

# Woodland gets marker just in time

**MARKING THE SPOT:** A landscaped area at Woodland Ferry Park South marks the spot for a replica of the state historical marker commemorating the history of the Woodland Ferry.

Richard Haxton of Dover-based Kent Signs and Russ McCabe, marker program administrator for the Delaware Public Archives, installed the new replacement marker last Friday afternoon — the day before the 2004 Woodland Ferry Festival.

Dedicated during the 2003 Woodland Ferry Festival, the original state marker was reported missing earlier this year from the Woodland Ferry Park South location, which has been the frequent target of vandalism.

Woodland Ferry Park South and other areas near the ferry are the focus of beautification and preservation projects of the Woodland Ferry Association.

Mr. McCabe said replacing the marker was relatively easy. He said the marker text was still in the computer of the Rhode Island-based manufacturer, and the only noticeable change on the new marker is date, from 2003 to 2004, marking when it was put in place.

**RIPPLE EFFECT:** Waves of generous support generated in benefiting Robert Dechene, a Laurel man stricken with muscular dystrophy, and his family have produced ripple effects.

Wendy Daudt, chairwoman of the committee that put together a benefit auction-dinner staged Sept. 4 at the Laurel Fire Hall, said more than \$25,000 has been raised for the Dechene family through that event and monetary donations.

And that figure does not include the voluntary donations of materials and labor that include installation of a handicapped ramp, kitchen renovation and painting at the Dechene

## FROM THE EDITOR

By Gwen Guerke



The Leader & State Register/Glenn Rolfe

**Richard Haxton, left, of Dover-based Kent Signs, gets a hand from Delaware Public Archives administrator Russell McCabe in the installation of a new state historic marker at the Woodland Ferry Park South location.**

home, Mrs. Daudt said. Approximately \$11,000 was cleared at the auction-dinner, thanks in large part to the generosity of a caring community and outright donations of goods and food, including the \$800 cost of the pig roast, said Mrs. Daudt.

"Almost everything was donated," she said.

An impromptu fundraiser at the dinner-auction that began with the auctioning of a book on Delaware donated by U.S. Sen. Thomas Carper raised \$1,400. According to Mrs. Daudt, the book sold for \$200 and a challenge was made for \$100 donations, with the donor signing the back of the book, which subsequently was given to Mr. Dech-

ene.

Dinner leftovers from the pig roast were donated to the Seaford Mission, which allowed them to hold a cookout and have dinner with their families, Mrs. Daudt said.

"There is all kinds of residual ripples through the community," said Mrs. Daudt.

And the ripple effect doesn't stop there.

Seaford resident Vivian Wheatley, the older sister of Mr. Dechene who also has the rare adult onset form of the muscular dystrophy, said publicity of this effort to assist fellow man has opened the door for possible assistance to muscular dystrophy patients in Delaware.

Ms. Wheatley, one of five Dechene siblings stricken with the disease, has worked with the Muscular Dystrophy Association in attempts to secure assistance available to those in other states.

"As a victim of the disease, there is nothing in our area that MDA provides," said Ms. Wheatley, who sent newspaper articles publicizing community support and the frustration and hardship of the family to the MDA. "And the outcome of that is they are going to start a support group in Delaware."

This is still in the works, and the hope is that some services will be available in this area, Ms. Wheatley said. She said she knows of several other people in Sussex County who have muscular dystrophy, other than she and her brother.

"In Sussex County, there seems to be a need," she said. "We're going to try to get some services here in Sussex County, and get a support group going where we can kind of work together."

**DON'T BE FOOLED:** Low turnout of registered voters for Delaware's primary elections last Saturday will not be duplicated in November's general election, predicts Ken McDowell, administrative director for the Sussex County Department of Elections.

Statewide, 12 percent of registered Republicans and 14 percent of Democrats voted in Saturday's primary. In the Democratic race for the candidate for 39th District representative, the turnout was even less — 7 percent.

"We'll have the all-time record in 2004, I'm sure," said Mr. McDowell. "You'll have a presidential race and you will have a governor's race, so you'll have a big turnout then. Don't be fooled by this."

Delaware



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**MEDIA ADVISORY**

**September 5, 2003**

## **HISTORY OF WOODLAND FERRY TO BE CELEBRATED ON SEPTEMBER 13**

One of the nation's oldest ferry services will be recognized on Saturday, September 13, with the dedication of a State Historical Marker. Representatives of the Delaware Public Archives will join the members of the Woodland Ferry Association for the unveiling on the south side of the Nanticoke River at 1:30 PM. The ceremony is a part of the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Woodland Ferry Fall Festival. This daylong event will feature arts and crafts vendors, tours of local museums, food, and music.

By the 1740s the Cannon family was operating a ferry service at the location. The family continued its operation until the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. In 1883 the Delaware General Assembly authorized the county government to establish a public ferry for "all citizens of the State, with their teams, wagons, and carriages...free of charge." Responsibility for the ferry was assumed by the State of Delaware in 1935. Landing areas on both sides of the river have recently been improved and are jointly maintained by the State and the Woodland Ferry Association. All interested persons are encouraged to attend the festival and unveiling.

*For additional information contact Russ McCabe (Delaware Public Archives) at 302-744-5049, or Bill Royal (Woodland Ferry Association) at 302-629-4870. .*

# MARKING HISTORY



The Leader & State Register/Bill Mitchell

State Rep. Tina Fallon, R-Seafood, second from left, unveils the new state historical marker on the south side of the Woodland Ferry on Saturday. Joining her are, from left, Donna Angell, secretary/treasurer of the Woodland Ferry Association; state Sen. Robert L. Venables Sr., D-Laurel; and Woodland Ferry Association President Jack Connor.

## Plaque tells tale of Woodland Ferry

By Glenn Rolfe

The Leader & State Register

WOODLAND — The Woodland Ferry will leave a new mark on history.

The historic value of the Woodland Ferry, which is more than 200 years old, was recognized Saturday with the dedication of a state historical marker during the 11th annual Woodland Ferry Fall Festival.

Local and state dignitaries and representatives from the Delaware Public Archives and the Woodland Ferry Association were on hand for the unveiling of the bronze marker, on the southern (Bethel) side of the Nanticoke River.

The state-operated cable ferry provides vehicle and foot passenger travel across



The Leader & State Register/Bill Mitchell

Jill Miller, left, and Rachel Lynn Fearn take a llama ride during Saturday's Woodland Ferry Association Festival.

# Marker

Continued From Page 1

the Nanticoke, linking Woodland, which is four miles southwest of Seaford, with Bethel and Laurel.

Russell McCabe, the Delaware Historical Markers Program administrator for the Delaware Public Archives, said Woodland resident Bill Royal submitted the marker request on behalf of the Woodland Ferry Association.

State Rep. Tina Fallon, R-Seaford, was the primary legislative sponsor of the marker and funding through the state legislature.

Mr. Royal, who lives near the ferry and is the association's president emeritus and past president, said the marker recognizes "the history of the ferry."

A page of that history changed Saturday.

Mr. McCabe said the marker unveiled on the south side contradicts an existing marker on the north (Woodland) side, which states that members of the Cannon family initiated ferry service there in 1793. He said an original Cannon family petition dug up in research pushes the documented birth of ferry service at that location back to the 1740s.

"And some folks speculate that it is even older than that," Mr. McCabe said. "We have been able to determine that the ferry was in operation (during the) 1740s."

Landing areas on both sides of the river have undergone recent improvements and are jointly maintained by the state and the Woodland Ferry Association. One project by the Woodland Ferry

Association was the creation of a park area at the south landing area.

"One of the reasons we're doing this on the south side is that they built a small park there," Mr. McCabe said. "They've really improved the south-side landing."

The Woodland Ferry is the last cable-operated ferry in Delaware. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The Woodland Ferry may possibly be the second oldest continuous-operating ferry in the nation, behind the Oxford-Bellvue Ferry in Easton, Md., which dates back to the 17th century, Mr. McCabe said.

The Cannon family continued its operation into the middle of the 19th century. In 1883, the Delaware General Assembly authorized county government to establish a

public ferry for "all citizens of the state, with their teams, wagons and carriages ... free of charge."

The state of Delaware assumed responsibility of road-maintenance operation of the ferry in 1935. Today, the ferry is operated by the state Department of Transportation and regulated by the U.S. Coast Guard. It passed its annual Coast Guard inspection in August.

The Woodland Ferry annually provides river transportation for thousands of motorists and walkers, free of charge.

Open from sunup to sundown, it is closed for several holidays and from 10 a.m. to noon Thursdays for general maintenance.

*Staff writer Glenn Rolfe can be reached at 629-5505 or [grolfe@newszap.com](mailto:grolfe@newszap.com).*



MAY 3

A ferry was in operation at the site of Woodland Ferry before February 2, 1793, for on that date the Assembly granted Betty and Isaac Cannon a monopoly for fourteen years. This was in recognition of the investment she, and her deceased husband Jacob Cannon, had made in causeways and roads leading to the ferry. It was conditioned upon keeping the boat in proper order and serving the travelling public promptly.

History Of Delaware, by J. Thomas Scharf, volume 11, page 1305, recounts that this ferry continued under the operation of the Cannon family through the lifetime of Betty Cannon and her sons, Isaac and Jacob, until the death of the latter in 1843. According to Scharf in 1888 the ferry and ferryman's nearby dwelling was the property of Sussex County, but the date of acquisition is not indicated. In 1886 the ferryman's report, as quoted by Scharf, showed 10,000 patrons for the year.

The Cannon brothers were shrewd and able businessmen, whose holdings in land were very extensive by the decade of 1820, and whose stores and warehouses created a business center of considerable extent. On January 6, 1826 the community acquired a postoffice, probably as a result of its becoming a major transfer point on a stagecoach-steamship line connecting Philadelphia and Norfolk. The office was closed October 4, 1861, leaving the community without direct mail service for nearly twenty years. On February 7, 1881, an office was reopened under the name of Woodland. Scharf's History of Delaware states that the village name became Woodland in 1882.

For a long period the ferry was cable-operated, first by hand power, and after 1930 by use of an auxiliary motor. Boats were constructed in 1937 and 1947. From 1951 until 1957 there was periodic consideration of replacing the ferry by a bridge. In the latter year, however, the Highway Commission reached a decision to continue the ferry. In 1958 it authorized replacement of the current boat, which had proved dangerous, with a better protected craft.

# Woodland residents say six-car ferry would be too big

By Lynn R. Parks

Citizens of Woodland are objecting to a state proposal to double the size of the Woodland Ferry. According to a letter sent to the Delaware Department of Transportation and signed by 28 Woodland residents, the proposed six-car ferry would "spoil the uniqueness of Delaware's number one tourist attraction."

Meanwhile, the Woodland Ferry Association, which originally endorsed the six-car ferry, is holding a special vote of its membership, to determine if their support has changed.

The ferry crosses the Nanticoke River at Woodland, about 5 miles west of Seaford. A ferry has crossed the river at Woodland since 1793; when it is operating, the cable-guided vessel carries between 150 and 200 cars across the river daily.

The citizens of Woodland do not disagree that a new ferry is called for: because of mechanical problems and problems loading at high and low tides, the 43-year-old ferry operates about 60 percent of the time. "Everyone agrees that the ferry now in service needs to be replaced," the letter to DeIDOT says.

But they feel that the new ferry should be the same size as the current one, able to accommodate three cars. "A small ferry would be much more in keeping with the rustic and historical character of our small village," the letter says.

At a public hearing held Dec. 2 in the hall of Woodland United Methodist

Church, engineers with DeIDOT presented plans for the six-car ferry. The ferry, which would be 30 feet 4 inches wide, would cost about \$800,000.

Also presented at the hearing were plans for a three-car ferry, 22 feet wide and estimated to cost \$600,000.

At that time, the six-car ferry had the endorsement of the Woodland Ferry Association. Association members endorsed the larger ferry during their annual banquet in November.

"A six-car ferry is necessary," said association member Phil Livingston, an adamant supporter of the larger ferry. Livingston said that on a recent trip across the river, he had to sit in a line of seven cars to wait for the ferry. On the other side, four cars were waiting.

"These are cars that are sitting there, idling, with their exhaust going into houses," he said.

But association president Rodger Hamrick said that after the Dec. 2 workshop, he began getting calls from members, saying they preferred the smaller ferry. On Monday, the association started mailing cards to its nearly 30 members, to ask which ferry they support. Hamrick said that he hopes to have all the cards back by next Monday. DeIDOT has requested that it be notified of the results by Tuesday.

Donna Angell, who grew up in Woodland and who now lives about a mile away, attended the association meeting at which the plans for the six-car ferry were presented. "At first, we were all gung-ho about the bigger ferry," she said. "But after

Livingston said that on a recent trip across the river, he had to sit in a line of seven cars to wait for the ferry. On the other side, four cars were waiting.

the meeting, when we had a little more time to think what it would mean to Woodland, we backed off in favor of the three-car ferry."

Woodland resident Jack Knowles, whose grandfather Henry Knowles Sr. was a ferry captain, is worried that the larger ferry would bring more traffic into Woodland. "I just don't think that Woodland needs it," he said.

Bill Royal, president emeritus of the association, said that a bigger ferry would damage the small-town, historic nature of Woodland. "It would be like dropping in a big Goliath where a David could take care of things," he said.

Livingston disagrees. "The six-car ferry would only be 8 feet wider and won't increase traffic," he said. "We have to plan 20 or 30 years ahead."

DeIDOT engineer Joe Wright said that the state will try to do whatever residents and association members want. "That is the whole purpose of having public hearings, to determine what the public wants then to act accordingly," he said.

The state's 2005 bond bill, which included funding for the new ferry, also in-



The current Woodland Ferry holds three cars. Residents want its replacement to be about the same size. Photo by Ron MacArthur

cluded money to redo approaches to the ferry on both the north and south banks.

Wright said that final plans for the ferry and for the new slips have not yet been sent to contractors. He anticipates that the state will still be able to meet its original timetable, which calls for closing the ferry after the Woodland Ferry Festival, which takes place the second week in September, and having the new ferry running by the spring of 2006.



An Act to provide for the establishment and maintenance of a  
Ferry across the Nanticoke River at Woodland in Sussex County.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the State of Delaware  
in General assembly met, as follows

Section 1. That the Levy Court of Sussex  
County, be and they are hereby  
authorized if in the judgment of said  
Levy Court they deem it for the best interest  
of the County to establish said Ferry  
and required to cause to be  
established and maintained  
a public Ferry across the  
Nanticoke River at the place  
now known as Woodland but  
formerly called Cammons Ferry,  
And to make such appropriations  
as may be necessary to procure  
the Scow or Boat to be used for ferriage  
purpose: And also to make such



Section 1. That the Levy Court of Sussex County, be and they are hereby authorized if in the judgment of said Levy Court they deem it for the best interest of the County to establish said Ferry and required to cause to be established and maintained a public Ferry across the Mattitoke River at the place now known as Woodland but formerly called Camons Ferry, And to make such appropriations as may be necessary to procure the Scow or Boat to be used for ferryage purposes; and also to make such appropriations from time to time as may be necessary for the proper attendance upon and maintenance

of the same.

Section 2. That all Citizens of this State, with their teams, wagons, and carriages shall be transported across the said ferry at all times between Sunrise and Sunset free of charge but the Levy Court may prescribe tolls to be collected for the ferrriage of all other persons.

Section 3. That this Act shall be deemed and taken to be a public act.

Passed at Dover, Delaware Apr. 19-1883.

W. H. Raley  
Speaker of the House of Representatives

Samuel B. Cooper  
Speaker of the Senate.

The Brandywine ferry receives mention first in an order of the New Castle County Court, in May, 1675, to the effect "that a ferry-boat bee maintained and kept at the falls at the west syde of this River, a horse and a man to pay for passage 2 gilders, a man without a horse ten styvers."<sup>1</sup>

In 1684 a complaint was made of the want of a ferry over Christiana and Brandywine Creeks. In 1689, Cornelius Empson was authorized to erect a ferry over the Brandywine Creek. While little is known of a ferry on the Brandywine, excepting their use when bridges were being built, many references are made to the "old ford" and "fording-place," which was at the foot of Adams Street. In a deed of 1727 the ford and the ford road are both mentioned, as is also the ferry and ferry road, the ferry being designated at what is now the north end of French Street. On September 6, 1729, Governor Gordon, of Pennsylvania, met at "Brandywine ferry" with the county magistrates in a case concerning property of the Swedes' Church. A deed of October 25, 1766, spoke of a lot on the south side of French Street, on the Brandywine, as "the old ferry place." The bridge over the Brandywine was built the year previous on about the present side under the act of 1762.

In a petition for the continuance of a road, about 1786, from the Brandywine bridge at the head of Market Street down the north side of the creek, past "the four lower mills on that side of the creek," to the creek, "it being in the same place and on the same ground where the publick road anciently went, while the publick ferry was kept at this place."

The court records of September 2, 1696 have the following record concerning a ferry over the Indian River, which is in Sussex County.

"Peter Whaples acquainted the Court of the conveniency of a ferry from his house over the Indian or South River for ye mutuall comodacon correspondency of the Inhabitants of this county with those of the province of Maryland and desires yt himselfe solely amongst his neighborhood may be appointed to keep the same and that ye C<sup>t</sup> would Please either out of the Public Charge to allow him yearly for his Labour and Trouble therein, or — some certain rates that he shall take of p<sup>er</sup>sons for them and their horses Transient. The C<sup>t</sup> thinks fitt to grant that he alone thereabouts keep ye said ferry and that he be paid for settling over to or froe of a man and horse (vizt.) Ten pence for a man and Ten pence for a horse, so much forward and so much backward and yt he provide a good conveniency for ye safe passage or ferryage both for man and beast. And all other persons, his neighbours, are hereby forbidden (upon hire or pay) to ferry any p<sup>er</sup>sons or horses over ye said ferry."<sup>2</sup>

tion is still to be seen. The ferry-house on the north side, also a tavern, stood on the grounds of the present Diamond State Iron Company. In 1807 it was kept by John McClary, and the jury met there when awarding damages for the road and bridge then building over Christiana Creek and the Holland Marsh.

<sup>1</sup> This location was, without doubt, on the Brandywine, below the first fall, which was between Jackson and Van Buren Streets, and above what was formerly known as Ashmond's Run.

<sup>2</sup> Peter Whaples began the purchase of land on Indian River in 1692 and on Sept. 3, 1693, bought a tract called "Warwick," at which place he lived and where the ferry was established. The road from Lewistown, which was the principal settlement at the time, led across the river at this place and in later years came also from the upper part of the State and both roads united at St. George's chapel. The site of the old ferry is at what is still known as the "Old Ferry Landing," a narrow place in the river and to which the old road led. It was on the tract "Warwick," and the present name is used for the farm and mansion of old time. In later years, a ferry was established higher up the river, below Swan Creek. The name of Ferryman Billy Burton is still remembered as the one who was wont to carry "over to and froe of a man or horse," at this ferry.

The New Castle and Salem Ferry was an important institution to the people of New Jersey, who, in early days, voted at New Castle, worshipped at Craine Hook and the Old Swedes' Church, and were, for many years, under the jurisdiction of the court at New Castle. The earliest public record of a ferry across the Delaware is found in Governor Keith's answer to a petition of Wessel Alrichs, July 25, 1724:

"That the Ferry between New Castle and Salem, over the River Delaware, is very irregularly kept and not well attended, so that Passengers are frequently delayed and hindred in passing the said River on their lawful occasions, and that he is willing to keep the said Ferry as may be most convenient for the transportation of Horses, Cattle, Goods or Passengers, and to provide necessary boats and flats for the said service and submit to such Regulations as by the Laws or ordinances of the Government of our said Counties already are or hereafter shall be made for well-managing of the said Ferry, hath prayed our Letters Patent to him and his heirs for the sole benefit of keeping the said Ferry from City of New Castle in the Government of our said Counties to the Town of Salem in our Province of New Jersey, and for one mile above or one mile below either the said City or Towne under the regulations aforesaid.

"Know ye that wee, taking the Premises into our Royal Consideration, and being desirous to Render the Passago of all our loving subjects, who may have occasion to be transported over the said River Delaware from the City of New Castle to the Town of Salem, more safe, easy and commodious, and also to encourage the said Wessel Alrichs for his expense and trouble in providing suitable flats and boats for the said service,

"Have, of our Special Grace, Certain Knowledge, Mere Motion, for us and our successors, given, granted, Ratified and confirmed, and by these presents do give, grant, Ratify and confirm unto the sd Wessel Alrich and his heirs the sole keeping of the said Ferry from the City of New Castle in the Government of our Counties of New Castle, Kent and Sussex upon Delaware, over the said River Delaware to the town of Salem in our province of New Jersey and for one mile above and for one mile below either of the said City or Town."

Michael King, who lived in New Castle and was in the Revolutionary War, obtained a charter at one time to operate this ferry, and later George Monro, who died about 1800, also controlled it.

A ferry was established by act of Legislature, January 21, 1801, over the Delaware at New Castle, at the brick house, southeast corner Harmony and Front Streets, and wharf commonly called "The Old Ferry," and James McCalmont, owner of the house, was given exclusive right to operate it for twenty-one years, which term was, in 1811, extended until 1832. About 1820 the ferry-right was sold to William Callahan, upon whose death his son, James Callahan, succeeded him, and retained it as late as 1835. In later years the ferry was known as "Craven's Ferry," that being the name of the man who had charge of it on the Jersey side.<sup>3</sup>

An effort was made in 1783 to establish a ferry at Thoroughfare Neck, but without success.

On February 2, 1793, a private act of the General Assembly granted to Betty and Isaac Cannon the sole and exclusive right, for fourteen years, of maintaining a ferry over the river Nanticoke in Sussex County, to be known as Cannon's Ferry. It was renewed for fourteen years in 1807 and, on the death of Betty Cannon, in 1815, it reverted to her sons, Isaac and Jacob. At their death, in April and May, respectively, 1843, Jacob Nicholson succeeded them.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> The old ferry-house stood on the river, at the upper end of Front Street, where the coal office is now. Dr. James McCalmont lived for many years in the old Tile House.

<sup>4</sup> Nicholson operated it but a short time. In 1883 the county estab-

A ferry was established at Newport prior to 1790, in charge of Thomas Duff. An effort was made to start another in the same vicinity, against which a protest prevailed for several years; but the movement was finally successful, and the General Assembly authorized the Newport Ferry by act of January 21, 1800. William Armor, John Crow and William Aull were appointed commissioners, and the ferry was maintained until the incorporation of the Newport Bridge Company and the building of a draw-bridge under act of Assembly, February 3, 1813, when it was abandoned. The several commissioners of the ferry were,—in 1800, John Crow, William Aull, William Armor; 1803-04, John Crow, David McCalmont, Jacob Robinson; 1806, John Crow, Zachariah Derrickson, David McCalmont; 1808-10, John Crow, Zachariah Derrickson, John Lynam; and the bridge commissioners were John Caldwell, James Stroud, George Read, Kensey Johns and John Crow.

The Seaford Ferry was the result of a petition to the General Assembly by the people of that village in 1807. An act was passed January 27th, appointing Richard Lawrence, John Rust, Sr., and John Hooper, proprietors, with exclusive rights. The ferry was established and operated by them for many years, and they sold it ultimately to Captain Hugh Martin, who continued it until the Seaford Bridge Company in 1832 built a draw-bridge near the ferry site, when it was abandoned. Captain Martin purchased the bridge and bridge property April 8, 1843, under authority of the General Assembly, and in 1865 the county bought it and made it a free bridge.

TRANSPORTATION.—The transportation of mails and passengers was unknown among the earliest settlers, because, perhaps, there were neither mails nor passengers; letters were carried by travelers or traders, or by messengers specially trusted with them. It was not until population had widened and extended from the river-banks that any regular conveyance of letters was necessary. The weekly post-routes between Philadelphia, Chester, New Castle and other settlements, established by William Penn, in 1683, are the commencement of the public mail facilities of Delaware. In July of that year, Henry Waldy, of Tacony, was given authority to conduct the service and to supply passengers with horses from Philadelphia to New Castle. The rates were to be: From Trenton to New Castle, seven pence; from Philadelphia to New Castle, four pence; and to Maryland, six pence. This post went once a week, and was to be fully published "on the meeting-house door and other public places."

On the 17th of February, 1691, King William and Queen Mary granted to Thomas Neale, for twenty years, power and authority to establish a postal system in America. Under this grant a general post-office was established in the colonies. The advance

of the post-office, however, was slow. In December, 1717, Jonathan Dickinson, of Philadelphia, wrote to a correspondent: "We have settled a post from Virginia and Maryland unto us, and goes through all our northern colonies, whereby advices from Boston unto Williamsburg, in Virginia, is completed in four weeks, from March to December, and in double that time in the other months of the year." In 1757 the mail to Annapolis, Md., from Philadelphia, ran once in two weeks in summer, and once a month in winter, *via* New Castle, to the Western Shore and back to the Eastern Shore.

The stages to Baltimore from Philadelphia went by way of boat to New Castle, and across the country to the head of the Elk River, from which water conveyance was taken, partly by way of Chesapeake Bay, to Baltimore. In 1757, a line was first set up between Philadelphia and Annapolis, Md., by John Hughes & Co. Stage-boats left Floyd's Wharf, Philadelphia, and sailed down to a point opposite Reedy Island, at Cornelius Carty's, where a wagon attended and proceeded to Fredericktown, from which a stage-boat went to Annapolis. The Rev. Andrew Burnaby, who traveled through North America in 1759 and 1760, left Annapolis on the 13th of June, 1759, for Fredericktown, upon the Sassafras River, in a schooner, and was greatly pleased with the scenery of the bay, and with "innumerable porpoises playing about the bows of the ship." At Fredericktown he hired an Italian chaise, with a servant and horse to attend him as far as Philadelphia. They went to New Castle, which is thirty-two miles, and thence, by the way of Wilmington, Chester and Darby, to Philadelphia, ferrying across the Schuylkill about three miles below Philadelphia, probably at Penrose Ferry.

The usual route to Baltimore from Philadelphia, after the Revolution, in spring, summer and fall, was by stage-boat to New Castle, thence by stage over the peninsula to Elk River, and thence by boat to Baltimore.<sup>1</sup> In 1796 a daily stage ran to Wilmington and Baltimore from Philadelphia once a week. The following description of the traveling in those days is from the *American Annual Register* of January 19, 1797: "The Roads from Philadelphia to Baltimore exhibit, for the greater part of the way, an aspect of savage desolation. Chasms to the depth of six, eight, or ten feet occur at numerous intervals. A stage-coach which left Philadelphia on the 5th of February, 1796, took five days to go to Baltimore. The weather for the first four days was good. The roads are in a fearful condition. Coaches are overturned, passengers killed and horses destroyed by the overwork put upon them. In winter sometimes no stage sets out for two weeks."

A comparison of the present route of travel through Delaware with that of the earlier part of the present century is decidedly interesting. In 1802 S. S. Moore

<sup>1</sup> This stage route was established by Joseph Tatlow, and ran from New Castle to Frenchtown, nearly on the line of the New Castle and Frenchtown Turnpike.

lished a ferry there. Residents of Delaware are ferried over free; others pay a small toll.



To the Honorable the General Assembly of Delaware.

The Petition of Betty Cannon of North West Fork Delaware and on the

County of Sussex, Sussex, respectfully sheweth,

That your Petitioner has had out considerable sums of money

in erecting and making Wharves and Landing Places on

both sides of the River Manhook, at a Place commonly

known by the Name of Commodore's Ferry. That a Ferry

has been regularly kept at the said Place by James Cannon

and others by deed of said Cannon his son, the late Abraham

and your Petitioner, and his Successors by your Petitioner, for the

space of fifty years. That your Petitioner hath also been

at considerable Expence in improving the Road leading to the

said Ferry; but having no realisable legal Right to keep a Ferry

at the Place aforesaid hath been lately interrupted in the

Management of the same by James Cannon who has never separated

any thing from what making the Wharves or Landing places and

said Ferry. Your Petitioner also shews that she has given

upwards of eight Weeks Notice in the Delaware Gazette

of the her Application to your Honors.

That your Petitioner shews her to have in a full

granting an Exclusive Right to the Ferry aforesaid in your

Petitioner has shewn and shews.

And your Petitioner will pray &c.

Done at Dover, Delaware, this 11th day of January 1798.

Betty Cannon

To the General Assembly of the Delaware State  
The Petition of Betty Cannon the widow of Jacob Cannon  
Late of Sussex County De. Humbly Sheweth  
That the said Jacob Cannon in his Life Time was <sup>very</sup> ~~at~~ <sup>considerable</sup>  
Expence in having a Spway made Over the ~~marsh~~  
Marsh on the Banks of the Nanticoke to a Ferry —  
Lying on the Road Leading from the Broad Creek to the  
above Ferry and Since the Death of the above named Jacob  
Cannon your Petitioner has at her Request to the Court  
of Quarrelptions of Sussex County Procured a  
Road laid Out from Broad Creek to said Ferry and has been  
at considerable Expence in clearing and making said  
Road but a number of Persons Regardless of the many  
~~of~~ Expences your Petitioner has been at in erecting said  
Ferry have by keeping Boats at the same and ferrying  
Travellers at Lower Rates than can be afforded by any Person  
Who has been at the ~~same~~ Expence of establishing the  
Ferry your Petitioner conceiving herself intitled to an  
Exclusive Privilege of keeping a ferry on said  
Road Prays your Honourable Body to Take her Case  
Into your Serious Consideration and grant her such  
Relief as you in your Wisdom shall Think meet  
and your Petitioner as in Duty Bound will ever Pray

May 25<sup>th</sup> 1789

Betty Cannon



to use in any manner whatever, the said  
Ferry unless by license first obtained from  
the said Betty Cannon or her Assigns  
during her Estate as aforesaid and  
if her Estate shall be sooner determi.  
from the said Isaac Cannon and his  
Heirs during the residue of the said  
Term, or from the Guardian or Guardian  
of such of the said heirs as may happen  
to be under age or some person or persons  
duly authorized by her him or them under  
the penalty of twelve dollars lawfull  
money of the State of Delaware for every  
offence to be recovered of the person or  
persons so offending in using the said  
Ferry or Boat thereto belonging their  
Executors

100  
executors or Administrators before any  
two Justices of the Peace of Suffolk County  
aforesaid in manner and form that  
debts of the like sum are made recover-  
-able before any one Justice of the  
Peace; One third part thereof goes  
to the informer, and the residue to  
the said Betty Cannon or her Assigns  
during her Estate as aforesaid or  
to the said Isaac Cannon his heirs  
or Assigns as the case may be —

and be it further  
enacted that from and after  
the passing of this Act the said Betty  
Cannon or her Assigns during  
her



her Estate as aforesaid, and after  
the determination thereof the said Isaac  
Cannon his heirs and assigns for and  
during the residue of the said Term  
or the Guardian or Guardians of such  
of the said heirs as may happen to be  
under age shall be obliged to keep the  
said Ferry and causeway in good  
and sufficient repair and give all  
due attendance to every person want-  
ing to pass or cross the same or stand  
liable to be indicted at the general  
Quarter Sessions of the Peace in Sussex  
County aforesaid, for breach of said  
duty and forfeit and pay the sum  
of

of twelve Dollars to every person or per-  
 sons to whom she or her assigns during her  
 estate as aforesaid, and after the determi-  
 nation thereof, he, his heirs or assigns  
 shall refuse or neglect to give due attend-  
 ance as aforesaid, to be recovered in man-  
 ner and form aforesaid, And that  
 every person or persons <sup>in Applying</sup> waiting to cross  
 said Ferry shall first pay to the said  
 Betty Cannon or her assigns during her  
 estate as aforesaid, and after the determi-  
 nation hereof to the said Isaac Cannon  
 his heirs and assigns for and during the  
 residue of the said Term, or to the Guardian  
 or Guardians, of such of the said Heirs as  
 may



may be under age or to some person or  
persons duly Authorized to receive the sum  
the sum of five cents each; for every horse  
so to be Ferried over the sum of five cents  
for every two wheeled Carriage the sum  
of ten cents; and for every four wheeled  
Carriage the sum of thirty cents; any  
law Usage or Custom to the contrary not  
withstanding

Lapsed at Dover,  
Feb. 2. 1793.

Geo: Wilson Speaker  
of the House of Representatives  
Daniel Rogers Speaker  
of the Senate

the passing on Volley  
Lamm &c. an exclusion  
Privilege to keep a Ferry  
over the River Branch  
sent to the Senate for  
Concurrence  
In debate, February  
The was 3 times  
by Special Order and  
Concurrence

1085

An Act granting to Betty Cannon  
 and Isaac Cannon in the manner therein  
 prescribed, for the term of fourteen Year  
 the sole and exclusive right of keeping a  
 Ferry over the River Nanticoke in Sussex  
 County aforesaid known by the Name of  
 Cannon's Ferry

Where as it has  
 been represented to this General Assem-  
 bly by a Petition from the aforesaid  
 Betty Cannon, that Jacob Cannon  
 deceased did in his lifetime at his  
 Own expence, make or cause to be made  
 a new way over the Marsh on the  
 banks of the aforesaid River Nanticoke  
 to the Ferry lying on the Road leading  
 from Broad Creek toward the State of  
 Maryland



Maryland; and that since the death  
of the said Jacob Cannon, his Widow  
the said Betty Cannon has been at a  
very considerable expence in causing  
a public road to be laid out and made  
convenient for travellers leading from  
Broad Creek to the aforesaid Ferry;  
and that since, to the great injury of  
the said Betty Cannon, other persons  
have used and still continue to use  
the said Ferry, which has rendered it  
in such a state that no person will or  
can keep it in such order as would  
make the said Road and Ferry ac-  
comodating to travellers. And  
whereas the good order of pub-  
lic roads redounds much to the  
safety

safety and convenience of society:  
 Be it therefore enacted by  
 the Senate and House of Representa-  
 tives of the State of Delaware in Ge-  
 neral Assembly, <sup>met</sup> that from and after  
 the passing of this Act, the said Bel-  
 ty Cannon and her assigns for and  
 during the Term of fourteen Years if  
 her Estate in the lands lying at the  
 said Ferry shall so long continue but if  
 her Estate shall sooner cease, the said  
 Isaac Cannon and his Heirs during the  
 residue of said Term shall have the sole  
 and exclusive right of Ferrying over  
 the said River Nanticoke in Sussex  
 County aforesaid; and that no person  
 or persons shall have power or authority  
 to