

"The Western states... have no other means of coming to us but by long land transportations and unimproved roads... But smooth the road, and make easy the way for them, and then see what an influx of articles will be poured upon us."
George Washington, October 10, 1784.



John Marshall in 1808, four years before he made his voyage over the Alleghanies.
(Library of Congress)

Two hundred years ago, in 1812, John Marshall, the Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court; Andrew Alexander, the Surveyor for Rockbridge County; and other famous dignitaries took a month long, 227 mile voyage over the Alleghany Mountains to survey the best transportation route between Richmond & the Ohio River.

They traveled by batteau, poling up the James and Jackson's rivers from Lynchburg to Covington, hauled the boat on a wagon over the mountains to Caldwell, and floated, dragged and lined the batteau down the Greenbrier and New rivers to the Great Kanawha at Gauley Bridge.

The pioneering survey was a great step forward toward fulfilling George Washington's dream of a firm commercial link tying together the eastern states with the frontier.

In his *History of the James River and Kanawha Company*, W. F. Dunaway called Marshall's report "easily the most famous report in the history of Virginia internal improvements, and its influence on the thought of the time was profound."

This imaginative portrait of the young George Washington surveying will also do for John Marshall, Andrew Alexander, and the other commissioners in the 1812 survey. It would be interesting to plot the original 1812 survey data, shown on Alexander's map, to be able to stand just where he was 200 years ago.

(Library of Congress)

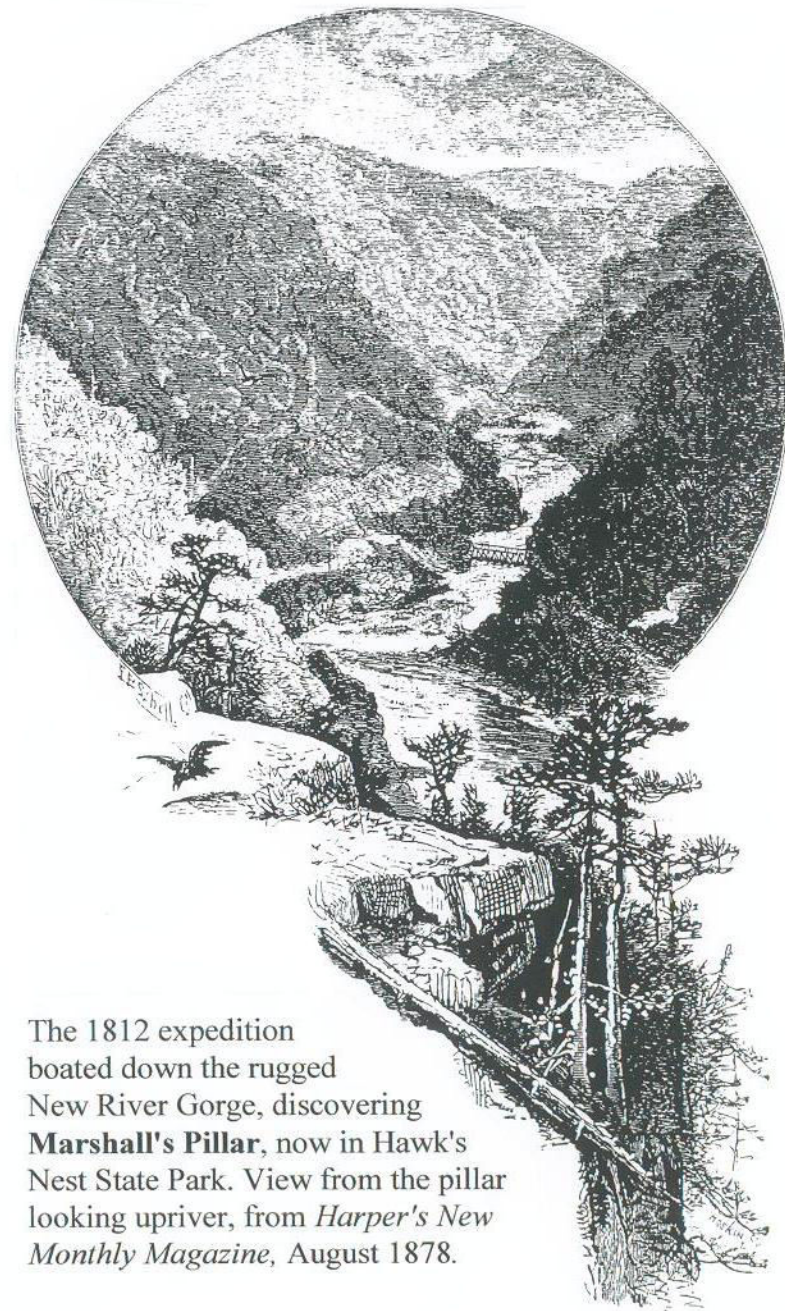


For Further Reading:

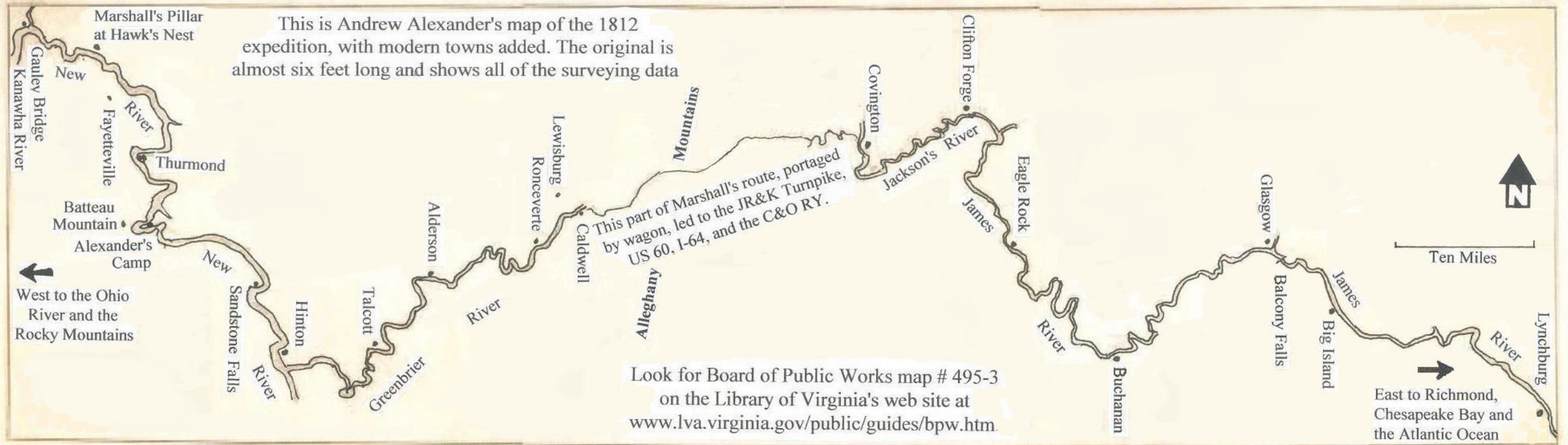
- Canal on the James*, by T. Gibson Hobbs, Jr.
- Cabell's Canal*, by Langhorne Gibson
- History of the James River and Kanawha Company*, by W.F. Dunaway
- Virginia Canals & Navigations Society publications:
The Upper James Atlas, *The New River Atlas*, and
A Guide to the Works of the James River & Kanawha Company, from the City of Richmond to the Ohio River

More about the 2012 celebration is on the web site of the Virginia Canals & Navigations Society
www.vacanals.org/2012

"Make easy the way"
Celebrating the Bicentennial of Chief Justice John Marshall's pioneering survey from the James to the Kanawha River
1812 - 2012

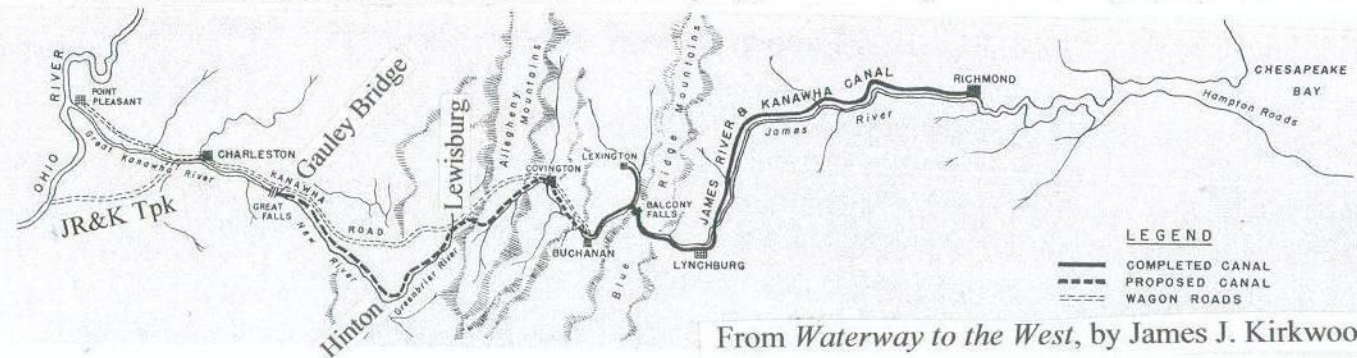


The 1812 expedition boated down the rugged New River Gorge, discovering **Marshall's Pillar**, now in Hawk's Nest State Park. View from the pillar looking upriver, from *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, August 1878.



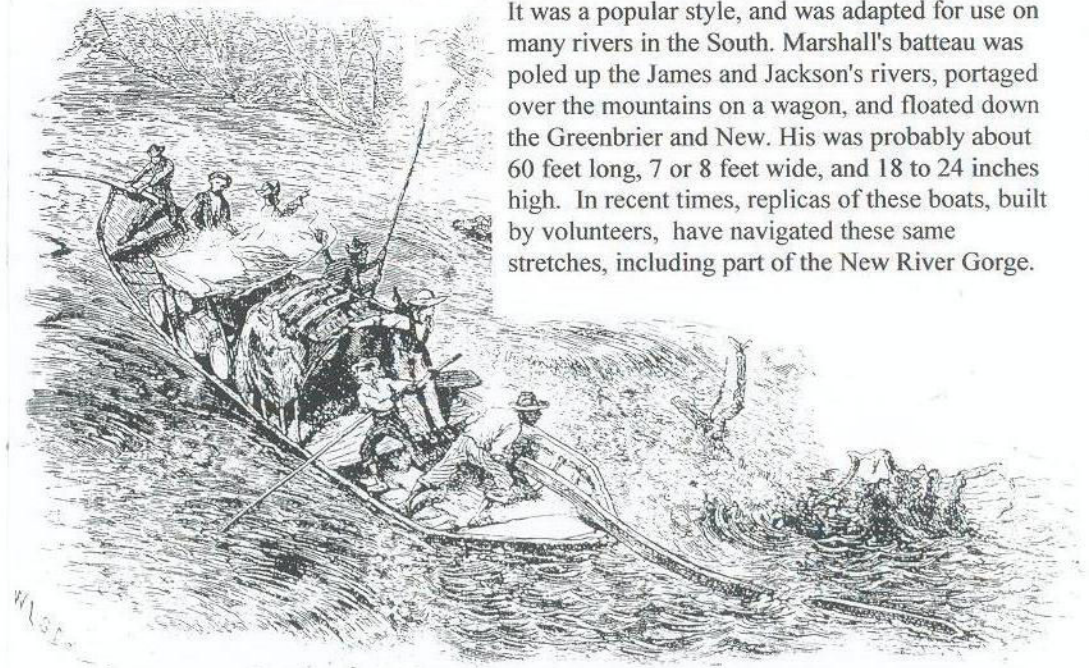
This pioneering 1812 survey led the way to today's transportation routes over the Alleghenies. The water route had begun with the James River Company, with Washington as honorary president, which opened in 1789-1800 the first canal system with locks in the United States, around the falls in Richmond, and had batteaux navigating the river as far up as the port of Covington. This was superseded by the James River & Kanawha Company, which operated one of the largest enterprises in the United States, with 223 miles of towpath canal, 200 miles of turnpike over the Alleghenies (now US 60 and I-64), and over 60 miles of steamboat navigation on the Great Kanawha. At its height, the canal company's works extended from Richmond on the James to the Ohio River. And unknown to anyone in 1812, Marshall's survey paved the way for the Chesapeake & Ohio Railway, now CSX, which faithfully follows his footprints over the mountains and through the New River Gorge.

The works of the James River & Kanawha Company, from the City of Richmond to the Ohio River



From *Waterway to the West*, by James J. Kirkwood

A batteau on the New: John Marshall's survey was made in a whitewater freighter something like this one, shown descending the New River Gorge in the January 1873 *Scribner's Monthly*. This type of boat, called a James River Batteau, was invented in 1771 on the James River, for carrying down tobacco hogsheads and other cargo.



It was a popular style, and was adapted for use on many rivers in the South. Marshall's batteau was poled up the James and Jackson's rivers, portaged over the mountains on a wagon, and floated down the Greenbrier and New. His was probably about 60 feet long, 7 or 8 feet wide, and 18 to 24 inches high. In recent times, replicas of these boats, built by volunteers, have navigated these same stretches, including part of the New River Gorge.