The Blacksmith in Society

Lesson Plan #2 - Mapping Your Community

Teacher Background

Mass production, the industrial revolution and disposable products rendered the blacksmith obsolete. Until this time, around the turn of the 20th century, virtually every citizen needed a blacksmith to make or repair tools or devices that helped sustain or improve their lifestyle. Blacksmith shops were established in locations convenient to the customers. This lesson uses historic documents and current maps to determine where historic blacksmith shops were located in a chosen community. This information will be used to draw comparisons/contrasts with current automobile repair shops and population centers.

Goal

After comparing the location of historic blacksmith shops and current automobile repair shops, students will be able to articulate how transportation influences the location of vital services.

Objectives

- To develop mapping skills and help students become more familiar with the physical layout of their community.
- To compare 18th century transportation with modern transportation, showing how customer mobility changes the definition of a "convenient location."
- To show how the residential population of an area shifts over time, as citizens change their attitudes toward living near industrial activities.

This activity addresses the following Maryland Learning Outcomes:

For Grades 4 and 5

#1 Social Studies Skills

Students will demonstrate an understanding of historical and current events using chronological and spatial thinking, develop historical interpretations, and frame questions that include collecting and evaluating information from primary and secondary sources.

- Apply and organize information specific to social studies disciplines by reading, asking questions, and observing. (MLO 1.2)
- Interpret and organize primary and secondary sources of information including pictures, graphics, maps, atlases, artifacts, timelines, political cartoons, videotapes, journals, and government documents. (MLO 1.3)

#3 Geography

Students will use geographic concepts and processes to examine the role of culture, technology, and the environment in the location and distribution of human activities and spatial connections throughout time.

- Construct and interpret maps using map elements including a title, cardinal and intermediate directions, compass rose, border, longitude and latitude, legend/key, author, date and scale. (MLO 3.1)
- Identify and locate physical and human characteristics of places and explain how those characteristics have affected people living there. (MLO 3.2)
- Describe the relationship between physical characteristics of a place and the location of human activities. (MLO 3.3)
- Identify ways and reasons why people adapt to and modify the natural environment with technology, and analyze consequences of the modifications. (MLO 3.8)

For Grades 6-8

#1 Social Studies Skills

Students will demonstrate an understanding of historical and current events using chronological and spatial thinking, develop historical interpretations, and frame questions that include collecting and evaluating information from primary and secondary sources.

- Evaluate and organize information specific to social studies disciplines by reading, asking questions, investigating, or observing. (MLO 1.2)
- Interpret, evaluate, and organize primary and secondary sources of information including pictures, graphics, maps, atlases, artifacts, timelines, political cartoons, videotapes, journals, and government documents. (MLO 1.3)

#3 Geography

Students will use geographic concepts and processes to examine the role of culture, technology, and the environment in the location and distribution of human activities and spatial connections throughout time.

- Construct and interpret graphs, charts, databases, thematic maps using map elements including a title, symbols, cardinal and intermediate directions, compass rose, border, longitude and latitude, legend/key, scale. (MLO 3.1
- Analyze geographic characteristics that influence the location of human activities in world regions. (MLO 3.3)
- Evaluate ways and reasons why humans modify their natural environment to meet their wants and the consequences of the modifications. (MLO 3.8)

#4 Economics

Students will develop economic reasoning to understand the historical development and current status of economic principles, institutions, and processes needed to be effective citizens, consumers, and workers participating in local communities, the nation, and the world.

- Analyze opportunity costs and trade-offs in business, government, and personal decision-making. (MLO 4.2)
- Analyze the relationship between the availability of natural, capital, and human resources, and the production of goods and services now and in the past. (MLO 4.3)

- Analyze effects of supply and demand on the production, consumption, and distribution of goods and services. (MLO 4.4)

Materials Needed

1. Entries from community directories or other source that lists the location of blacksmith shops during a chosen historic era. (These may be found in the local history room at the public library.)

2. If possible, an expendable copy of a local map from the same era as the directory entries for each student or group. (A sample map and directory are provided for Hagerstown, MD, 1877)

3. Current community directory or phone book.

4. Expendable copy of a current local map for each student or group. (A map of Hagerstown taken from the 1999 Maryland Highway Map is provided.)

Suggested Activity

1. After acquainting the students with the importance of the blacksmith to the citizens of the 17th through 19th century, share the directory information that shows the location of historic blacksmith shops of yours, or a chosen community. (Hopefully, the names of streets and roads will be familiar to the students.)

2. Distribute maps of the chosen community to each student or group. Have the students plot the location of the historic blacksmith shops on the map.

3. If population centers for this community have changed over time, share the location of historic neighborhoods with students, telling them generally how many people lived in each area. Ask children to determine how far the historic blacksmith shops were from neighborhoods, roads or other transportation and to deduce how location affected the customer base for each shop. (Supplemental Information for Lesson Plan #2 was the source of population information for the sample map.)

4. Using current information, from community directories or phone books, have students determine the location of current automobile repair shops. Explain the similarities between the historic blacksmith shop and the current automobile repair shops. (If the community is large, assign a specific area to each student or group.)

5. Once the locations of modern automobile repair shops have been determined, have students plot these on a copy of the local map. Direct students to use different symbols for the historic and modern shops and to develop a legend to make the map meaningful for others.

6. After the map is complete, ask students to determine how the location of the historic blacksmith shops and the modern automobile repair shops compare with the location of population centers and roads or transportation routes. If the chosen community is typical, it will become obvious that service centers are now clustered in locations outside residential areas and near major roads.

Follow-up Activities

1. Allow students to become "city planners". Have them draw a map of the ideal city, showing residential, service, shopping and recreational areas.

2. Ask students to interview friends and relatives about the changes in business and industry have changed the definition of a "desirable" neighborhood in their community. After comparing stories, have students write a short essay about the evolution of a particular neighborhood as influenced by transportation and industry.

3. People, by necessity, used to live close to where they worked. Commuting became popular as automobiles became available. Have students poll 5 people who work outside the home to determine how far each worker travels to work each day, the average time of the commute, method of travel, etc., for themselves and for a relative who worked 40 years ago. Compile the results and compare commuting trends. Have students utilize math skills to compute mean and median times and distances of commutes from 40 years ago and today.

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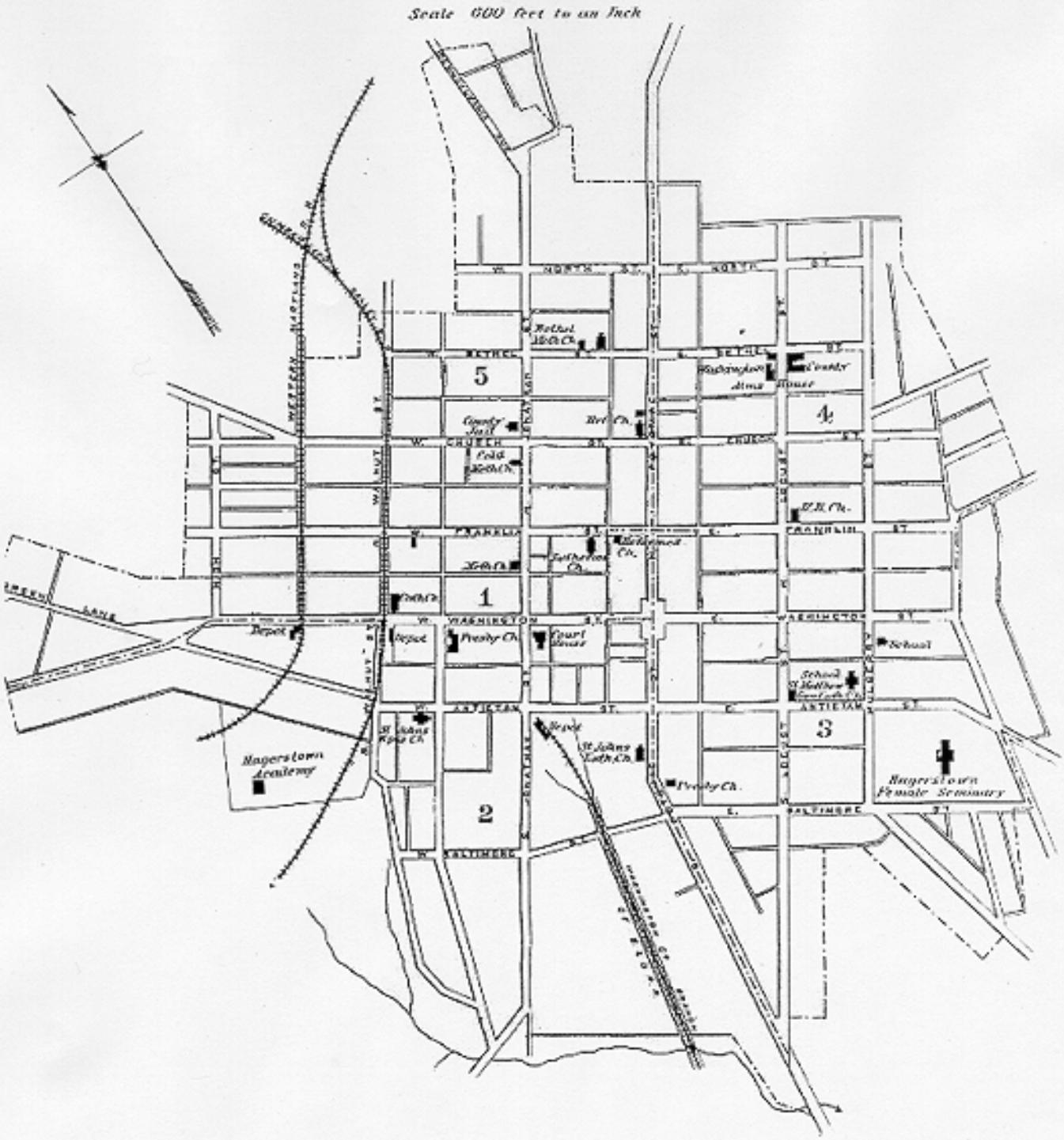
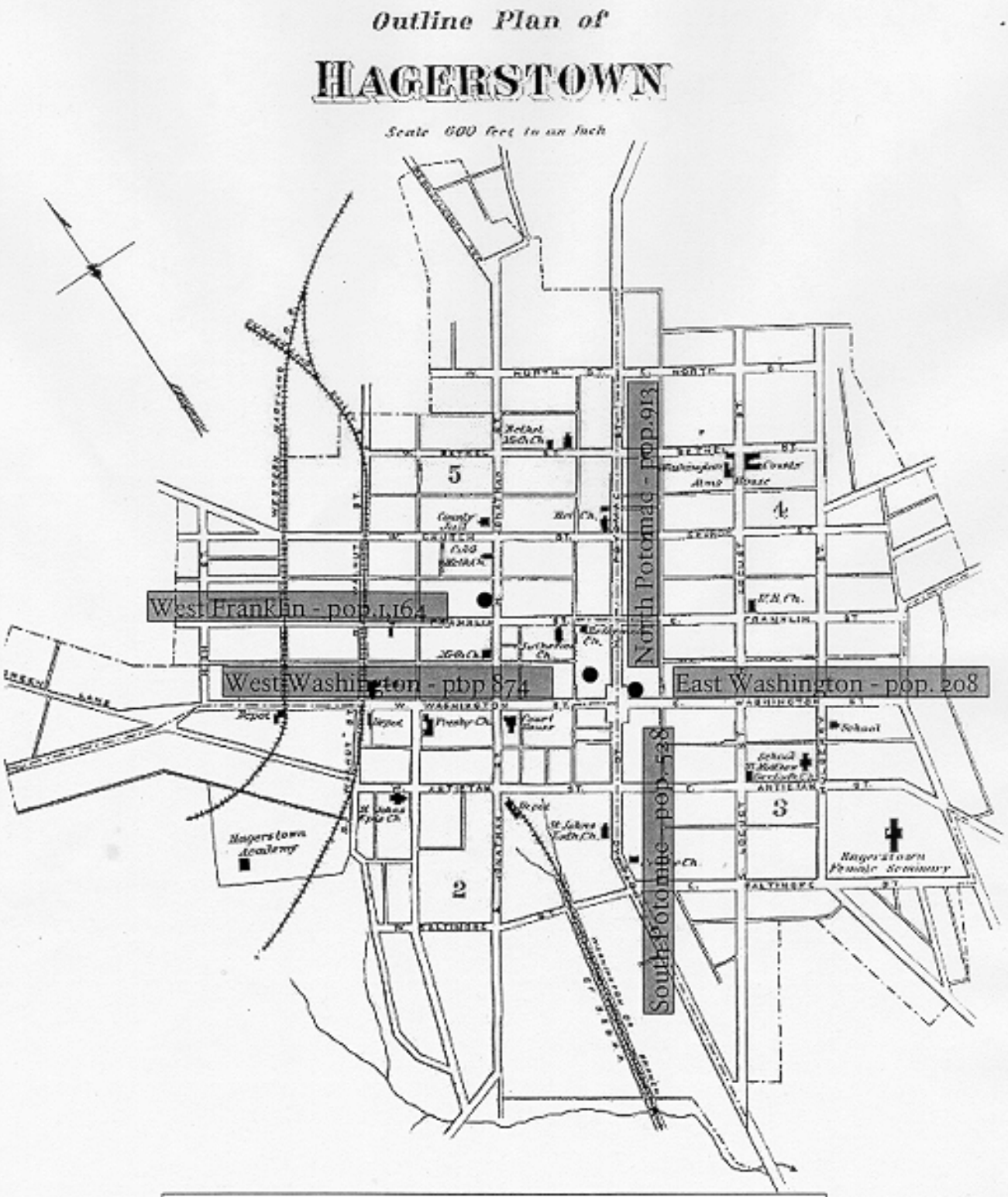
Map of Hagerstown

(from *Illustrated Atlas of Washington County, Maryland 1877*)



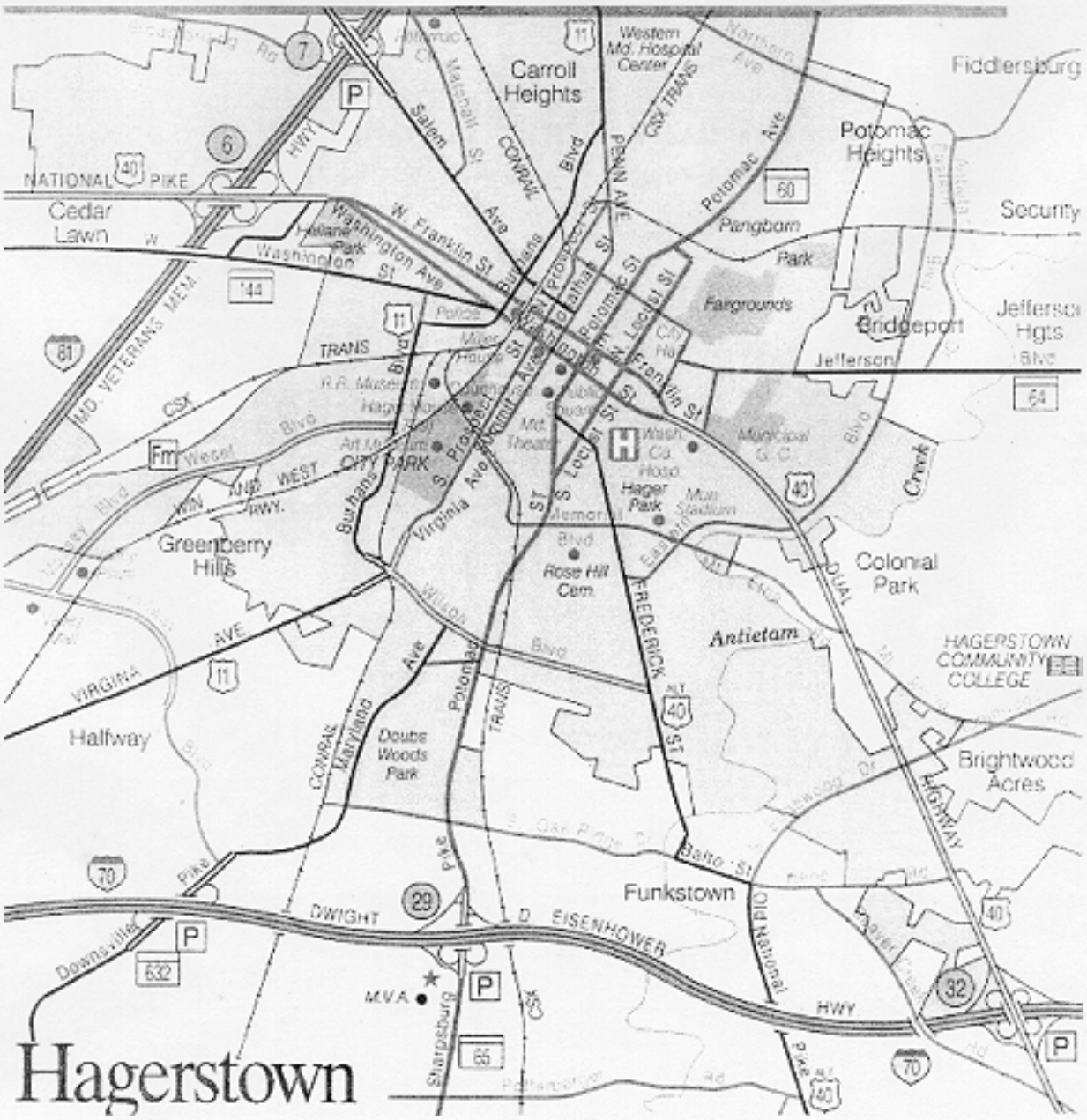


Legend

- ● Blacksmith Shop
- ▭ Population of Neighborhoods as of 1828 - from *History of Washington County* by Thomas J. C. Williams, page 183

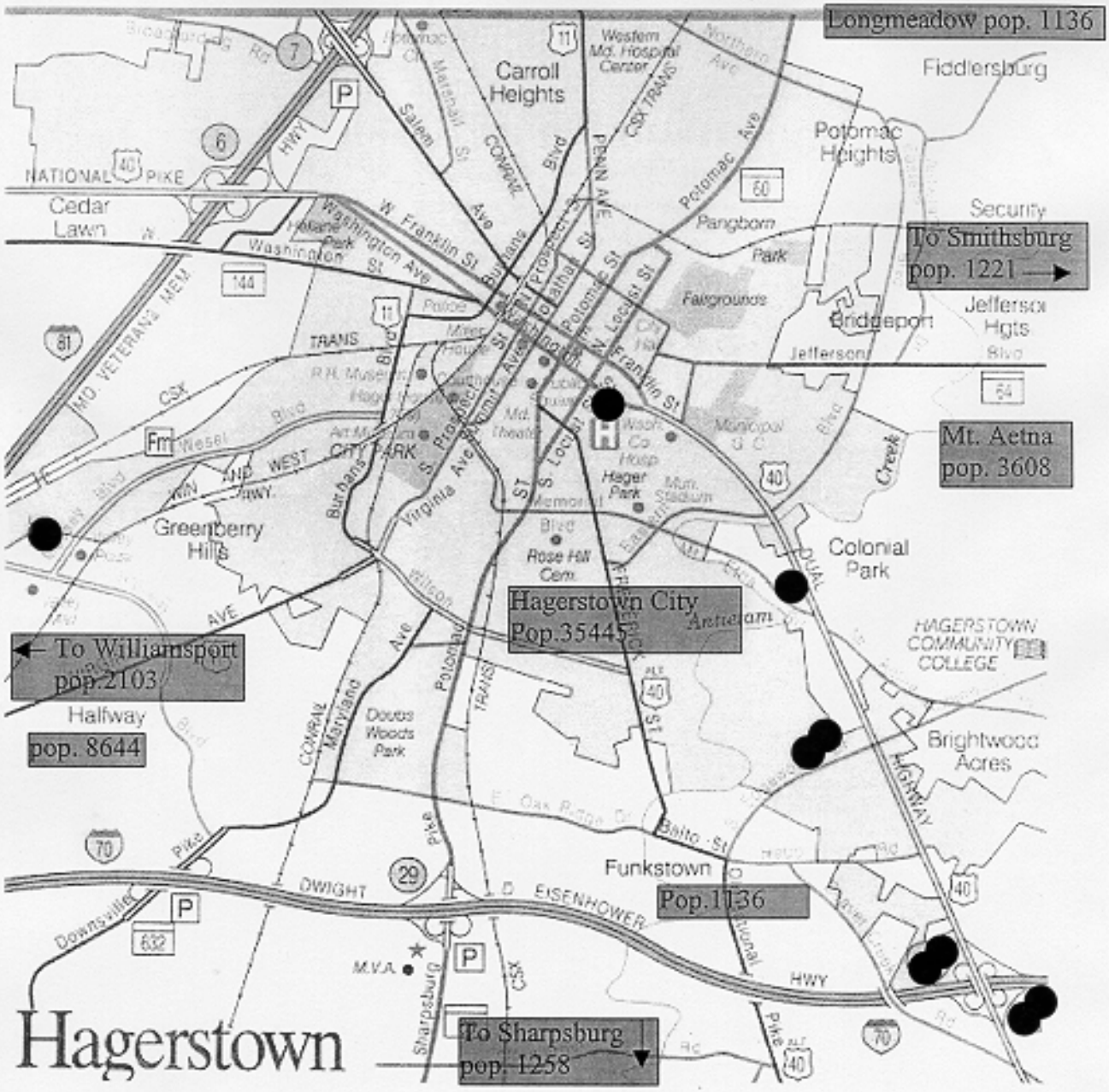
Map of Hagerstown

(From the 1999 Official Maryland Highway Map)



Map of Hagerstown

(From the 1999 Official Maryland Highway Map)



Legend

- ● Location of major automobile repair shops (Associated with major dealerships)
- ▬ Population of named area from 1990 United States Census

Supplemental Information
For Lesson Plan #2

Hagerstown contained according to the census of 1810, a population of 2342 -- 1951 whites, 94 free negroes and 297 slaves. In ten years the increase had been but 348. The number of slaves had slightly decreased and the number of free negroes had increased. In 1827, the population of the town had increased to 3,262. It is interesting to note the varied occupations of the inhabitants. There were 7 clergymen, 11 attorneys, 8 doctors, 4 silversmiths, 3 coachmakers, a rope maker, 5 tinners and coppersmihts, 2 tobacconists, 6 saddlers, 5 brick makers, 2 saddletree makers, 2 upholsterers, 3 wheel wrights, 2 gunsmiths, 2 whitesmiths, 1 bellows maker, 8 cabinet makers, 12 mantua makers, 13 house joiners, 6 blacksmiths, 2 bakers, 5 bricklayers and stone masons, 1 nail maker, 7 plasterers, 2 barbers, 2 pump makers, 5 painters, 1 comb maker, 2 brass founders, a carding machine factory, a woolen factory, a plow factory, 20 shoemakers shops, 6 tanneries, 4 hatters, 4 potteries, 2 breweries, a book bindery, 3 printing offices, 38 stores, 13 taverns, 2 book stores, 2 drug stores, 3 confectioners. ... The population of the different street was as follows: E. Washington 208, W. Washington 874, S. Potomac 528, N. Potomac 913, E. Franklin and suburbs 527, W. Franklin 1,164, Antietam and South-Western suburbs 306.

From *History of Washington County*
By Thomas J. C. Williams