



Brunswick

FROM DIRT PATH TO MAIN STREET



East Potomac Street looking west (c. 1905). Courtesy of Smoketown History

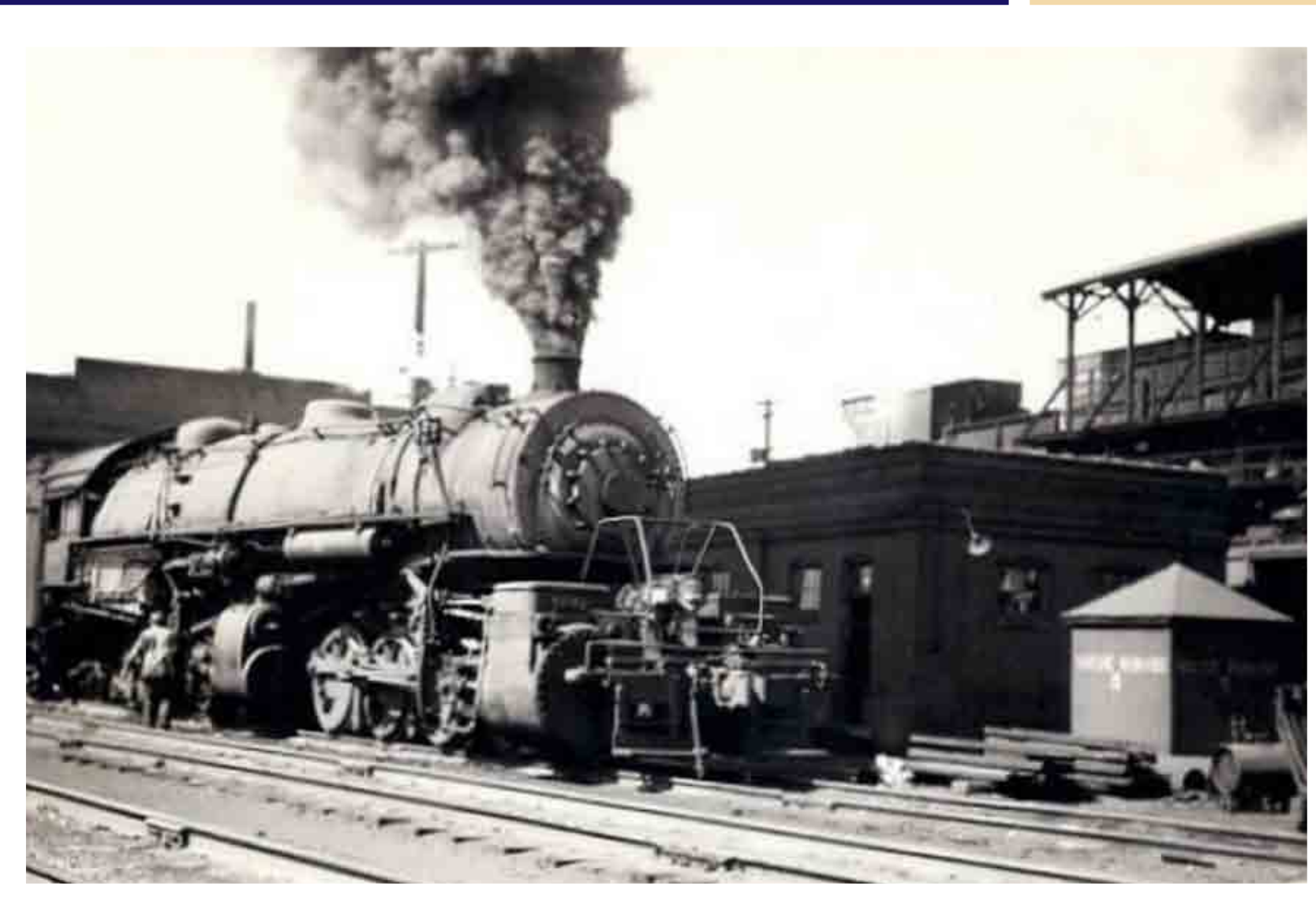
By 1787, Leonard Smith laid out the town of Berlin in 96 lots, most of which were half acre in size. Geographic location made this locale a natural transportation crossroads. Settlers and merchants traveled to and through the new town to utilize the popular ferry that crossed the Potomac into Virginia. Growth was slow until 1834, the year the C&O Canal and B&O Railroad reached town.

Berlin was primarily a canal town, until the B&O built its major freight yards here in the 1890's. The town was incorporated in 1890 and the name changed from Berlin to Brunswick. Population exploded from 300 residents to 3000 by 1893. Now a textbook "boom town," the residential area had been pushed from the river flats to the surrounding hills. A new downtown center flourished.

In 1924, the C&O ceased to function as a canal. Of greater consequence, the B&O moved its yard operations in 1959 from Brunswick to Cumberland, taking with it many jobs and residents. Brunswick would change from a railroad employee town to a railroad commuter town.

Although the Brunswick Historic District would be listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1979, the downtown struggled with vacant storefronts and population decline....primarily due to suburbanization, shopping malls and workforce commuting.

Through the efforts of local government, Brunswick was designated a Maryland Main Street Community in 2004. With this distinction, Brunswick's downtown district has continued to revitalize itself, while hosting special events to commemorate the town's rich heritage as a transportation center.



First steam engine built in United States for B&O Railroad (c. 1930's). Courtesy of Smoketown History



Canal barge heading towards Lock 30 in Brunswick. Courtesy of Smoketown History

East Potomac Street businesses and homes (c. 1920's), with old Brunswick High School hovering above. Courtesy of Smoketown History

