ON AUGUST 1, 1912 a Western Maryland freight train moved from Pittsburgh to Baltimore. This trip marked the opening of a new rail outlet from the Steel City to tidewater. The opening was the result of thirty years of financial manipulation, a considerable amount of open warfare between powerful individuals, and the epochal construction of an 87-mile extension of the Western Maryland Railroad from Cumberland, Maryland to Connellsville, Pennsylvania through mountainous terrain. That construction feat continues to hold the record of being the last major construction of main line track in the United States, except for the Alaska Rail Road—construction of which was begun in 1915.

The story of the forging of a new rail link from Pittsburgh to Baltimore in the early years of this century is almost as fascinating as the checkered career of the Northern Pacific Railway, which extends from Duluth and St. Paul, Minnesota, to Seattle, Washington, and Portland, Oregon. The story of the new rail link for Pittsburgh is one in which some of America's leading financiers play a part—Andrew Carnegie, William H. Vanderbilt, George Jay Gould, J. P. Morgan, and William Rockefeller.

There are striking similarities between the forging of the eastern road and the development of the Northern Pacific. There was a long time-lag in the completion of each. For the Northern Pacific it was from 1864 until 1883, and for the new link from Pittsburgh to Baltimore it was from the mid-1880's until 1912.
Both the eastern link and the Northern Pacific were the pawns of financial manipulators. Both roads experienced bankruptcy. Both faced enormous construction problems. Jay Cooke managed the Northern Pacific for a time; George Jay Gould had a heavy hand in the financing of rail construction from the vicinity of Pittsburgh toward the Atlantic; and J. P. Morgan exerted an influence on the Northern Pacific and various influences on Pittsburgh’s rail connections to the east.

The Northern Pacific and the Pittsburgh route by way of the Western Maryland were both at the mercy of financial pirates. A spectacular contest between the E. H. Harriman interests, on the one hand, and James J. Hill’s and J. P. Morgan’s, on the other, for control of the Northern Pacific took place in 1901 with the Hill-Morgan people gaining control. Then the victors agreed with the Harriman group to organize the Northern Securities Company that controlled the Northern Pacific, the Great Northern, and the Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy.

In the East, the Vanderbilts, having control of the New York Central Railroad, had an eye on Pittsburgh as early as the 1880’s. They wanted to capture much of the city’s freight traffic that was destined for eastern Pennsylvania and the Atlantic seaboard. In order to gain entrance to Pittsburgh, the Vanderbilts acquired control of the Pittsburgh and Lake Erie Railroad—a maneuver about which Dr. George Swetnam speaks at length in his unpublished book on the history of the P. & L. E. The manuscript is now in the Library of the new Indiana University of Pennsylvania along with numerous other manuscripts written by Dr. Swetnam.

When planned, and when completed in 1879, the P. & L. E. was intended to be a link with the Baltimore & Ohio’s Pittsburgh and Connellsville Railroad for a through line, after a fashion. However, the B. & O. supported Henry W. Oliver in the construction of the Pittsburgh and Western, now the Baltimore and Ohio’s Pittsburgh-Chicago line, which was completed in 1885. Meanwhile, Vanderbilt constructed the Pittsburgh, McKeesport and Yougbiogheny, which was completed in 1884 and ran east to New Haven, Pennsylvania. He had his eye on the coal trade. At the same time he was working with the South Penn and the Reading Railroad for a new rail outlet from Pittsburgh to the
As George Swetnam has stated: "It's hard to say which half of this double-cross was planned first."

As to the South Penn, Andrew Carnegie, eager to obtain competitive freight rates for his steel from Pittsburgh to tidewater, bargained with William H. Vanderbilt in the early 1880's. The upshot was an attempt of sorts to build a railroad from Pittsburgh to Harrisburg, the South Penn. Vanderbilt decided to sell the South Penn to the Pennsylvania Railroad rather than complete the new road. However, in 1886 the state courts prohibited the sale. By 1888 Carnegie expressed an interest in completing the South Penn. The freight rates that he was required to pay on steel were going up. He said he would try to deliver Pittsburgh from monopoly railroad rates. He now proposed the construction of a railroad from Pittsburgh that would connect with the Western Maryland, so as to get to seaboard. In 1900 Carnegie hired S. W. Cooper, an engineer, to look over the South Penn route. This action alarmed J. P. Morgan, who now decided to get rid of Carnegie by buying him out and forming the United States Steel Corporation.

About a decade after Vanderbilt and Carnegie were toying with the South Penn, George Jay Gould wanted to gain control of a rail network that would reach from coast to coast. His father, Jay Gould (1836-1892), had controlled 17,000 miles of railroad, mainly the southern "transcontinental" routes, including the Missouri Pacific and Wabash railroads. Father was daring and his eldest son, George, like father, took enormous financial risks. Jay Gould had won in the fight for control of the Erie Railroad. He was an expert at stock watering and similar forms of deception. With James Fisk he attempted to gain control of the nation's gold supply, an effort which resulted in the "Black Friday" panic of 1869. Jay Gould gained control of half of the railway mileage in the Southwest as well as New York City's elevated railways and the Western Union Telegraph Company. Upon his death, his son George inherited this vast empire. George launched out boldly. In order to further his father's dream of controlling a railroad from ocean to ocean, George Jay Gould decided to extend his line westward. He purchased the

1 Correspondence of September 8, 1967 to this writer.
Denver & Rio Grande Railroad so as to compete with E. H. Harriman. Harriman, in turn, retaliated by purchasing the Southern Pacific and limiting Gould in Utah. Gould decided to build a new railroad to San Francisco by way of the Feather River Canyon in California. The Western Pacific Railway Company was organized on March 3, 1903, and incorporated three days later; the route was surveyed with the utmost secrecy until the spring of 1905. At last Gould made a public announcement acknowledging his hand in the new venture. Late in 1905 contracts for construction of the road were signed.

Meanwhile, Gould was chairman of the board of directors of the Wabash Railroad (1903-1905). He was buying and building lines from Toledo, Ohio to Pittsburgh and to the east of Pittsburgh so that traffic over the Wabash Railroad could get to the Atlantic Ocean without using the Pennsylvania Railroad from Pittsburgh to tidewater.

George Jay Gould built a railroad from Bishop in Washington County, Pennsylvania to New Haven, a small borough across the Youghiogheny River from Connells ville (and since 1912 a part of the borough of Connells ville), with a spur into downtown Pittsburgh. This road later became the Pittsburgh and West Virginia and now is part of the Norfolk and Western. Gould's road had a rail link that joined Bishop with the Wheeling and Lake Erie. Now he was closely approaching control of a railroad from San Francisco to New Haven, Pennsylvania, and had his heart set on the Western Maryland Railroad which ran from Baltimore to a point sixty miles east of Cumberland, Maryland. In order to be the one man to control a railroad empire from the Atlantic to the Pacific, he wanted to close the 147-mile gap between the western end of the Western Maryland Railroad and New Haven, Pennsylvania. For a time it almost looked as though he might succeed. But, alas, his financing was not sound. Construction costs from Pittsburgh up the Monongahela and Youghiogheny rivers, were exceedingly expensive because of the excessive price of land at some places, much excavation in hard rock, and numerous bridges that had to be built.

Gould purchased the West Virginia Central and Pittsburg Railway Company about January, 1902 for $18,082,910.39. A few
months later he gained control of the Western Maryland Rail-
road through purchase of the interests of the City of Baltimore in that road. A City of Baltimore ordinance of July 23, 1860 had authorized the city to endorse first and second mortgage bonds to the extent of $500,000 as a means of enabling the Western Maryland Rail Road to build farther west, the road then having been less than thirty miles in length. Almost forty-two years later, on May 7, 1902, the City Council of Baltimore passed an ordinance authorizing the sale of its interests in the Western Maryland to Gould. The sale was negotiated by the Fuller Syndicate. The West Virginia Central and Pittsburg Railway Company and the Western Maryland would almost connect Gould’s western lines and his Wabash with eastern tidewater.

The purchase price for the interests of Baltimore in the Western Maryland was $8,751,370.45. According to a strict condition contained in the terms of sale, the purchaser should not receive title if the Western Maryland would be sold to any competing railroad company then operating in Baltimore or Philadelphia. This proviso, of course, was an expression of the fear that the Western Maryland Railroad might fall into the hands of the Baltimore and Ohio or the Pennsylvania Railroad and thus lead to a still more acute monopoly situation at the expense of Baltimore merchants. Gould was required by terms of the sale to extend the road to Cumberland, Maryland and build a tidewater terminal.

There were three other bids for the city’s interests in the Western Maryland—Hambleton and Company, the Reading Railway Company, and William W. Varney—with offers ranging up to $10,000,000, but none were in all cash. The competition was keen.

Almost at once Gould started a construction program. Surveys were completed in 1902. On June 15, 1903, construction bids were received and construction began on August 1, 1903. This sixty-mile extension was expensive even though following the Potomac River. More than two miles of tunnels were built, one being almost a mile long. Numerous bridges were erected. The track reached Cumberland, Maryland by February 6, 1906. The construction cost for the sixty-mile stretch was approximately $7,-
000,000. On March 15 freight trains were running to Cumberland and passenger service was established on June 17.²

Expenses in extending the road and in the improving of its former sections at a time when traffic had not yet increased markedly placed too great a financial strain on George Jay Gould. And then the Panic of 1907 caught him short and caused his downfall. On March 6, 1908, the Western Maryland Rail Road went into the hands of a receiver. Gould's Pittsburg and West Virginia went into receivership on May 29 and his Wheeling and Lake Erie on June 8. Gould was practically finished. In the next ten years, by 1918, he lost all of his railroads.

The Circuit Court of the United States for the District of Maryland on March 5, 1908 appointed a receiver of the property of the Western Maryland Rail Road Company. Benjamin Bush became the receiver of the Western Maryland. Bush had previously operated Gould's coal lands in the West and Southwest, and was president of the Western Maryland immediately before the receivership. Bush also became president of the road immediately after the receivership. The new corporation, the Western Maryland Railway Company, was incorporated on December 1, 1909 under the laws of Maryland. Under foreclosure proceedings it purchased the property of the former organization, the Western Maryland Rail Road Company.

In his fascinating two-volume history of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, Edward Hungerford scarcely mentions the B. & O.'s great rival, the Western Maryland, and discusses George Jay Gould in less than three paragraphs, as follows:

> At about this time [about 1900], Baltimore and Ohio was threatened with invasion by a new competitor; apparently, a very serious one. The so-called Gould interests were preparing to enter its territory. Mr. George Gould, acting through the Wabash, which already he controlled, had purchased the Cleveland and Wheeling Railroad and he actually was extending it into the very heart of that great traffic center, Pittsburgh. This involved tremendously heavy construction, the building of

ADDITIONAL RAIL OUTLET TO SEABOARD

great embankments, the driving of long tunnels and the construction of a mighty bridge over the Monongahela, almost at the very point where it enters the waters of the Ohio. All of this did not deter Gould. He not only prepared to build on this large scale, but he actually completed his project; even to the finishing of a sizable passenger station close to the historic Point.

For this enterprise, he had reorganized the Cleveland and Wheeling into the Wabash-Pittsburgh Terminal Railway (now the Pittsburgh and West Virginia). Next, he purchased the long-existent Western Maryland, which in its inception also had been aided financially by the city of Baltimore and the state of Maryland. He then announced his intention of connecting these two companies by a link of railroad. This caused much apprehension in the offices of Baltimore and Ohio. When it was further found that Gould actually was preparing to buy the properties of the Fairmont Coal Company as an aid to this plan, Loree [then president of the B. & O.] secured the purchase of that property, the Somerset and the Clarksburg Coal companies by the Consolidation Coal Company. For many years, Baltimore and Ohio had held a very substantial interest in the Consolidation, and now Mr. Loree purchased 13,701 additional shares of that company, so that the road owned 53,532 shares out of a total of 100,000 shares. It now found itself in possession of what was then perhaps the largest acreage of unmined coal held at that time in one ownership in the entire country. . . .

In ways similar to this, Mr. Gould soon began to find himself blocked, at nearly every turn. Unsuccessfully, he fought his stout opponents. Gradually, his imposing dream of a single transcontinental railroad (to be composed of Western Maryland, Wabash, Missouri Pacific, Denver and Rio Grande and Western Pacific) under a single management faded. . . . His eastern properties slipped out of his fingers; then followed, in due course, the westerly ones. He retired from active railroad management, and the name of Gould became merely a part of the dramatic railroad history of this continent.3

By the time that Pittsburgh was approaching a reasonably good prospect of obtaining an additional rail link to the sea, the relationship between business and government was undergoing

a drastic change. The railroad barons had managed their properties as they saw fit. When they thought it possible they watered their stock, and in this way swindled the public out of many millions of dollars. They engaged in rate wars hoping to bankrupt their rivals so that they could command a monopoly situation.

Various abuses by railroads and the failure of regulation by the states led Congress to create the Interstate Commerce Commission in 1887. The act which established the Commission made pools and discriminatory railroad practices in interstate commerce illegal and required that freight and passenger rates be published. The act was to be enforced by a commission consisting of five members, appointed by the President of the United States. Unfortunately the act did not confer sufficiently broad powers. Clever lawyers found ways to evade the intention of the act. Furthermore, the courts had little sympathy for the regulatory powers of the new agency. Ruinous competition and monopoly were the order of the day; and the courts had not yet developed a respect for the decisions of administrative tribunals. A series of decisions by the United States Supreme Court gradually strangled the Interstate Commerce Commission. Not until the Theodore Roosevelt Administration did the Interstate Commerce Commission have any substantial authority.

By the year 1900 a number of Eastern railroads, in anthracite and in bituminous areas, had acquired enormous tracts of coal land and engaged in the mining and sale of coal. At least some of them violated their trust as common carriers by hauling their own coal to market for a fraction of the actual cost of transportation and charging exorbitant rates for the hauling of coal that was mined by independent coal companies. When there was an absence of competition, the railroads added to the selling price of their coal a high charge for transportation.

George Jay Gould had been heavily involved in the coal business. A few months before he gained control of the West Virginia Central and Pittsburgh Railway Company in 1901, chartered February 23, 1881, the company operated 160.68 miles of railroad. Much of its trackage was in the heart of the West Virginia coal fields. In 1901 that company shipped 15,044,174 tons of coal from its own mines. It had more than 135,000 acres of coal and coking lands on the eastern slopes of the Alleghenies containing
ADDITIONAL RAIL OUTLET TO SEABOARD

an estimated one billion tons of coal. The value of coal lands, mining plants, coke ovens, and etc. of the Western Maryland for the year ending June 30, 1908 was $7,097,530.80.

In 1908 Henry H. Rogers, vice-president of Standard Oil Company, and his associates were completing a railroad with easy grades from Norfolk, Virginia to Deepwater, West Virginia, a distance of 446 miles, in order to capture a share of the bituminous wealth lying southwest of Connellsville.

Connellsville, Confluence, Rockwood, Garrett, and Meyersdale were Pennsylvania towns along the proposed 87-mile extension between Connellsville and Cumberland. Each had a deep interest in bituminous operations. The Connellsville Weekly Courier for July 2, 1908 reported that in spite of the depression of 1907 that year was by far the greatest coal-producing year. Only two of the thirty-one coal-producing states in the United States—California and Oregon—fell behind in 1907 as compared with coal production in 1906. As for bituminous coal, 394,845,730 short tons were produced in 1907 as compared with a national output of 342,874,867 short tons in 1906, an increase of 15.16 percent. The increase in terms of dollars amounted to $70,085,378, or 18.39 percent. The statistics were taken from the report of the Division of Mineral Resources in the United States Geological Survey.

The same issue of the Weekly Courier included a table indicating that on June 27, 1908 there were 6,154 coke ovens in blast in the Lower Connellsville District and nearly 100,000 other coke ovens in blast in the Connellsville District. The names and addresses of the operators were given in each table. These two tables were updated week by week and printed in the Courier during the years 1908-1912. At that time the Connellsville region was producing approximately one-half of the coke that was manufactured in the United States.

The Connellsville Weekly Courier for December 24, 1908 carried a large headline across the entire top of its front page: "BOW OF PROMISE HANGS OVER THE CONNELLSVILLE REGION." A "good" new year was predicted for the

region. Four new coal and coking plants were being pushed toward completion.

In 1908 coal was big business and a business that was rather largely dominated by those railroads which had penetrated the anthracite and bituminous fields. Both state and federal legislation had failed to produce adequate regulation of the railroads. The driving force of Theodore Roosevelt, and his dedication to the public interest, resulted in a strengthening of several kinds of federal regulatory legislation. The Hepburn Act of 1906 was pushed through Congress largely by him. The act increased substantially the powers of the Interstate Commerce Commission. One part of the act, the "commodity clause," alarmed the financiers who were looking with favor on the completion of the new rail link between Pittsburgh and Baltimore. The "commodity clause" stated specifically that after May 1, 1908 it would be unlawful for a railroad to transport from one state to another state any commodity (except timber) which was produced by the railroad or under its authority, "or which it may own in whole or in part or in which it may have any interest, direct or indirect, except such articles or commodities as may be necessary and intended for its use in the conduct of its business as a common carrier." In short, a railroad company was prohibited from transporting across a state line to a purchaser any commodity, except timber, which it produced or owned. The purpose of the clause was to protect the independent coal producer and the public.

In the spring of 1909 the constitutionality of the commodity clause was being tested in the United States Supreme Court. The test case excited much attention. Persons about to invest money in the Western Maryland extension to Connellsville and influential people in towns along the proposed route were greatly concerned about the outcome of this test case because the Connellsville vicinity was in the heart of a rich bituminous coal field and the Western Maryland was a large owner of bituminous coal land south of Connellsville. The following article about the test case, entitled "Future Of The Wabash Railway Hangs on the Supreme Court's Decision on a Clause," appeared on the front pages of the Meyersdale, Pennsylvania Republican for April 8, 1909.

The Supreme Court of the United States resumed its sitting Monday, and it is confidently expected in financial
and railroad circles that the long-deferred decision involving the constitutionality of the commodity clause of the Hepburn act will be handed down.

Upon this decision will hinge the early reorganization of the Western Maryland railroad, and probably the creation of a new trunk line, to include the Western Maryland, the Wheeling and Lake Erie, the Wabash-Pittsburg Terminal and the West Side Belt railroad of Pittsburg. This company has outstanding $10,000,000 of general lien and convertible 4 per cent. bonds secured by a mortgage upon the corporation's coal lands, aggregating more than 130,000 acres in Maryland and West Virginia. Under the Hepburn law railroads cannot haul products of companies which they own or control.

Example of B. & O.

If the decision is adverse, the Western Maryland railroad must divest itself of this property, as the Baltimore and Ohio did when it sold control of the Consolidation Coal Company to a syndicate headed by Clarence W. Watson and Jere H. Wheelwright.

It is understood that the Western Maryland railroad has two plans for reorganization, one based upon the Supreme Court recognizing the rights of railroads to hold coal lands and control other enterprises, and the other upon the tribunal sustaining the validity of the commodity clause.

May be Devoid of Force.

Large interests, who should be as well informed as to the legal aspects of the case as anybody, are inclined to take the ground that while the decision will probably be against the roads, it will be surrounded by so many conditions and exceptions as to leave it practically devoid of force. They assert, however, that the possibility of a surprise has not been ignored and that even the most drastic decision imaginable would not find the companies entirely unprepared.

* The files of the Connellsville, Pennsylvania Weekly Courier and the Meyersdale, Pennsylvania Republican for the years 1908-1912, constitute an excellent source of information concerning day-to-day local interest in the proposed 87-mile extension of the Western Maryland, and the progress of surveying, right-of-way acquisition, and construction. Meyersdale, somewhere near midway between Cumberland and Connellsville became the center of construction operations.

The file of the Connellsville Weekly Courier is available in the Pennsylvania State Library. Through the courtesy of Mrs. Frances L. Imler of Meyersdale, the only known file of the Republican for those five years was made available to this writer on a considerable number of occasions.
Just as the financiers and their shrewd corporation lawyers had guessed, the Supreme Court emasculated, almost annulled, the "commodity clause" in the case of the United States v. Delaware and Hudson Company.\(^7\) The necessary money was poured into the construction of the new rail link to seaboard. Nevertheless, a new day in the public interest had already dawned. The decisions of the United States Supreme Court in a second and in a third test of the "commodity clause" in 1911 and in 1915 were far less favorable to the railroads.\(^8\) In a fourth test case, in 1920, the Supreme Court flatly took the point of view that the public interest must be protected.\(^9\)

The Philadelphia *Railway World* for Friday, May 7, 1909 opened with an article entitled "The Commodity Clause Decision A Railroad Victory." Like the title, the opening two sentences of the article packed an enormous message:

The decision of the Supreme Court of the United States in the "commodity clause" cases, made public Monday, while upholding the validity of the law, permits the carriers to have stock interest in mining companies, or to own the mines outright provided the coal is sold before delivery to the railroad. This amounts practically to a sweeping victory for the roads, and with possibly one or two exceptions, will necessitate no change in the present method of control.

The "commodities clause" decision was of such significance that the opinion of the Court was printed in full as the first item in *The Traffic Bulletin* for May 8, 1909, a weekly publication issued by the Traffic Service Bureau in Chicago.

The Meyersdale *Republican* on May 13, 1909 announced that the prospect of constructing the link from Cumberland to Connellsville was "bright" and that it was believed the line would be built soon. The issue spoke of the atmosphere having been cleared by the decision of the Supreme Court on the commodities clause, and that Western Maryland stock was now selling at $28 per

\(^7\) 213 U. S. 366.
share on the New York Stock Exchange as compared with $5 per share a year ago.

The scare over the test case subsided. By July 1910, construction crews were busily at work on the 87-mile link. In December 1910, the Western Maryland Railroad had high hopes of developing its bituminous veins and hauling enormous quantities of coal. It was then owner of, or controlled, 133,121 acres of coal land. In addition, it controlled the West Virginia Central and Pittsburgh Railway, which owned in fee a similar area of coal territory, and the Davis Coal and Coke Company. The Davis company had made a contract with the Bethlehem Steel Company in the summer of 1910 to furnish at least 730,000 tons of coal per year for twenty years beginning in 1912, and as much as 2,000,000 tons annually for the twenty years if such quantity was wanted. This lucrative contract involved more than $50,000,000. With the Vanderbilt connections in the Central West it was expected that the coal traffic would be a very large business for the Western Maryland. Nevertheless, many of the wealthy coke manufacturers in the Connellsville vicinity, who were selling their product to the steel mills in Pittsburgh, were, no doubt, more interested in a federally-financed deep waterway to that city than in a commercial trunk line to Baltimore. More than a year and a half earlier, in November, 1908, the Connellsville Weekly Courier printed much news about the prospects of the Youghiogheny River being made a deep waterway from Connellsville to McKeesport at federal expense.

George Jay Gould's efforts to complete a rail link from Pittsburgh to Baltimore did not die when he lost control of the Western Maryland. Hungry eyes were contemplating the prospect of forging that link. The Vanderbilts had acquired control of the Pittsburgh and Lake Erie Railroad, which was operating between New Haven, Pennsylvania and Pittsburgh as well as to the north of Pittsburgh.

A few weeks after the Western Maryland came out of receivership a trade and traffic alliance between the Western Maryland and the P. & L. E. was announced. The Pittsburgh Gazette Times for January 19, 1910 heralded the news on its front page, with the following headlines: "Real Rival For B. & O. Road Is Now In
Sight," "Traffic and Trackage Pact of P. & L. E. and Western-Maryland Confirmed," "Possibilities Many," "Ninety-three Miles of Connecting Line Will Have to Be Constructed," and "New Coal Carrying Power." The article stated that Benjamin Bush, president of the Western Maryland Railway Company, had confirmed a report that a traffic and trackage agreement had been made by the Western Maryland and the P. & L. E., which would require construction of ninety-three miles of track to connect the two roads. It recited the following statement which was made to the public subsequent to a meeting in New York of the executive committee of the Western Maryland: "A traffic arrangement, covering a period of ninety-nine years, has been concluded between the Western Maryland Railway Company and the Pittsburgh & Lake Erie Railway Company." The Gazette Times of January 19, 1910 pointed out that the connection between the Western Maryland and the P. & L. E. by way of a direct route would be the best lake to seaboard rail line in the United States "and would be a real competitor for freight and passenger business with the Baltimore & Ohio."

At about the same time, the Baltimore Sun was busy prophesying that the rail gap between Cumberland and Pittsburgh would be closed and that the new trunk line would bring prosperity to Baltimore.

The trade and traffic alliance was, of course, beneficial to both roads. Alliance with the Vanderbilts' New York Central system assured financial support to the Western Maryland, the routing of New York Central tonnage to seaboard by way of the Western Maryland, and the use of the Western Maryland by eastern shippers who were doing business in those parts of the Midwest that were touched by lines controlled by the Vanderbilts.

The Railway Age Gazette for January 21, 1910 stated that the agreement between the Western Maryland and the P. & L. E. included the "immediate" extension of the Western Maryland from Cumberland to Connellsville, and full through traffic arrangements between the two railroads, with each of the two companies opening its lines and terminals to the "traffic of the other company and its through connections."

11 P. 157.
Under the terms of the reorganization plan of July 26, 1909 for the new Western Maryland Railway Company following receivership, the new company was to issue $10,000,000 4 percent non-cumulative preferred stock and $23,959,560 common stock. The preferred and the common were to have a par value of $100 each. Details concerning the sale of these securities are difficult to obtain. It is fairly certain that sales were slow and that the New York Central system was a large purchaser. The New York Central was desirous of routing much traffic between Baltimore, Pittsburgh, and the Midwest over its P. & L. E. In the year ending June 30, 1910, the following five persons from New York were directors of the Pittsburgh and Lake Erie Railroad Company: William K. Vanderbilt, Fred W. Vanderbilt, J. Pierpont Morgan, William Rockefeller, and William K. Vanderbilt, Jr.  

Two of the Gould properties, the Wabash-Pittsburgh Terminal Railroad and the Wheeling & Lake Erie Railroad, were being reorganized at the beginning of 1910 with the assistance of two banking firms in New York, Kuhn, Loeb & Company, and Blair & Company. The Pittsburgh Gazette Times for January 12, 1910 opened an editorial with these words:

An Important Reorganization.

More than ordinary interest attaches to the announcement that two of the strongest banking houses in New York, and representatives of the Wabash-Pittsburgh Terminal and Wheeling & Lake Erie Railroad companies have completed plans for reorganization of these properties.

The Railway Age Gazette on January 28, 1910 raised the question as to where the money would come from to build the extension from Cumberland to Connellsville. It suggested that it would probably be necessary to finance the eighty-seven miles by mortgaging the new work, and that the traffic agreement with the P. & L. E. would be a factor to incline bankers to advance the necessary construction funds. The Gazette also analyzed B. & O. and Western Maryland traffic. The preponderance of

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B. & O. freight between Cumberland and Baltimore was eastward, and much of it was coal. Westward from Baltimore its freight was mainly merchandise, limestone, and oysters. The Western Maryland was turning much of its westbound freight over to the B. & O. at Cumberland. 13

The Pittsburgh Post took the view that the traffic alliance with the P. & L. E. would scarcely produce the amount of money that would be required to build the link from Connellsville to Cumberland. 14 Among the headlines of the Meyersdale Republican of February 17, 1910 were "After Cash To Build Railroad" and "Western Maryland Wants Authority to Sell Bonds to Build Link."

At a meeting of the Western Maryland in Baltimore on March 31, 1910, the stockholders agreed to a plan to sell $25,496,670 Western Maryland unissued capital common stock. Present stockholders were given the opportunity to buy at $50 per share.

The extension to be built from Cumberland to Connellsville was 86.98 miles long. The estimated cost was $12,700,000. On the east end, 18.49 miles were to be built under the charter of the Georges Creek and Cumberland Railroad Company, which was owned by the Western Maryland. The remainder of the extension, from the Pennsylvania boundary to Connellsville, was to be constructed by a new corporation (the Connellsville and State Line Railroad) formed under the laws of Pennsylvania with capital stock in the amount of $700,000. The capital stock of the Georges Creek and Cumberland Railroad Company was to be increased from $1,000,000 to $3,500,000 so as to provide for construction costs. The Western Maryland bought the new shares.

By the time that apprehension was declining concerning the commodity clause and the trade and traffic alliance was made between the Western Maryland and P. & L. E., surveyors were at work selecting an appropriate route for the railroad from Cumberland to Connellsville (New Haven), although preliminary surveys had been made previously. The P. & L. E. then

13 P. 174.
14 January 31, 1910.
ran from Pittsburgh to New Haven, a distance of approximately sixty miles.

The Meyersdale Republican for February 17, 1910 reported that three engineering corps were then in the field "making final surveys" and that they would be followed by grading gangs. The Pittsburgh Dispatch for March 20, 1910 commented as follows concerning the route of the last link in the seaboard route:

The projected new line of the Western Maryland, to be constructed from Cumberland, Md., to a connection with the Pittsburg & Lake Erie at New Haven, Pa., will be some 20 miles shorter than the main line of the Baltimore & Ohio between these two points and is expected to have better grades. From Cumberland, where the Baltimore & Ohio makes a long detour to the north and west to reach Salisbury Junction [in Somerset County, Pennsylvania] the Western Maryland expects to strike directly west, south of Savage Mountain and reach Salisbury Junction with a line approximately half the length of the former's. From this point to Connellsville, Pa., the lines will parallel each other, the Baltimore & Ohio on the north bank of the Casselman and Youghiogheny rivers and the Western Maryland on the south bank.

Between Salisbury Junction and Confluence [in Somerset County, Pennsylvania] the Western Maryland will cross the Casselman river five times and from that point into Connellsville will cross the Youghiogheny three times. Its last crossing will be just west of Ohiopyle [in Fayette County, Pennsylvania] and from there will run directly into New Haven on the south bank of the river. One tunnel about a mile in length and several shorter tunnels will be necessary. Eighteen months, it is estimated, will be required to construct these. Engineers are now going over the ground and several construction concerns are making estimates on the work, although no formal requests have yet been made for bids. These are expected to be asked for within the next two weeks and active construction to begin before the end of April.

The route as finally surveyed was almost eighty-seven miles long through the Allegheny Mountains. It had a maximum grade of forty-two feet per mile as compared with seventy-nine feet on the Pennsylvania Railroad and fifty-three to sixty-three on
the Baltimore and Ohio and fifty-three on the Norfolk and Western.

The Railway Age Gazette for February 3, 1911 reproduced a profile of elevations on the Western Maryland's Cumberland-Connellsville line and declared that it was the easiest grade eastward of any railroad crossing the northern part of the Alleghenies. This fact was of much importance because heavy commodities, such as coal and steel, would be moving east from Pittsburgh over this railroad.

By the new route from Connellsville to Cumberland the rail distance from Pittsburgh to Baltimore would be 317 miles as compared with 327 miles on the Baltimore and Ohio and 329 on the Pennsylvania Railroad. From Baltimore to Cleveland the distance on the B. & O. was 497 miles, on the Pennsylvania 468, and on the Western Maryland route it would be 449. Toledo was 642 miles from Baltimore by way of the B. & O., 589 miles by using the Pennsylvania, and it would be 562 via the Western Maryland connection. Where the rail distance from Baltimore to Chicago along the route of the B. & O. was 813 miles, it was 798 on the Pennsylvania. Trains traveling over the Western Maryland would reach the Illinois metropolis after a trip of 806 miles, which was seven miles shorter than by B. & O. but eight miles longer than the Pennsylvania Railroad's route.

The extension of the Western Maryland Railway Company's line from Cumberland, Maryland to the Pittsburgh and Lake Erie's tracks at New Haven, Pennsylvania was about as delightful a subject to the officials of the B. & O. as were devastating storms, train wrecks, and loss of a dozen or so of the country's largest shippers. The creation of a new trunk line between Baltimore and Pittsburgh was a serious threat to the B. & O. Its officials retaliated. No doubt they interposed numerous obstacles when the Western Maryland was attempting to acquire right-of-way, especially through Sand Patch Gap, a pass near the crest of the Allegheny Mountains. B. & O. officials probably attempted a few pieces of Machiavellian strategy, revamped to suit the purposes of modern business.

B. & O. surveying crews were much in evidence around Meyers-

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15 Railway Age Gazette, February 3, 1911, p. 197.
16 Ibid.
Meyersdale on the west slope of the backbone of the Allegheny Mountains. It was thought that the B. & O. would supplant its Sand Patch Tunnel, approximately a mile long, with a tunnel several miles long so that its line would have a far easier grade than its new competitor.

The Meyersdale Republican for April 28, 1910 proclaimed good news for the town it served.

Meyersdale is to be headquarters for the new B. & O. construction work [Sandpatch Tunnel], as well as for most of the heavy work to be done in order to connect the Western Maryland with the Pittsburg & Lake Erie. All of which means better times ahead for Meyersdale.

Nearly three months later the same newspaper, in its issue for July 21, 1910, carried a headline, “B. & O. Shows Its Teeth.” The article stated: “The B. & O. engineers are still as conspicuous as an army with banners in and around Meyersdale, but the company’s plans are yet shrouded in mystery.” The same paper, for August 25, 1910, carried a headline: “B. & O. Low Grade An Assured Fact” and “New Tunnel Over Two and One-Half Miles Long to Be Built.”

On November 3, 1910 the Meyersdale Republican quoted the Connellsville Courier and provided the following information. In the past few months surveyors were running lines for the B. & O. from the Casselman River, at Meyersdale, up the Flaugherty Creek toward Sand Patch. Right-of-way agents were then on the ground to acquire the land. These dual activities were thought to be preliminary work for a line with easy grades that would enter a tunnel at Glade City, two miles east of Meyersdale. The tunnel would be more than two miles long. Also, it was then rumored that the most extensive yards of the entire B. & O. system would be built at Meyersdale, with ten to twenty tracks extending two miles.

On April 4, 1911, B. & O. officials and engineers arrived in Meyersdale in a private car with a flat car attached to it. The flat car had an iron frame on it, probably to measure the smallest heights and widths in the Sand Patch Tunnel, and thus determine the extent to which over-size rolling stock could be accommodated. A helper engine took the two cars to Sand Patch. The group
spent several hours inspecting the tunnel. It was becoming increasingly deficient, almost daily. It was reported on April 20, 1911 in the Meyersdale paper that a contract had been let for a new tunnel at Sand Point. The new tunnel was to accommodate two tracks, thereby providing three tracks instead of one at the summit. It was thought that the plan for a long tunnel and a low grade had been discarded. According to a front page story, “The B. & O. sphinx has spoken and the mystery in regard to what is to be done about Sand Patch tunnel is solved.” A tunnel 4,000 feet long, rather than 2.6 miles, was to be built.

Building the Western Maryland link in this century introduced a greater number of serious right-of-way problems than were faced by earlier railroad construction projects of major size. It was no easy task to obtain the necessary parcels of land for an 87-mile stretch of railroad through mountainous country in which one of America’s leading railroads had already obtained the parcels it wanted. Sand Patch Pass in the Alleghenies was the key to a new trunk line from Pittsburgh to Baltimore.

The importance of the Sand Patch Pass to Chicago-East Coast rail traffic can scarcely be exaggerated. The rail history of that notch in Somerset County, Pennsylvania, near the crest of the mountains, is a story that involves some of the most difficult construction of two major railroads—the Baltimore and Ohio and the Western Maryland. It is a story of the struggle between man and nature. It is also the story of the pitting of power against power, with Leonor F. Loree, Oscar G. Murray, and Daniel Willard, presidents of the B. & O., and Benjamin Bush, president of the Western Maryland, and George Jay Gould, William Rockefeller, and the Vanderbilts being the principal characters in the act. The story surrounding the Sand Patch Pass is one of the most spectacular in American railroad history.

In 1962 Ray Gnagey, a native of Somerset County, Pennsylvania...

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37 Meyersdale Republican, April 6, 1911.
38 Hungerford spoke of the Sand Patch Tunnel as a bottleneck on the Cumberland-Pittsburgh line of the B. & O., and a stretch of more than a mile “that made operating men grow grey before their time,” Baltimore & Ohio, II, 270.
39 Meyersdale Republican, April 20, 1911.
and a minister in the Evangelical United Brethren Church, told this writer that at the time the construction of the Western Maryland extension from Cumberland to Connellsville was being considered seriously the B. & O. was buying certain pieces of land so that the Western Maryland could not get the right-of-way that it needed. Reverend Gnagey also said that the State of Pennsylvania assisted the Western Maryland in obtaining the necessary land through the Sand Patch Gap. Whatever the tactics of obstruction and delay may have been, this writer has not found any Pennsylvania statute or any court decision which gave major assistance to the Western Maryland Railway Company or to its predecessor, the Western Maryland Rail Road Company, in obtaining its right-of-way from Connellsville to the Pennsylvania-Maryland boundary in Somerset County, Pennsylvania, a point approximately sixty-nine miles from Connellsville and about eighteen miles from Cumberland.

For the largest part of the distance from Connellsville to Sand Patch, the Western Maryland parallels the B. & O.; the latter, for the most part, following the north bank of the Casselman and the Youghiogheny rivers and the Western Maryland following the south bank. However, at Sand Patch the Western Maryland turns southeast, taking a bold course to Cumberland and one which shortens its distance without increasing the severity of its grade. At the very narrow entrance to the pass, the Western Maryland crosses over the B. & O. on an enormous steel bridge. At that point Western Maryland freight trains, and for a time its elegant passenger trains making through connections between Baltimore, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Toledo, and Chicago, alternately thundered and puffed over the B. & O. The Western Maryland freight trains have been thundering and laboring over that bridge for more than fifty-five years.

The Western Maryland of course was faced with the large problem of acquiring the land and after laying out its route to Sand Patch, up the east and up the west slopes of the Allegheny Mountain. The Meyersdale Republican for April 14, 1910, carried on its front page the following article:

Another straw that shows that the Western Maryland or Wabash road is in earnest about building a connecting line between Cumberland, Md., and New Haven, Pa., is
furnished by a big right-of-way deal that was closed last Friday by Col. J. M. Turner, the popular and efficient right-of-way agent of the company.

The survey for the proposed road runs right in front of three openings of the Kenneth Coal Company, formerly known as the South Side Mining Company at Garrett. How to get by those mines on the grade desired without paying enormously for the privilege, was a question that greatly perplexed the right-of-way agent, as the damage to the mining property will be very heavy.

But the mining company is made up of enterprising and public spirited men who want the new road to come through, as it will give them added shipping facilities and stimulate the coal market generally. Accordingly, the mine people were willing to meet Col. Turner half-way at least.

Negotiations which had been in progress for a long while were brought to a conclusion last Friday at a conference held at the Slicer House in this city [Meyersdale], where Col. Turner has his headquarters. The terms of sale were not made public, but both sides appear to be well satisfied with the agreement reached.

The coal company agrees for a cash consideration understood to run well up into the thousands, to permit the railroad to pass directly in front of the three mine openings, necessitating the removal of the air shafts, boiler house, etc., at great expense, which the coal company will bear.

This removes one of the greatest obstacles in the building of the road on the line proposed. If unable to get the right-of-way desired at this point, it would have meant a change of grade for a long distance, involving enormous expense and not giving near as good a gradient as the engineers have figured on.

A few weeks later the same paper gave a quick summary of right-of-way activities, under the following headlines.

WABASH RIGHT OF WAY

Company Pushing Its Campaign With Much Vigor — Defendants Get Worst of Condemnation Suits.

As an earnest [evidence?] of its determination to begin early construction, the Wabash, or Western Maryland Railroad, is pushing right of way matters with vigor.
Col. [J. M.] Turner, the genial right of way agent, is the busiest man connected with the project. During the past week, he secured two deeds from the Wilmoth heirs, one for a tract on Big Savage Mountain, and one at Sand Patch. To secure all of the necessary signatures, he had to make trips to Johnstown, Cumberland and Baltimore. He also closed a deal with the Savage Fire Brick Company for right of way over its property; with Keim & Dibert of Johnstown, for three strips near Pinkerton; with the Wilkins heirs, for a tract opposite Casselman; with J. B. Listie, for a tract near the Fort Hill bridge. Several condemnation suits have been successfully prosecuted. Mrs. Susan Speelman who demanded $2,000 for six acres, was awarded $885 by the jury; the company would have been willing to compromise for $1,000. Augustine Berkey, who asked $10,000 for 17½ acres, received an award of $3,000; the company would have paid $4,000 rather than go into court. In most cases the defendants in condemnation suits get the worst of it.20

The Connellsville Weekly Courier for August 4, 1910, said that the right-of-way had been acquired for 69 miles of the 87-mile stretch. Meyersdale had difficulty making up its mind as to where it would permit the Western Maryland to go through the town. The matter was not yet settled by December 15, 1910. A week later the Western Maryland was planning to tunnel under the town in order to eliminate dangerous street crossings and an expensive right-of-way.

The agreement reached by the Meyersdale borough council and the representatives of the Western Maryland Railway concerning a rail route through the town is commented upon on the editorial page of the Meyersdale Republican for June 1, 1911. The editorial states, in part:

Upon the whole, it looks as though the borough “dads” got around the several perplexing problems in the best possible way and are to be commended for the manner in which they performed their duties. The railway authorities are also to be commended for their exceeding liberality and for the disposition displayed by them in their efforts to do the best possible thing in each case, in order to please and benefit the greatest number of citizens.

20 Ibid., May 5, 1910.
The Western Maryland Railway Company was trying to do a good public relations job. For example, its right-of-way agent, Colonel J. M. Turner, had promised Meyersdale, at a meeting of the town’s Commercial Club, that the railroad would build in Meyersdale the finest depot on the line between Cumberland and Pittsburgh, except at Connellsville. He promised to do other great things for the town, such as help it develop industries and a flourishing business.21

Among the amusing incidents concerning right-of-way acquisition for the 87-mile link is one which occurred after construction began and which was recounted in some detail in the Connellsville Weekly Courier. The incident might perhaps have developed into a pitched battle between Sheriff Charles F. Hochard of Somerset County, Pennsylvania and Western Maryland laborers who continued to work on a fill near Markleton, in his county, after Judge William H. Ruppel of Somerset County issued an injunction against the Western Maryland Railway Company. The injunction was in favor of Mrs. Margaret Phillips and others. Approximately one hundred laborers were involved. They continued working on a fill across a tract of about 600 acres described as a private roadway. By the time the sheriff tried to serve the injunction papers at the scene of the work, the representatives of the railroad had disappeared. After a long search, a section foreman was found about two miles from Markleton and the papers were served on him. However, the laborers continued their work for a short time. About twenty of them were arrested after being chased. The sheriff locked them in a boxcar and left his deputy, Edward Keefer, in charge of the prisoners. Upon arriving in Somerset the sheriff was notified by an attorney, Ernest Kooser, that the laborers had been ordered back to work. Sheriff Hochard went to Markleton again, and under threat of force he arrested the work train crew “and many other men.” All of these men were imprisoned in the boxcar. Some of the laborers fled but were caught after a long chase. Then orders to cease work temporarily arrived from Western Maryland officials at Connellsville. The prisoners were released and the work train of approximately sixty-five cars took them to Connellsville. The sheriff enforced this injunction on Sunday, September 22, 1912.22

21 Ibid., March 30, 1911.
22 Connellsville Weekly Courier, September 26, 1912.
Two years and $10,000,000 were required to build the 87-mile link which brought into existence a new trunk line railroad between Pittsburgh and the eastern seaboard. Some of the construction was exceedingly difficult because of the mountainous terrain through which the route passed. One cut involved the moving of 111,300 cubic yards of earth and stone. One fill contained 126,200 cubic yards of material. Another cut, on the east slope of the Allegheny Mountain, required the moving of 182,240 cubic yards, and one fill of 145,725 cubic yards had a depth of 101 feet to its culvert.

With a large headline, "Dirt Will Fly Within a Month," the Meyersdale Republican for January 20, 1910 announced the beginning of construction between Connellsville and Cumberland. The issue stated that engineers of the Western Maryland and the P. & L. E. were "working out details and making arrangements for ordering steel and other requisites for the road."

On March 5, 1910, Benjamin Bush, president of the Western Maryland Railway Company, announced the completion of the surveying as well as the acquisition of the right-of-way. He also reported that he expected that ground would be broken by April 10. Barring unforeseen difficulty, he predicted that trains would be moving from Baltimore to Pittsburgh over the new line in twenty months.

The Connellsville Weekly Courier of March 17, 1910 carried an editorial, "The Western Maryland and Greater Connellsville," emphasizing that the coming of the Western Maryland railroad would bring new industries and prosperity in general to the town.

Various newspapers from Pittsburgh to Baltimore were soon announcing that several construction concerns were making estimates on the cost of building the link. It was expected that bids would be asked for in the next two weeks and that active construction would begin by end of April.

Late in March contractors were in Meyersdale looking at plans. They were probably trying to obtain facts on which to make a bid. Construction bids were to be opened on April 1, 1910, and contractors were to work day and night with the right-of-way illuminated by electricity for the night work.

22 Meyersdale Republican, March 24, 1910.
Events were beginning to move rapidly. The *Wall Street Journal* for April 13, 1910, commented as follows:

Contracts for the construction of the Western Maryland's extension from Cumberland, Md., to Connellsville, Pa., have been awarded to the Carter Construction Co., of Pittsburgh. There were nine bidders, but the lowest bid was made by the above named firm.

Bids for the construction of this extension were invited in three sections and it was expected that the contracts would be awarded to several different concerns in order to facilitate its completion as it is desired to have the new line in operation as soon as possible.

The line is to be 83 miles in length and will give the Western Maryland entrance into Pittsburgh over the Pittsburg & Lake Erie with which it has a 99-year traffic agreement. It is believed that the United States Steel Corporation is closely affiliated with the Carter Construction Co. The new line will cost about $12,500,000 to construct and equip.

Along the 87-mile route the new road was frequently called the Wabash because of the former influence of George Jay Gould in the projection of the trunk line and the connection with the Wabash-Pittsburgh Terminal Railroad. On May 19, 1910, a front page headline of the Meyersdale *Republican* read "Wabash Road a Sure Thing." It also reported that "Meyersdale has been swarming with sub-contractors for a week past." And the Connellsville *Weekly Courier* for May 26, 1910, placed the following headlines on its front page: "Western Maryland Contracts Are Let," "Connellsville Contractor Will Build One Stretch of Road," and "Work To Start At Once." The article stated that the contractors were assembling their equipment so as to begin work as soon as weather would permit. In order that the road could be built rapidly, divisions were kept small and work was given to numerous subcontractors. The John B. Carter Construction Company, the article said, was given the overall contract to build the eighty-seven miles, "but will construct only 22 miles in Maryland and just beyond Meyersdale, where the sub-contractors will begin." The Carter Construction Company had given a bond to complete the eighty-seven miles in fifteen months. The article also said that more than 3,000 men would be employed in the entire contract.
The Meyersdale Republican for June 2, 1910, indicated that the Carter Construction Company had already established its headquarters at Meyersdale. On June 9, 1910, the same paper heralded the news, "Steam Shovels Will Soon Be Moving Dirt," and "Meyersdale the Head Center." A week later its headlines announced: "Activity Along Wabash Line" and "B. & O. Sidings Congested with Machinery and Materials for New Road." Of course, as a common carrier the B. & O. was obliged to haul for the contractors who were building the competing road, a situation that must have caused squirming among some officials in Baltimore and among some stockholders in New York.

The following account of construction activity received double mileage. It was printed in the Connellsville Weekly Courier and then reprinted almost immediately in the Meyersdale Republican, near the end of June 1910.

The Allegheny mountains east of here have been turned into a busy hive of industry since the sub-contractors on the Western Maryland have started to work. Up to the present time the materials have been assembled and this week the work begins in earnest.

Last week actual grading was started on the new line at several points. A big steam shovel is making the dirt fly at Confluence, while fast time is being made at Garrett and Indian Creek. Actual grading also began in the neighborhood of Ohiopyle last week. Forces of men are at work on several stretches between Green Junction and Ohiophyle, where the first cuts into the mountain side have been made.

Practically all the timber has been cut off the right of way and there is nothing to impede the contractors. The timber owned by the Ohiopyle Company near Ohiopyle still remains on the right of way but the company has already begun its operations to remove it.

A number of the timber owners are making a clean sweep of their wood. Many of them have started to burn the small stuff for charcoal.

News about the Western Maryland was "big news" in the towns along the 87-mile extension during the summer of 1910. The Meyersdale Republican for July 14 of that year carried


The Pittsburgh Gazette Times for July 23, 1910 printed a long article about construction progress, and reproduced three photographs of construction scenes along the Western Maryland. The article spoke of the work as being pushed at Ohiopyle, Fayette County, Pennsylvania by men and machinery. The new road "will eventually be a four-track line," the article asserted, although now, in 1967, it is still mainly single-track. The article correctly stated that the road "will open new territory for Pittsburgh markets, and will afford a new means for shipping coal from the Pittsburgh district to the seaboard for a 'growing export trade.'"

The Gazette Times had no allusions as to who was building the 87-mile link, stating that the Western Maryland was then "owned or controlled absolutely by the Vanderbilt system and interests." The article in the July 23 issue also stated:

Within 18 months, finely appointed express trains, with the label "New York Central Lines," will be entering and departing from Pittsburgh for Baltimore, Md., and will make the journey without leaving the tracks of that system. The Vanderbilt system, in other words, will have reached its long looked for goal of a direct short line from Pittsburgh territory to the seaboard, and Pittsburgh will have another powerful ally to help her in capturing the markets of the Old World.²⁵

The Connellsville Weekly Courier was busy reporting construction progress. In its issue for July 28, 1910 it noted that heavy grading was being done.

Since last week the increase of construction operations on the whole line keeps moving from day to day and while there are many stretches on which operations have not yet commenced in most cases these vacant places are being taken up. One drawback felt is a scarcity of labor and this appears to be a serious handicap in most cases.²⁶

One steam shovel was excavating from 15,000 to 20,000 cubic yards of earth per month. One contractor had started erecting camps for his men that very week. The article said that sidings were filled with "all kinds of construction machinery." It assured that work on the Big Savage Tunnel, near Sand Patch, was beyond the initial steps and that from the tunnel to Frostburg, Maryland "a great lot of work is under way, if not continuous, at many points at least."

Herbert Krygsman, a long-time resident of Meyersdale and a B. & O. employee for nearly forty years, told this writer in November 1966 that when the Western Maryland extension was being built the work force lived in construction camps. He stated that a large number of the workers were unmarried, and wanderers—a rough lot. Italians, Negroes, Irish, and Mexicans constituted the large majority of the construction work force, according to Krygsman.

Late in the summer of 1910 the route of the Western Maryland extension was alive with men, steam shovels, and various items of construction equipment and material. The August 25 issue of the Meyersdale Republican shouted: "Work on Wabash Pushed With Vim" and "Contractors Aim to Have Road Completed Before November, 1911." There were then at least 2,700 men, 306 animals, and 30 steam shovels on the job. The Carter Construction Company's contract called for a bonus of $3,000 for each day that it would complete the job prior to the end of the specified fifteen months. In mid-November, 1910, grading was being done between Meyersdale and Sand Patch, for the Western Maryland, by the contracting firm, Head & Wright.²⁷

By the beginning of December, 1910, Benjamin Bush, president of the Western Maryland Railway Company, was predicting that the 87-mile road would be constructed in about the next twelve months, and would be open for freight even sooner. There were then, in early December, 3,800 men and 34 steam shovels at work on the $12,000,000 construction job that stretched from Connellsville to Cumberland. The John B. Carter Construction Company had Camp No. 10 at the west end of Big Savage Tunnel at that

²⁷ Meyersdale Republican, November 24, 1910.
Concrete and hand work has been abandoned almost entirely on the sections where construction work has been in progress, on account of the snow and cold weather. Tunnel work and steam shovel work on the deep cuts is proceeding at almost the same rate as before cold weather set in. By keeping the steam shovels and tunnel gangs busy through the long winter, it is believed the work will be so far advanced by spring that the grading of the entire line will be entirely completed before the frosts of another winter come.

Only a few days before Christmas, and in the face of severe winter weather, the steam shovels were kept going steadily. Near the crest of the Alleghenies, at Big Savage Tunnel, headway was being made at each end of the tunnel at the rate of six to nine feet daily. However, there had been a serious cave-in at the east end of the tunnel a few days previously. In spite of heavy snows, teamsters were hauling coal and other freight from Sand Patch to the tunnel construction camp. On one day they were obliged to remove their cargoes from wagons to sleds in order to get through the snow drifts.28

The Meyersdale Republican reported on January 12, 1911 that grading had progressed to such an extent on most of the line that track-laying could be started before the end of the summer, and that if tunnel and bridge work would not meet unexpected difficulties, trains would be running from Cumberland to Connellsville by end of the year.

Regardless of winter snows and freezing weather, construction moved forward. The Railway Gazette Age for February 10, 1911 stated that construction was being conducted “with an almost feverish haste.” Enormous steam shovels, weighing 80 to 90 tons each had to be transported over country roads to high points in the mountains.29 Progress of construction of the 87-mile link was described by George L. Fowler, associate editor of the Railway Age Gazette, in two issues of his magazine, illustrated with photographs of construction scenes. He observed that “In
passing over the Cumberland-Connellsville extension of the Western Maryland, even as it stands today, with work of all descriptions in progress, the impression made is that of thoroughness and excellence."30

The Connellsville Weekly Courier, August 17, 1911, carried an article with the following headlines: "Western Maryland Work Progressing," "Contractors All are Rushing Work All Along the Line," and "Erection of the Bridges Is Now Well Under Way in the Vicinity of Meyersdale Where the Steel Work is Heaviest—Good Weather is Helping." The article pointed out that one contractor used approximately fifteen carloads of black powder and, in addition, "a large quantity" of dynamite to blast rocks and ledges.31

President Benjamin Bush of the Western Maryland visited Connellsville on June 3, 1910 accompanied by his industrial agent, Austin Gallagher, and his real estate agent, C. H. Smith. Bush was very cautious and noncommittal in his statements. The three men visited Meyersdale and other points along the line that was being constructed.32

On a trip to Baltimore, Colonel J. M. Schoonmaker, vice-president of the Pittsburgh & Lake Erie Railroad in charge of property, general manager J. B. Yohe, chief engineer J. A. Atwood, and secretary and treasurer John G. Robinson, all of the P. & L. E., made an inspection of the Western Maryland during the week of June 13, 1910. The Connellsville Weekly Courier reported that Schoonmaker considered the Western Maryland roadbed capable of accommodating the heaviest traffic and that he said the P. & L. E.-Western Maryland alliance was entirely logical and "one of the really noteworthy and meritorious railroad combinations of recent years."33

With construction getting a good start in the summer of 1910, Alexander Robertson, vice-president and general manager of the Western Maryland, and two members of his staff, chief engineer H. R. Pratt and trainmaster Frank Brendel, came to Meyersdale in a private car on July 21 to make an inspection. They went to

30 Ibid., pp. 270-276, and (February 17, 1911), 316-321.
31 Connellsville Weekly Courier, August 17, 1911, p. 8.
32 Ibid., June 9, 1910, p. 8.
33 Ibid., June 23, 1910.
Big Savage Tunnel and found the work "being pushed with all possible dispatch. They also inspected the line for the entire distance between Meyersdale and Connellsville."\textsuperscript{84}

Naturally the construction of a railroad in a mountainous region is a hazardous undertaking. Blasting of ledges, tunnelling, and the handling of heavy equipment is dangerous work. In the period 1910-1912 the rate of accidents on construction jobs was greater than in 1967. Furthermore, neither the employer nor the government were as solicitous then as now about the safety of the worker. There were numerous accidental injuries and deaths as a result of the construction of the Western Maryland extension.

On December 16, 1910, one man was killed and three others were injured when dynamite exploded unexpectedly at Keystone Junction in the Sand Patch Pass.\textsuperscript{85} Undoubtedly many men lost their lives in a series of accidents resulting from blasting, falling, and being struck by moving equipment.

The large viaduct at Salisbury Junction, carrying the Western Maryland across the valley of the Casselman and over the B. & O. tracks, was the scene of the worst disaster on the entire 87-mile stretch at the time it occurred in July, 1911. The viaduct, built of steel, was only partially completed at time of the accident. The viaduct would soon be approximately 1,900 feet long and more than 100 feet high at its highest point. A traveling crane, operated by electricity, toppled off the trestle while lifting a side girder weighing about fourteen and a half tons, although it had safely lifted a weight of thirty-seven tons only a few days before. Five persons were dashed to death, falling ninety-six feet.

Another victim died the next day. On August 11, 1911, a seventh man lost his life by falling from the viaduct. The Meyersdale Republican for July 13, 1911 carried a three-column front page gruesome picture of the wreckage at Salisbury Junction.

The number of serious injuries and deaths that plagued the work force during the two years of construction of the Western Maryland extension will never be known. Because of the rough-and-tumble kind of men who made up most of that force, the premium placed on their lives by themselves and by their employers

\textsuperscript{84} Ibid., July 28, 1910.
\textsuperscript{85} Meyersdale Republican, December 22, 1910.
may in many instances have been surprisingly low, and therefore a factor contributing to a high accident rate.

As the 87-mile link neared completion the men who had invested heavily in it, and those who would be responsible for operating the new road to seaboard, could benefit from seeing the project at first hand. A trip over the new rails was made on May 31, 1912 in a special train consisting of a Western Maryland locomotive and four private cars. The train stopped in Connellsville for about fifteen minutes. Alexander Robertson, then president of the Western Maryland Railway, was confronted by a reporter from the *Courier* but declined to predict for the reporter when the road would be open to traffic. He declared that the Company wanted it to be in best of condition before its opening. Robertson stated that the trip was a "family affair" to give officials of the Western Maryland, the Pittsburgh and Lake Erie, and the New York Central an opportunity to see a fine railroad travel through the mountains, since many of them had not been over the new route.

At Cumberland the members of the traveling group were guests of the city. They stayed overnight. President Robertson was accompanied by Winslow S. Pierce, chairman of the board of directors of the Western Maryland, and by three vice-presidents of the P. & L. E.: Colonel J. M. Schoonmaker, C. F. Daly, and W. K. Vanderbilt, Jr. From the New York Central Lines, Harold Vanderbilt was also a member of the group that was traveling with Robertson.86

A half-month after the tour by railroad officials and investors, a tour was conducted for freight traffic managers who represented some of the largest shippers in Pittsburgh. On June 15, 1912 they were taken over the newly constructed road from Connellsville to Cumberland to show what the new road could offer to the Steel City. At Cumberland the group inspected terminal facilities and then returned to Pittsburgh. The party making the trip included a distinguished list of shippers: F. A. Ogden, general freight agent of the Jones & Laughlin Steel Company, and persons representing the American Sheet & Tinplate Company, Pittsburgh Steel Company, Page Woven Wire Company, American

86 Connellsville *Weekly Courier*, June 6, 1912, p. 8.

The Connellsville *Weekly Courier* commented on the sojourn of "Big Shippers." "The steel industries in the Pittsburg district," the paper maintained, "will throw to this new trunk line for trans-shipment over the piers of the Western Maryland Railway at Port Covington [Baltimore], considerable steel and other products when the line is placed in operation August 1, that heretofore has been routed to eastern markets over the lines of the Baltimore and Ohio and the Pennsylvania."

Thursday, August 1, 1912, was a joyful day for the Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce, for the large industries of the city, for the Pittsburgh and Lake Erie Railroad, for the Western Maryland Railway, for Baltimore, and for cities and towns along the Western Maryland. Perhaps George Jay Gould scanned the newspapers of the day with both nostalgia and a wince. For on that day, Pittsburgh's new rail outlet to seaboard was put into service. The Pittsburgh *Dispatch* for that day carried the following article:

One of those events in railroad progress which might, without undue inflation, be accepted as marking a commercial epoch in the Pittsburg district will take place in the yards of the National Tube Works, McKeesport, this morning at 9 o'clock. The very first train of freight forwarded over the new extension of the Western Maryland Railroad from Connellsville to Cumberland will begin its journey to New York. A distinctly fast freight line has been created and named for The Pittsburg Dispatch, and it has every element inherent to worthily uphold the prestige of this journal and its own, as well as to amass substantial profits.

The new line will use the New York Central system, with the Pittsburg & Lake Erie as its connecting route to McKeesport and Connellsville, and thence the freight will be conducted over the extension to Cumberland, thence still by the Western Maryland via Shippensburg, thence by the Philadelphia & Reading via Allentown, to the Central New Jersey road into New York.

The first train leaving this morning will consist of 40 cars and two engines and this double header will run thus solid through to the metropolis. These 40 cars will be loaded with 1,200 tons of wrought pipe by the National Tube Company. The consignees are the United States Steel Products Company in New York, a subsidiary of the United States Steel Corporation, and the immense consignment is destined for export.

Panama Canal Vantage

Other sections of freight over this new Pittsburg Dispatch line are being loaded to move to the port of Baltimore, thence to be shipped toward the Southwest, to Europe and South American ports. The initial traffic is expected to realize for all shippers the advantages of a shorter and low grade route to important ports. For Baltimore the new line means much. It lets Pittsburg into this lowest rate point to the Atlantic seaboard. From Baltimore the Merchants and Miners Transportation Company has vessels plying busily in the coastwise trade. They run to Norfolk, Savannah and Florida, and with the opening of the Panama Canal, a vantage will be held over New York in reaching that great waterway.

It is easy to imagine the joy and excitement in the towns along the line from Pittsburgh to Baltimore as the first train on the new seaboard route steamed its way eastward. Whenever approaching a crossing or a throng of people, the engineer blew the whistle and the other members of the train crew waved their red or blue bandannas. The event provided a field day for mayors, burgesses, city and borough councilmen, representatives of local chambers of commerce, and, in fact, for anyone eager to observe an historic event.

The first report of the new organization, the Western Maryland Railway Company, to its stockholders was dated October 19, 1910. It covered the period January 1 to June 30, 1910. The report indicated that the two principal developments were the formation of “a traffic alliance” with the Pittsburgh and Lake Erie Railroad Company and the “undertaking” of the construction of the rail link from Cumberland, Maryland to Connellsville, Pennsylvania. In the new company’s second annual report for

the year ending June 30, 1911, the construction of the 87-mile extension was referred to as having "been diligently pressed." The report stated that construction was "substantially advanced at this time." The following year the third annual report contained a flavor of achievement. The president of the road, Alexander Robertson, wrote:

The year under review [July 1, 1911-June 30, 1912] marked a period of diligent prosecution of the construction of the extension from a connection with the Western Maryland Railway Company's lines at Cumberland, Maryland, to a connection with the lines of The Pittsburgh and Lake Erie Railroad at Connellsville, Pennsylvania, this new and important link having been so far advanced toward completion as to enable the line to be opened for preliminary operation on August 1, 1912, thus cementing the traffic alliance with the New York Central Lines, predicated upon which the construction of the extension by your Company was undertaken.

Now that the Western Maryland had become a link between Pittsburgh and seaboard it was necessary to up-date its facilities in general. Heavier rails were needed on much of its mileage. Stronger bridges, additional rolling stock, and larger terminals were the order of the day. Consequently the Company arranged to finance these improvements. An indenture was made on January 1, 1912 to The Equitable Trust Company of New York for the issuing and securing of $10,000,000, par value, of Gold Notes at five percent, maturing July 1, 1915. In the next year [July 1, 1912-June 30, 1913] the Company raised another $3,000,000 upon its notes that would mature January 1, 1914, and carried forward a great deal of improvement of facilities. For example, twenty-two light bridges on the main line between Baltimore and Hagerstown were renewed with steel and concrete structures. The report stated that $13,000,000 worth of work "progressed during the year to the greatest possible extent consistent with ability to secure labor and materials." The addition of rolling stock during the year was almost phenomenal. It

*Ibid., p. 7.
included one thousand 50-ton steel hoppers, five hundred 40-ton steel underframe boxcars, five hundred 50-ton steel underframe gondolas, five hundred 40-ton steel underframe gondolas, fifteen Henry Consolidation freight engines, nine Heavy Pacific type passenger engines, thirty cabooses, eighteen passenger coaches, five baggage cars, and six all-steel mail and express cars.\footnote{Ibid., p. 8.}

In January 1913 the Company acquired ninety additional acres of waterfront property at Port Covington, Baltimore, an area at the edge of water deep enough to accommodate large ocean vessels.\footnote{Ibid., p. 10.} The various improvements and acquisitions were expensive. The results of operations did not compare favorably with the preceding year. Nevertheless, J. M. Fitzgerald, then president of the company, included the following in the \textit{Fourth Annual Report}:

\begin{quote}
The construction of your Cumberland-Connellsville Line, resulting in the transformation of your system from a local railway to a seaport terminal link in one of the largest railway systems in the country, demanded an extensive program of adjustment, improvement and betterment work, which involved practically a rehabilitation of your lines and terminals between Cumberland and Baltimore, in order to meet obligations assumed by your Company under its traffic agreement with the Pittsburgh and Lake Erie Railroad.

Heavy construction and improvement work, particularly that involved at the Baltimore, Hagerstown and Cumberland division terminals, all of which was carried on during the year, unavoidably and seriously restricted the efficiency of the transportation service and resulted in abnormally high operating costs.

The completion of improvement and rehabilitation work will enable the management to offer competitive service to patrons, affording opportunity for free solicitation of all classes of traffic available to your lines, and justifies your directors in an expression of confidence for the future of your property.\footnote{Ibid., p. 11.}
\end{quote}

The \textit{Fifth Annual Report}, for the year ending June 30, 1914, pointed to specific improvements. Construction was now completed on the 87-mile link from Cumberland to Connelsville and
this mileage was being carried in the operation rather than in the construction account. Twenty Heavy Consolidation Freight Locomotives and five switching locomotives were acquired. Stations, yards, and other facilities were added. All this was accomplished in the face of a general economic recession in the United States. The new president of the road was forced to report losses, but infused an optimism into his report. He stated:

The fiscal year covered by this report [July 1, 1913-June 30, 1914] has not been satisfactory, as it has reflected smaller gross earnings and a greater ratio of expenses than was anticipated. The former condition is the direct result of the general depression in business which has existed during a greater portion of the year. The latter was due to extraordinary expenses involved in taking care, vigorously, of deferred maintenance, both of roadway and equipment, and to the materially increased Transportation Expense occasioned partly by an increasing scale of wages, but more materially the result of motive power and roadway conditions, since remedied. It is confidently asserted that both roadway and equipment are now in normal repair, and your Company is in condition to handle a materially increased business, which it is expected a resumption of normal conditions will produce.\(^4\)

The next year gross earnings of the Western Maryland Railway Company were up substantially in spite of a continued economic depression in the United States. A huge fireproof, reinforced-concrete grain elevator was being built at Port Covington to increase the Company's revenues from western grain that would be shipped abroad from its eastern terminus. Things were looking up for the Western Maryland and for Pittsburgh. The Steel City now had four major rail outlets to seaboard—the Pennsylvania, the Baltimore and Ohio, the northern route (P. & L. E.-Lake Shore-New York Central), and the Western Maryland. During the next fifty-five years the Western Maryland Railway was one of the most efficient and prosperous fast-freight roads in the United States. Today, fortunately for this country, the Western Maryland has excellent prospect of continuing its enviable record.