

Ask Bartleby

Dear Bartleby,

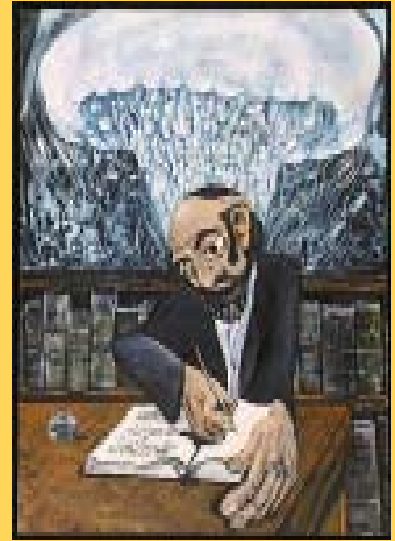
What is or was the legal status of Wheeling's history as a Port of Entry, and what exactly did that mean?

Libby Slater

Dear Libby,

A Port of Entry is any designated place at which a U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officer is authorized to accept entries of merchandise to collect duties, and to enforce various provisions of the customs and navigation laws (19 CFR 101.1). Wheeling was designated a Port of Entry along with Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Louisville, St. Louis, Nashville, and Natchez by Congress [United States Statutes ch. 87 (Mar. 2, 1831)], because of its importance to shipping traffic on the river route to the Mississippi and the Port of New Orleans.

In 1854, Congress appropriated \$88,000 for the construction of a stone building to serve as customs house, post office, and United States courthouse [United States Statutes ch. 242 (Aug. 4, 1854)], which is now known as the old Customs House, or more popularly, Independence Hall, at Market and 16th Street. Wheeling lost its legal status as Port of Entry by Executive Order of Warren G. Harding on May 4, 1923. (SEE BELOW) West Virginia still has one Port of Entry, at Yeager airport in Charleston, West Virginia.



Yours Sincerely,
Bartleby, the Scrivener

Pursuant to the Act of Congress approved August 1, 1914, making appropriations for the sundry civil expenses of the Government for the fiscal year ended June 30, 1915, Wheeling West Virginia, is hereby abolished as a port of entry in customs collection district No. 12 (Pittsburgh) with headquarters at Pittsburgh, Pa.

WARREN G HARDING

THE WHITE HOUSE,
May 4, 1923.

(No. 3831.)