha Valley, some of which I have made modest reference to in this paper. Many a graduate student could comb the census, as well as deeds, wills and tax assessments housed in county government to fill in gaps of the community's social structure. We need systematic studies of voting patterns and political alliances among the economic elite of the area, maybe even a family biography of the Summers family, or at least a collective biography of Charleston leaders. Also, we need good business histories to go along with the work done by John Stealey to say nothing of the need for studies of slavery as Billy Joe Peyton is currently undertaking. There is much to keep scholars of the Marshall University Graduate College and Glenwood Project busy for many years to come, and I wish them well.

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<sup>1</sup> Ruth Woods Dayton, *Pioneers and Their Homes on Upper Kanawha*, Charleston, WV: West Virginia Publishing Co., 1947, pp. 237-241, 275-285; George W. Atkinson, *History of Kanawha County from Its Organization in 1789 until the Present Time*, Charleston: Office of the West Virginia Journal, 1876, pp. 282-284, 250-253; W. S. Laidley, *History of Charleston and Kanawha County West Virginia and Representative Citizens*, Chicago: Richmond-Arnold Publishing Co., 1911, p. 959-964; Jim Comstock, ed., *The West Virginia Heritage Encyclopedia*, Vol. 12, Vol. 21, Richwood, WV: Published by Jim Comstock, 1976, pp. 2688, 4570. Although sources often list him as James M. Laidley, some indicate he went by Madison as used here. See the National Register Nomination for Glenwood, August 9, 1978.

<sup>2</sup> John Alexander Williams, *West Virginia*, New York: W. W. Norton Co., 1976, pp. 17-25, map on p. 18.

<sup>3</sup> See R. Eugene Harper, "Town Development on the Western Pennsylvania Frontier," *Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine*, Vol. 71, No. 1, Jan. 1988, pp. 3-26.

<sup>4</sup> John Hale, *Trans-Allegheny Pioneers*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Charleston, WV: The Kanawha Valley Publishing Co., 1931, pp. 262-275. Otis K. Rice, *Charleston and the Kanawha Valley*, Woodland Hills, CA: Windsor Publications, Inc., 1981, pp. 12-16.

<sup>5</sup> The first estimate comes from Laidley, p. 160; the Bowyer and Wilson estimates are from Atkinson, pp. 193, 144-145 respectively.

<sup>6</sup> Many, many standard works cover national events that had an impact on westward development. For example: Thomas P. Slaughter, *The Whiskey Rebellion*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1986, see Chs. 2 and 3; Charles Henry Ambler, *Sectionalism in Virginia from 1776-1861*, New York: Russell & Russell, Inc., 1964, see Chs. 3-4; John C. Miller, *Toward a More Perfect Union*, Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman Co., 1970, see Chs. 10-11, 17-18; Marshall Smelser, *The Democratic Republic, 1801-1815*, New York: Harper & Row, 1968, see Chs. 6-8, 10, 14-15; Edward Pessen, *Jacksonian America*, Homewood, IL: The Dorsey Press, 1969, see Chs. 5-6. A succinct account summarizing recent scholarship most relevant to this paper is Daniel Feller, *The Jacksonian Promise*, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995, see Chs. 2-4, pp. 14-75.

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<sup>7</sup> John E. Stealey III has provided the definitive study of the salt industry. *The Antebellum Kanawha Salt Business & Western Markets*, Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1993, pp. 8-16.

<sup>8</sup> Stealey, pp. 17-26. Those who formed the Kanawha Salt Company were: Daniel Ruffner, Tobias Ruffner, David Ruffner, Stephen Radcliff, Aaron Stockton, John Reynolds, John Shrewsbury, Samuel Shrewsbury, John D. Shrewsbury, Joel Shrewsbury, Leonard Morris, Charles Morris, Charles Brown, Isaac Noyes, Bradford Noyes, and John J. Cabell with William Steele, William Steele and Company, Joseph Lovell, and Andrew Donnally, p. 26.

<sup>9</sup> Stealey, pp. 27-36.

<sup>10</sup> Stealey, pp. 49-54.

<sup>11</sup> Stealey, pp. 64-73.

<sup>12</sup> Stealey, pp. 77-84, 89-98.

<sup>13</sup> Stealey, pp. 158-164, 168. Page 164 lists all the members of Ruffner, Donnally and Company.

<sup>14</sup> Stealey, pp. 184-188.

<sup>15</sup> Lists of historical firsts and of early institutions can be found spotted through out all the local histories. For some examples, see: Atkinson, pp. 185-198, Hale, pp. 279-289, Laidley, pp. 161-167, and Julius deGruyter, *The Kanawha Spectator*, Vol. I, Charleston, WV: Jarrett Printing Co., 1953, pp. 193-242. Otis Rice, *Charleston*, summarized many of these in Ch. 2, pp. 19-27, and in part of Ch. 3, pp. 29-33.

<sup>16</sup> *The Fifth Census of the U.S. 1830, The Sixth Census of the U.S. 1840, The Seventh Census of the U.S. 1850*, microfilm copies available in the West Virginia Archives, Cultural Center, Charleston. Anyone who has worked with microfilmed original documents quickly learns there are issues of judgment and interpretation. Handwriting can be unclear, inks fade or occasionally smear, corrections are not always clear nor calculations accurate. Even the microfilming can cut off a line or part of a number. Thus, these numbers are educated totals, but other researchers may reach slightly different conclusions. Also, each census was recorded differently. For example, the 1850 census has a separate slave register, while previous ones included slaves as part of the individual household population listing. Also, 1830 listed only population figures, but 1840 included columns for mining, agriculture, commerce, manufacturing and trades, navigation, and professions under which a number could be entered for each household. However, when household populations included both white owners and slaves, just who did what is not always clear. Finally, the 1850 census provides occupations for each household on the census but gives no occupation or trade for slaves on the slave register. Cecile R. Goodall, "Development of Municipal Government, Charleston, West Virginia, 1794-1936, *West Virginia History*, Vol. xxix, No. 2, Jan. 1968, p. 109 notes the 1846 annexation of the Lovell Addition but does not indicate its size or location.

<sup>17</sup> Hale, list of 1838 occupations, pp. 297-299; Dayton, p. 276. Julius deGruyter provides another list of occupations for 1857, but not directly used in this paper, in *The Kanawha Spectator*, Part II [Parsons, WV: McClain Printing Co.], 1976, pp. 19-27,

<sup>18</sup> A succinct modern discussion of the emergence of the second party system can be found in Harry L. Watson, *Andrew Jackson vs. Henry Clay*, Boston: Bedford/St. Martins, 1998. Also see Pessen and Feller, *passim*.

<sup>19</sup> Lee Benson, *The Concept of Jacksonian Democracy: New York as a Test Case*, New York, Atheneum, 1969, paper edition; See Ch. 5, especially pp. 104-109.

<sup>20</sup> See Stealey, Ch. 9, pp. 103-118 for his discussion of the tariff issue. deGruyter states that many of the prominent people of the Valley were Whigs, Part II, p. 7. See also Rice, *Charleston*, pp. 26, 32.

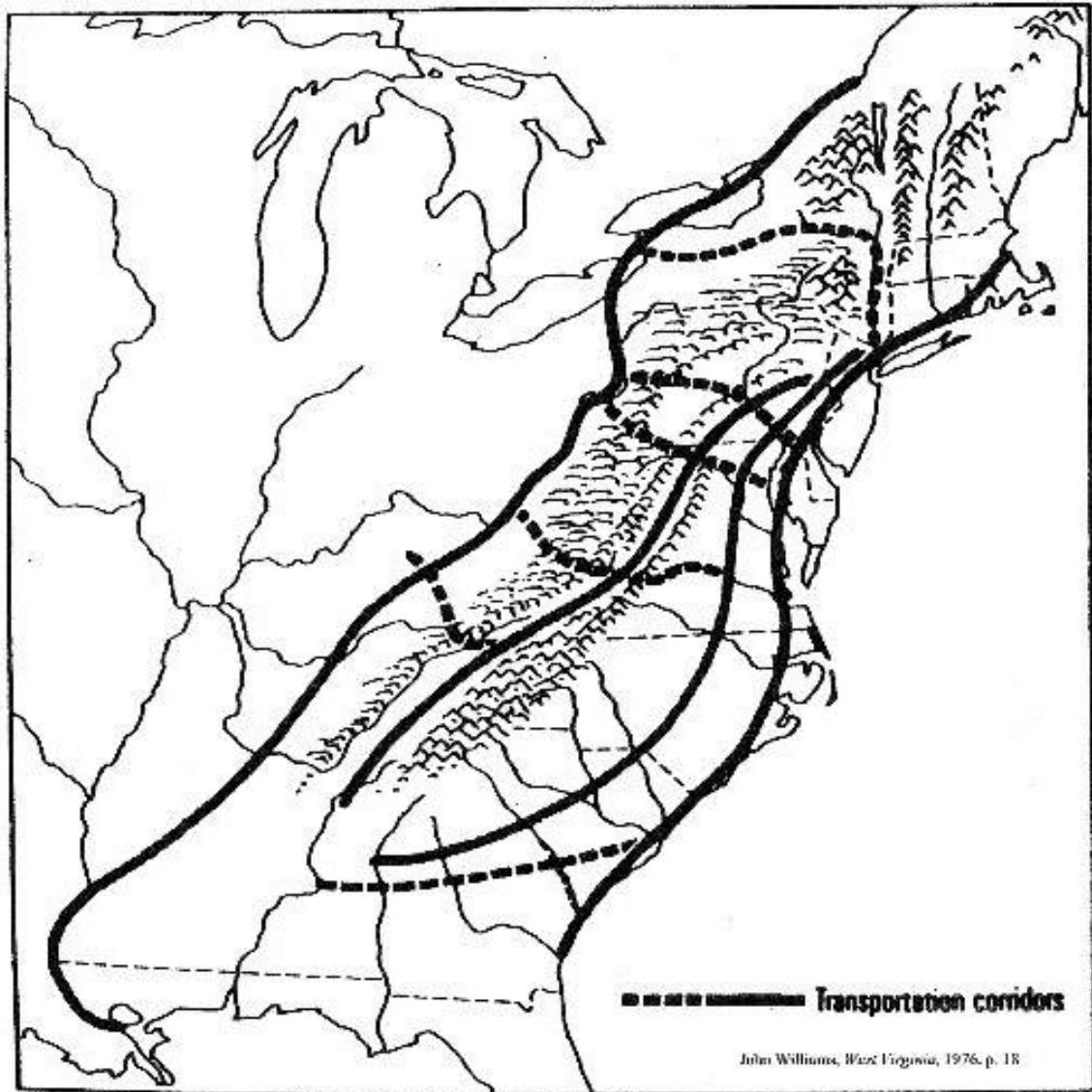
<sup>21</sup> Atkinson, pp. 282-284, 252-253.

<sup>22</sup> Ambler, is the traditional study of these questions; see especially, Ch. X, pp. 300-338. Otis Rice, *West Virginia: A History*, Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1985 summarizes these issues in Chs. 9 and 10, pp. 90-110. See also deGruyter, Part II, which primarily deals with issues of the 1850s, and Laidley, p. 152.

<sup>23</sup> Atkinson, pp. 252-253. Richard A. Andre and Stan B. Cohen, *Kanawha County Images*, Vol. II, Charleston, WV: Pictorial Histories Publishing Co., 2001 have a photo of the Summers and Patton business card on p. 39. See Dayton, pp. 306-307 for a list of the Kanawha Riflemen and Rice, *Charleston*, p. 72, Atkinson, pp. 282-284, Laidley, p. 961 and Comstock, p. 2688 for Laidley's late career.

<sup>24</sup> See Virginia and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1989, pp. 178-195 for a discussion of the significance of Greek Revival architecture. The McFarland-Hubbard House and Craik-Patton House still exist.

Figure 1



The east-west routes across the mountains are from top to bottom:

The Mohawk River-Hudson River corridor

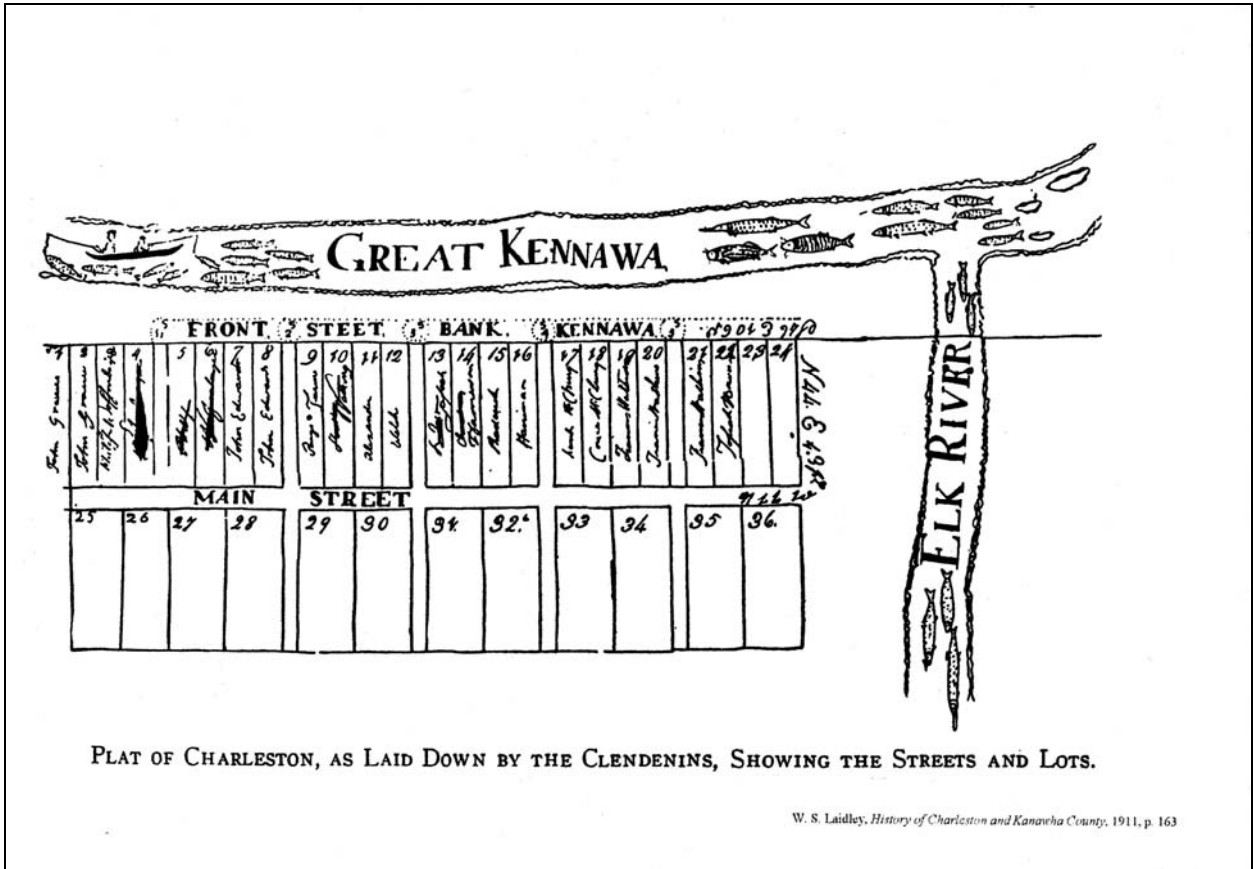
Forbes Road to Pittsburgh

Braddock's Road from Cumberland, the Potomac River-Monongahela corridor

The James River-Kanawha River Corridor

The Cumberland Gap

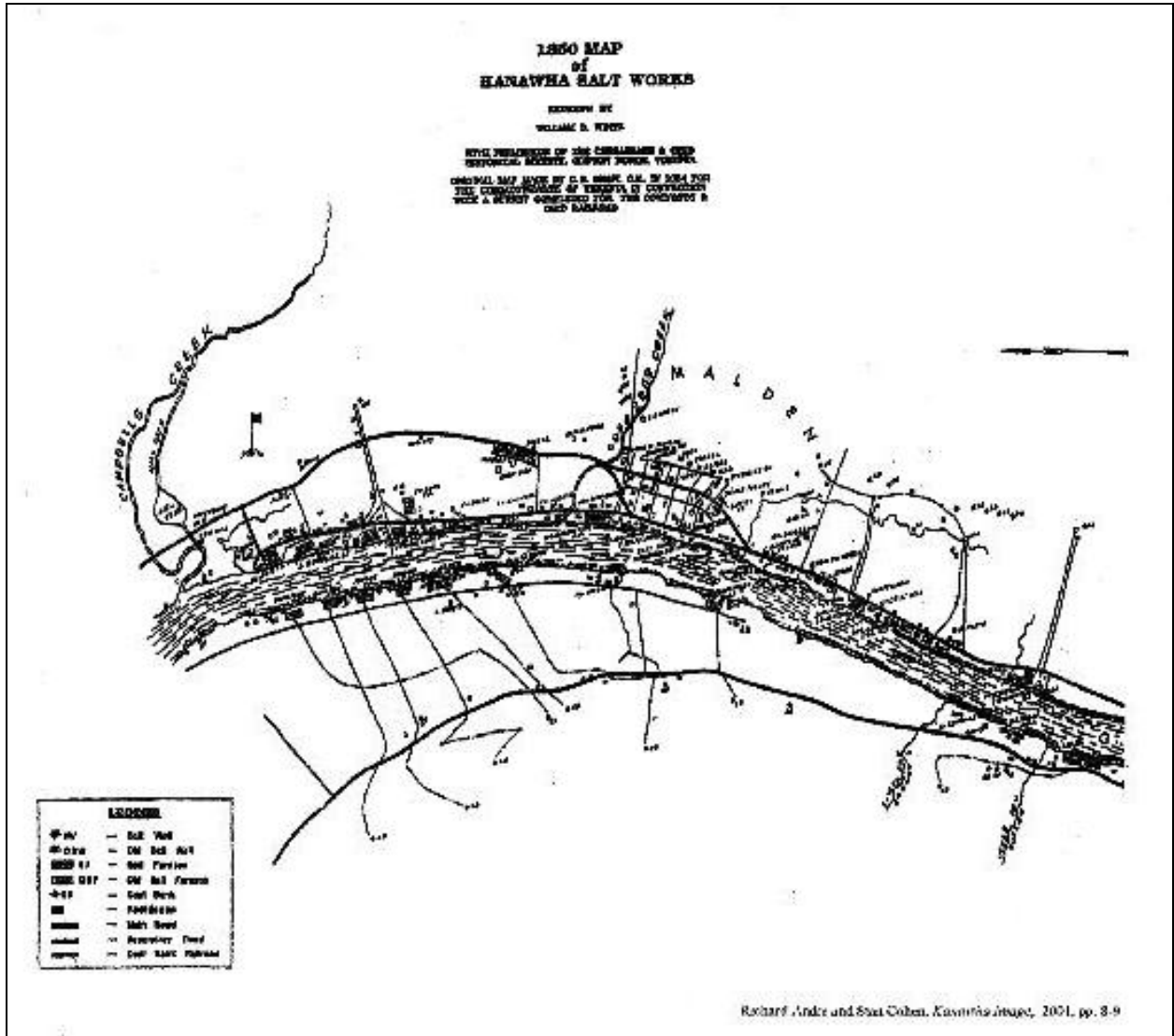
Figure 2



The original 1794 plat for Charleston. Front Street ultimately becomes Kanawha Boulevard, and Main Street becomes Virginia Street. The plat extended east to current Capitol Street, but not all the way to the Elk because of a deep ravine not shown.

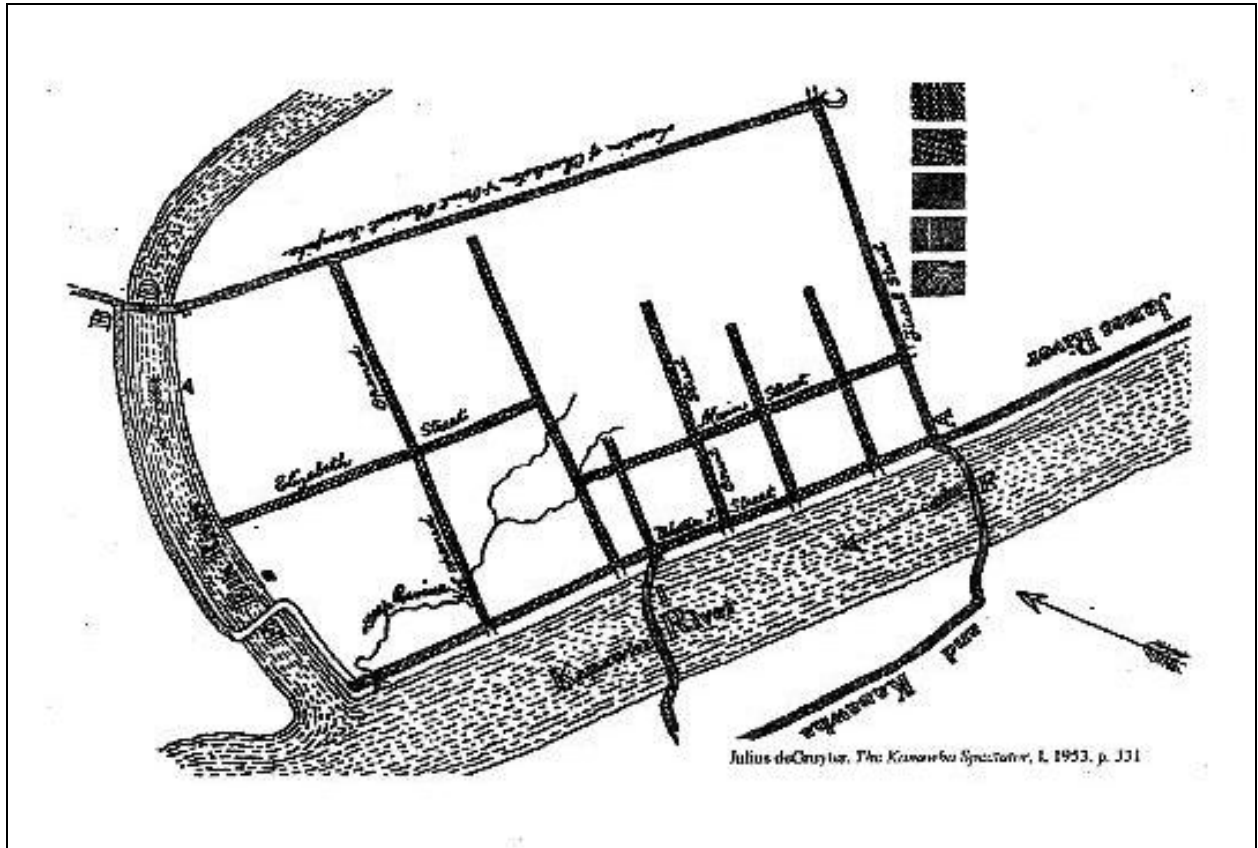


Figure 3



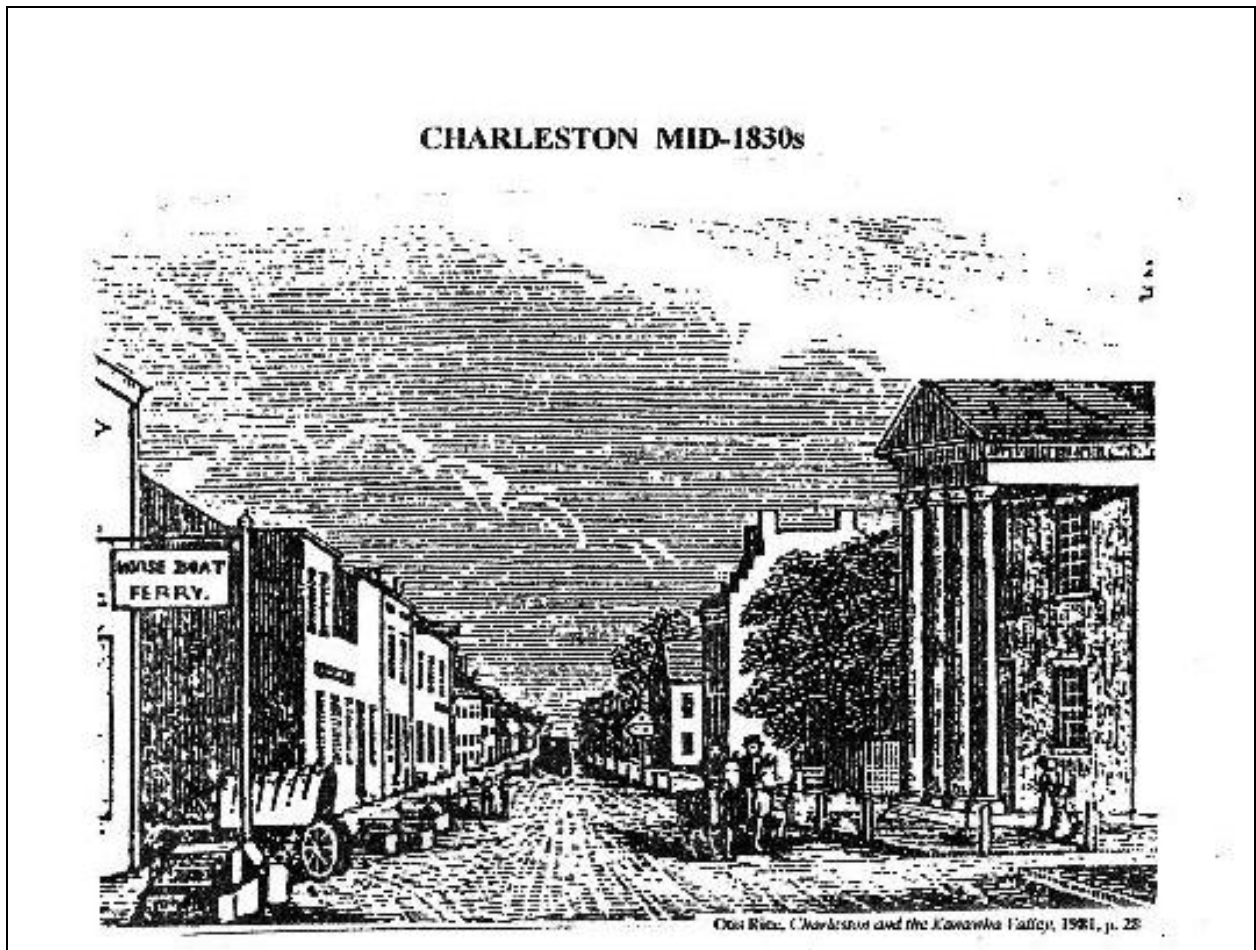
A portion of the salt industry in 1850 focusing on the Malden area. The industry extended this distance again up the river to Cedar Grove. On the legend, the large rectangles are salt furnaces, both producing ones and old ones. Note the many small salt railroads connecting coal banks in the hills with the salt furnaces on the river's edge.

Figure 4



An 1835 proposal for a new route through town for the Point Pleasant Turnpike requested by Augustus Ruffner and drawn by Thomas Mathews, an Assistant to the Sheriff. The old route through town was down Water Street (Kanawha Boulevard) from point A, crossing the Elk on Truslow's Ferry E and up the west side of the Elk to B and then west (using present west Washington Street). Ruffner proposed using Fiscal Street (Capitol Street) from A to C and create a new street (roughly Washington Street) from C to a new ferry at D and then west on the turnpike. The goal, one suspects, was to get the "through traffic," i.e. the many wagons and droves of poultry and swine, out of downtown. The James River and Kanawha Turnpike stayed out of downtown by crossing the Kanawha at A, the location of Wilson's Ferry. Goshorn's Ferry also crossed the Kanawha. Note the small x, indicating the Court House, on Water at Court. The proposal was not built. In 1852, a bridge was built across the Elk at point D, just as Madison Laidley was completing Glenwood.

Figure 5



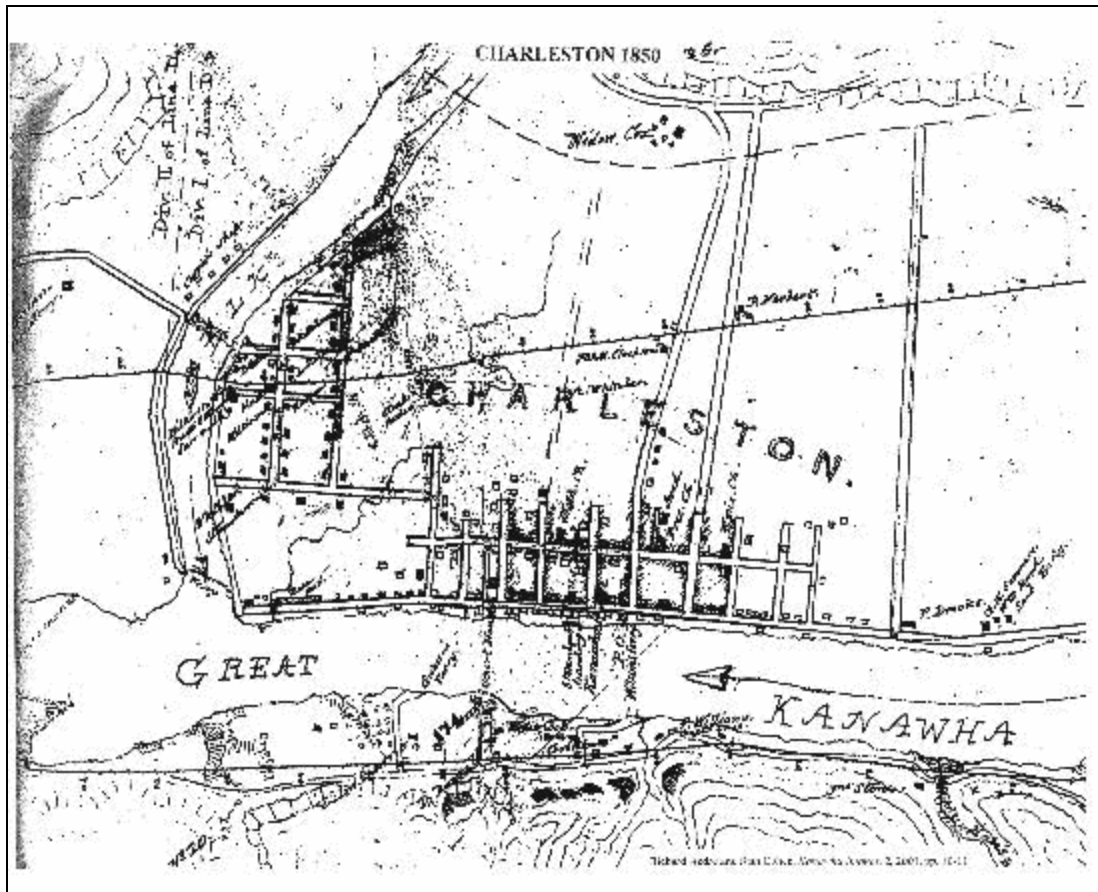
Present Kanawha Boulevard (Front, then Water Street) looking west from Capitol (Fiscal) Street.

On the corner on the right side of the street is the new Charleston Branch of the Bank of Virginia with its great Greek Revival columns, reminiscent of the Second National Bank in Philadelphia.

Next on the right is the Kanawha House Hotel in a Federal style with its great end chimneys, followed by the Summers Building.

On the left side of the street is Wilson's Ferry, James A. Lewis' store with the post office, and Aaron Whitteker' store at the location of the present levee. The Steamboat landing would have been behind it on the river bank. (Identifications in Andre and Cohen, I, p. 26.)

Figure 6



Charleston in 1850 as shown on a map by the future C & O Railroad plotting routes on both sides of the river. The route on the south side was completed in 1873 and the northern route later by another railroad. Identifications written in the river from left to right: Goshorn's Ferry, Court House, Steamboat Landing, Kanawha House, Post Office, Wilson's Ferry. On Main (Virginia) Street can be seen the Meth[odist] Church, and east of Fiscal (Capitol), the Acad[emy], Pres[byterian] Church, and Epis[copal] Church. F. Brooks residence is on Water (Kanawha) just east of the last cross street. Note the cooper's shop on the west side of the Elk above the Point Pleasant turnpike. (Andre and Cohen, *Kanawha Images*, 2, pp. 10-11.)