Overlapping Hinterlands: York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore, 1800-1850

York, a small south-central Pennsylvania city, lies forty-eight miles north of Baltimore and eighty miles west of Philadelphia. In the first half of the nineteenth century Baltimore bought York’s raw materials, agricultural products, and iron ware, and so served as a market for York goods. The Baltimore market drew York people to the Maryland city where considerable social interchange occurred and where they found some of the institutions of culture. Philadelphia acted as wholesaler to York retail merchants, as supplier of manufactured articles, and even as direct retailer to York consumers. Thus the two cities came to play different central-place roles in York life. This article examines the relations of York, a town in overlapping hinterland zones, with Baltimore and Philadelphia in the first half of the nineteenth century, when those relations were being changed and focused by the transportation and industrial revolutions.

Allen Pred has argued that by the mid-nineteenth century the major cities of the eastern United States existed in a system of “intricate, crisscrossing economic relationships,” in which small towns and cities interacted with metropolitan complexes.¹ In this system York came to play a specialized and complementary role as a purchaser of Philadelphia manufactures, but that role developed as York supplied both manufactures and raw materials to Baltimore. Money made in Baltimore bought Philadelphia goods. Regarding these relationships from the standpoint of the hinterland town rather than from the metropolis suggests a refinement of Diane Lindstrom’s thesis that Philadelphia rose to industrial preeminence by exploiting the markets of its own hinterland.²


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This article will also argue that York's own role in the central-place hierarchy shifted during the first half of the nineteenth century. From colonial times York, as the county seat, had provided political and legal functions to surrounding townships and villages. Markets and a central market house were authorized in the 1750s. In addition to the unspecialized shopkeepers characteristic of even smaller places, milliners, bakers, confectioners, brewers, druggists, dentists, newspapers, and banks appeared by the early nineteenth century. The trappings of civic respectability followed: schools, libraries, lectures, and popular entertainments.\(^3\) By the mid-nineteenth century York and its surrounding townships had become both a transshipment point (as railroad delivery of agricultural products replaced wagon teams) and a center of specialized manufactures exported beyond its own immediate hinterland. Those new functions all depended on, or grew out of, changed relations with the cities and the improved transportation routes created in the years after 1830.

The distances separating York from Philadelphia and Baltimore, the intervening geographical features, and the transportation links that were developed removed York from clear dependence on one city or the other.\(^4\) Although major topographical barriers did not isolate York from the cities, they sometimes complicated its access to them.\(^5\) The Susquehanna River, twelve miles to the east of the town, interfered with York's connection with Philadelphia. Although the town of York was founded in 1741, and settlement in the surrounding area had begun in the 1720s, the York-Philadelphia road did not bridge the

\(^3\) Based on John Gibson, ed., *History of York County, Pennsylvania* (Chicago, 1886), 521; U.S. Census of Manufactures, 1850 manuscript schedules (National Archives microfilm T-1157, roll 5); U.S. Census of Population, 1850 manuscript schedules (National Archives microfilms 432-839 and 432-840).

\(^4\) York was therefore not the overshadowed captive of a metropolis, as were the examples discussed in Bayly Ellen Marks, “Rural Response to Urban Penetration: Baltimore and St. Mary's County, Maryland, 1790-1840,” *Journal of Historical Geography* 8 (1982), 113-27, and Michael P. Conzen, *Frontier Farming in an Urban Shadow: the Influence of Madison's Proximity on the Agricultural Development of Blooming Grove, Wisconsin* (Madison, 1971).

Map 1
Townships of York County, 1850

Towns mentioned in text:
- York
- Wrightsville
- Hanover
- York Haven
- Wellsville
- Mount Wolf

The townships of York County. Note that York Township is a different entity from the borough of York.
wide and treacherous river until 1814. And while the Susquehanna, its mouth at the head of the Chesapeake Bay, seemed to confer a natural connection between York and Baltimore, the river's shallow depth and rocky bottom made that route a mixed blessing. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries considerable downstream traffic moved on the Susquehanna, especially in the high-water spring season. But without spring freshets to carry boats over the rocks, downstream traffic was difficult; upstream traffic was almost impossible in all seasons.

Furthermore, York did not lie on the major east-west travel routes by which Baltimore and Philadelphia separately sought access to the markets and materials of the developing west. Those routes sought river passages through the Appalachians: from Baltimore, west to the Potomac; from Philadelphia, west to the Susquehanna, then northwest along the Susquehanna and its tributary the Juniata (see map 2). York lay to the north of the first and to the south of the second. A random selection of 108 travel accounts by foreigners in the United States between 1785 and 1860 reveals that only thirteen of them passed through York, although almost all traveled through the eastern states. All thirteen followed routes away from more customary travelers' paths. Five passed through York en route from Philadelphia to Baltimore compared with forty-three others who followed a more direct route between those cities. Of seventeen travelers between Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, only four passed through York; others struck

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6 Gibson, History of York County, 17-19 (for early settlements) and 597 (for Susquehanna bridges). For more information on the history of Susquehanna bridges at Wrightsville, see "Columbia and Wrightsville Bridge Company," file folder A-327, Historical Society of York County (hereafter, HSYC).


8 The selection of travelers' accounts was made chiefly from bibliographies in Jane L. Mesick, The English Traveler in America, 1785-1835 (1922; reprint, Westport, 1970) and Max Berger, The British Traveler in America, 1835-1860 (1943; reprint, Gloucester, 1964).

west from Harrisburg through Carlisle and Chambersburg, or (after its construction) followed the "Main Line" canal-and-railroad route along the Juniata. John Melish’s *Description of the Roads of the United States* (1814) listed five routes between Philadelphia and Pittsburgh; none passed through York. Melish did refer to one older route, some of whose traffic perhaps passed through York: roads from Philadelphia to the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. In the eighteenth century that valley had been settled by migrants from Pennsylvania and had been tied to Philadelphia markets by wagon roads. It is not clear whether more of that traffic passed through York (crossing the Susquehanna at Wright’s Ferry) or avoided it by passing down the Great Valley (crossing at Harris’s Ferry); no York documents refer to the traffic. In any case the importance of that route declined after the Revolution as the Shenandoah Valley found outlets and suppliers in Baltimore, Alexandria, and Richmond.

Although York lay off their main east-west lines, both Baltimore and Philadelphia interests constructed transportation routes that connected York with their cities (see map 2). For Philadelphia, transportation to York seems in retrospect almost an afterthought, but for Baltimore greater issues may have been at stake. Philadelphia could tap the Susquehanna Valley without touching York, and in any case had available the rich hinterland east of the Susquehanna. But roads from the Susquehanna Valley to Baltimore led logically through York and, as Clarence Gould argued, Baltimore’s growth in the late eighteenth century was intimately connected with its exploitation of the grain economy of western Maryland and adjacent Pennsylvania.

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Map 2
Railroads and waterways affecting York

Waterways:
1: Codorus Creek and Navigation
2: Chesapeake and Delaware Canal

Railroads:
A: Baltimore and Ohio
B: Pennsylvania "Main line"
C: Baltimore and Susquehanna
D: York and Cumberland
E: Wrightsville, York & Gettysburg

James Livingood has thoroughly discussed those transportation links, and they need only be summarized briefly here. Both Baltimore and Philadelphia reached York with turnpike roads at about the same time. Improved roads to both cities were in place by 1810. The Susquehanna and York Borough Turnpike, between York and Wrightsville (on the west bank of the Susquehanna), was finished in 1810 with considerable Philadelphia investment. A turnpike between Philadelphia and Columbia (across the river from Wrightsville) had been completed in 1803. A turnpike from Baltimore also reached York in 1810, and it was extended north to the Susquehanna at York Haven (the site of an especially serious rocky barrier to river navigation) in 1811. Thus Baltimore interests hoped to establish connections with the Susquehanna Valley through York.  

The natural channel for such Baltimore traffic was, of course, the river itself, and Baltimore men early hoped to improve its navigation. The final such “improvement,” however, did not occur until 1840—after almost sixty years of schemes—and by that date improved river navigation failed to confer a dramatic advantage on Baltimore. A “Susquehanna Canal” had been incorporated as early as 1783, although no construction resulted immediately. In 1797 Philadelphia interests, hoping to open the river north of Columbia (but not south of it), built a short canal to detour around the Conewago Falls near York Haven. By 1810 this Conewago Canal, now styled the York Haven Company, had fallen under the control of Baltimore capital. The Susquehanna Canal itself was built from Port Deposit (near the river’s mouth) to the Pennsylvania state line in 1802, but there it abruptly ended. The Pennsylvania legislature, protective of Philadelphia’s interests in the Susquehanna Valley, discouraged canal construction south of Columbia and Wrightsville. Only after the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal (1829) opened the Chesapeake to Philadelphia traffic did Susquehanna canal construction south of Wrightsville proceed. With the completion of the Susquehanna and Tidewater Canal in 1840, Wrightsville was linked with the Chesapeake. By that date

however, a railroad had been built between Baltimore and York, and the new canal proved as useful to Philadelphia merchants as it was to those in Baltimore.\textsuperscript{15}

Railroads provided much more direct and significant links between York and the two cities. The Baltimore and Susquehanna Railroad, a Baltimore concern incorporated in 1828, completed its line to York in 1838. An extension (and subsidiary) of this line, called the Wrightsville, York, and Gettysburg Railroad, reached Wrightsville from York in 1840. Meanwhile, a railroad had been built from Philadelphia to Columbia in 1834. In 1840 railroad tracks were laid on the Wrightsville-Columbia bridge thus linking York and Philadelphia. In 1851 the last significant rail line for York extended the Baltimore and Susquehanna's tracks north to Bridgeport, across the river from Harrisburg.\textsuperscript{16} Baltimore had finally reached directly into the Susquehanna Valley. The important dates for York, however, were 1838 and 1840. After 1838 familiar social intercourse with Baltimore became easier; anecdotal evidence (discussed later in this article) suggests that the railroad helped tilt the town's personal and social connections southward. The railroad also changed the character of the economic relationships of York and the larger cities; it accelerated change and promoted specialization.

In the first half of the nineteenth century York's economy became more specialized: agricultural raw materials were processed on a larger scale, and the manufacture of more specialized iron implements and machinery reached wider external markets. Its agricultural productivity rested on the limestone-rich "York Valley" (see map 3). This belt of limestone-based soil, two to four miles wide, runs from near Wrightsville through York to Hanover. In the nineteenth century the county's largest towns perched on this belt, and the townships through which the belt passed (Hellam, Spring Garden, Manchester, West Manchester, North Codorus, Paradise, and Heidelberg) were the most


richly cultivated in the county.\textsuperscript{17} The limestone belt townships and towns (including York, the largest town, with a population of 6,863 in 1850) functioned as an economic unit. The farms and food producers of the townships served both the local towns and the markets of Baltimore, the latter—especially after the 1830s—reached through York and with the involvement of York merchants. Access to such markets coincided with the best land in the county. Completion of the railroad from York to Baltimore in 1838 facilitated transport to Baltimore and encouraged the organization of larger processing industries, especially in flour milling and whiskey distilling.

Long before the larger processing industries or the railroad appeared, whiskey and flour had moved from York County to Baltimore. Unfortunately the quantitative evidence available for 1850 does not exist for the early decades of the century. Surviving records point to the dispersed production of agricultural goods throughout York County, some of which moved to Baltimore and even Philadelphia in small lots, carried over roads by wagons and pack animals. One substantial flour mill owned by Baltimore interests had been founded in the first decade of the century. That enterprise, at York Haven, collected grain from many places in the Susquehanna Valley and sent flour to Baltimore by wagon.\textsuperscript{18} But this mill was an unusual precursor of later relationships.

By 1850, however, a concentration of agricultural processing activity was underway. In that year the seven limestone townships contained 59.7 percent of York County’s farms valued over $5,000, yet they had only 29.8 percent of the county’s township (i.e., rural) population. The same townships, with the limestone-belt towns of York, Hanover, and Wrightsville, included only 40.7 percent of the county’s total population of 57,540, but contained two-thirds of the county’s individuals who reported wealth in excess of $5,000.\textsuperscript{19} The same towns and

\textsuperscript{17} Stose and Jones, \textit{Geology of York County}, esp. maps on 3, 35. See also James T. Lemon, \textit{The Best Poor Man’s Country: a Geographical Study of Early Southeastern Pennsylvania} (Baltimore, 1972), 35.

\textsuperscript{18} Gibson, \textit{History of York County}, 350-51; Henry J. Young, “Some notes on the economic history of the site of York Haven,” file folder 221, (typescript 1953), HSYC. See also the letterbook of Charles M. Poor, 1816-1823, file folder BR-99, HSYC; Poor was agent at York Haven for the controlling Baltimore interests.

\textsuperscript{19} U.S. Census of Population, 1850.
townships claimed 34 of the 47 York County businesses that produced goods valued in excess of $10,000 in 1850. Much of this wealth came from the products of the land, particularly grain, converted to flour and whiskey. The 1850 census of manufactures recorded a total of 113 grist mills in York County, but five of those mills—two in Manchester and one each in Hellam, Spring Garden, and West Manchester townships—ground 28 percent of the county’s total by value.\(^{20}\) The seven townships in the limestone belt accounted for 52.6 percent of the county’s milled grain, although they had only 30.5 percent of the grain mills and 25.8 percent of the county’s farm households. Milling especially concentrated in the enterprises of the York merchant firm of P.A. and S. Small, founded in 1833, whose grain mill in Manchester Township was the largest single manufacturing establishment in the county. Small’s mills (in Spring Garden and Manchester townships) accounted for 16 percent of the county’s flour. Much of Small’s production made its way to Baltimore by rail.\(^{21}\) Millers responded quickly to railroad access. Mount Wolf, one of the county’s first settlements deliberately sited on a rail line, grew up when Adam Wolf began his milling operations as the railroad was extended north from York in 1851.\(^{22}\)

By 1850 something of the larger scale that marked flour milling also characterized the distilling of whiskey. Distilleries in the seven townships accounted for 55.6 percent of value added by all county distilleries, although they numbered only 42, 24.6 percent of the county total.\(^{23}\) York newspapers regularly quoted Baltimore market prices of whiskey, flour, and grain; Baltimore market reports, printed in York papers, regularly summarized arrivals of whiskey by canal, rail, and road.

The widespread dispersal of milling and distilling suggests that concentration was the new exception. In 1850 grist mills existed in 27 of the county’s 28 townships, and at least one distillery could be found in 23 of the 28.\(^{24}\) This pattern of dispersal went back to the

\(^{20}\) U.S. Census of Manufactures, 1850.

\(^{21}\) Gibson, History of York County, 556; pamphlets describing the history of the firm of P.A. and S. Small, file folder 862, HSYC; values from U.S. Census of Manufactures, 1850.

\(^{22}\) Gibson, History of York County, 618.

\(^{23}\) U.S. Census of Manufactures, 1850.

\(^{24}\) Ibid.
eighteenth century when agricultural settlement patterns of the county took form. A map of grain mills published in 1821 shows over 100 mills scattered throughout the county.\(^2^5\) In the years between 1810 and 1840, according to one authority, as many as one-fifth of the county’s farms had a still on their premises. Farms advertised for sale in that period often boasted either a still or spring water suitable for the operation of one.\(^2^6\) The dispersal of mills and stills, and the small size of most of them, argue that most served local demand. But by 1840 York County had more distilleries than any other county in the eastern district of the state and trailed only Lancaster County in gallons produced.\(^2^7\) No evidence suggests that the people of York drank more whiskey per capita than others; whiskey was exported to other markets. And the townships on the southern border, closest to Baltimore, had the largest number of stills in the county.\(^2^8\) Larger distilleries in the limestone belt could move whiskey to Baltimore by rail; in the southern townships the older small-scale movement by wagon persisted.

Although tanneries were also widely dispersed over the county, one specialized leather-related industry supplied larger markets by mid-century. By 1860 York County produced 49 percent of the state’s whips. The whip factory of Peter McIntyre, in York, was the largest in terms of value produced, while Abraham Wells’s factory in Warrington Township employed sixty people. Wells sold many of his whips in Pittsburgh, and during the Civil War he opened a branch factory there.\(^2^9\) Other leather trades served only local markets. For example, the per capita proportion of shoemakers in Hanover (population 1,210), Dillsburg (population 270), and Lewisberry (population

\(^{2^5}\) A map of York and Adams counties, published in 1821 by Small and Wagner (in the possession of HSYC), shows the location of mills at that date. The map is reprinted in “Old mills in York County,” *Art, Ink and Type 6* (n.d.), a publication of Printing Plate Craftsmen, York. Grant H. Voaden collected massive material about mills in York County, and his files are deposited at HSYC.

\(^{2^6}\) The estimate is in Gibson, *History of York County*, 351. Advertisements in the *York Gazette* have been randomly surveyed between 1815 and 1851.

\(^{2^7}\) U.S. Department of State, *Compendium of the Sixth Census*, 1840, 138.

\(^{2^8}\) York County Tax Records, 1849, Pennsylvania State Archives.

York did, however, export iron implements and machinery. While York County never equaled the importance of some other Pennsylvania areas in the mining of ore and the making of iron, its townships always had some mining, smelting, and founding activities. In the early nineteenth century some of this business—especially the forging of tools and implements—came to be practiced in York, and a market developed in Baltimore for York's iron products. In the 1840s and 1850s such businesses expanded, and the little city became an industrial center that manufactured railroad cars, agricultural implements, steam engines, and decorative iron for buildings. The 1850s were especially significant in this expansion. In 1850 George Ilgenfritz employed fifteen men in railroad car construction producing cars valued at $18,000. Two years later David Small (a cousin of the preeminent millers) and his partner Charles Billmyer began their manufacture of railroad cars. By 1860 all these carmakers employed eighty men and produced cars with a total value of $253,000. In 1850 Durkee and Company employed twelve men and steam-powered machinery to cast plows and stoves, while Wambaugh and Baker, and Rudolph Spangler made threshing machines, George Shetter edged tools, and John Denning plows. Durkee's business expanded rapidly in subsequent years, as A.B. Farquhar took it over and renamed it the Pennsylvania Agricultural Works. By 1860 York County produced $125,000 worth of agricultural implements, an activity that employed 106 men, and by the 1870s Farquhar was quoting prices for the delivery of goods over much of the United States.

30 U.S. Census of Manufactures, 1850; York County Tax Records, 1849, Pennsylvania State Archives; U.S. Census of Population, 1850, for proportions of shoemakers to populations.


32 Some of this information about forges and foundries has been taken from U.S. Census of Manufactures, 1830; U.S. Census Office, Manufactures in 1860, 534-35; Gibson, History of York County, 564-68. For Billmyer and Small, file folder 16076, HSYC; for A.B. Farquhar, file folder 937, HSYC.
In addition to railroad cars and agricultural tools, other specialized iron businesses appeared in the middle decades of the century. Geiger and Bechtol began making ornamental iron railings and staircases in 1840. In subsequent years the firm acquired more partners, became the Variety Iron Works, and opened a branch office in Baltimore. Frederick Baugher, who had transformed his tannery into a foundry in the 1830s, joined Enos Frey's steam engine and boiler works in 1845; by 1850 Baugher and Frey had thirteen employees. Root and Case began making scales in the 1840s and soon published testimonials from Baltimore and Philadelphia customers.33

These specialized iron makers found markets in Baltimore as early as the 1820s. York's first iron foundry, developed by the partnership of Phineas Davis, Israel Gardner, and James Webb, made significant contributions to American iron technology while undertaking commissions for Baltimore interests.34 Davis and Gardner, for example, built the first American iron steamboat, the Codorus, launched into the Susquehanna in 1825 and intended to ply the river above York Haven bringing grain to the mills there from the Susquehanna Valley. Two other steamboats soon followed, although none was particularly successful.35 More significant than the steamboats was the construction by Davis and Gardner of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad's first steam locomotive, the "York," completed in 1832 and hauled to Baltimore by wagon. Davis and Gardner subsequently built several other locomotives for the same railroad until Davis (the partner chiefly responsible for such large projects) died in a railroad accident in 1835.

The most complete records of a York County iron business, those of the Margaretta Furnace in Lower Windsor Township, illustrate that by the 1840s York iron makers had a very close relationship with the Baltimore market.36 A steady stream of orders for castings, stoves, furnaces, kettles, pots, firedogs, oven lids, cauldrons, griddles, and

33 For Baugher, file folders 12290 and 14661, HSYC; for Root and Case, York Gazette, March 19, 1844.
34 John C. Jordan, An Historical Citizen: Career of Phineas Davis, the Noted Inventor (1904), pamphlet, file folder 12195, HSYC.
36 Margaretta Furnace Papers, 1844-1864, file folder 783, HSYC, a large and well-organized collection of account books, receipts, invoices, and business correspondence.
grates came from Baltimore businessmen, orders that overshadowed those from York and Lancaster County towns. The rural York iron industry in effect competed with Philadelphia for Baltimore buyers. A Baltimore correspondent ordering holloware in 1846 promised to buy "if you can put them at $60 per ton—for which price I can buy in Philadelphia."

In the process of growing and specializing, York iron and machine makers came to serve wider markets than did the miscellaneous foundry business of the early nineteenth century. The Davis and Gardner ledger books of the 1820s show a firm that built railroad locomotives and steamboats for Baltimore but drew most of its work from supplying York customers with nails, springs, plow parts, and stove parts. Thus early iron founders made their livelihoods supplying the surrounding rural population with goods that helped plow, distill, mill, and tan. But the experiences of Davis and Gardner and of the Margaretta Furnace illustrate that before 1850 some York iron manufacture began to reach the Baltimore market. The railroad's construction greatly augmented their reach. As Paul Paskoff has made clear, the weight of iron products made forges and foundries particularly vulnerable to high transportation costs. The railroads and canals in place by 1840 helped the careers of Ilgenfritz, Billmyer and Small,

37 There are many references to stove purchases by Baltimore businessmen in the Margaretta Furnace Papers. One businessman introduced himself to James Curran, the furnace's managing partner:

Baltimore July 30th 1844

Dear Sir
You are the oner or proprietor of the Margaretta Furnace i hav Not the onner of Beasing aquired With You.—But i want you to Send me some Cook Stovs and some Box Stovs as follows—4 No. 4 Cook Stovs, 5 No. 5 Cook Stovs, 6 No. 6 Cook Stovs, 40 No. 1 Box Stovs.
I Want those Stovs Vary Bad and iff you will send them to mee you Shall have your money within four monts at least as sure as i liv. i have had a Deal of truble for Two or Three years and i have been Broken up and i was fourst to pirtishen for the Benefit of the insolvent Laws of maryland But i hav got throu with it and i am on my feets a gane and—iff any man katches mee in such a scrape a gane he may Set me Down as a Fool.—iff you fecal Willing to Trust mee With this amont you will pleas to forred them as Soon as you can and you Shall have your money in 4 monts
Yours Respectfully
C. Bryan

Bryan became a regular customer.

38 John Emich to James Curran, April 13, 1846, file folder 783 (M), HSYC.
39 Davis and Gardner, file folder BR-10, HSYC.
40 Paskoff, Industrial Evolution, 53-57.
Geiger and Bechtol, and Farquhar prosper as York converted from general iron making that served local needs to specialized production for a larger market.

The transportation links with Baltimore and Philadelphia contributed to the integration of York into the economies and societies of those cities, and evidence from York supports Lindstrom's view of an increasingly integrated regional economy. By the mid-century York and its surrounding townships supplied a variety of products to the outside world. Much of this export, whether the fruits of agriculture or of industry, moved to Baltimore. Market prices from Baltimore appeared in York newspapers, and Baltimore commission agents advertised their services to York sellers. But Philadelphia merchants who advertised in York appealed to buyers of Philadelphia goods, not to sellers of York produce.

Although heavy raw materials such as timber, coal, and limestone reached York from the north and west, via the river system and the Codorus Navigation, an immense range of products flowed to York from Baltimore and Philadelphia. Baltimore, with its advantages of transportation and proximity, and its connections with the southern and Caribbean trades, served as York's intermediary for raw materials and staples from a distance. Philadelphia, with its industrial revolution clearly underway by 1840, increasingly supplied manufactured goods. The cities did not absolutely divide those roles, for Baltimore sent a few manufactures and Philadelphia performed some entrepot functions. But the division was clear enough; if there had been a competition for industrial supremacy, Philadelphia had definitely triumphed despite Baltimore's marginal transportation advantages. The railroad connection between York and Baltimore was made slightly earlier, and service on it remained more frequent, than the York-Philadelphia link. Yet Philadelphia merchants found the service adequate, for by the late 1840s they not only supplied York merchants on a wholesale basis but had designs on the York retail market as well.

The business records of James McConkey, a Peach Bottom Township merchant and canal boat operator, provide an especially rich source of information about the origin of products. Although McCon-

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41 The Codorus Navigation canalized the Codorus Creek between York and the Susquehanna River in 1833. For an example of its traffic, see York Gazette, March 26, 1839.
key was a country, not a York, merchant, his activities probably parallel those of town merchants. In the southeast corner of the county, Peach Bottom more clearly depended on canal and river than did York. Isolated from the railroad, it had access to both Baltimore and Philadelphia by boat, with Baltimore the closer of the two. McConkey's boats frequented both cities, reaching Philadelphia through the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal. McConkey sold a wide variety of stock to customers in southeastern York County, and Philadelphia supplied most of it. Bills received from Philadelphia and Baltimore businesses illustrate the dominance of McConkey's trade with the former city. In 1835 Philadelphia bills totaled $2,260, while Baltimore bills were $360; in 1836 the respective figures were $3,270 and $320. Both cities supplied what may be broadly called processed foods: wine, crackers, meat, salt, syrup, sugar, coffee, tobacco, molasses, cheese. Manufactured goods, however, were decisively Philadelphia in origin, and they included pens, stationery, paper, shoes, hats, clothing, hardware, cutlery, drugs, soap, pottery, glassware. McConkey tended to equip his boats in Baltimore with purchases of rope, oakum, tar, pitch, and rosin—but Philadelphia occasionally supplied such goods too. The pattern of McConkey’s expenses shows that he made two or three major purchasing expeditions to Philadelphia annually where he took a room in a hotel and visited a large number of retail and wholesale establishments over a period of several days. He made more casual and briefer trips to Baltimore.\(^\text{42}\)

As a York County “country merchant,” McConkey was the intermediary between his rural customers and the merchants of the cities. Merchants in the town of York shared some of his habits. Their ties with Philadelphia had been established in the eighteenth century before any dramatic industrialization had occurred. The account book of York merchant Conrad Leatherman lists 452 purchases made in Philadelphia and only 38 in Baltimore between 1790 and 1800.\(^\text{43}\) Even then Philadelphia's closer connections with Europe proved attractive. John Fisher, the proprietor of a York store, bought goods from both Philadelphia and Baltimore in the 1790s, but his wares

\(^{42}\) James McConkey, Bills, 1834-1837, Hildeburn Papers (McConkey section), Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

\(^{43}\) Conrad Leatherman, Account Book, 1790-1800, file folder BR-11 (b), HSYC.
from London and Liverpool all came through Philadelphia. Despite the difference in distance, therefore, York retail business (perhaps drawn east by the political and legal pull of the capital) had long been accustomed to the Philadelphia wholesale market.

As the middle of the nineteenth century approached, some variations in the pattern began to appear, as a sample of York newspaper advertisements suggests. At the beginning of the century, with transportation links still somewhat frail, York merchants obtained some goods from both cities. In 1815-16 York stores advertised that they had received dry goods, hardware, pots and pans, and stoves largely from Philadelphia, although one store referred to such supplies from both cities. Another store received shoes from Baltimore, and a Baltimore business appealed directly to York tanners with advertisements of imported hides. By 1819-20, more Baltimore merchants advertised directly offering wire screens, groceries, hops, and salt, while York merchants offered either their own products or goods from Philadelphia—books and dry goods, or fashions from London imported through Philadelphia. The same pattern—direct Baltimore retail advertisements, with York merchants offering Philadelphia goods—was repeated more systematically in 1832-33. Baltimore businesses offered (in addition to processed foods) drugs and tin plates, while in York the buyer could find Philadelphia fashions (from a tailor), Philadelphia dry goods, Philadelphia cologne (from a barber), and European pianos (imported through Philadelphia). By 1838-40—the first years of the Baltimore railroad—advertisements from Baltimore businesses had become relatively rare. In fact the first advertisement from a Baltimore business in the 1838 *York Gazette* did not appear until December when a commission merchant offered his services to those sending goods to Baltimore by rail. In the next year several York merchants began offering their wares—china and glass, for instance—at “Baltimore prices,” while they also continued to refer to their Philadelphia goods: fashions for tailors and milliners, pottery, drugs, and dry goods.

44 John Fisher, Correspondence, file folder 15189, HSYC.

45 This and subsequent paragraphs are based on advertisements in the *York Gazette* which was systematically checked in the following periods: Nov. 30, 1815-May 2, 1820; Jan. 2, 1832-Sept. 3, 1833; Jan. 2, 1838-June 2, 1840; May 16, 1843-April 2, 1844; Aug. 29, 1848-March 25, 1851. Spot checks were made in other dates as well.
By 1848-49 the pattern of advertisements had changed dramatically. It now seemed that Philadelphia merchants sold in York, or to Yorkers directly, and that Baltimore merely bought York produce. The *York Gazette* continued regular reports of Baltimore market prices for those selling their agricultural goods in Baltimore. But Philadelphia merchants now had separate columns of advertising in the same paper, and those columns told of stoves, pianos, plaster, garden seeds, Venetian blinds, iron chests, refrigerators, umbrellas, ready-made clothing, tea, dry goods, hats and caps, shoes, window glass, furs, watches and jewelry, foreign fruits and nuts, daguerreotype portraits, and the skills of an optician who took temporary rooms in York and offered his services. In 1848 twenty-four Philadelphia businesses ran advertisements in the *York Gazette*, some of them nearly every week. In the same period only two Baltimore businesses advertised: a hotel and a merchant offering to sell York produce on commission.

Several circumstances contributed to this surge of Philadelphia merchants and manufactures into York. The growth of wealth in the region around York, and its concentration there, meant more buying power. In 1850 (according to the manuscript census of population) 603 individuals in York, Hanover, Wrightsville, and the seven townships of the "York Valley" possessed wealth over $5,000. Most of these individuals—farmers, millers, and merchants—had been enriched by the land and its products and by the sale of those products in Baltimore. The wealth that Baltimore helped to create contributed to a demand for Philadelphia goods.

By the 1840s, if not sooner, Philadelphia had become the first American city whose leading economic activity was manufacturing. It could offer to York a sophisticated spectrum of goods that Baltimore could not match. As an industrial center the Pennsylvania city possessed several decisive advantages over its Maryland rival, notably its access to coal and iron and its connections with Europe.

46 U.S. Census of Population, 1850. Of the 603 individuals, 378 (62.7%) were farmers. Of the remaining 225, 139 lived in the town of York. Of the 225 non-farmers, 95 had no listed occupation, 63 were artisans or tradesmen, 40 were merchants, 16 were professionals, 7 were involved in personal services, and 4 were laborers.

Lawson Browne has shown, in a crucial period in the 1820s Baltimore's maritime economy fell into the doldrums, a victim of its location, several hundred miles further (by sea) from Europe than either Philadelphia or New York. Without export connections (especially with Great Britain) Baltimore's merchants lacked capital to drive transportation links through the Appalachians to the west; the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, from which Baltimore men expected so much, did not reach the Ohio River until 1853.\(^48\) That Baltimore's premier railroad had its first locomotives built in York may illustrate the Maryland city's relative industrial weakness; Philadelphia, where coal and iron poured down the Schuylkill Valley, suffered no such dependence. And Philadelphia not only led the nation in the production of such goods as fine textiles, carpets, heavy metalwork, paints, chemicals, and pharmaceuticals; it also supplied York with "London fashions" and "European pianos." Baltimore was closer to the Caribbean, but Philadelphia was closer to Liverpool.

Paradoxically the railroad tightened the social and cultural connections between York and Baltimore. The railroad to Philadelphia clearly had great economic importance; on those occasions when service was interrupted York businessmen immediately felt the inconvenience.\(^49\) While Philadelphia supplied new and exciting goods, the railroad to Baltimore contributed to making Baltimore part of the warp and woof of everyday York life. The socio-cultural network of Baltimore extended to York in many ways. Marriages involving the two communities were fairly common. Real estate for sale in Baltimore, or in adjoining parts of rural Maryland, was regularly advertised in the York press. York people owned land in Maryland.\(^50\) Baltimore slave-owners and craftsmen sought runaway slaves and apprentices in York County and, indeed, Maryland farmers searched for stray or stolen farm animals there as well. Baltimore advertised in York for labor. York "country people" were advised that if they sought good servants, they could find them on a ship from Germany docked in Baltimore.

\(^48\) Gary Lawson Browne, *Baltimore in the Nation, 1789-1861* (Chapel Hill, 1980), esp. 82-86, 125-26, and 165-76.

\(^49\) For example, *York Gazette*, March 10, 1840, when a fire on the railroad between Philadelphia and Lancaster interrupted goods bound for York merchants.

\(^50\) Charles A. Morris, file folder 13334, HSYC.
Immigrants reached York from Baltimore, and when a party of York people left for the California gold fields in 1849 they sailed from Baltimore.\textsuperscript{51}

If York people regarded themselves as familiarly linked to Baltimore, the railroad played an important role in that connection. The guest registers from a York hotel before and after the 1838 completion of the Baltimore-York rail link suggest a dramatic shift in the axis of travel through York. Two such registers survive: one for the period between November 1835 and March 1837, the other for October, November, and December 1840.\textsuperscript{52} In the first, the guests of the Globe Inn stopped there in the course of east-west journeys, for the home places most frequently recorded were Ohio, Pittsburgh, Wrightsville/Columbia, Lancaster, and Philadelphia. As it had earlier in the century, York hosted traffic (however thin) on what is now called the Lincoln Highway. The volume of that traffic varied according to economic conditions. In 1819, for example, during hard times, the \textit{York Gazette} reported that "twenty or thirty" people passed through York every day on foot heading for a hoped-for better life in the west, but such a number was unusual enough to call for comment.\textsuperscript{53}

Railroads resulted in a different pattern of travel through York. The 1838 completion of the railroad between Lancaster and Harrisburg made the rail-canal link between Philadelphia and Pittsburgh easier, which may have tempted some east-west traffic away from York. In the same year the York-Baltimore railroad opened. By 1840 the Globe Inn's guest register revealed almost no Pittsburgh and Ohio addresses. The most commonly recorded home addresses now lay along a north-south line—through Harrisburg, Baltimore, and Virginia. As even fewer Philadelphia-Pittsburgh travelers passed through York, visitors from Baltimore, Washington, and the south arrived, bringing with them a shift in the direction of casual talk, gossip, news, personal interactions, and perhaps even a general sense of a shared community.

When the railroad to Baltimore opened in 1838, residents of both Baltimore and York anticipated its great social and economic effects.


\textsuperscript{52} Globe Inn, Registers, file folder BR-15, HSYC.

\textsuperscript{53} \textit{York Gazette}, July 29, 1819.
The *Baltimore Patriot* urged that city's businessmen to make the train trip to York to see the town's commercial possibilities. Some Baltimore city councilmen and newspaper editors visited York. The *York Gazette* reported "more interchange of visits between the two points since the completion of the road [two months earlier], than there had been for five years previously."\(^{54}\)

Although, as we have seen, Baltimore businessmen did not capture the York market for their wares, substantial anecdotal evidence illustrates how the railroad strengthened social links between York and Baltimore. The railroad improved communications as in 1849 when, thanks to a railroad conductor who made a special trip with a copy of the *Baltimore Sun*, the *York Gazette* printed President Taylor's inaugural address the next day. The railroad enlivened York society. In 1851 the militia's Washington's Birthday Ball enjoyed the presence of General Sam Houston who was passing through by train from Baltimore. The railroad made available cultural opportunities, sometimes deliberately. When in 1850 Jenny Lind appeared in concert in Baltimore, the railroad offered special excursion tickets that included admission to the concert.\(^{55}\) The railroad facilitated long-standing sentimental connections between York and the Maryland city. In 1814 a detachment of York militiamen had marched to Baltimore to assist in the defense of the city against the British, and that event was zealously remembered in later years. Companies of York militia repeatedly traveled to Baltimore, ostensibly to celebrate the glorious events of 1814, where their Baltimore counterparts entertained them. Baltimore militia units also came to York. The railroad strengthened these happy interchanges, as reciprocal militia visits were exchanged within the first few months of the opening of the line. One such use of the railroad ended sadly when a Baltimore detachment calling on York in 1843 met with a rail accident, but the sociable militia visits continued despite that misfortune.\(^{56}\) The York militia companies occasionally visited Philadelphia as well, but their excursion there in 1849 seemed

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\(^{54}\) Ibid., Sept. 18, 1838, and Oct. 30, 1838.

\(^{55}\) Ibid., March 6, 1849; Feb. 25, 1851; Dec. 10, 1850.

more a visit to the tourist sights of the big city than a reunion with friends. On a grim occasion in 1844 the York militia was ordered to Philadelphia to assist in the suppression of an urban insurrection, and the York Gazette sorrowfully referred to "another of those outbreaks that have fixed so deep a stain upon the character of the city of Philadelphia." Baltimore was a neighbor, Philadelphia a painted harlot.

It is possible, however, to make too much of the hostile attitude of York toward Philadelphia, as Livingood did in his book on the Baltimore-Philadelphia trade rivalry. Livingood argued that York political opinion was firmly pro-Baltimore, with York interests convinced that Philadelphia interfered with the construction of rail and canal links between Baltimore and the Susquehanna Valley. As Livingood shows, York political leaders and editors assaulted Philadelphia frequently. With the completion of the rail and canal links, however, the anti-Philadelphia character of York public opinion moderated. As early as 1832 and 1833 the York Gazette argued that the town’s prosperity depended on close connections with both cities, and in 1849 the same newspaper sharply criticized the control wielded by Baltimore interests over the extension of the railroad from York to Harrisburg. As was true of many small cities and towns of the age, York’s organs of public opinion were fiercely chauvinistic, determined to assert both the town’s independence and its glories.

Furthermore, while personal sympathies, historical relationships and trade links existed between York and Baltimore, York and Philadelphia were in the same state—a state for which Philadelphia had performed many higher-level central place functions since the first English settlement in the seventeenth century. In addition to its economic power, Philadelphia possessed cultural, social, and political attractions for people all over Pennsylvania. Until 1799 it was the capital, so that state business drew all Pennsylvanians to it. Even after

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57 Ibid., Sept. 25, 1849.
59 Livingood, Philadelphia-Baltimore Rivalry, 125, 128.
60 York Gazette, March 27, 1832; March 5, 19, 1833; July 31, 1849.
61 Lemon, Best Poor Man’s Country, esp. 118-30.
that date, when the capital moved to Lancaster (and then in 1812 to Harrisburg), some government institutions, especially federal ones, remained in the metropolis. State issues gave York and Philadelphia common concerns, and election returns suggest that York and Philadelphia voters shared some affinities. For example, although the county of York as a whole generally supported Democratic candidates between 1824 and 1860, the town of York was less clearly in the Democrats’ camp. The town supported the Whig or “Anti-Masonic” interest in every presidential and gubernatorial election between 1835 and 1854, as indeed did Philadelphia, while Baltimore was consistently Democratic in that period. Divisions in the anti-Democratic ranks meant that Buchanan (of neighboring Lancaster County) carried York in 1856, and that the Democratic candidate for governor gained 53 percent of York’s votes in 1857. But the presidential election of 1860 showed York a Pennsylvania town, not a Maryland one. Lincoln, who gained a majority of Philadelphia votes that year, took 46.2 percent of York’s, a plurality; in Baltimore Lincoln’s vote was 3.6 percent. In that year the Mason-Dixon line had political meaning, and York was north of it.

The cultural influences of the two cities overlapped in York. Both supplied York with visiting orators, singers, painters and paintings, and bands. York Methodists fell within the Baltimore Conference, while Catholics and Episcopalians each lay within a Philadelphia diocese. Many York people were either Lutherans or some variety of German Reformed, and although their churches thus had much territorial autonomy, eighteenth-century Philadelphia developments had inspired the original organization of their churches. Visiting preachers came to York from both cities; Baltimore camp meetings appealed, especially with the rail connection, but Philadelphia sent temperance lecturers and was the home of the parent Bible Society. When the Independent Order of Odd Fellows opened its fraternal hall in York

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62 I have here used county election statistics compiled and supplied by the Interuniversity Consortium for Social and Political Research, University of Michigan. I thank my colleague Barbara Bardes for her assistance in reading the figures. For votes in the town of York I have used figures printed in post-election issues of the *York Gazette*.

63 Based on surveys of selected periods of the *York Gazette* (as in note 44).

in 1850, the inaugural oration was delivered by the Philadelphia-based state Grand Master, while a Baltimore band provided the music. In 1839 the United States federal court in Philadelphia heard a case arising from a dispute over financing the construction of a new York County courthouse. The architect was a Philadelphian, the contractor from Baltimore. And just as Philadelphia was the source of goods that Baltimore could not supply, so too was it the source of unusual cultural attractions: freak shows, traveling menageries, visiting circuses, "nightingale Ethiopians," mechanical wonders, daguerreotype galleries. The Maryland city could not—or at least did not—match such spectacles.

Sometimes York turned to Philadelphia for education as well as for amusement. A list of 66 physicians practicing in York County in 1885 identifies 43 of them as having received their medical education in Philadelphia; 16 others graduated from Maryland institutions. But if physicians trained in Philadelphia, on occasion Baltimore provided hospital and surgical service. In 1840 the Baltimore Infirmary advertised: "now that York is so immediately connected with Baltimore, the Infirmary is particularly convenient." York's most celebrated nineteenth-century physician, Horatio Gates Jameson (1788-1855), spent much of his career practicing in Baltimore and founded that city's Washington Medical College. Able young men moved from the hinterland town to the city for fame and fortune.

These cultural symbioses between York, Baltimore, and Philadelphia provide a clue both to the significance of the early nineteenth century in York's history and to the subsequent relationships of York and the cities. In the early nineteenth century York's history illustrated those "intricate, crisscrossing economic relationships among American smaller towns, cities, and metropolitan complexes" to which Allen Pred urged attention. Those relationships included the social and cultural realms as well. A town whose doctors trained in Philadelphia

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65 York Gazette, May 7, 1850.
66 Ibid., Nov. 12, 1839.
68 Gibson, History of York County, 455-63.
69 York Gazette, Jan. 21, 1840.
and moved to Baltimore to practice, that used a Philadelphia architect and a Baltimore contractor for its new courthouse, would become the town which, when the Philadelphia Phillies and the Baltimore Orioles met in the 1983 baseball World Series, presented a classic picture of divided cultural loyalties. Modern communications may bring baseball games into York living rooms, but Interstate Highway 83 plays the role pioneered in the early nineteenth century by the Baltimore and Susquehanna Railroad. York's close social and cultural ties with Baltimore—maintained despite the economic, cultural, and political pull of Philadelphia—may not have been created by that railroad, but its opening in 1838 gave them a shape and permanence.

At least for a time in the nineteenth century Philadelphia held sway in York as the unchallenged purveyor of the goods of the industrial revolution. This article, concentrating on the hinterland rather than the metropolis, has confirmed Diane Lindstrom's view of Philadelphia's preeminence in its back yard, although the role of Baltimore as a market for York goods may stand as an addendum to her thesis. But would that hegemony continue after the antebellum period? Although I do not here consider later developments, the answer was clearly no. The national economy became increasingly complex (as did the transportation and distribution networks), and industrial production included more and more sophisticated specialties. One city did not remain the sole industrial cornucopia. Early nineteenth-century York prefigured those changes. In the little Pennsylvania city specialized industries appeared, even though the markets for whips—let alone for heavy iron such as steamboats and locomotives—were limited by the existing transportation systems. But in the second half of the century York railroad cars, agricultural implements, and ornamental ironwork sold all over the United States and overseas as well. This article has suggested that the "crisscrossing economic relationships" of York and larger cities served as prelude to York's participation in that complex later industrial economy. Marketing connections in Baltimore supplied

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71 A long-time York journalist guessed that on that occasion York's allegiances may have divided 52-48 in Baltimore's favor, with propinquity an important but not the sole determining factor. James A. Hubley, personal communication to author, Oct. 25, 1985.
capital to York, while York’s infant manufactures cut their teeth in a limited, but real, metropolitan market.

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