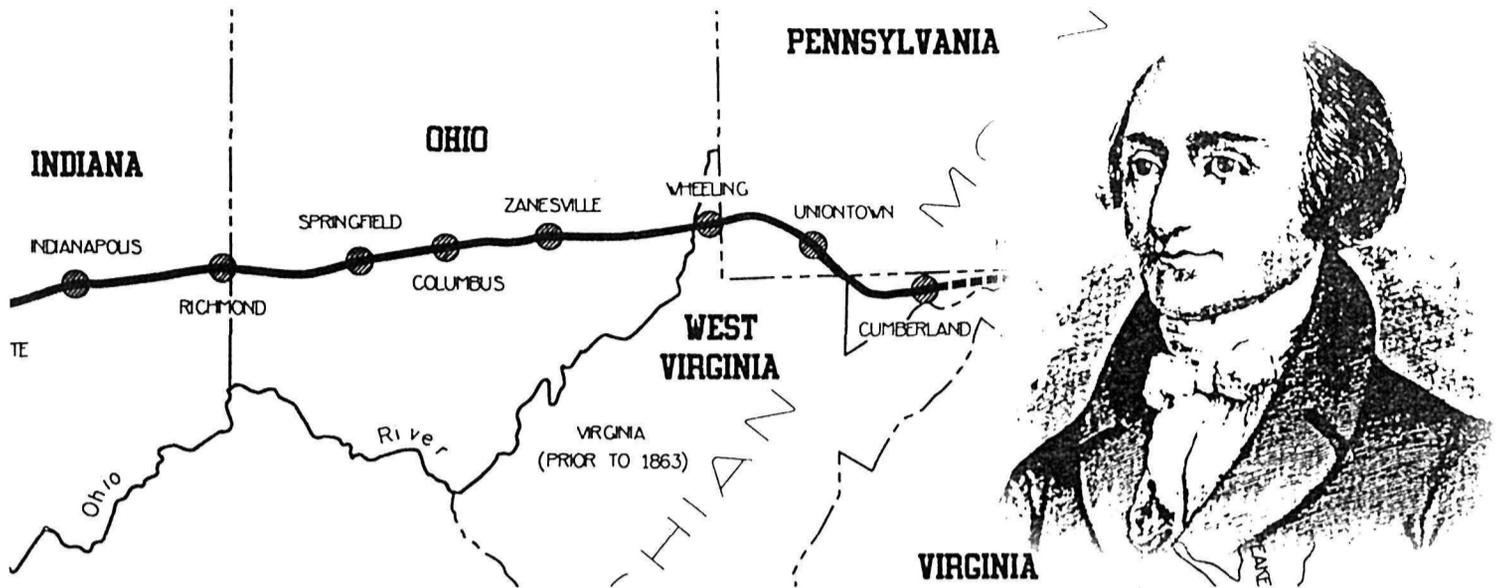




## Albert Gallatin: "Father of the National Road"



In 1784, George Washington met with a group of citizens in Western Pennsylvania to discuss a route for a road through the wilderness. During the meeting, a young man interrupted and expressed his own opinion of the best route. Washington concluded, "You are right, young man; the route you have indicated is the correct one." The young man was Albert Gallatin, and the road the men discussed eventually became the National Road.

### The Problem of the West

Washington and other American leaders advocated for a transportation network to connect the people living on the western frontier with those in the eastern cities. Without such a link to facilitate communication and commerce, the settlers might have aligned themselves with either the Spaniards or the British.



Incidents such as the Whiskey Rebellion, a 1790s uprising by western settlers, also revealed the necessity of a good road to the West. Gallatin, who lived on the frontier and understood the needs of the settlers, stressed the importance of transportation systems.

### Into New Territory

As Secretary of the Treasury under Thomas Jefferson, Gallatin searched for a link between east and west. He proposed that a small portion of the proceeds from the sale of lands in the Northwest Territory be used for construction of roads. When Ohio was admitted as a state in 1802, a percentage of the profits from land sales was appropriated for building a road to connect the "navigable waters emptying into the Atlantic to the river Ohio, to said State."

After the 1803 Louisiana Purchase, financed by Gallatin, a link to the newly-acquired western lands became necessary. In 1806, Jefferson authorized the construction of the National Road.



Lewis and Clark Peace Medal

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**“To strengthen and perpetuate that Union”**

Gallatin supported the construction of transportation networks throughout the United States. In his 1808 Report on Roads and Canals, he stressed the importance of internal improvements:

“Good roads and canals will shorten distances, facilitate commercial and personal intercourse, and unite, by a still more intimate community of

interests, the most remote quarters of the United States. No other single operation, within the power of Government, can more effectually tend to strengthen and perpetuate that Union which secures external independence, domestic peace, and internal liberty.”

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**Deciding the Route**

Gallatin financed the construction of the National Road, which began in 1811. The road commenced in Cumberland, Maryland, extended westward through Pennsylvania, and met the Ohio River in Wheeling, [West] Virginia.



Building the National Road

The route originally bypassed established towns such as Uniontown and Washington, Pennsylvania. Local residents, angered by the choice of route, demanded that the route be changed to include those communities. Gallatin, as a former representative in the Pennsylvania Legislature for the citizens of the area, exchanged letters with local politicians and President Madison in hopes that a solution could be reached. Eventually, thanks to the efforts of Gallatin and local citizens, Madison decided on a route that included both Washington and Uniontown.

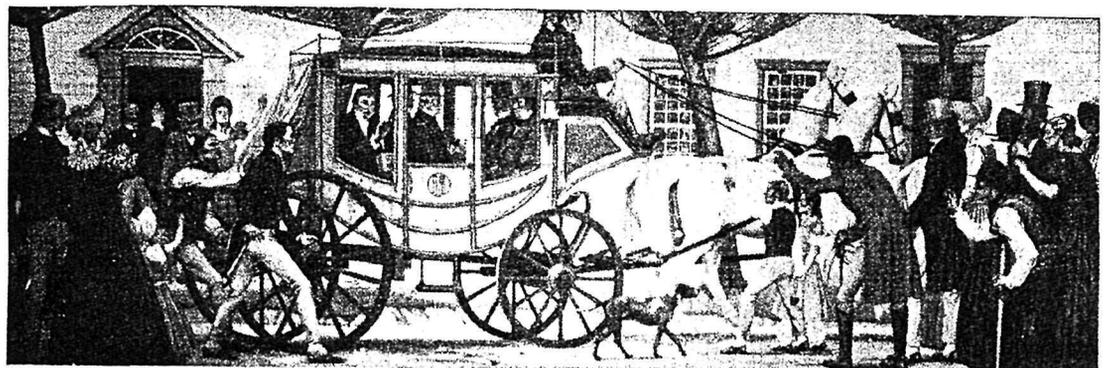
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**Gallatin and the National Road**

By 1818, the National Road was opened for travel. The road immediately became an important thoroughfare for the nation’s trade, travel, and mail. A link between east and west was finally a reality.



Gallatin became known as the “Father of the National Road” due to his never-ending quest to strengthen the bonds of the United States.



Lafayette traveled the National Road on his 1824-1825 tour of America, which included a stop at Gallatin’s Friendship Hill