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BENJAMIN HENRY LATROBE
AND THE REVIVAL
OF THE GALLATIN PLAN OF 1808

National planning of internal improvements before the War of 1812 has been identified largely with Albert Gallatin, secretary of the Treasury under Thomas Jefferson and James Madison. The basis for this assumption was Gallatin's monumental plan of 1808 for an interlocking system of roads and canals to tie together the far-flung parts of the rapidly expanding American nation. A study of the Papers of Benjamin Henry Latrobe, however, provides a fresh appraisal of the movement for a national system of internal improvements. Such a study reveals that the national planning movement in the first decade of the nineteenth century consisted of two—not one—major efforts to secure congressional approval of a national road and canal system; that Latrobe—not Gallatin—played the major role in the second effort in 1810; and that the 1810 revival of Gallatin's plan came closer to realization than the original effort of 1808.

America, as it entered the nineteenth century, was an agrarian nation with few cities and a small commercial sector. A large percentage of its predominantly rural population did not engage in market production at all; or if they did, their contribution was peripheral and an "irregular supplement to a way of life largely self-sufficient." The economic development of the United States, however, depended on the creation of a market economy in which the agrarian elements were incorporated into the domestic market. One important factor in the development of a national market economy

was the creation of a transportation system that could provide cheap carriage for bulky goods of low value and allow the farmer to become part of the market system at an affordable rate. Yet the cost of internal improvements was immense, a fact to which many American canal and river improvement companies, which went defunct in the early nineteenth century, could testify. America's natural resources seemed unlimited—her supply of capital was not. Business eventually turned to the one available agency that could assist in the effort to develop America's transportation facilities—government. State governments had incorporated a number of internal improvement companies in the quarter century after the American Revolution. But state governments were reluctant to dispense financial support to the canal and turnpike companies they created. As a result, more and more of these corporations turned to the federal government as their only hope for funding.

In December 1791, Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton pointed out that a "comprehensive plan" for nationwide internal improvements was "one of those improvements which could be prosecuted with more efficacy by the whole than by any part or parts of the Union." But no comprehensive plan emerged at the national level until after the Jeffersonians came to power in 1800. Not all Republicans agreed on the efficacy or method of a national internal improvements system. While conservative Jeffersonians or Old Republicans considered the idea of federal expenditures for canals and roads to be repugnant, more moderate Republicans, including Jefferson himself, approved of government expenditure of surplus funds if a constitutional amendment allowing such action was passed. Still other moderate Republicans saw no constitutional impediment at all to federal government support of internal improvements. This latter group, led by the new secretary of the Treasury, Albert Gallatin, worked to secure government funding for internal improvement works throughout the country.


Gallatin was one of those internal improvement advocates who promoted a national system of canal and road improvements. Among this collection of canal enthusiasts were Benjamin Henry Latrobe and his friends Turner Camac, William Tatham, Robert Fulton, and Joel Barlow. These men knew each other, corresponded and talked about national planning of internal improvements, and promoted their plans in the press. They had a cosmopolitan outlook; each was either born in the British Isles and Europe or lived there for an average of twenty years or more. As a result, they all had a chance to witness the phenomenal growth of Britain's canal system and to examine the development of internal improvements in France, Italy, and Germany. They were about the same age—only thirteen years separated the oldest from the youngest—and well educated. But most important they disseminated their ideas through their publications and contributed to the growing movement that advocated substantial federal involvement in internal improvements.


5. Many other internal improvement enthusiasts, such as Thomas Eddy, Jesse Hawley, DeWitt Clinton, and Gouverneur Morris, were more interested in local improvements than in promoting a national system of roads and canals.

6. There were numerous other internal improvement advocates in the United States, but some had lost their effectiveness by 1805 (e. g., George Washington and Alexander Hamilton were both dead; Elkanah Watson, who had discussed the feasibility of an American canal system with Washington as early as 1784, had shifted his interests to scientific agriculture). Mathew Carey’s strong promotion of internal improvements came after the War of 1812.


8. In 1805, Fulton was 40; Latrobe, 41; Gallatin, 44; Barlow, 51; Tatham, 53. Camac’s age is not known.

9. One of the most important internal improvement publications was Turner Camac’s *Facts and Arguments respecting the great utility of an extensive plan of Inland Navigation in America* (Philadelphia, 1805), the most comprehensive and detailed prospectus for national planning of American transportation before the Gallatin Report. For a more extensive discussion of internal improvement promotion by Camac, Tatham, Fulton, and Barlow and their relationship with Latrobe, see Lee W. Formwalt, “Benjamin Henry Latrobe and the Development of Internal Improvements in the New Republic, 1796–1820” (Ph.D. dissertation, Catholic University of America, 1977), pp. 135–44.
In addition they had access to the inner circle of power in Washington. Although not a part of Jefferson’s official family, Latrobe, Fulton, and Barlow were friends of the president and often met with him. Merrill Peterson claims that they “undoubtedly influenced Jefferson’s thinking on . . . internal improvements.”¹⁰ But Latrobe appears to have had the most influence on Jefferson and Gallatin with regard to internal improvement planning. He had more contact with the president and Treasury secretary and his influence was obvious in Gallatin’s report.

The Gallatin plan had its origins in a resolution offered in the Senate by Gallatin’s close friend Senator Thomas Worthington of Ohio. The resolution, passed on 2 March 1807, directed the Treasury secretary to

prepare and report to the Senate, at their next session, a plan for the application of such means as are within the power of Congress, to the purposes of opening roads, and making canals; together with a statement of the undertakings, of that nature, which as objects of public improvement, may require and deserve the aid of government; and also a statement of works of the nature mentioned, which have been commenced, the progress which has been made in them, and the means and prospect of their being completed . . .¹¹

In July 1807, Gallatin sent questionnaires to customs collectors throughout the United States concerning the canals and turnpike roads which had been built, were being constructed, or were still in the planning stages in their respective districts.¹² In addition, he asked Robert Fulton and Benjamin Henry Latrobe for more general information on roads and canals. Latrobe became Gallatin’s informal chief technical expert from the summer of 1807 to April 1808 when the latter submitted his comprehensive plan to the Senate. Not only did Latrobe compose a thirty page essay on canals and river improvements in America but he met with Gallatin at least every other day during March 1808 when the secretary was sorting out the masses of information that had poured into Washington from canal and

turnpike companies across the country and compiling his report to the Senate.  

Why was Benjamin Henry Latrobe, the premier architect in the new nation, so interested in assisting with the development of a national plan for federal support of internal improvements? His official government position of surveyor of public buildings certainly did not require it. In fact, the summer and early fall of 1807 saw him feverishly working to complete the new House of Representatives chamber in the Capitol for the sitting of Congress in October. To understand Latrobe's commitment to internal improvements one must examine his European background and his career in this country not only as an architect but as one of the first professional civil engineers.

Latrobe was born in Fulneck, England, in 1764 and received his formal education in Moravian schools in England and Germany. On the continent Latrobe saw some of the results of the great state planning movement that had its origins in early modern Europe. It had manifested itself in the Cromwellian and Stuart Navigation Acts of seventeenth-century England, in Colbert's mercantile policies of Louis XIV's France, and, in the eighteenth century, in the economic programs of the German and Austrian cameralists. It was the latter group of policy makers with whom Latrobe was probably most familiar, for it was in Germany that he spent his formative school years. Part of the cameralists' plans for developing domestic industry and encouraging the export of its products included an overhaul of the country's transportation system. Thus cameralist Joseph von Sonnenfels (1733-1817) urged the Austro-Hungarian authorities to undertake road construction and repair as well as "the encouragement and control of carriers." Latrobe had witnessed Frederick the Great's implementation of the cameralist programs, having examined the improvements on the Elbe and Oder rivers. He was impressed with the absolute monarch's ability to accomplish great

objects of improvements. But Latrobe was not sufficiently impressed to want to live under a repressive regime, and he returned to England upon the completion of his education in 1783.

In England, Latrobe began his professional training in engineering and architecture under John Smeaton and Samuel Pepys Cockerell. Much of a civil engineer’s work in late eighteenth-century England was devoted to the improvement of water transportation through river channel clearance or canal construction or a combination of both. Latrobe had training in each of these areas having worked on the Rye Harbour improvement (c. 1786–87) and the Basingstoke Canal (c. 1788–89). Before his departure for America he drew several plans for a combined river improvement and canal scheme along the Chelmer and Blackwater rivers in Essex County. When he came to the United States in 1796 Latrobe brought with him an invaluable training and experience and a technical expertise on which he would rely for the rest of his career. His experience included membership in an occupation which, though established as a profession, was still in a young and fluid state. In his new country he would try to establish the professionalism he learned in England in the fields of architecture and engineering. His continued attempts to do so helped determine the shape of his career here.

Latrobe undertook his first significant American internal improvement project in 1801–02 in Pennsylvania and Maryland where he directed the improvement of the Susquehanna River from Columbia, Pennsylvania to tidewater at Havre de Grace, Maryland. Appointed by the governor of Pennsylvania, Latrobe also worked in cooperation with officials of the Maryland incorporated Susquehanna Canal Company. As a result of his labors a straight and clear inshore channel was created allowing for safer trips by boatmen descending the river during spring freshets. This offered farmers, who were rapidly expanding cultivation in the Susquehanna Valley, the youthful port of Baltimore as an alternative to Philadelphia as an entrepot for their grain and other products. In order to limit Baltimore’s competition, Philadelphia merchants launched a successful campaign to create a company that would construct a canal across the northern Delmarva Peninsula linking Chesapeake and Delaware bays.

16. Latrobe's qualified admiration for Frederick the Great appears in the engineer's preface to his translation of Characteristic Anecdotes, and Miscellaneous Authentic Papers, tending to illustrate the character of Frederic II. Late King of Prussia (London, 1788).

Chesapeake and Delaware Canal could then tap the Susquehanna trade before it reached Baltimore and draw it to Philadelphia.18

Having established his reputation on the Susquehanna clearance project, Latrobe was the obvious choice for C & D directors when, in 1804, they selected an engineer to design and construct the waterway. Latrobe convinced the C & D board that work should be started on the feeder canal, which would supply the summit level of the main canal with water, while the directors still argued over the exact location of the canal’s termini. The engineer assembled an impressive crew of workmen in northern Maryland and Delaware in the spring of 1804 to construct the feeder. From Philadelphia he hired a clerk of the works, student clerks, master craftsmen, and contractors who eventually employed up to three hundred laborers. By June 1805 nearly four-fifths of the feeder was completed. But by then financial problems, which had plagued the company since its start, had grown worse and the board of directors was forced to dismiss nearly eighty per cent of its work force. By December 1805 the company dismissed the remaining employees except for Latrobe.19

The financial collapse affected Latrobe’s own personal finances in several important ways which help explain why he became a vigorous promoter of the C & D Canal’s revival and its placement at the heart of a national program for roads and canals. First, Latrobe lost his annual salary of $3,500, which he would regain with the company’s revival. Second, much of his salary in 1805 was in the form of company notes payable in sixty days. These notes became worthless as fewer creditors accepted them when the company’s fortunes dwindled. With the company’s revival the paper would regain its value. Third, the company was unable to pay all that it owed Latrobe so that by the end of 1805 it was $3,000 in debt to him. With a revived company he might recoup this loss. Fourth, Latrobe was a C & D stockholder whose investment would gain value should the company be revived. Finally, Latrobe had dabbled in land speculation and purchased a tract of land at the proposed junction of the feeder and the main canal. As long as the company was dormant, Latrobe’s land investment was worth little.20

Latrobe then had good reason to work for the revival of the C & D Canal Company. But financial reasons were not the only factors in

Latrobe’s promotion of the canal. He was also interested in furthering his reputation as one of the most important civil engineers in the new republic. True, as his reputation increased he would receive more lucrative commissions; but equally as important, he would have greater influence in establishing professional standards for American civil engineering. Latrobe felt that until the professionalism of European engineering was adopted in the United States, American internal improvements would be limited in design and provincial in scope. Latrobe saw himself playing a significant role in introducing professional engineering in this country; the best way to do it was to prove to Americans, by building a major canal like the C & D with European professional standards, that it was feasible.

A final important reason for Latrobe’s promotion of the C & D Canal was that he was strongly committed to the development of the American economy. After his immigration to the United States in 1796, Latrobe considered himself an American in every sense. He was devoted to his newly adopted country and his devotion was reflected in his work. Perhaps the most widely known example of this was his use of tobacco and maize (native American crops) for the capitals of the columns in the Capitol building in Washington, D.C. Latrobe understood that economic prosperity in this country depended on the development of an integrated national economy that could only emerge with the creation of a national transportation system. His involvement with the C & D Canal convinced him that the waterway was the crucial link in such a system and that government aid should be solicited if private capital failed to measure up to the task. Thus, in 1805, Latrobe and the C & D directors began a campaign for government support that would continue for a decade or more and eventually result in two major attempts to secure congressional approval of a national transportation system, the key link of which was to have been the C & D Canal.21

It was the C & D Canal Company’s petition to Congress in 1807 which set into motion a complicated series of maneuvers in the Senate that ultimately resulted in Worthington’s resolution calling on Gallatin to report on the state of American internal improvements and to propose a national plan for federal assistance to canal and road projects.22 Considering Latrobe’s role and interest in the C & D Canal project it was logical that he should volunteer his time and energy to

assist Gallatin in drawing up his report. In the essay Latrobe wrote for Gallatin, the engineer reviewed his work on the C & D Canal feeder and concluded "that neither in Europe, nor in our own country do I know a line of inland navigation, which by so short a distance, and at so easy an expense, unites such extensive and productive ranges of commercial intercourse." Gallatin was convinced of the C & D's importance and Latrobe assured C & D director Joshua Gilpin shortly before the report's appearance that in the plan "the principal objects of national importance which are to be executed first are the Ch. & Del. Canal, for which he [Gallatin] intends to recommend the first appropriation . . ."\(^{23}\)

On 4 April 1808, Gallatin submitted his lengthy report to the Senate. It was a singular effort. Gallatin decided that the report should be accompanied by the voluminous accounts and maps he received in reply to his queries. He also sent along Latrobe's and Robert Fulton's essays on canals. When John Quincy Adams' Senate committee ordered that 1,200 copies of the report be printed, they asked that it include Gallatin's, Latrobe's and Fulton's essays.\(^{24}\) The secretary's report was divided into four sections: an introductory section that explained the need for government aid and planning of internal improvements; second and third sections that dealt with canals and roads respectively; and a final part that suggested methods for government funding of internal improvements.

Gallatin noted that the lack of capital in the United States and the enormous size of the country compared to the population prevented a more rapid and expanded development of American internal improvements. The "general government" alone had the ample resources necessary to overcome these obstacles and complete "every practicable improvement" it undertook. Distant works, necessary to render a whole line of communication complete, could be undertaken by the government, whereas a private corporation

\(^{23}\) "Mr. Latrobe's Communication," 16 March 1808, Appendix to Gallatin Report, p. 104; Latrobe to Joshua Gilpin, 30 March 1808, Latrobe Letterbooks.

\(^{24}\) American State Papers: Documents, Legislative and Executive, 38 vols. (Washington, D.C., 1832-61), Miscellaneous, 1:724-921. For convenience, all references to the report will be to the pamphlet version, Gallatin Report, ordered to be printed by the Adams committee. Fulton's essay was concerned with convincing the public of the "vast advantages of a general system of cheap conveyance." He argued that canals could be built across the Appalachian Mountains, by using steam engines to draw water up to the high levels of the canal and to pull canal boats up inclined planes from the lower to the upper canal. "Mr. Fulton's Communication," 8 December 1807, Appendix to Gallatin Report, pp. 108-23.
might not be so venturesome. Indeed, the government should undertake all the improvements necessary to eliminate the dangers that came with possession of such a vast territory with such a scattered population. “Good roads and Canals,” Gallatin declared,

will shorten distances, facilitate commercial and personal intercourse, and unite by a still more intimate community of interests, the most remote quarters of the United States. No other single operation, within the power of government, can more effectually tend to strengthen and perpetuate that union, which secures external independence, domestic peace, and internal liberty.25

The greater portion of Gallatin’s Report was concerned with the canals and roads that the secretary included in his program for government aid (see map). Gallatin summarized his four-part plan in convenient chart form:26

I. “From north to south, in a direction parallel to the sea coast:”

A. Canals which would provide
   a complete intracoastal
   waterway from Massachusetts
to North Carolina.
   1. From Boston to Mount
      Hope Bay, Rhode Island,
      26 miles, $1,250,000
   2. Raritan and Delaware
      Canal, New Jersey, 28
      miles, $ 800,000
   3. Completion of Chesapeake
      and Delaware Canal, 22
      miles, $ 750,000
   4. Deepening and widening
      the Dismal Swamp Canal
      to make it a “national
      object,” 22 miles,
      $ 250,000

   $3,000,00027

26. The chart follows the form Gallatin used (ibid., pp. 67–69) but has been somewhat expanded to include some of the important data which he discussed at length ibid., pp. 9–66.
27. The actual total of the four estimates is $3,050,000, which Gallatin rounded off to $3 million.
B. "A great turnpike road from Maine to Georgia, along the whole extent of the Atlantic sea coast," 1,600 miles, $4,800,000

II. "From east to west, forming communications across the mountains between the Atlantic and western rivers:"
A. Four turnpike roads (100 miles each) across the mountains from the four great Western rivers (the Allegheny, Monongahela, Kanawha, and Tennessee) to the nearest corresponding Atlantic rivers (the Susquehanna or Juniata, Potomac, James, and Santee or Savannah).
B. Improvement of navigation on the four great Atlantic rivers, including canals parallel to them.
C. Canal around the Ohio River falls at Louisville, Kentucky.
D. Improvement of roads to Detroit, St. Louis, and New Orleans, the "distant outposts of the Union."

III. "In a northern and north westwardly direction, forming inland navigations between the Atlantic sea coast, and the great lakes and the St. Laurence:"

$ 7,800,000

$ 2,800,000

$ 1,500,000

300,000

200,000

$ 4,800,000
A. Inland navigation between
Hudson River and Lake
Champlain. 800,000

B. Inland navigation from
Hudson River to Lake
Ontario. 2,200,000

C. Canal around Niagara Falls
linking Lake Ontario with
other Great Lakes 1,000,000

$ 4,000,000

IV. Local improvements in New
England and the South, areas
which received little benefit from
the national improvements
selected for federal aid. $ 3,400,000

Total Cost $20,000,000

Gallatin suggested that the government appropriate $2 million a
year for ten years in order to accomplish his program. He calculated
that the United States would take in an annual revenue of $14 million
between 1809 and 1815. After paying the annual installment on the
national debt and other expenses, the government would be left with
a yearly surplus of $5.5 million, of which $2 million could be easily
spared for internal improvements. Gallatin, alluding to the danger of
involvement in the European war, cautioned the Senate that his
remarks were applicable only “in times of peace.” At the same time
he pointed out that “the facility of communications, constitutes
particularly in the United States [with its extensive territory and
limited population], an important branch of national defence.”

Another source of money for an internal improvement fund, be-
sides the general revenue, was the immense amount of government
land in the West: 100 million acres north of the Ohio River and 50
million south of Tennessee. The proceeds from the sale of these lands
could be placed in a permanent fund to assist canal and road build-
ing. The land fund could continue to be used for improvements
even during wartime, when general revenue sources would be di-
verted from canals and roads. When the land fund had provided the
$20 million to complete the Gallatin projects, it could be retained as
a “perpetual resource for further improvements” so that eventually
“every portion of the United States should enjoy all the advantages
of inland navigation and improved roads, of which it was susceptible.

Gallatin discussed the two methods of dispensing government support to internal improvements: the U.S. government could undertake the works "at their sole expense," or the government could subscribe to stock of companies incorporated to build the canals or roads. The government could also provide loans to canal or turnpike companies. The first method would "give the most proper general direction to the work" by "effectually controlling local interests," whereas private companies would see that a project's details were "executed on a more economical plan." Gallatin suggested a blending of the two modes "so as to obtain the advantages pertaining to each." He refused to be any more specific in a plan as general as his, since the method of funding would often be determined by the particular circumstances of each improvement.28

The Gallatin Report was significant because it was the first major effort by the federal government at national planning of internal improvements. Although many of Gallatin's ideas had been previously proposed, he based his report on an incredible amount of research. Like his predecessor in the Treasury Department, Alexander Hamilton, who drew up the Report on Manufactures in 1791, Gallatin relied on information provided by company officials and Treasury agents.29 Contemporaries and modern historians have marvelled at Gallatin's ability to digest and coordinate the vast amount of data he received on some twenty-five canals and several hundred turnpikes.30 As Carter Goodrich has noted, Gallatin's innovation was not in "the basic direction but in orderliness of thought and comprehensiveness of view. What it [the report] did was to give coherence and intellectual organization to the proposals of a movement that was already vigorous."31

30. According to Latrobe, "The materials from which Mr. Gallatin had to collect the information he has given, were voluminous, ill-digested, and in many instances, where local interests prevailed, absolutely contradictory. The manner in which he has arranged and compressed the whole mass of this information, is, I cannot help thinking, a proof that his is one of the clearest heads in the Union." Latrobe to Jacob Morton, 23 August 1808, Latrobe Letterbooks. For two later assessments of Gallatin's work, see Harrison, "Internal Improvement Issue," p. 245n.
Gallatin was the first national planner to use the expertise of a qualified engineer. Latrobe had visited most of the canal works in Virginia and the Middle Atlantic states and offered Gallatin his professional opinion on their quality and defects. When Gallatin selected a standard for the intracoastal waterway canals, he chose Latrobe's C & D Canal and lock dimensions. Latrobe's interest in American geology and European canals led him to discourage Gallatin from advocating Fulton's scheme for carrying canals across the Appalachians. The secretary took his advice and urged that transmontane roads, rather than canals, link the eastern and western waters. 

Gallatin's report arrived on Capitol Hill too late for any action to be taken in the spring of 1808. The report was not a wasted effort, however, but became the blueprint for future national schemes during the next twenty years. Though disappointed at the lack of congressional approval of the plan, Latrobe continued to promote it after Congress adjourned. He sent copies to friends in New York, Pennsylvania, and Virginia, and his part of the Gallatin Report was published in the fall of 1808 in the *National Intelligencer*. But when Congress returned to Washington in November, the legislators had Embargo, not internal improvements, on their minds. The only positive action taken by Congress in the latter field was the Senate passage of a bill to assist the C & D Canal. The House, that session, was indisposed to appropriate any money for canals and roads.

When the new Eleventh Congress was sworn in in March 1809, some observers felt it would be more favorable to internal improvements than its predecessor. They seemed correct when the Pope-Porter internal improvements bill was introduced into the second session of this Congress. Historians have long assigned the authorship of the bill to Senator John Pope of Kentucky and Representative Peter Buell Porter of New York, the congressmen who introduced

34. Latrobe to Jacob Morton, 23 August 1808, Latrobe Letterbooks; Latrobe to Joshua Gilpin, 24 May 1808, Latrobe Letterbooks; Latrobe to John G. Gamble, 27 September 1810, Latrobe Letterbooks; *National Intelligencer*, 23, 26, 30 September 1808.
the bill into their respective houses. However, Latrobe's correspondence reveals that Latrobe not only wrote the bill, but had considered such an act for several years.

Latrobe noted on several occasions in 1809–10 that his plan for a government supported internal improvement fund had been germinating for “some time.” He told Gouverneur Morris that he would have proposed the scheme “long ago” in Pennsylvania for “the benefit of the minor canal & road companies which have from time to time been projected” there, had it not been for “the prejudice against liens upon freehold property, which every one of our citizens entertain.” Early in the second session of the Eleventh Congress (late November 1809), Porter and other New York representatives in Congress approached Latrobe about the engineering problems involved in connecting the Mohawk River with Lake Ontario. They also asked the engineer to draw up a legislative act “for the whole [New York] system” of canals. As Latrobe worked on the New York internal improvement fund act, it occurred to him that the scheme could be applied to the United States as a whole. He immediately turned his attention to drawing up an act which would once more place the idea of national planning of American internal improvements before Congress. He showed the draft of the act to Porter, who heartily endorsed the idea. They decided that before any further steps were taken, they should consult with the foremost expert on national planning, Albert Gallatin. The seasoned Cabinet member was delighted with the new scheme, hoped this plan would succeed where his had failed, and immediately set to work on the various financial parts of the act.

37. See especially the following in Latrobe Letterbooks: Latrobe to Joshua Gilpin, 23 December 1809; Latrobe to Richard Rush, 31 December 1809; Latrobe to William Duane, 7 January 1810. Research among Porter’s papers does not contradict the evidence in PBHL. The only documents relating to the bill are two charts, dated 17 February 1810, listing the projects included in the bill, the total capital required for each, the amount of the federal government’s subscription and interest thereon, and the number of years required to construct the projects. Peter B. Porter Papers, Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society, Buffalo, N.Y. There is no correspondence for this period in the Peter Buell Porter Papers, the New-York Historical Society, New York.
38. Latrobe to Richard Rush, 31 December 1809, Latrobe Letterbooks; Latrobe to Gouverneur Morris, 10 April 1810, Latrobe Letterbooks.
39. Latrobe to Gouverneur Morris, 10 April 1810, Latrobe Letterbooks; Latrobe to William Duane, 7 January 1810, Latrobe Letterbooks.
Meanwhile, Latrobe wrote Joshua Gilpin that he was working on a new scheme, and that he would "confidentially" send him its outline in several days. The engineer's letter to Gilpin of 23 December 1809 is the earliest known revelation of the contents of Latrobe's plan. The scheme, which Latrobe had considered before November to be "Utopian, & . . . far beyond the temper of our national Government," was clearly based on the Gallatin Report. The federal government was to subscribe "one third of the Capital of Companies incorporated by any state or states" to complete: coastal canals linking 1) Boston and Newport, 2) the Raritan and Delaware rivers, 3) Delaware and Chesapeake bays, and 4) Norfolk and Albemarle Sound; northern and western canals 5) connecting Mohawk River and Lake Ontario, 6) bypassing Niagara Falls, 7) connecting Hudson River and Lake Champlain, 8) linking Lake Erie and Allegheny River, 9) bypassing the Ohio River falls, 10) uniting the Susquehanna and Delaware rivers via the Schuylkill River, 11) linking the Roanoke and Appomattox rivers; "4 great Western roads" connecting the four major eastern rivers over the Appalachian Mountains with their western counterparts; and the coastal post road from Maine to Georgia (see map). All of the above improvements, except the eighth, tenth, and eleventh, had been recommended by Gallatin in 1808. The secretary had discussed the Lake Erie and Allegheny connection but not enough information had been received to recommend its execution then. The two Pennsylvania canals which together would link the Delaware with the Susquehanna were considered by Gallatin to be more of local interest to Philadelphia than of national import.

40. Latrobe to Joshua Gilpin, 7 December 1809, Latrobe Letterbooks. In the same letter, Latrobe told Gilpin that this session seemed the best chance for the C & D Canal to receive federal aid. He urged the director to send down a petition before 20 December and noted that the petition should "be very short, and referring to that presented last session, [and] should contain, not general arguments in favor of the Canal system [Congress was hearing plenty of them], but only a short view in a dozen lines of the advantages civil and military of the particular work proposed." Latrobe offered to be the company's agent and informed Gilpin that he could not proceed on the C & D Canal's behalf without a regular appointment from the board. Apparently Latrobe did not get the appointment, for on 31 December he wrote Gilpin: "As to the power I requested, I am very perfectly aware of the queerish objections made by such men as Tatnall, and even by Johns. It is now unnecessary. As to the use I could have been of to you, you may judge of it from the success of a Bill of such immense import [i.e. Latrobe's bill] as that now on the Tapis." Latrobe to Joshua Gilpin, 31 December 1809, Latrobe Letterbooks.

41. Latrobe to Joshua Gilpin, 23 December 1809, Latrobe Letterbooks.
42. Latrobe to Richard Rush, 31 December 1809, Latrobe Letterbooks.
43. Latrobe to Joshua Gilpin, 23 December 1809, Latrobe Letterbooks.
Projects in Latrobe's Pope-Porter Bill (January 1810)
The canal linking the Roanoke and Appomattox rivers had not appeared in the Gallatin Report. Such a connection was of interest to Latrobe, however, for he had been consulted on its feasibility earlier in the year.  

Latrobe explained very briefly the funding of his plan to Gilpin. The companies were to have two-thirds of their stock subscribed before the U.S. could take any shares, thus leaving “to the Companies a majority of private Stockholders votes in the direction of their affairs.” Latrobe noted that the proceeds from the sale of public lands would be pledged to “pay the interest of the U.S. subscription” and that “the companies may make loans to the amount of the U. States subscription pledging the interest payable by the U.S. at 6 per cent.”

After he sent his sketchy outline of the plan to Gilpin, Latrobe sent the bill back to Gallatin for further consideration. By New Year’s Eve, Gallatin made several more alterations which Latrobe incorporated into the bill. The two canals uniting the Susquehanna and Delaware rivers were dropped and replaced with a Tombigbee and Tennessee canal. The reasons for eliminating the Pennsylvania canals were several: “the difficulties of their finances, . . . the speculations of the directors . . . & because the United States appear to have no interest in its success which belongs chiefly to the views of Philadelphia.” A canal linking the Tennessee and Tombigbee would open a navigation to Mobile Bay on the Gulf of Mexico. But the planning for this connection was of recent origin and Latrobe considered it a “canal hardly in embryo.”

While Gallatin perused and altered his copy of the bill, Latrobe began his massive lobbying effort on the bill’s behalf. The engineer knew many members of the Eleventh Congress either through his government work as surveyor of the public buildings, through private commissions, or socially. He had or would design or alter houses

47. For example, early in 1809, Latrobe reported to his father-in-law that he had “dined with Mr. Madison in company with about 20 federal Members of Congress. Pickering, Quincy, Lloyd and many others of the most able and prominent men on that side were present, and I think I never saw a host and his Guests in better humor.
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for three representatives and three senators in the Eleventh Congress. Latrobe's correspondence reveals that the architect wrote to forty-six members of this Congress throughout his career. This list does not include all Latrobe's acquaintances in Congress, since there were others whom Latrobe knew, but with whom all communication was verbal, or at least with whom no correspondence survives, such as William Branch Giles. When Latrobe, joined by Porter and the New York delegation, began canvassing members of the Senate and House of Representatives, they found that "each [member] had his favorite little project which he wished foisted" in the bill. The promoters, however, were determined that the bill should not be destroyed by loading it down with small local canal projects. After "much pains," according to Latrobe, the bill remained a "national bill." Outside of this expected attempt by the legislators to make the bill more favorable to their own localities, Latrobe found the congressmen rather agreeable to his plan. The only opposition Latrobe could discern was from John Wayles Eppes of Virginia, who felt the bill was unconstitutional, and from the Connecticut delegation, which, voicing Federalist mercantile woes, opposed the bill "because our Country has been sold to the Emperor of France, our commerce destroyed, our revenue annihilated, & the best part of the citizens so irritated & ruined, that no measure of the [Republican] party ought to be suffered to succeed, untill commerce is restored & so forth."48

There was not much Latrobe could do about New England Federalist polemics, but he did attempt to convince Eppes of the constitutionality of the bill. Latrobe understood the constitutional objection to his measure to be "the want of constitutional power in Congress to interfere in what is reserved to the States, by not being expressly granted to the General government." Latrobe presumed that this objection was not applicable to his scheme since the plan "expressly requires that the first step should be taken by authority of a State." According to Latrobe's bill, a company incorporated by a state or several states would have to ask for federal aid before the president could subscribe to its shares. To further bolster his case, Latrobe referred to a recent act of the assembly of Eppes' home state "which gives to congress the right of making a Canal from the Waters of

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James river to Albemarle sound, [and which] acknowledges the principle, that Congress may appropriate money to the objects of internal improvement, originated by States, or may by their Permission, undertake the whole work.\textsuperscript{49}

Latrobe's arguments did not persuade Eppes; but the Virginia congressman’s opposition did not discourage the engineer. He drew up abstracts of the bill and distributed them to the legislators. The reaction was so favorable, according to Latrobe, that he “ventured to propose even that the U.S. should take half the stock” of the companies, rather than one-third, and the congressmen did not object. When the bill was introduced in Congress the one-third limit was changed to one-half.\textsuperscript{50} Convinced his scheme was going to be adopted, Latrobe, along with Porter and the New York delegation, began preparations for introducing the bill into the House and Senate. It was arranged that Porter would introduce the bill into the House, while John Pope of Kentucky was to do the same in the Senate shortly after the New Year. Another strong Senate supporter was the Virginian William Branch Giles. Two important legislators, however, were not present in Washington: Senator James A. Bayard and Congressman Nicholas Van Dyke, both Delaware Federalists. Latrobe wanted Bayard, well-trained in the law, to work out the legal points of the bill, while Van Dyke was “the only man [in the House of Representatives] capable of making a good speech for it [the bill], who will take any pains about it.” Latrobe wrote Gilpin of their absence, complaining that they were missed “exceedingly.”\textsuperscript{51}

Within days of his complaint, Bayard and Van Dyke arrived in Washington, much to Latrobe’s relief. Bayard went to work on the legal aspects of the bill and, on 5 January 1810, John Pope introduced it in the Senate.\textsuperscript{52} The first section of the bill listed the projects to which the government could subscribe; explained that the states were to make the first step in securing government aid for roads and

\textsuperscript{49} Latrobe to John Wayles Eppes, 20 December 1809, Latrobe Letterbooks; \textit{Annals of Congress,} 11th Cong., 2d sess., Senate, p. 522.

\textsuperscript{50} Latrobe to William Duane, 7 January 1810, Latrobe Letterbooks; Latrobe to Joshua Gilpin, 31 December 1809, Latrobe Letterbooks; \textit{Annals of Congress,} 11th Cong., 2d sess., Senate, p. 522.

\textsuperscript{51} Latrobe to Joshua Gilpin, 7 January 1810, 31 December 1809, Latrobe Letterbooks.

\textsuperscript{52} Latrobe to Joshua Gilpin, 7 January 1810, Latrobe Letterbooks; U.S., Congress, Senate, \textit{A Bill For the improvement of the United States by public roads and canals}, S. 9, 11th Cong., 2d sess., 1810; U.S., Congress, House, \textit{A Bill For the improvement of the United States by public roads and canals}, H.R. 55, 11th Cong., 2d sess., 1810.
canals; and provided that the president, on behalf of the government, could subscribe up to one-half of a company's capital stock. The enumeration of roads and canals included all the ones Latrobe had originally designated with the substitution of the Tennessee and Tombigbee canal for the two Schuylkill canals and the addition of a "sweeping clause" which allowed the president to subscribe to any internal improvement company "as may hereafter be approved of by Congress." This clause prevented the bill from being limited to only those projects which were named, making it more flexible and able to serve as a basis for a permanent internal improvement fund to aid future projects which legislators in 1810 had never contemplated.53

The second section of the act listed the requirements for companies that wished to receive federal aid. The prerequisites were very similar to the standing orders of the British House of Commons regarding navigation bills. Like the orders, with which Latrobe was very familiar, the engineer's bill required that the companies submit "an authentic map and description" of the proposed canal or road along with a list of subscriptions and payments made to the company's stock. In addition, the company was to provide a copy of the law through which it was incorporated and, if it had already begun operations, it was to supply detailed financial accounts of its expenses, debts, and possessions. The section concluded with a proviso that the president could withhold his subscription "until the line of said canals or roads shall be located in such manner as to him may appear proper."54

The last five sections of Latrobe's bill dealt with the federal funding of the transportation projects and were largely influenced by Gallatin's financial expertise. The government would issue certificates bearing six per cent interest to pay the installments of its subscription. As security for the principal of the debt, Gallatin set aside fifteen


54. *Annals of Congress, 11th Cong., 2d sess., Senate*, pp. 523-24; O. Cyprian Williams, *The Historical Development of Private Bill Procedure and Standing Orders in the House of Commons*, 2 vols. (London, 1948-49), 1:42-46, 264-66. It should be noted that the Parliamentary standing orders were for bills of incorporation, not for financial assistance acts. Bills for incorporating internal improvement companies in American state legislatures did not have such rigorous requirements, probably because there were not that many bills compared with the number introduced into Parliament.

million acres of land located north of Ohio in the lower part of present-day Michigan. The proceeds from the sale of this land would be used to purchase or redeem the certificates. The president was allowed to sell any of the stock, which the government had subscribed, at or above par and apply the proceeds to the payment or redemption of interest or principal of the certificates, authorized by the act. The books and papers of the companies were to be open to inspection by persons appointed by the president for that purpose. Finally, the president was to appoint a proxy who would attend stockholders’ meetings, but the government’s share of the votes was to be limited to one-third of the total.55

In his scheme, Latrobe presented Congress with a viable method of funding a national internal improvements system, a method which appeared to be the most acceptable. Government involvement in the internal improvement scheme was minimal. It would not direct any of the projects itself, rather its function was to approve the plan of a road or canal and then provide a portion of the money needed to build it. Even though the government would provide up to half of a company’s capital, its control as a stockholder would never exceed one-third of the total vote. Thus, the various improvements would always be under private control. Latrobe’s plan was not as expensive as Gallatin’s 1808 proposals. Porter told the House of Representatives that Latrobe, “who, as an experienced as well as scientific engineer, is confessedly superior to any other in this country,” had estimated the cost at $16 million. The estimate, said Porter, “was intended to be a liberal one, and to show the maximum price which the works could cost.”56 Actually, the items in Latrobe’s plan cost the same as those in Gallatin’s. The difference was that Latrobe eliminated the $3.4 million which Gallatin had allotted for local projects in those parts of the Union that did not benefit from the national plan. But to a Congress interested in spending as little as possible, $16 million might have looked more acceptable than $20 million.

Once the bill was introduced in the Senate, Latrobe did not relax his efforts in obtaining its passage. On 7 January 1810, he wrote to William Duane, the Philadelphia editor and internal improvements enthusiast, and related the origins of the bill. He assured Duane of its passage, noting that the opposition consisted only of Eppes and the Connecticut Federalists, and he asked the editor to aid the bill


in his “Patriotic paper,” the *Aurora*. Meanwhile Joshua Gilpin had written the engineer explaining his objections to the bill. Apparently Gilpin felt the bill was too inclusive, and he was afraid that the most important project (at least in his eyes), the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal, might not receive the proper attention. Latrobe tried to ease Gilpin’s anxieties and assured him that the C & D Canal was “no doubt in point of national usefulness, practicability, & probable productiveness, at the head of all the projected Works.”

The same day Latrobe wrote Gilpin (8 January 1810), the bill was read a second time in the Senate and referred to a select committee consisting of Senators Pope, Bayard, Joseph Anderson of Tennessee, William H. Crawford of Georgia, and James Hillhouse of Connecticut. Pope moved that the Gallatin Report also be referred to the committee. But the Pope committee did little on the bill. After a week of inaction, Latrobe wrote Porter that “our bill appears to be taking a nap.” He asked Porter to see Pope that very morning “& get him to call the committee together tomorrow morning (Monday) so as to make their report tomorrow.” In the same note he informed Porter that many Maryland and Virginia congressmen were trying to insert the Potomac Canal into the bill. Latrobe feared that if it was included, “it will bring in the Merrimac, Santee, Octorara & 20 other ill planned and ill executed works from every quarter.” He suggested therefore that the sweeping clause be altered by qualifying the canals that were to be aided with the following words: “which in the opinion of the President shall contribute to the general welfare of the United States, or promote the more advantageous communication of the several states with each other.” This would “satisfy the Potowmac people” and at the same time keep the more local canals from ruining the bill.

All Latrobe’s efforts to keep the bill intact, however, were for naught. Pope called his committee together as requested and, on 18 January, he reported to the Senate the bill as amended by the committee. Every recommended canal and road, except for the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal and the Ohio falls canal, had been cut out of the bill. Of course, Pope’s and Bayard’s position in the committee leadership assured a favorable consideration of the projects for their home states. Latrobe was furious with the Senate for ruining his plan.

57. Latrobe to William Duane, 7 January 1810, Latrobe Letterbooks.
58. Latrobe to Joshua Gilpin, 8 January 1810, Latrobe Letterbooks.
"Congress," he declared, "will do nothing that has character & force in it."\(^{60}\)

The whole Senate disagreed with the select committee's report and turned itself into a Committee of the Whole to debate the matter in March. The first section of the bill was amended to require that companies have two-thirds of their subscription filled (rather than one-half) before they apply for government assistance. Attempts to eliminate the companies for building the Boston to Newport Bay canal and the Raritan and Delaware Canal were defeated. At that point, Senator Giles moved that further discussion of the matter be postponed until the following session, thus effectively killing the bill.\(^{61}\) Giles' motivation is difficult to determine. Latrobe thought he would be one of the bill's strongest supporters in the Senate. But the involvement of Gallatin, Giles' declared enemy, in the bill's preparation may have alienated the Virginian. In any case the bill was doomed.

Latrobe felt that the bill would have fared much better in the House of Representatives had it not been so mutilated by the Senate. The most promising speech made on behalf of the bill was given in the House. It was not Nicholas Van Dyke, whom Latrobe thought was the best speaker for the bill, but Peter B. Porter who spoke at length advocating passage of Latrobe's plan. Porter emphasized the two major objects of the internal improvements program: the development of America's market economy and the reinforcement of geopolitical ties between the East and the West. But Porter's eloquence was to no avail. As long as the Senate was going to radically alter and then delay consideration of the bill, the House would not act and the bill died.\(^{62}\)

Why did Latrobe's plan for systemizing and developing American internal improvements fail to achieve congressional approval? According to Latrobe, the bill "died of too many doctors, in the Senate." The architect was thoroughly disgusted with the legislators on Capitol Hill. He wrote to Gouverneur Morris that

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the first object with a majority of the members [of Congress] is
to prepare for the next election: the second to promote the
local interests of their district or their state, and if then any
energy of mind is left for national objects, it wastes itself in
projecting schemes for saving money.63

An examination of the Senate vote which killed Latrobe's bill
reveals definite sectional and political patterns.64 New England
Federalists, Southern conservative Republicans, and the anti-Gal-
latin "invisibles" predominate in the group that opposed the bill,
whereas Westerners and senators from the Middle Atlantic states
favored it. The latter group would have been the main beneficiaries
of the Latrobe plan. The only Federalists in this group were Dela-
wareans James A. Bayard and Outerbridge Horsey, who wanted
federal aid for the C & D Canal. Federalist New Englanders were not
enthusiastic about a scheme that would have benefitted only two
New England states, Massachusetts and Rhode Island. Furthermore,
they felt very uncomfortable supporting Republican legislation,
especially at a time when New England merchants were expressing
growing hostility toward the Jefferson-Madison measures of com-
mercial retaliation against the European powers. The "invisibles,"
the anti-Gallatin Republican faction in the Senate led by Penn-
sylvania Michael Leib, Marylander Samuel Smith, and Virginian
William Branch Giles, delighted in crushing any program with which
the Treasury secretary was associated. William H. Crawford wrote on
8 January 1810, the day Latrobe's bill was referred to the Pope Com-
mittee, that "Mr. Giles is laboring, totis visibus, to raise the war fever,
but the great object of his exertions and wishes, appears to me, to be
the removal of Mr. Gallatin, and the destruction of his popularity
in the public estimation." Gallatin's assistance in drawing up the
Pope-Porter bill doomed the chances for support from the Leib-

63. Latrobe to Gouverneur Morris, 10, 29 April 1810, Latrobe Letterbooks.
64. Senators who favored postponement were Champlin (Fed.-R.I.), Condit (Rep.-
N.J.), Crawford (Rep.-Ga.), Franklin (Rep.-N.C.), Gaillard (Rep.-S.C.), Giles
(Rep.-Va.), Gilman (Rep.-N.H.), Goodrich (Fed.-Conn.), Hillhouse (Fed.-Conn.),
Lambert (Rep.-N.J.), Leib (Rep.-Pa.), Lloyd (Fed.-Mass.), Mathewson (Rep.-R.I.),
Pickering (Fed.-Mass.), Robinson (Vt.), Smith (Rep.-Md.), Sumter (Rep.-S.C.),
Turner (Rep.-N.C.). Senators opposed to postponement were Anderson (Rep.-Tenn.),
Bayard (Fed.-Del.), Clay (Rep.-Ky.), German (Rep.-N.Y.), Gregg (Rep.-Pa.), Horsey
(Fed.-Del.), Meigs (Rep.-Ohio), Pope (Rep.-Ky.), Smith (Rep.-N.Y.), Tait (Rep.-Ga.),
and Whiteside (Rep.-Tenn.).
Smith-Giles faction which was gearing up for their battle against the secretary’s effort to recharter the Bank of the United States.  

Recharter of the Bank also elicited the opposition of a number of Old Republicans, mostly Southern conservatives who insisted on a strict construction of the Constitution. The Constitution did not provide for either the chartering of a national bank or government support of internal improvements. In the eyes of a number of these Republican senators, such as James Turner and Jesse Franklin of North Carolina, Thomas Sumter and John Gaillard of South Carolina, and William H. Crawford of Georgia, Latrobe’s bill was an unwarranted extension of the central government’s power. The fact that the projects in the bill hardly affected the Carolinas or Georgia did little to encourage the conservatives to compromise their principles.

Another reason for the plan’s defeat was the troubled times during which it was introduced. Latrobe and Porter attempted to prove that the scheme would not draw scarce funds from a poorly supplied treasury, since the plan was based on the sale of public lands. But the thought of the government issuing certificates, which would ultimately have to be redeemed, at a time when the Treasury was so low, probably caused uneasiness among a number of congressmen. In addition, the lack of a satisfactory settlement of diplomatic problems diverted the attention of many congressmen away from canals towards the question of commercial relations with Britain and France. Indeed, at the same time the Pope-Porter Bill was being debated, congressmen wrangled over the controversial Macon’s Bill Number One. As the United States grew closer to war the chances for the adoption of a national plan for internal improvements grew slimmer.

65. William H. Crawford to James Hamilton, 8 January 1810, typewritten copy, William Harris Crawford Papers, Library of Congress; Risjord, Old Republicans, pp. 116-17, 110-16. Once Congress began debate on the bank issue there was little time for other issues like internal improvements. According to one senator, “There is no subject upon which opinion in both houses of Congress is so divided and distracted as upon that of a National Bank.” James A. Bayard to Andrew Bayard, 8 April 1810, Bayard Family Papers, Library of Congress.

66. Conservative Republicans formed the largest group among the Senate opponents of Latrobe’s bill; they included Nicholas Gilman (N.H.), John Lambert (N.J.), James Turner (N.C.), Jesse Franklin (N.C.), Thomas Sumter (S.C.), John Gaillard (S.C.), William H. Crawford (Ga.).

A final cause for the bill's defeat may have been related to Latrobe's effectiveness as a lobbyist and promoter of the bill. Latrobe's relations with Congress while constructing the Capitol had not always been smooth. On occasion, the architect had been called to task for his "extravagance" and cost overruns. John Randolph and other conservative congressmen launched a major attack against the architect in the spring of 1808 when they learned that he had overspent the 1807 budget by more than $50,000. Cost overruns were bad enough, but many congressmen felt that the money was spent on undue extravagance in the government buildings of a simple republic. With this experience in mind, many congressmen, especially conservative Southerners, may have wondered about the accuracy of Latrobe's $16 million estimate. They may also have wondered if the projects in the Latrobe plan would be executed with unnecessary extras, so typical, they felt, of the architect's manner. Added to their constitutional qualms, the large expense of the Latrobe plan, especially at a time when the country's finances and foreign relations were at best precarious, may have convinced the conservatives to oppose the Pope-Porter Bill.

Latrobe did not completely abandon his interests in securing federal aid for internal improvements after the defeat of his plan in early 1810. Once again, he assisted the C & D Canal Company in its annual plea to Congress for monetary aid. In November 1810, he wrote Joshua Gilpin: "We must make a great exertion this Session & if we lose it we may give it up." But the Eleventh Congress was no
more willing to assist the company in the winter of 1810–11 than it had been in the previous session. Internal improvement planners made one last attempt at securing federal assistance for a national program before war broke out in June 1812. New York Canal Commissioners Gouverneur Morris and DeWitt Clinton came to Washington in December 1811 to secure federal help in the construction of a canal that would unite Albany with Lake Erie. In Washington they consulted with Latrobe and Gallatin and came up with a scheme similar to the Pope-Porter bill. The new bill, however, provided for even less federal involvement. Basically the government would set aside a certain amount of land for particular projects. The proceeds from the sale of this land would then be given to the states when they finished building the specified canal or road. But, like Latrobe's attempt two years earlier, that of Morris and Clinton failed. War was closer than ever and the Congress seemingly had more pressing matters to consider than canals.

By the War of 1812, Latrobe's attention to internal improvements was beginning to shift away from the national level. National planning had been attempted several times and each time it failed. Its failure was certainly not due to any lack of expertise with which the plans were assembled. Rather a number of other important national issues kept shoving internal improvements off center stage. But internal improvements were developments that would not wait for the federal government. Individual states, aware of the long time it would take to secure federal funds, if they were to be secured at all, began to take action on their own. In the 1810–11 session of the Pennsylvania legislature, assemblymen appropriated $825,000 for roads and bridges; in New York, the state legislature created a canal commission to undertake internal improvements and to seek federal aid for those projects. The war interrupted most of these efforts by the states to develop their own transportation systems. But when peace arrived in 1815, Americans turned their attention back to canals and roads.

1. January 1814, he congratulated Charles Jared Ingersoll, who had introduced the latest C & D aid bill in the House of Representatives, on his “patriotic effort,” reminding the congressman that he (Latrobe) held himself “free to serve the Company with might and main, if they wish for my assistance.” Latrobe to Charles Jared Ingersoll, 17 January 1814, Latrobe Letterbooks. See also Latrobe to Kensey Johns, 5 January (misdated December) 1816, Latrobe Letterbooks.

70. Latrobe to DeWitt Clinton, 20 January 1812, Latrobe Letterbooks. For a more comprehensive treatment of the 1812 internal improvements scheme, see Harrison, “Internal Improvement Issue,” pp. 292–98.

Another unsuccessful attempt would be made to secure a national plan for internal improvements, but the real action in this field was at the state level. When state agencies began looking for the expertise they needed to undertake such projects in a professional manner, they turned to the same men that the federal government had turned to when it was planning canals.

Two southern states—Virginia and North Carolina—called upon Latrobe to provide them with advice on personnel and technical problems concerning their internal improvements. Both the Virginia Board of Public Works, through President Madison, and the North Carolina internal improvements commissioners asked Latrobe to recommend suitable men for their chief engineering positions. In addition, North Carolinians drew on Latrobe’s technical skill regarding the union of the Yadkin and Cape Fear rivers by means of a canal. Latrobe also had an indirect influence on South Carolina’s efforts at regional planning of internal improvements. Robert Mills, Latrobe’s pupil who had worked with the engineer on the C & D Canal, was appointed a member of the South Carolina Board of Public Works in 1820 and published several works advocating internal improvements to assist the state’s economic recovery from the postwar depression. Latrobe, then, never abandoned his efforts at internal improvements planning. As the emphasis in canal and road planning shifted from the national to the regional level, so did

72. Calhoun’s Bonus Bill, which passed Congress on 1 March 1817, provided for an internal improvements fund composed of the net annual dividends paid to the U.S. by the Second Bank of the U.S. as well as the $1,500,000 paid by the bank to the U.S. as a “bonus” (required) for the act of incorporation. Madison vetoed the bill as unconstitutional on 3 March, the day before he left office, and defeated the last major effort at comprehensive national planning of American canals and roads. Harrison, “Internal Improvement Issue,” pp. 333-78. For the Bonus Bill as part of Madison’s tripartite nationalist postwar program, see George Dangerfield, The Awakening of American Nationalism, 1815-1828 (New York, 1965), pp. 5-20.

73. Latrobe to James Madison, 8, 16 April 1816, and Latrobe to John Spear Smith, 25 April 1816, Board of Public Works Papers, Virginia State Library, Richmond; Latrobe to William Seaton, 3 September 1817, Latrobe Letterbooks; Latrobe to Joseph Gales, Sr., 16 April 1818, Archibald D. Murphey Papers, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh.

the direction of Latrobe's services change from Washington to Richmond and Raleigh.

This shift reflected the direction American politics was taking in the early nineteenth century. Despite the nationalist fervor following the War of 1812, politicians, especially in the agrarian South where national planners had proposed few major transportation improvements, spoke more of retaining or restoring political power at the state and local level and limiting it at the national level. Large scale internal improvements (first, canals and later, railroads) were undertaken with government aid during the antebellum period—but that assistance emanated from the state legislatures. Not until several years before the Civil War did the federal government begin to assist railroad construction but only in a haphazard manner. It was with the demise of sectionalism as a potent force and the rise of industrialization as a dominant factor in American society that the federal government finally undertook the development of a national transportation system based initially on railroads and later, in the twentieth century, on a national highway network.