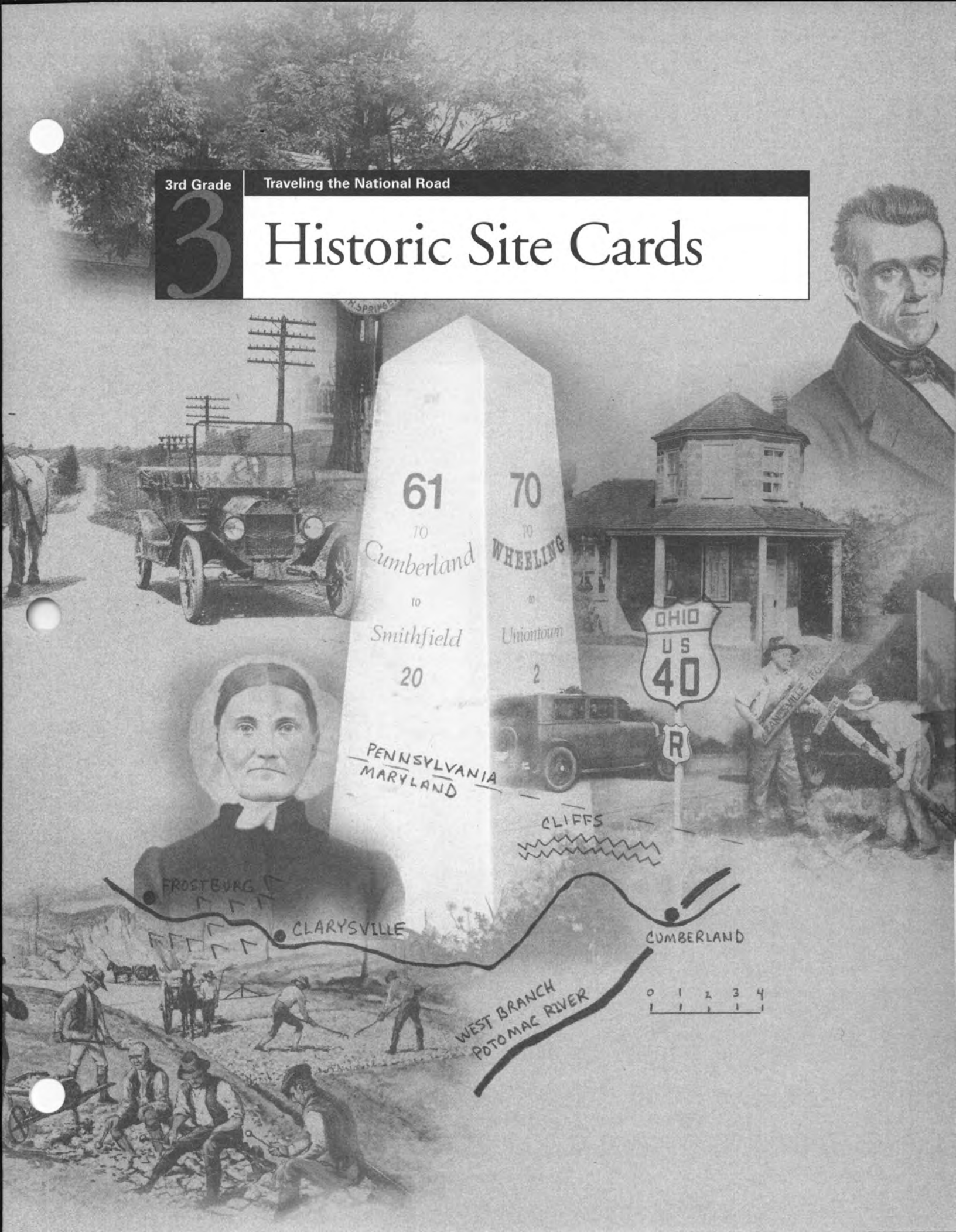


3rd Grade

Traveling the National Road

3 Historic Site Cards

Student Activity: National Road Bridges

Materials

- Copies of the "bridge" historic site cards.

Objectives

After completing the student activity, students will be able to

- List three facts about the bridges associated with the National Road and their importance.

Standards

Pennsylvania Standards for History

- 8.2.3 C
- 8.3.3 B

Procedures

1. Discuss the importance of bridges on the National Road and make sure students understand the alternative was to take a ferry across rivers.
2. Divide the class into teams.
3. Provide each team with one of the "bridge" historic site cards.
4. Give each bridge team a different assignment.

Great Crossings Bridge Team

Have students write letters to their state representatives proposing one of the following:

- creating an underwater state park where people could view the bridge beneath the lake.
- raising the bridge and rebuilding it elsewhere.
- creating a model of the bridge so people could see what it looked like.

Dunlap's Creek Iron Bridge

Have students write one of the following assignments:

- a letter to their state representatives proposing that traffic no longer be allowed on the bridge and that the bridge be restored to the way it looked during the 1800s.
- a paragraph describing what it feels like to be the Dunlap's Creek Iron Bridge, looking back from today to its glorious past as part of the National Road.

"S" Bridge

Have students write one of the following letters:

- to their state representatives proposing the return of "S" bridges as a way to slow traffic down to enjoy the scenery and save lives.
- from the "S" bridge to people today describing its career as a bridge on the National Road.

Student Activity: Design a Brochure

Materials

- Copies of the historic site cards.

Objectives

After completing the student activity, students will be able to

- List three facts about the historic sites associated with the National Road and their importance to Pennsylvania and U.S. history.

Standards

Pennsylvania Standards for History

- 8.2.3 C
- 8.3.3 B

Procedures

1. Provide students with copies of the historic site cards.
2. Have the students design a brochure for an imaginary tour of the National Road based on the information in the historic sites cards.
3. Encourage students to be imaginative: for example, one stop on the tour might be an underwater visit to the Great Crossings Bridge.

Student Activity: Create a Postcard

Materials

- Copies of the historic site cards.

Objectives

After completing the student activity, students will be able to

- List three facts about the historic sites associated with the National Road and their importance to Pennsylvania and U.S. history.

Standards

Pennsylvania Standards for History

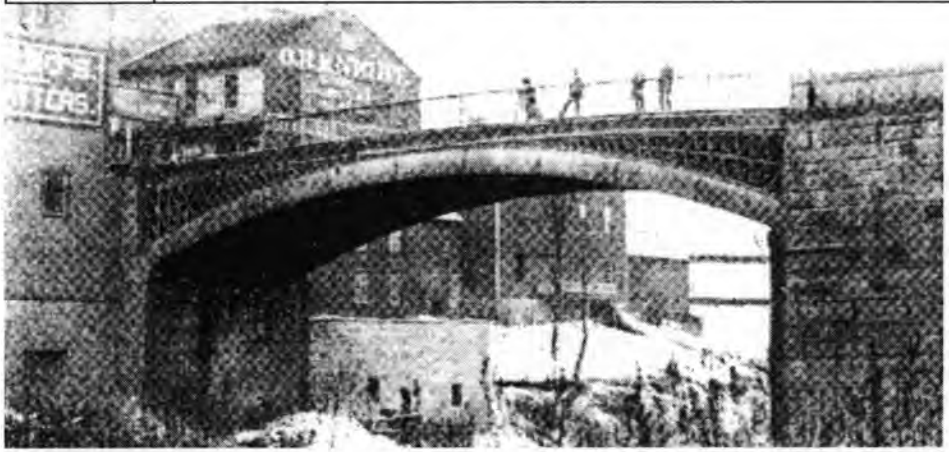
- 8.2.3 C
- 8.3.3 B

Procedures

1. Provide students with copies of the historic site cards.
2. Have the students create a postcard featuring one of the sites on the historic site cards.
3. On a separate piece of paper, have them write a short description of the site and two messages —one describing a visit to the site in the 1840s and another describing a visit to the site today.

Student Activity: Create a Postcard

Dunlap's Creek Iron Bridge: *Still Standing*



A photograph of the Dunlap's Creek Bridge taken in the 1800s.

Dunlap's Creek Bridge as it looks today.

Dunlap's Creek Iron Bridge on the National Road was the first cast iron bridge in America. It was built in Brownsville, Pennsylvania, by Captain Richard Delafield, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Two earlier bridges over Dunlap's Creek had collapsed. The U.S. government agreed to build a new bridge. This was part of a promise to make repairs to the National Road before the states took over the road. The cast iron bridge was started in 1836 and finished in 1838. It cost about $40,000.

The single-arch **cast iron** bridge is 30 feet wide and 80 feet long. Before work started in 1836 people fought about where to build it. Some people wanted to build the new bridge at the same spot where the old bridge had been. They won and the bridge was built on the same spot as the old one.

Dunlap's Creek Iron Bridge: *Still Standing*

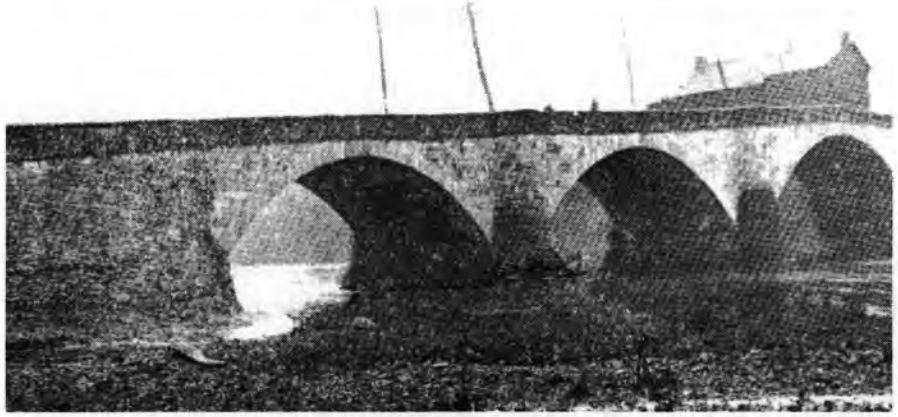
Traffic on the National Road used a **temporary** bridge while the new cast iron bridge was being built. The new cast iron bridge was opened on July 4, 1839.

Later the Dunlap's Creek Iron Bridge became part of U.S. Route 40. That's when people started calling it the "neck." "Neck" was short for "bottleneck," a place where traffic slows down because a road gets narrower. The bridge was only 30 feet wide and Route 40 was wider than that.

Today Dunlap's Creek Iron Bridge is part of Market Street in Brownsville. The bridge was named a National Historic Landmark in 1920 and became a National Historic Civil Engineering Landmark in 1969. It is owned by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation.

Cast iron: A hard and brittle form of iron made by melting iron with other metals and then pouring the mixture into a mold.
Temporary: Something that lasts for only a short time.

Great Crossings Bridge: *Why Is That Bridge Under Water?*



A photograph of the Great Crossings Bridge taken in the 1800s.

Parts of the Great Crossings Bridge can be seen when the water in the lake is very low.

The stone bridge at Great Crossings opened on July 4, 1818, with a big celebration. The president of the United States, James Monroe, was there. It was the country's birthday. The country was so new that men who had fought in the American Revolution came to the celebration. George Washington himself had crossed the Youghiogheny (yok-uh-**gayn**-ee) River near this spot, many years before the bridge was built. The river was **shallow**, so it was easy to cross.

The celebration on July 4, 1818, was also about the National Road. The bridge would be a great help to travelers along the road. More **traffic** would help towns on both sides of the river. People looked forward to jobs connected to the National Road. There would be jobs for tavern keepers, drivers, blacksmiths, road builders, and farmers once traffic started moving.

Great Crossings Bridge: *Why Is That Bridge Under Water?*

The Great Crossings Bridge was built of stone. It was 375 feet long with three stone **arches**. It was the longest bridge on the National Road. Another beautiful stone bridge on the National Road was built at Little Crossings on the Casselman River in Maryland. That was another place where George Washington crossed a river before there was a bridge. The bridge was built in 1813–1814 and was 80 feet long. Today, the Casselman River Bridge is part of a Maryland State Park.

In 1939 the Youghiogheny River was dammed to control floods. The dam created the Youghiogheny River Lake. Today the water in the lake is so deep it completely covers the Great Crossings Bridge. But in very dry years, the water in the lake goes down. When that happens, as it did in 2001, the Great Crossings Bridge can be seen. It was built so well it is still there, after more than 60 years under water!

Arch: A curved structure.
Shallow: Not deep.
Traffic: Moving vehicles.

LeMoyne House: *Freedom's Doorway*

An old photograph of the LeMoyne House.

Usually a house is just a place where people live. If a family lives in a house for many years, it is very special to them. Sometimes a house is an important piece of history. The LeMoyne House, built in 1812 in Washington, Pennsylvania, is both.

Dr. Francis LeMoyne bought the house from his father. He and his family lived there. It was also his office. There were two front doors. One door was used by the family. The other door was used by Dr. LeMoyne's patients. The office side of the house had a waiting room, an office, and an apothecary. The apothecary was where Dr. LeMoyne kept all the medicines he used to treat his patients. Some of the medicines were from plants Dr. LeMoyne grew in his garden. Others were mixtures he made himself.

The family side of the house had a parlor and dining room. The kitchen was in the basement. Bedrooms were located on the second and third floors.

LeMoyne House: *Freedom's Doorway*

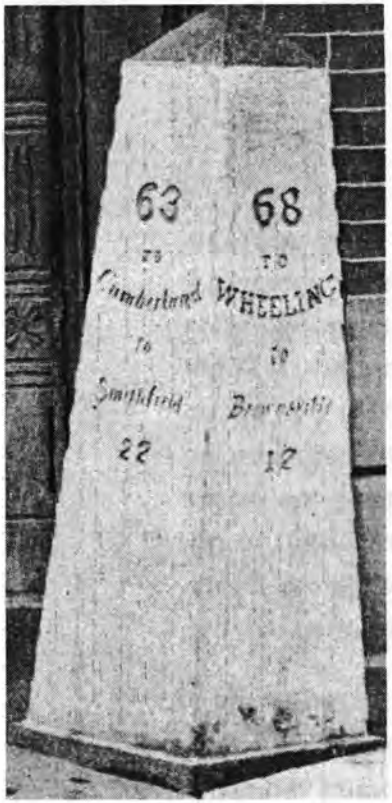
Francis LeMoyne did not think slavery was right. He helped slaves escape, even though it was against the law. A story told about the LeMoyne House says that one time six slaves hid under Dr. and Mrs. LeMoyne's bed. Another story says that the LeMoynes once hid 25 slaves on the third floor in a secret space behind a wall. Escaping slaves knew the house was a safe place.

The house was special to the LeMoyne family. It was also special to many other people, white and black.

Today the LeMoyne House is a museum. It is decorated the way it might have been when Dr. LeMoyne and his family lived there. The LeMoyne House is Pennsylvania's first National Historic Landmark of the Underground Railroad.

Madeleine LeMoyne's bedroom on the second floor of the LeMoyne House.

Mile Markers: *Are We There Yet?*



A photograph of a mile marker in Uniontown taken in the 1800s.

A photograph of one of the new mile markers.

When the National Road was built, stone markers were set up every 5 miles. The markers told the distances to important places along the National Road. The markers helped travelers figure out how far they had come and how far they had to go.

In 1833 iron markers were set up. The iron markers were called mile markers. They marked every mile along the National Road between Cumberland, Maryland, and Wheeling, Virginia.

The iron mile markers were made in foundries in Connellsville and Brownsville, Pennsylvania. Foundries are factories where iron is heated and shaped. Each mile marker had four distances listed on it. The side facing east listed the distance to Cumberland and the distance to the nearest town in that direction. The west-facing side listed the distance to Wheeling and the next town west of the mile marker.

Mile Markers: *Are We There Yet?*

What stories do you think the old mile markers could tell? Think what they saw moving past them on the road. There were horses pulling stagecoaches and wagons. There were people moving west to the frontier; and pigs and sheep being herded east to cities where they would be sold.

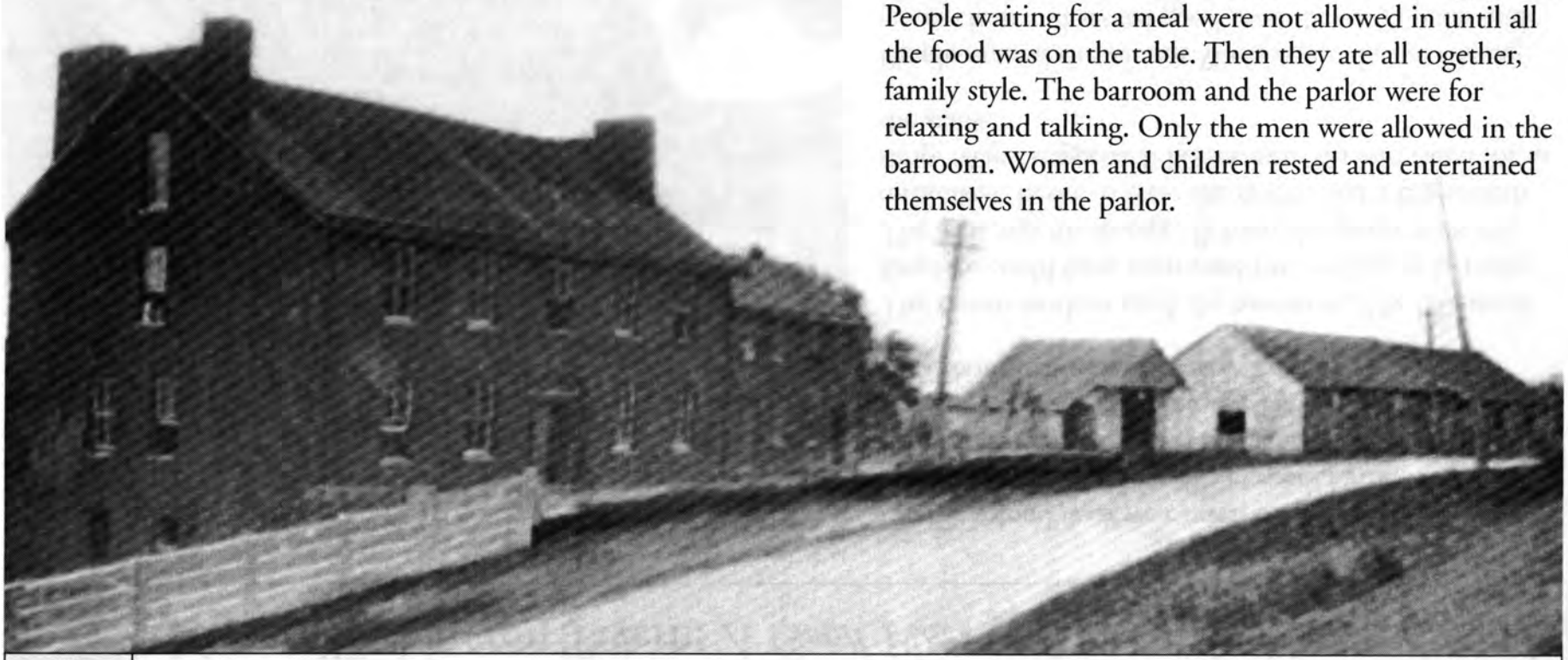
At one time there were about 90 iron mile markers along the National Road in Pennsylvania. By 1997 about 60 of these markers had disappeared. An organization called the National Road Heritage Corridor decided to replace the missing markers. They used mile markers made of a modern material—fiberglass. Fiberglass is a super strong, long-lasting material. The new mile markers look like the older iron ones. The National Road Heritage Corridor now takes care of all the mile markers, new and old.

Mount Washington Tavern: *A Good Place to Stay on the National Road*

To hungry and thirsty travelers, and their animals, the Mount Washington Tavern was a welcome sight. Travelers would have a bed, hot food, and good company. Tired horses would get food, water, and a place to rest.

The tavern was built in the 1830s. It was a stagecoach tavern. The stagecoaches operated by the Good Intent stagecoach company stopped there.

The first-floor rooms were the barroom, dining room, parlor, and kitchen. The kitchen had a 6-foot wide fireplace for cooking. It was a lot of work preparing all the meals. Next to the kitchen was the dining room. People waiting for a meal were not allowed in until all the food was on the table. Then they ate all together, family style. The barroom and the parlor were for relaxing and talking. Only the men were allowed in the barroom. Women and children rested and entertained themselves in the parlor.



Mount Washington Tavern: *A Good Place to Stay on the National Road*

The barroom at the Mount Washington Tavern.

On the second floor were seven bedrooms. One of the bedrooms was for the tavern keeper's family. The other bedrooms were for people living at the tavern and for travelers. The travelers had to share their bedrooms and each room had several beds.

The tavern workers used the basement. The basement fireplace could have been used for cooking or laundry. The attic was for storage. Behind the tavern were the outhouses. Beside it were the stables and a blacksmith shop. Many stagecoach horses were fed and cared for in the stable.

People praised the Mount Washington Tavern, saying it was clean and served good food. It was popular and made a lot of money. After the railroad came, there was less traffic on the National Road. People began traveling by train instead of by stagecoaches. They sent freight by railroad instead of by wagon. In 1856 the Mount Washington Tavern was sold. There were not enough travelers to make it worthwhile.

Today the Mount Washington Tavern is a museum cared for by the National Park Service. It is open to the public. Many National Road taverns are still standing. They are now used as homes and businesses.

"S" Bridge: *S is for "Straight"*

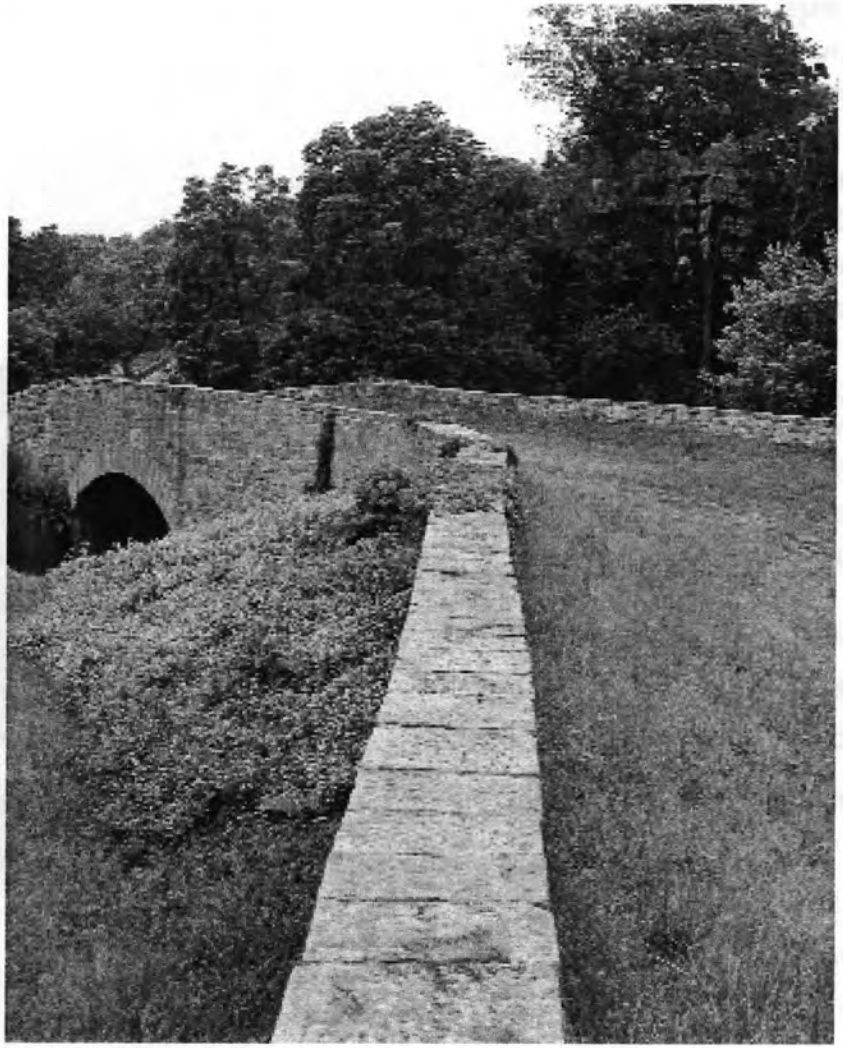
An old photograph of the S Bridge.

Look closely at a capital "S." Imagine you are riding in a car following a road shaped like an "S." What would the driver have to do? Slow down. If not, the car might not be able to make the turns. Another problem with an S-shaped road is that it is hard to see a vehicle coming from the opposite direction.

Why would someone build an "S-shaped" bridge—wouldn't it be better to go straight? "S" bridges did go straight across the river or stream. But the road on either side of the bridge was curved to meet the bridge, so together the road and bridge had an "S" or "Z" shape.

The people who built the National Road knew bridges built straight across the stream or river were stronger. Wagons and stagecoaches went slowly enough to cross "S" bridges without an accident. Today's road builders have to make roads that are safe for the faster vehicles we drive nowadays. They keep roads straight and build bridges at an angle to the stream or river. Bridge builders can do this because they have many materials that were not available when the National Road was built.

"S" Bridge: *S is for "Straight"*



The S Bridge as it looks today.

Today in Pennsylvania and Ohio you can still see some beautiful old "S" bridges. One "S" bridge originally on the National Road is still in use. It is near Bridgewater, Ohio.

In Pennsylvania, the National Road Heritage Corridor plans to build a park around the restored "S" bridge in Buffalo Township, Washington County. The bridge is owned by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation.

Tollhouses at Addison and Searights: *Stop! Pay Toll!*

The Addison Tollhouse as it looks today.

It cost a lot of money to keep the National Road in good repair. Holes in the road had to be fixed. Fallen trees had to be cleared away. The United States government grew tired of paying for all the repairs. But the federal government was not allowed to collect tolls. A toll is a charge for using the road. Only the states could collect tolls. So the federal government gave the National Road to the states. After that toll money helped pay for repairs.

Before accepting the National Road, Pennsylvania asked the federal government to repair the road and build tollhouses—which it did. All the tollhouses were built in 1835. Pennsylvania took charge of the National Road in the same year. Pennsylvania had six tollhouses, one about every 18 miles. Travelers had to stop at a tollhouse. A gate outside the tollhouse blocked the road. The gate kept people and animals from going farther along the National Road until they paid a toll. A toll is a charge for using a road.

Tollhouses at Addison and Searights: *Stop! Pay Toll!*

The Searights Tollhouse as it looks today.

Only two of the six tollhouses are still standing. The Addison Tollhouse was called Gate No. 1. It was built of stone. Gate No. 3 was another name for Searights Tollhouse. Searights was built of brick.

The tollhouses were built with a rounded office that had windows facing in different directions. These windows helped the tollkeeper see what traffic was coming. There were two other rooms in the downstairs of the tollhouse, a parlor and a kitchen. Upstairs over the office was one bedroom. It also had windows facing in different directions. There was only one closet in the house and no running water or bathroom. Tollkeepers got their water from a well and used an outhouse as a bathroom.

Searights was used as a tollhouse until 1905. Then it became a private home. Today the Searights Tollhouse is a museum owned by Fayette County, Pennsylvania. Addison Tollhouse collected tolls until 1888. Now it is also a museum. The Daughters of the American Revolution own it.