

Consolidation of Three Settlements

The first three decades of the nineteenth century saw the development of the three settlements around the ferry sites at Coopers Point, Camden and Kaighn, into a city with industries and varied industries and a varied economic base.

Description of the city during this period can be found in the writings of two prominent authors. Ornithologist and artist, John James Audubon and local author, Isaac Mickle, in their respective works, describe Camden as a collection of villages, each separated by a half mile of woods or farmlands.

Expansion into some of these lands, which separated the villages, began to occur. Camden businessman and public servant, Richard Fetters (1791-1863) purchased land from the Kaighn family to establish Fettersville in 1833. Lots originally laid out by Fetters, measured 30x200 feet and in 1835 were assessed at \$50 each. These low rates attracted many buyers of modest mean, a large portion of them South Jersey and Philadelphia blacks. The town of Fettersville, bounded by the Delaware River, and modern Line Street on the north, Cherry Street to the south, and Third Street on the east, grew rapidly. By 1835, Fetters bought additional lands from the Kaighn family, east of his initial purchase and south to monter Mt. Vernon Street. He platted these lands into lots and sold them for \$125 for a lot 40X100 feet. Fetter's plan placed the fronts on the streets running east and west in consideration of his design for a ferry to be located at the foot of Spruce Street.



Development was also occurring in the vicinity of Kaighns Point, where the Kaighn family had extensive interests, which included the ferry. The settlement, known as Kaighnsborough or Kaighn, existed as early as 1801. The town was officially surveyed by Joseph Kaighn as one of the commissioners appointed to divide the real estate of Jame Kaighn. The plan was filed in the county clerk's office by 1812. Kaighnsville, another black settlement to the southeast of Fettersville began to grow in the 1840's. A fire destroyed the community in 1854 but it was rapidly rebuilt.

Another early development named Centreville, was laid out in building lots by the Kaighns Point Land Company on land formerly belonging to prominent Camden physician Isaac Mulford and the Mickle family. Extended eastward to Evergreen Cemetery in 1851, Centreville was eventually renamed Stockton. Lots were sold on easy terms and sales were rapid until the burning of the ferryboat New Jersey in 1856. Sixty passengers perished in the mishap which proved to be the deterrent to the inflow of homeseekers from the western shores of the Delaware. By 1871, Stockton was annexed to the City of Camden.



In 1842, the Cooper Lands known as Coopers Hill, east and south of the original townsite area, were laid out into 100 lots and offered for sale by William D. Cooper. These lots sold rapidly and at good prices due to their location on high ground which deemed them highly desirable for residential properties. This area, the present site of the Cooper Medical Center and its immediate surrounding neighborhood, consists of three story brick rowhouses which now remain as some of the earliest rowhousing in the city. The remainder of the Cooper Lands north of Birch and Main, previously restricted to agricultural uses, were laid out with streets and lots and offered for public sale by 1852.

In 1812, the first state bank south of Trenton was approved by the New Jersey State Legislature and by 1821 the town could boast a weekly newspaper, the American Star. The post office, established at Cooper's Ferry in 1803, changed the official name of the town to Camden in 1829, following the City's incorporation the year prior. The City had grown southward to Newton Creek and eastward to Broadway.

By 1840, the population of Camden had grown to 3,371. Camden, then located in the upper half of Gloucester County, appealed to the state legislature for better representation. This resulted in the creation of Camden County in 1844. Bitter political struggle ensued between Long-A-Coming (Berlin) and Camden for location of the new county seat. Finally, in 1848, Camden was voted the county seat.