

# Running the River

Marietta's early history is steeped in the Pennsylvania lumber industry that reigned from 1810-1870. During the winter months, prized white pine and hemlock were cut from the thick forests along the Susquehanna River's West Branch. In the spring when the water was high, the timbers were lashed together and guided by raftsmen miles downstream to Marietta. Some rafts were broken up here in Marietta to feed the planing mills, sawmills, lumber yards, and carpentry shops that supplied building materials and heating fuel to this rapidly developing region. Other rafts, bound for Port Deposit, Maryland, stopped at Marietta to board a fresh crew of raftsmen for the short but dangerous run to Peach Bottom.

Caption

Credit



Once Marietta raftsmen disembarked at Peach Bottom Station, they hiked back 30 miles on a riverside trail known as the Raftsmen's Path. Upon returning, the raftsmen would board another Peach Bottom-bound raft and repeat the process. An 1814 list of taxable landholders attests to this emerging industry's impact on the makeup of Marietta: nine lumber merchants; 21 carpenters; 21 joiners; 10 cooper smiths; and four pilots. The availability of lumber explains why early homes in Marietta are wood frame and clapboard instead of brick and stone like other Lancaster County buildings constructed during the same time period.

Caption

Credit



[www.baygateways.net](http://www.baygateways.net)



## Susquehanna River Water Trail

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