

# Northwest Ohio Quarterly

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# *The President's Page*

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## Freedom of Religion

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof. . . .

**N**O PROVISION of our Constitution is more venerated than this, the First clause of the First Amendment. Like the name of Abou ben Adhem, it leads all the rest of the freedoms in the Bill of Rights.

In the reign of England's second Charles, Parliament sought to compel all persons to attend the established church in England, and by the Test Act to require oaths in support of the established religion. This Act and similar acts in England and in the countries of continental Europe greatly increased immigration to America.

Article VI of the Federal Constitution furnishes an additional protection by its provision that, ". . . no religious Test shall ever be required as a Qualification to any Office of Public Trust under the United States."

While the First Amendment prevents Congress from encroaching upon the liberties guaranteed thereby, the Fourteenth Amendment has, in recent years, been construed by the Supreme Court to prevent the legislatures of the states from enacting laws restricting such freedoms. Formerly these freedoms were not deemed protected from state action by the Fourteenth Amendment.

The states of our country have also, in their respective constitutions, placed restraints upon their legislatures to protect their people in the exercise of freedom of religion. The restraining provision in the Constitution of Ohio is quite broad in its scope and can be found in Section 7 of Article I of that Constitution.

But like other rights guaranteed to the people, freedom of religion is subject to limitations. The amendment embraces two

concepts, freedom to believe which is absolute, and freedom to act which is not absolute.

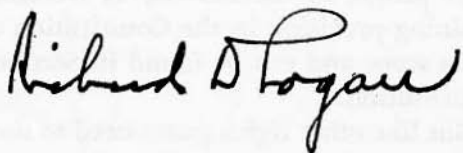
In the language of a recent decision of the United States Supreme Court,

Government has a right to survive, and powers conferred upon it are not necessarily set at naught by the express prohibitions of the Bill of Rights. It may make war and raise armies. To that end it may compel citizens to give military service, . . . and subject them to military training despite their religious objections. . . . It may suppress religious practices dangerous to morals and presumably those also which are inimicable to public safety, health and good order. . . .

The Supreme Court, in May of this year, restored the rampart erected by the First Amendment in defense of religious liberty. In a case involving one of the late journeys of Jehovah's Witnesses to the Supreme Court, that tribunal reversed its former decision rendered a year ago, and held unconstitutional ordinances of towns which require license fees from persons before they may distribute religious literature for contributions.

In June of this year the Supreme Court, in a case involving the latest journey of Jehovah's Witnesses to that tribunal, held unconstitutional a West Virginia law requiring a salute to the American Flag on the ground that the American Flag is an "image," and that the requirement to salute such "image" is a violation of the religious beliefs of that Religious Sect which claims to observe literally verses 4 and 5 of Chapter 20 of Exodus which says

"Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; thou shalt not bow down thyself to them nor serve them."



PRESIDENT

# Fort Miami

F. CLEVER BALD

## PREFATORY STATEMENT BY THE COMMITTEE ON FORT MIAMI

*On October 16, 1942, a committee of the Historical Society of Northwestern Ohio was appointed at the request of the Toledo Metropolitan Park Board to undertake research for the preparation of a history of Old Fort Miami. A rapid survey of the histories of the Maumee Valley has been made and inquiries have been addressed to the many archives and libraries where original unpublished material may be located. The Committee is indebted to Mr. Russell J. Schunk and Mrs. Max Shepherst of the Toledo Public Library which has acted as clearing house and agent for most of this inquiry. In March the Committee enlisted the services of Mr. F. Clever Bald of the Detroit Institute of Technology, since he was writing a dissertation on the Anthony Wayne Campaign. Mr. Bald has gathered together the main documents, published and unpublished, on Fort Miami and at the request of the Committee has presented an outline of the history of the Fort. He is now compiling a bibliography for an exhaustive study.*

*The Committee felt that Mr. Bald's documentary outline was well worth publishing as a preliminary report, and it is here presented to the Society as such. Some notes and emendations on the report and the accompanying map are by the Committee.*

CURTIS W. GARRISON

CARL B. SPITZER

GEORGE W. WELLES

*Committee on Fort Miami*

GENERAL Anthony Wayne spent the winter of 1793-94 at Fort Greenville in the Northwest Territory. Lieutenant Colonel Richard England, British commandant at Detroit, expecting him to advance against that post in the spring, warned Lord Dorchester, governor-general of Canada, that Detroit would be in great danger.

Dorchester accepted England's view of Wayne's intentions. Consequently, he ordered Lieutenant-Governor John Graves Simcoe to build a fort on the Maumee River, then called the Miamis. The Governor-General left the exact location of the

MAP  
 showing the present condition of  
**FORT MIAMI, OHIO.**

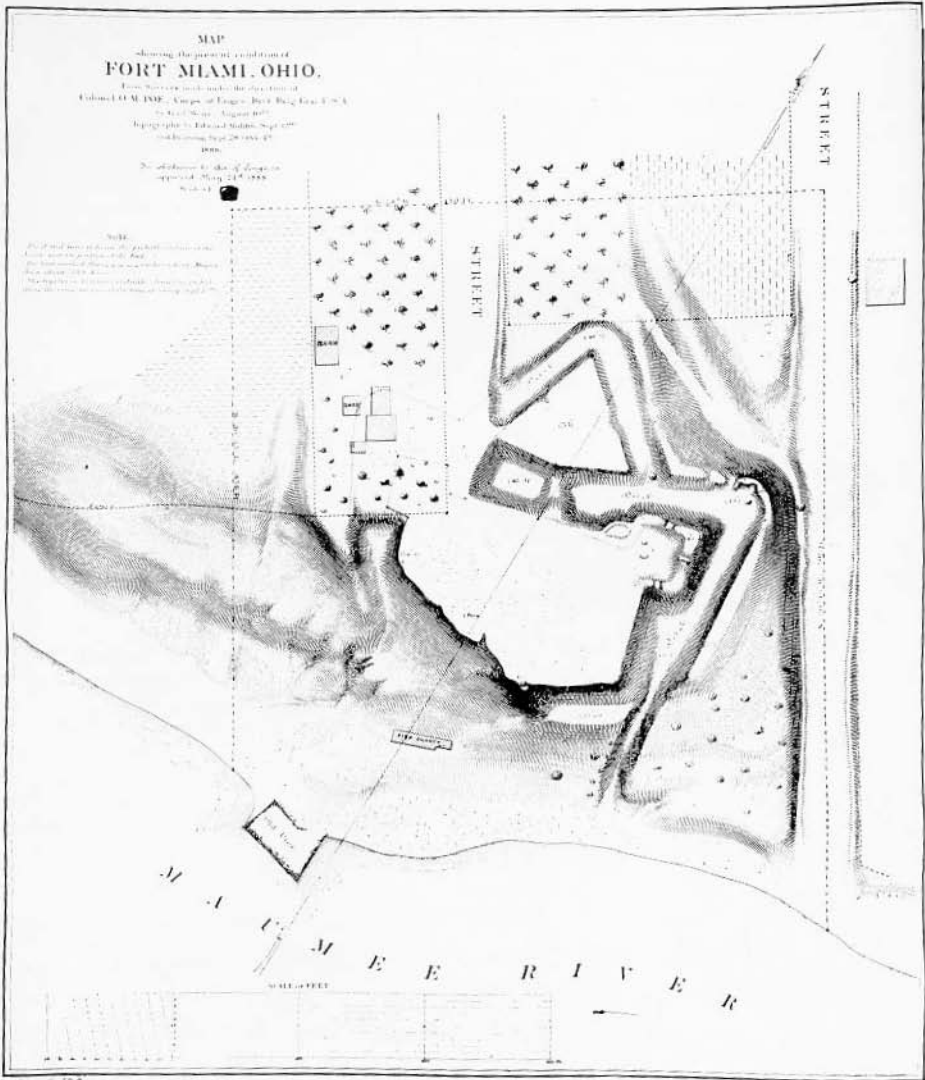
From surveys made under the direction of  
 Colonel L. M. HAY, Corps of Engineers, July 1, 1854, to 1858.

Scale 1:10,000.

Copyright by Edward M. Taylor, 1858.

Reprinted by the War Department  
 approved May 25, 1888.

Note:  
 All of the buildings at Fort Miami are shown in this map as they were in 1858. The present buildings are shown in a different color. The present buildings are shown in a different color. The present buildings are shown in a different color.



R. E. 27 502

"—IN THIS ISSUE" HAS NOTES ON THIS MAP.  
 Reproduced from original in The National Archives, Washington, D.C.

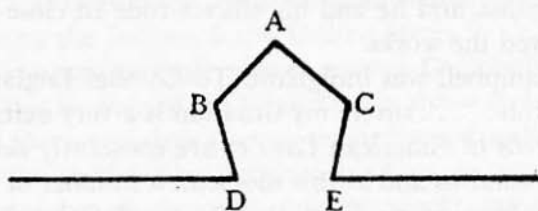
post to Simcoe's discretion; but he stressed the fact that it must effectively protect Detroit.<sup>1</sup>

Simcoe obeyed with alacrity. On April 10, 1794, he was on the Maumee with a detachment of British troops who were set to work at once under the direction of Lieutenant Robert Pilkington, Royal Engineers.<sup>2</sup> Early in July, Pilkington sent Simcoe a report on the progress of the fortification:

“. . . the present state of the Works I will endeavour to give your Excellency some idea of, and with the assistance of the inclosed Plans,<sup>3</sup> to express my future intentions, the general form of the Work and the manner in which the Plan of the outline which I have traced on a Survey of the position. The Plan of the Fort exhibits the disposition of the several Buildings; the Barracks forming a part of the Rampart, and are the lining of it, they are roofed with Logs 12 inches thick, and those on the longer faces of the work, have Loopholes for firing in the reverse. The Bastions have casemated Flanks, and the whole interior part below of each Bastion may be considered as a casemate serving for a secure lodgment of Stores. The Bastions will be somewhat superior to the other parts of the work, and each of their Platforms will be capable of receiving Four Guns, which may be directed variously, each Bastion having six Embrasures. The flat Bastion on the water front I have not raised with Earth higher than the Platform to it, as I purpose the remaining part to be of Log work, as represented in the section, pierced with Loopholes and Port holes, and to have a Machicouli Fire, proposing by this to have a perfect defense for the water front, with a formidable Battery commanding the River and opposite shore, this work being but little advanced, is not exposed to view from either Flank. I have availed myself of a hollow in the ground, before the left face of the Ravelin by making a covered passage under the Glacis for a communication with any work on the adjacent rising ground, and it gives easy and secure access in receiving of Stores into the Fort from the side of the River. The present state of the work is such that in four days from hence the body of the place will consist of an elevated Parapet

of Earth, the casemates of the Bastions and Flanks perfectly formed, the whole completely fraised and surrounded by the ditch requisite on the Land side. The Barracks on the water front are in great forwardness and the casemated Flanks ready for receiving Cannon.”<sup>4</sup>

[EDITOR'S NOTE: It is rather difficult, without the Pilkington Plan to explain the technical terms in his description. The ramparts, of course, are the main walls or earthworks thrown up using the earth removed while digging the ditch surrounding the fort. The outer earthworks beyond the ditch were the glacis. The barracks evidently formed part of the ramparts and on the longest faces, or sides of the fort, loopholes were placed so that guns could be elevated to an angle of more than 30° with the slope of the parapet (Firing in reverse). A bastion is similar to a blockhouse but built differently. It is a bulge in the works, as in the diagram, which is designed to bring a cross fire on any party attacking



between bastions and so protect the rampart or “curtain.” The faces of the bastion are represented by lines AB and AC. The flanks are the lines BD and CE. A casemated chamber is a bombproofed chamber, so with the flanks of the bastions and the entire area below the bastions, as Pilkington describes them (see also Captain Short’s description, post, p. 134). The guns were fired from the bastions through embrasures or slit openings. For one bastion on the river side, Pilkington had the floor beams projecting out beyond the supporting earthworks, with openings between the beams through which the troops could pour shot, and projectiles of all sort directly on the head of the advancing enemy (Machicouli fire, often used in castle defense, Middle Ages). On one side, where there was a dip or hollow in the ground he had a tunnel under the outer earthworks starting from the ravelin which is simply a bastion without the flanks. The fraise was a row of stout pointed stakes extending out almost horizontally from the parapet.]

Late in July, General Wayne resumed his forward march into the Indian country. He reached the Maumee at the mouth of the Au Glaize on August 8. Remaining there for a week to build Fort Defiance, he moved down the Maumee toward Fort Miamis.

Near the present town of Waterville, Ohio, he met a force of Indians, supported by British militiamen from Detroit, who

were determined to check his advance. There, on August 20, 1794, he defeated them in the decisive Battle of Fallen Timbers. The beaten savages fled to nearby Fort Miamis, expecting to be received within its ramparts; but Major William Campbell, the commandant, refused to open the gates. He had strict orders to commit no act of war unless the Americans took the initiative against him.

General Wayne, likewise, had been forbidden to attack the British without provocation. Nevertheless, he would have been glad to have an excuse to capture this fort, built upon territory which Great Britain had ceded to the United States in 1783. Consequently, he pitched his camp just out of range of the guns of Fort Miamis, and he and his officers rode in close and carefully surveyed the works.

Major Campbell was indignant. To Colonel England at Detroit, he wrote: ". . . surely my situation is a very extraordinary one, hundreds of American Cavalry are constantly skirting the wood all around us and at this moment, a number of their officers are looking at us from the Point of Colonel McKee's Island."<sup>5</sup>

Feeling that his honor and that of his country were at stake, Major Campbell dispatched the following note to General Wayne under a flag of truce:

"An Army of the United States of America, said to be under your command, having taken Post on the banks of the Miamis, for upwards of the last twenty-four hours, almost within the reach of the Guns of this Fort, being a Post belonging to His Majesty, the King of Great Britain, occupied by His Majesty's Troops, and which I have the honor to command, it becomes my duty to inform myself as speedily as possible, in what light I am to view your making such near approaches to this Garrison.

"I have no hesitation on my part to say, that I know of no War existing between Great Britain and America."<sup>6</sup>

Wayne answered this communication the same day.

"I have received your Letter of this date requiring of me the motives which have moved the Army, under my command to the



position, they now occupy, far within the acknowledged Jurisdiction of the United States of America.

“Without questioning the authority or the propriety Sir, of your interrogatory, I think I may without breach of decorum observe to you, that were you intitled to an answer, the most full & satisfactory one was announced to you, from the muzzles of my small arms yesterday morning, in the action against the heard [herd] of Savages in the vicinity of your Post; which terminated gloriously to the American Arms—but had it continued until the Indians &c were drove under the influence of the Post and Guns you mention—they would not have much impeded the progress of the Victorious army under my command, as no such Post was established at the commencement of the present war, between the Indians & the United States.”<sup>7</sup>

Wayne's minatory reply almost goaded Campbell to action. The next day he warned the General that although he had “forborne for these two days past to resent these Insults you have offered to the British Flag flying at this Fort, by approaching it within pistol shot of my works, not only singly, but in numbers with arms in their hands,”<sup>8</sup> in future, he would fire on Americans if they approached his post.

General Wayne at once replied that the British were occupying American soil and demanded the evacuation of the fort.<sup>9</sup> Major Campbell answered that he would obey his orders to remain where he was; and he again warned Wayne not to approach Fort Miamis.<sup>10</sup>

Since Major Campbell would not fight without provocation, Wayne withdrew and retired to Greenville. He had accomplished his purpose—the destruction of the Indian forces. Now he began the tedious task of inducing the savages to come in to make a treaty. Slowly but surely, he gained the confidence of the chiefs, who had lost faith in their British “Father” when the gates of Fort Miamis had been closed against them.

In August, 1795, was signed the Treaty of Greenville, by which fifteen years of savage warfare in the Northwest Territory was terminated and the southern half of Ohio was ceded to the

United States. Wayne had successfully completed his mission. Leaving General James Wilkinson in command of the troops, he returned to Philadelphia.

In the spring of 1796, President Washington ordered Wayne to visit the western posts which were about to be delivered by the British to the Americans in accordance with the terms of Jay's Treaty. The Commander in Chief traveled overland to Pittsburgh, then sailed down the Ohio River to Cincinnati.

Meanwhile, arrangements had been made for the American occupation. At Detroit, Colonel England wrote to General Wilkinson on July 1: "Captain De Butts<sup>11</sup> who arrived here last night, will no doubt communicate with you, and I shall have much pleasure in affording him every assistance in my power, in hiring or procuring Vessels to bring your Troops here, from the Miamis River."<sup>12</sup>

Lieutenant Colonel John Francis Hamtramck,<sup>13</sup> commanding the First Sub-legion, moved down the Maumee and occupied Fort Miamis on July 11, 1796. He wrote the following letter there on the same day:

"Copy"

Fort Miamis, July 11th, 1796

"Sir,

"On the 7th Instant two small *vessels* (sic) arrived from Detroit, in which I sent a Detachment of Artillery and Infantry, consisting of Sixty-five men, together with a number of Cannon, ammunition & &c, the whole under the command of Captn. Porter.<sup>14</sup>

"On the 9th Instant a sloop arrived from Detroit to Swan Creek, purchased by Captain DeButts, which carries fifty tons, and which is now loaded with flour, Quarter masters Stores and Troops; that, together with Eleven Batteaux, I have, will be sufficient to take all the Troops I have with me, leaving the remainder of our Stores deposited at this place, which was evacuated this day—and where I leave Captn. Marschalk<sup>15</sup> and Lieut. Shanklin,<sup>16</sup> with fifty-two men of Infantry, and a Corporal and

Six of Artillery, that is, the Garrison at the Head of the rapids Included.—I have endowed Fort Miamis with one months provision, for both the Troops and the Shawanoes, the latter you will recollect you promised subsistence, until their crop was ripe—the calculation is at the rate of One pound of flour and Beef p[er] day for the Troops and a pound of Beef and half a pound of flour to the Indians—the number of the Shawanoes is about 180 besides twenty or thirty [Ot]tawas.

\* \* \*

“The Miamis fort was evacuated this morning and taken possession of by Captain Marschalk—I shall embark in two hours with all the Troops for Detroit.

“Since writing the above, I am informed that thirty Waggon are on their way to Defiance—I have directed that if they are public property, to come to Fort Miamis, for the Navigation of the rapids is now impracticable—if it is the Contractors waggons, they will of consequence return from Defiance, in that case your orders for the transportation of that Flour to this place, will be necessary—I shall immediately send back all the Boats from Detroit to this place.

“Enclosed are the returns of the Troops under my command.

I have the honor to be sir,

with real esteem

Your Obt. Servt.

“Brig<sup>r</sup>. Gen<sup>l</sup>. Wilkinson

Signed J. F. Hamtramck”

[Endorsed]

11th July 1796

from

Col. Hamtramck

to

Gen. Wilkinson

“A true copy

J. A. Wilkinson

B. Genl.”

Advancing northward from Cincinnati along the line of forts he had built during 1793 and 1794, Wayne reached Fort Miamis on August 7, 1796. He remained only long enough to repair some boats in which he and his escort embarked for Detroit on

August 10.<sup>17</sup> After they had sailed, Captain Marschalk sent him the following letter and report on Fort Miamis:

Fort Miamis, 14 Augt. 1796

“Sir

“I have the Honor to lay before your Excellency, a statement of the Public works and buildings of Fort Miamis, as received by me from Capt. Short, of his Brittanic Majesty’s 24th Regiment on the 11th ultimo.<sup>18</sup>

“His statements, of which duplicates were exchanged, are as follows viz.—

“A statement of the condition and nature of the Works and Public Buildings of Fort Miamis, delivered up to Captn. Marschalk of the 2<sup>d</sup>. Sub-Legion of the Troops of the United States of America when evacuated by a Detachment of his Majesty’s 24<sup>th</sup> Regt. July 11<sup>th</sup>, 1796.

“Four Bastions, two with cazemates (sic)

“A Water Battery

“Three Bomb Proofs for Soldiers quarters, with Births (sic), in good order, having been lately shingled.

“One Bomb-proof, for Provision Store, and Ordnance Magazine, in good order.

“One Bake House, and oven, in good order.

“One Engineers Store, in good order.

“Six Logg Houses, for Officers quarters, want repair.

“One Logg Guard House.

“One House for Artillery, with births (sic)

“One Guard House in the Ditch, in good order.

“Four Logg Houses, on the outside of the works, out of Repair.

“One Blacksmiths Shop.

“One Carpenters Shop.

“N.B. The works in general, very much out of repair, having never been properly finished.’

Signed—C. W. Short, Captn. 24 Rgt.

"I have to observe to Your Excellency that the above statement, with the remarks made by Captain Short, is generally correct. The works are, at present, in a tolerable State of Defence, but will admit of many improvements.

"It would appear, however, from circumstances—that there has not been, for a considerable time, that attention paid to the Police and cleanliness of the post, so essentially necessary for the preservation of Health. This might possibly be owing to the anticipated hour of evacuation. I have, in a great measure, however, removed those obstacles.

"I have, also, Sir, made particular Enquiries, with respect to the disorders &c. said to have prevailed among the British troops in 1794.

"From well informed persons now on the spot, I find, that Colonel Simcoe, with a Detachment, arrived here about the latter part of April, that the Troops were immediately put upon hard fatigue—that they were destitute of tents, or any kind of covering, and fed constantly on salt provision. Added to this, the river water, only, was made use of—no spring having at that time been discovered. Their disorders were generally flux,<sup>19</sup> which were attributed to the circumstances mentioned, and not to a want of salubrity of Climate.

"I cannot find that more than one officer (and who, if I am not wrongly informed made rather free with his constitution), and four or five soldiers have died at this place. Some indeed, in getting sick, were sent to Detroit, and I believe a few died on their passage—but their deaths might probably be owing, more to their confined and disagreeable situations in the gun boats than to any other cause.

"One of my informants added that he has lived in the vicinity of this post nearly fourteen years, and has never experienced himself or known of any remarkably sickly periods.

"The latter end of July, and the month of August, have been thought by some to be the most unhealthy seasons. I beg leave to observe to your Excellency that since my being in command of the post I have seen no symptoms that have led me into a belief of a particular want of Salubrity of climate.

"I have, at this time, a number of sick in the Detachment, but when it is remarked that the men who at present compose the Garrison have been on the very arduous duty of Boatmen (a service of all others most severe) since early in February last, and that they were particularly selected for this post on account of their being deficient of clothing (very few of them having received their proportion allowed for the summer months) and that for a considerable part of the time while on that service they have not received their rations of whiskey, the necessity of which, as a refreshment, while so employed, must be particularly obvious, they could not, in my opinion from the fatigues they had undergone, be considered in any other state than that of convalescents only, when I took possession of the Garrison with them. Their disorders are generally agues and fever.<sup>20</sup> which appear to me to have originated from Billious habits, and which I also am of opinion their fatigue under those circumstances has been a principal cause of, and which, unfortunately, I have not been in possession of medicine to remove—all committed to my care in taking charge of the Post, having been a few doses of Tartar Emetic and Salts—a small quantity of Bark<sup>21</sup> and Castor oil, and a little salve, and which, while they lasted, have been made use of to good affect—I am now entirely destitute, but at the same time have the pleasure to inform your Excellency that there is not at this place any man whom I conceive dangerously ill. I have myself been a subject of the ague, which a very few dozes of Bark easily removed, although the attack was a severe one. A small supply of medicine and Hospital Stores would, in my opinion, very soon remove what sickness is now at this place.

"Another source of the sickness now here has, I believe, proceeded from some days of hard fatigue, which I found necessary on taking possession of the post to remove some obstacles of a very disagreeable nature. The want of soap has also been much felt as it deprives the men of the opportunity of keeping themselves as clean & wholesome in their appearance as is necessary to preserve health.

"The information I have obtained with respect to the climate &c proceeds from Traders, I believe, of respectability and who

are willing to come forward on oath to establish the facts they have represented to me.

I have the Honor to be

Sir

With great respect  
Your Excellency's  
Most obt. & Very h<sup>e</sup> Serv.  
And<sup>w</sup> Marschalk  
Capt. in 2d S.L.  
(Sub-Legion)"

"Hiss Excellency  
Major Genl. Wayne

Fort Miamis was now an American post.

NOTES

1. Dorchester to Simcoe, February 17, 1794, *Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections* (Lansing, 1877- ), XXIV, 642-43. Hereinafter cited as *MPHC*.
2. Simcoe to Dorchester, April 29, 1794, *ibid.*, 658. The fort was built on the site of the present town of Maumee, Ohio.
3. This plan of the fort has not been found.
4. Pilkington to Simcoe, July 7, 1794, E. A. Cruikshank (ed.), *The Correspondence of Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe* (Toronto, 1923-), II, 309. Hereinafter cited as *Simcoe Papers*.
5. Campbell to England, August 21, 1794, *MPHC*, XXV, 15.
6. Campbell to Wayne, August 21, 1794, *ibid.*, 16.
7. Wayne to Campbell, August 21, 1794, *ibid.*, 16-17.
8. Campbell to Wayne, August 22, 1794, *ibid.*, 17.
9. Wayne to Campbell, August 22, 1794, *ibid.*, 18.
10. Campbell to Wayne, August 22, 1794, *ibid.*, 19.
11. General Wayne's chief aide-de-camp.
12. England to Wilkinson, July 1, 1794, Anthony Wayne Papers, 44: 88, Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Hereinafter cited as *HSP*.
13. Colonel Hamtramck was a Canadian who joined the American army and fought throughout the Revolutionary War. He became the first American commandant of Detroit. Milo M. Quaife (ed.), *The John Askin Papers* (Detroit, 1931), II, 49.
14. Capt. Moses Porter occupied Fort Lernoult at Detroit on July 1, 1796. He was a veteran of the Revolutionary War.
15. Capt. Andrew Marschalk, of New Jersey, entered the army in 1791 and was honorably discharged on June 1, 1802. Francis B. Heitman, *Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army* (Washington, 1903), vol. I.
16. Lieut. Andrew Shanklin entered the army in 1792 and resigned in 1798. *Ibid.*
17. Wayne to Sec. of War James McHenry, August 10, 1796. Wayne Papers, 45: 73, *HSP*.

F. Clever Bald

18. This is the statement of the condition of the public works which each British commandant was required to deliver to the American officer who occupied the post. It is in the Wayne Papers, HSP.
19. Dysentery.
20. "Agues and Fever"—malaria—were prevalent throughout this region. Constantin F. Volney, the French philosopher and traveler, who visited the Old Northwest at this time, wrote: "In the autumn of 1796, during a journey of more than three hundred leagues, I have not found, I dare say, twenty houses which were entirely free of it [malaria]. . . ." *Tableau du Climat et du Sol Des Etats Unis D'Amerique* (Paris, 1803), 309.
21. "Peruvian bark," a crude form of quinine.



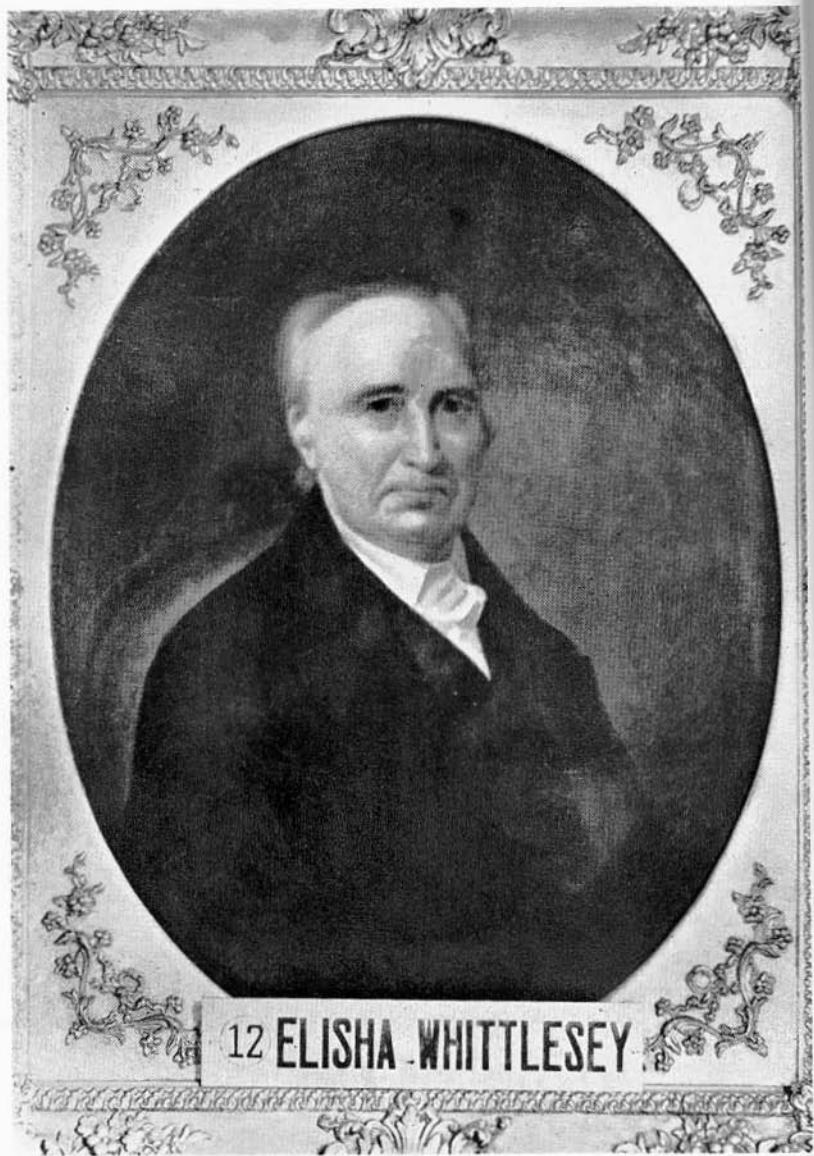
## Elisha Whittlesey and Maumee Land Speculation, 1834-1840

HAROLD E. DAVIS

A NUMBER of factors contributed to intensify the spirit of land speculation in the Maumee valley about the year 1834. One factor was the Jacksonian policy of removing the Indians from the reservations of northwestern Ohio, which brought their highly desirable lands into the market.<sup>1</sup> Another factor was the imminent prospect of fixing the routes of the Wabash-Erie Canal and the northern end of the Miami-Erie Canal.<sup>2</sup> The boundary conflict between Ohio and Michigan Territory introduced an additional element of uncertainty and also fixed national attention upon the area in a very spectacular manner.<sup>3</sup> Joined to these factors, which applied particularly to the Maumee area, were two of more general character: the mounting spirit of speculation in western lands in general, and the fiscal and land policies of the Jackson administration. The total effect was to make of the Maumee region one of the most notable centers of the great speculative era which preceded the Panic of 1837.

There was an early flurry of speculation in lands within the present Toledo when the Port Lawrence Company, including such prominent Cincinnatians as Jacob Burnet, William Oliver and Martin Baum, purchased the land of the Greenville Treaty reservation at the mouth of the Maumee. The land was purchased at auction in Wooster, in February, 1817, and the village of Port Lawrence (now Toledo) was laid out the same year.<sup>4</sup> This boom proved premature, however, and many of the holdings were permitted to lapse during the hard times which followed.

The real speculation in Maumee lands began in 1834, when James Samuel Wadsworth of New York purchased thousands of acres along the Maumee and Auglaize rivers. The Hicks Land Company and the American Land Company purchased land aggregating 100,000 acres in western Defiance and Williams



*Painted 1856 by John Mix Stanley. Presented to Western Reserve Historical Society by Ralph K. Buckland, a Descendant.*

counties. The name of the Hicks Company and of Henry W. Hicks in the development of northwestern Ohio, which began at this time, is, of course, today commemorated in the town of Hicksville, which the latter laid out in 1836.<sup>5</sup> About this time, too, William Oliver and his fellow Cincinnatians showed a revived interest in the Maumee. First they exchanged some of their Port Lawrence holdings for land held by the University of Michigan, then, shortly thereafter, re-purchased that land. In 1835 the property of The Port Lawrence Company was divided among its members,<sup>6</sup> opening the way for much more private speculation.

One of the participants in the developments of this period, deserving of a higher place than the meager attention given him by Maumee valley historians, is Elisha Whittlesey, National Republican and Whig Congressman from northeastern Ohio. With some of his Whig friends from that region, and with the aid of eastern and Cincinnati capitalists and speculators, he played a prominent role, indeed, in the development of the Maumee Valley and Toledo particularly, after 1834. His papers, preserved in The Western Reserve Historical Society, have been the principal source for this article.

Elisha Whittlesey was born in Washington, Litchfield County, Connecticut. In Danbury he received a good education, including the study of law. Shortly after completing his legal studies he moved to the Western Reserve, where he settled in Canfield, then Trumbull, now Mahoning, County. He became prosecuting attorney for the county in 1806 and served in that capacity, apparently, until 1823. In the War of 1812 he rose to the rank of brigade major under his friend, and in many respects mentor, General Simon Perkins. During the war, also, he served William Henry Harrison as private secretary, thus beginning another life-long friendship. The events of the war naturally directed Whittlesey's attention toward the region of southern Michigan and northwestern Ohio.

Two years in the Ohio legislature (1820-1822) were followed by election to Congress in 1822, where he was still serving during most of the period covered by this paper, that is, until his

resignation in 1838. He was, in fact, one of the most highly respected members of the Ohio delegation, and rapidly became a leader in Congress. *Niles' Register* wrote of him: "Without disparagement to any other of the few *working* members of Congress, we may be allowed to place Mr. Whittlesey, of Ohio, at the head of this class." In Harrison's administration he was Auditor of the Post Office Department, and in 1849 became the first Comptroller General of the United States, an office which he held, except for the Buchanan administration, from that date until his death in 1863. For himself and the office he earned the epithet "Watch-dog of the Treasury."<sup>7</sup>

Whittlesey acted as attorney for Simon Perkins, probably the greatest land agent in the state of Ohio. Among other things Perkins laid out and developed the town of Akron. From interest in land to interest in internal improvements was but a step, and Whittlesey accordingly took an active interest in the development of the Ohio canals. He was a close friend and collaborator of Alfred Kelley, financier of the Ohio canals and later author of the Bank of Ohio, as well as of Micajah T. Williams, author of the first motion in the Ohio legislature to undertake consideration of canal building and author of the bill establishing a canal commission. Williams' name will appear frequently hereafter.<sup>8</sup> Whittlesey took an active part in promoting the Pennsylvania-Ohio Canal,<sup>9</sup> and was also actively interested in several canal projects which never were completed, such as the proposed canal from the Mahoning River at Niles to Lake Erie at Ashtabula, and the Black River-Killbuck canal.<sup>10</sup> His influence in Congress was used to promote federal aid for canal construction and for improvements to navigation and the construction of harbors on Lake Erie. After 1837 his growing interest in railroads is abundantly evidenced by the mass of letters dealing with the subject preserved among his papers.

In 1833 he joined with his brother Mathew, of Danbury, Connecticut, and a certain Colonel Moss White, in the purchase of some land near Norwalk.<sup>11</sup> Then in 1834 he became interested in Maumee lands, first, apparently, through his concern for the lands in this area granted to the Western Reserve

townships for school purposes by the Act of 1834. The Western Reserve townships had no school lands from the State of Connecticut or the Connecticut Land Company. Therefore, the Ohio Constitutional Convention in 1802, and Congress in the Enabling Act of 1803 had given them fourteen quarter townships in the United States Military Tract. This was less than most townships had received, however, and the Act of 1834, in the passage of which Whittlesey played an important part, granted additional lands, some 30,000 acres to be selected from the public lands in the Maumee Valley, to make the total received by the Reserve townships equal 1/36 of the area of the Reserve.<sup>12</sup>

Whittlesey worked closely with Alfred Kelley and Governor Lucas to secure the appointment of the right agent by President Jackson to select the lands, with the result that Daniel Kerr, a prominent citizen and "Associate" judge of Geauga County was appointed after Judge Ebenezer Lane of Norwalk had declined the office.<sup>13</sup> He advised Kerr to seek out "Mr. Rice" at Maumee, who was supposed to know more about lands in that vicinity than any other man.<sup>14</sup> He also wrote to Joseph Larwell, United States land agent at Bucyrus, asking Larwell's aid for Kerr. His letter to Larwell is particularly interesting because of the pains to which he went to make it clear that these school lands would be sold immediately, so that no community need fear that its development would be retarded.<sup>15</sup>

When United States Land Commissioner Hayward determined that the area of the Western Reserve was three million acres and gave directions for selecting the school lands to the extent of 1/36 that amount, Whittlesey took up the case with the Secretary of the Treasury and got recognition of the real area of the Reserve, 3,666,921 acres. He urged Kerr to select lands along the proposed canal route from among those reserved by the United States, but this led to some difficulty. When local land agents refused to permit entries for these canal lands Whittlesey carried the case to the Commissioner General, to the Attorney General, and to the Secretary of the Treasury, Levi Woodbury. The Attorney General eventually gave his

opinion in favor of the Reserve, but Jackson decided that "he could not with propriety make the selections from the canal lands."<sup>16</sup>

It was about this time that Whittlesey joined with Judge Ebenezer Lane of Norwalk in purchasing some Maumee lands through the Bucyrus land office. Even before the lands were opened for entry Whittlesey had an arrangement with Larwell, the land agent, whereby the latter would notify Judge Lane as soon as the lands were opened for entry. Judge Lane would then send immediately a certificate of deposit to cover the costs of entry. Larwell informed Whittlesey from time to time of particularly desirable lands which were being offered for sale.<sup>17</sup>

Whittlesey's interest in Maumee lands mounted rapidly. In early March, 1835, he talked with Joel B. Sutherland<sup>18</sup> about the possibility of the latter's investing \$10,000 in western lands. To Judge Lane he suggested looking out for good lands in the sections along the canal routes reserved by the national government. These were, of course, the same lands he was urging Kerr to select for the Western Reserve townships.<sup>19</sup> He determined, moreover, to make a trip through the Maumee region that year himself, partly to assist Kerr in selecting the Western Reserve lands, and partly to see for himself what the opportunities were.

Naturally he turned to his longtime friend of Ohio legislature days, Micajah T. Williams, recently parted from Jacksonism and now joined with Whittlesey in Ohio Whiggery. Williams had been surveyor general of Ohio, Indiana and Michigan territories.<sup>20</sup> Long associated with the cause of internal improvements, he had just recently become President of the newly created Ohio Life Insurance and Trust Company, the biggest and most active bank in the state, and heir in Ohio to the interests of the second United States Bank.<sup>21</sup> He had already been interested in Maumee lands, as noted, and was in any case a powerful ally. Not only did he know personally most of the land agents, including Larwell, and have a first hand knowledge of the lands, but his bank came near controlling the credit of western Ohio, having outstanding obligations equal

to a tenth or a twelfth of the total assessed valuation of property in the state by 1836.<sup>22</sup> Williams responded generously to Whittlesey's requests with information, advice and letters of introduction to land agents in the West.<sup>23</sup>

In April, 1835, Whittlesey and Perkins went together, by canal and river, apparently for a meeting of the trustees of the Ohio Life Insurance and Trust Company. There they must inevitably have talked with Williams, William Oliver and others about Maumee lands.<sup>24</sup> Back in Canfield, Whittlesey wrote again to Kerr about Western Reserve School lands, proposing that they make a trip to look over lands together through the West.<sup>25</sup> Whether Kerr accompanied him on a trip to Norwalk, Sandusky and points further west, in June, is not certain. From Norwalk he wrote Mrs. Whittlesey on June 5 that he planned to leave for Sandusky that afternoon, would spend the Sabbath in Sandusky, and "go into the woods on Monday." This trip probably took him no further than into Wood County, although he could have gone as far as the Maumee. Possibly he was looking at lands near Lake Erie and Maumee Bay which Larwell had recently suggested. By June 12 he was back in Norwalk and had been attending to some business there.<sup>26</sup>

Jessup Wakeman was a friend of some means who was furnishing part of the capital to pay for stock in the Ohio Life Insurance and Trust Company which he and Whittlesey were buying jointly. The growing seriousness of Whittlesey's intention to speculate in Maumee lands on a large scale is seen in the proposal which he made to this friend at this time. He proposed a joint speculation, Wakeman furnishing the capital, Whittlesey arranging for the entries, handling the sales and all other business details, and both sharing equally in the profits. As precedents he cited the arrangements under which Simon Perkins and John Fitch had handled investments in Western Reserve lands for eastern friends with capital. How completely western lands were coming to absorb his attention appears in this letter:

It is my intention during this fall to go to the westward, and make selection, and enter United States land. My funds are so employed at this time, as to prevent me from making as extensive entries as I

would, if my funds were not already invested. Your knowledge of the Western Country will enable you to judge whether money can be more safely and profitably invested than in entering land at the Government price. Speculation in town and city property have been great for the two years past, but I have not confidence enough in their stability to embark in them. Such is the flourishing condition of our country, that land at one dollar and a quarter an acre, must I think, not only be a safe, but a profitable investment. It is my intention to view the land I may enter myself, and to obtain the services also of Daniel Kerr Esq. a practical surveyor, who selected the school lands for the Reserve.<sup>27</sup>

Back at home, he apparently discussed plans with his law partner, Eben Newton, and with Joshua R. Giddings of Jefferson, Ashtabula County soon (1838) to be Whittlesey's successor in Congress. Both men were already interested in the Maumee. In October, accompanied by two other men, one of them Daniel Kerr, he set out for another and more extensive tour of northwestern Ohio. The name of the second man does not appear.<sup>28</sup> A letter to his wife from a point in "Sandusky County, midway from Lower Sandusky to Perrysburgh on the Maumee" tells of his plan to travel through Wood County, and possibly Hancock and Hardin.<sup>29</sup> Four days later, from the Lima land office, he wrote that he was dissatisfied with the lands he had seen in Sandusky and Wood counties, and so had gone on to Putnam County; and that he planned to return to Putnam County the next day to examine some more lands.<sup>30</sup> In a later letter he mentions having also visited Hancock County on this trip.<sup>31</sup>

By the time Whittlesey returned to Washington for the opening of Congress in December, 1835, the pot of Maumee speculation was fairly boiling among this Western Reserve group of Whigs, and was beginning to draw in some of Whittlesey's eastern friends who had capital to invest. His interest in land was also reflected in the official business to which he gave his attention that winter. Because of the difficulties he had encountered on his speculative tour in the Maumee country, he took up with the Land Commissioner the possibility of relaxing a new rule of that office which had caused him to waste



time, and even to lose the chance to enter certain lands. The rule, contained in a recent circular from the Commissioner's Office had required the enterer of lands to swear that he had examined the lands and that there were no preemption right settlers on them.<sup>31</sup>

Edward Wade (brother of Benjamin F.) was interested in some lands near the foot of the Maumee Rapids, "in the northwest corner of Perrysburgh," and enlisted Whittlesey's aid in clearing up a controversy over the title, a controversy originating in the Congressional grant of March 2, 1827, to Indiana, of lands to aid in construction of the Wabash-Erie Canal. The law had given land along the proposed route "to the foot of Maumee Rapids." By Act of May 24, 1828, Congress transferred all such lands within the borders of Ohio to the Ohio Canal Commissioners, Ohio assuming responsibility for construction of that part of the canal. The question, therefore, was whether these lands now belonged to the Ohio Canal Commissioners, or could be entered as public lands. That question, in turn, depended upon where the line should be drawn marking the foot of the rapids. Besides Edward Wade, James Quinley and a Mr. Morrison were interested. A letter of this period from the land agent, Larwell, may also refer to these lands. Whittlesey took up the question with the Land Office, apparently with the result that the lands were opened for entry.<sup>32</sup>

Judging from the reserve which Whittlesey still guarded on the question of town lots when writing to Jessup Wakeman the preceding June, it was Edward Wade's enthusiasm which now aroused his interest in lands in the then Port Lawrence Town and Upper Toledo, with tales of the great profits he (Wade) had made there. With \$500, he said, he had already made \$8,000. Wade wished Whittlesey to help him secure capital for investment. Since Senator John M. Clayton, of Dover, Delaware, had already offered Whittlesey capital for investment in lands, the latter now proposed to Wade that he, Newton, Whittlesey and Clayton form a partnership. Clayton would advance \$20,000, upon which he would receive 6% interest, plus one-fifth of the profits. Wade (and his partner Raymond) would re-

ceive two-fifths, and Newton and Whittlesey the other two-fifths. Newton and Whittlesey would join in guaranteeing his capital to John Clayton.<sup>33</sup> From this point on there is an almost constant correspondence about Maumee lands between Wade, Whittlesey and Newton, especially during the months that Whittlesey is in Washington attending Congress.

Whittlesey, however, had a conservative bent, and was afraid, apparently, of Edward Wade's more reckless tendencies, just as he suspected Wade's abolitionism. "What property I have obtained," he wrote Wade, "has been by patient labour, and the most rigid economy." Moreover, whether for this reason or another, he was reluctant at first to divulge Clayton's name, writing to Wade that "the gentleman to whom I have spoken is no speculator."<sup>34</sup> "Such has been the rage for speculation the past season," he wrote his partner, "we must inevitably, as I fear, meet with a check. A war with France is not impossible. In this event it will take a good deal of property to pay a debt of twenty thousand dollars." The reference, obviously, is to the \$20,000 which Clayton was furnishing, and the conservative spirit of the whole letter is in marked contrast to Wade's exuberant enthusiasm. Perhaps he had been influenced by Judge Lane's cautious warning of some months before that "a season of general speculations" was approaching, since anyone with \$100 "seems disposed to hold an 80 acre lot in the Congress lands."<sup>35</sup>

This cautious attitude may well have been what enabled him to ride out the Panic of 1837, as will appear later. Although it is irrelevant in some respects to the theme of this article, it may be noted, too, that this same spirit carried over into Whittlesey's relations to the Ohio Life Insurance and Trust Company, of which he was a trustee. He criticized the bank for its liberal credit policy, because, as he said, it encouraged speculation in western lands. With Simon Perkins he joined in a protest to the bank in November, 1836.<sup>36</sup> To another friend, Rogers M. Sherman, he wrote about the same time of "a feverish excitement that [pervades?] all kinds of business."<sup>37</sup>

Even with the backing of Clayton and Wakeman, Whittlesey

felt he needed still more capital. "It is my design and intention hereafter to attend to selecting public lands," he wrote in March, 1836, to the eminent Abbott L. Lawrence, wealthy manufacturer of Lawrence, Massachusetts, and newly elected Whig congressman. "I have not the capital I could use to advantage," he said. At Lawrence's request he was setting forth his views on the purchase of lands for speculation. Discussing at great length the various factors which affected the suitability of western lands for investment, he urged especially that the lands in northwest Ohio were preferable to those in Indiana or Michigan. The Ohio lands, he wrote, were close at hand, and so could be attended to with less expense. Indiana, on the other hand, was building up a huge debt for canals and other improvements, which might reach the great sum of twenty millions. "Another reason is, and I think it is entitled to some weight, the taxes in Ohio are at their maximum, and I think will soon be reduced." From the vantage point of a century later, this is, to say the least, an amusing instance of human fallibility in judgment.

He told Lawrence of his purpose to form a "concern" to invest in public lands, and mentioned particularly "fifty sections" which would "soon be brought into the market" near Toledo. Capital at 6% to share in the profits of the speculations was what he needed, and he would "be grateful to know before long" whether Lawrence or his friends were "disposed to make any investment on the terms mentioned."<sup>38</sup>

Part of the "fifty sections" to which Whittlesey referred may have been the land which William Oliver, as already noted, had purchased from the University of Michigan. This tract, at any rate, was an object of special interest to Whittlesey, as will now appear. At the moment he was interested in a special law of Congress which would have the effect of validating Oliver's title.<sup>39</sup>

By this time the spirit of speculation was reaching a peak at Toledo. Edward Wade wrote from there in June, 1836, that the spirit of speculation had arrived at its climax. "There are now on this river, in the distance of 12 miles, ten village plots,

six of which have been laid out since last Fall, all of which have sprung out of the uncertainty of the boundary question and of the point of termination of the Canal."<sup>40</sup> In this connection it is pertinent to note that in Port Lawrence or Lawrenceburgh, the chief center of the speculative interest, the ownership of land was distributed as follows in 1836: The Port Lawrence Company owned 360 acres, William Oliver 661 acres, valued for taxation at \$7,612, and Elisha Whittlesey 512 acres. Several others, including a Mr. Andrews, W. J. Daniels (of whom more later), J. N. Stebbin, C. S. Pattee, Isaac Street & Co., owned small tracts, while for five parcels, totaling 400 acres, the owners' names were unknown.<sup>41</sup>

The Act of the Ohio Legislature establishing Lucas County in 1835, and the prospect of locating the county seat, naturally introduced an additional speculative factor into the Toledo situation. Oliver and his associates, which seem by this time to include Whittlesey and his friends, had set aside land for courthouse purposes. The chief rival to Port Lawrence (now Toledo) was Maumee, where Edward Wade seems to have had extensive interests, judging from some of his correspondence with Whittlesey.<sup>42</sup>

Although Whittlesey's correspondence shows clearly the intense interest he and his friends took in the prospective location of the county seat, the exact nature of their connections with the land involved in the location of the courthouse does not appear clearly. Edward Wade's partner, Raymond, had purchased 200 acres from Oliver in January, 1836, at the very time Whittlesey and Wade were negotiating with John Clayton in Washington. Whittlesey was obviously disappointed when Wade did not invest any of Clayton's money in these lands purchased from Oliver, and did not rest content until part of it was so invested. Wade wished to invest the Clayton money in Olean, New York, a speculation in which Newton and Whittlesey also joined, but eventually consented to put part of it in Toledo.<sup>43</sup>

Sixty acres from the Raymond tract were sold to General O. H. Knapp of Ashtabula for \$17,000, in January, 1836. In May of the same year Knapp sold thirty acres for \$50,000 to

Stephen B. Comstock, another man prominently associated with land speculation in early Toledo, and agent of the Port Lawrence Company during 1834-35. Part or all of this Comstock purchase seems to have been re-purchased later by Wade and Raymond. The price paid does not appear, but Wade wrote at one time that Comstock was holding it at \$150,000.<sup>44</sup> Wade and Raymond then made some kind of contract arrangement with Joshua R. Giddings, Whittlesey, Horace Wilder, W. J. Daniels, and James Myers, the latter two from Toledo, and substantial owners of land there. Giddings' version of the matter was that he had assigned his contract to Myers, and that Myers sold to Daniels. However, in the resulting difficulties which arose the obligations of the various parties seemed rather uncertain and vague.<sup>45</sup> What was clear was that Wade, Raymond, Giddings and Whittlesey expected Daniels and Myers to furnish the money to be paid to Comstock. This they ultimately refused to do.

Meanwhile the Ohio-Michigan boundary question had been settled in a manner favorable to Ohio and Toledo, if contrary to the opinion of the United States Attorney General.<sup>46</sup> In an early stage of the controversy, Whittlesey had accompanied the United States Commissioners as a voluntary peacemaker, in an effort to secure a compromise settlement. John M. Clayton was chairman of the judiciary committee of the United States Senate which passed on the bill establishing the final boundary. Moreover, this group of Whigs interested in the Maumee valley had evidently used all the influence they could muster to get the legislature to locate the county seat of the new county at Toledo.<sup>47</sup> All that now remained to be done was for the commissioners to select a site, which they proceeded to do in 1837, selecting, or accepting, the land which the Oliver interests had intended for that purpose. Toledo landowners promised \$20,000 to aid in construction of the courthouse.<sup>48</sup>

November 1, 1837, Whittlesey as agent, deeded the courthouse square to Lucas County in consideration that county buildings be erected. The deed was assented to by Newton, Wade and Clayton. A receipt, dated at Dover, Delaware, De-

cember 10, 1836, shows that Clayton had received a deed for land (in trust to Whittlesey) which may be the same property. This deed was from Philander Raymond and Clayton acknowledges on the receipt that this is the land involved in his contract with Wade, Newton and Whittlesey. It is not certain, of course, that this is the same land as that involved in the disputed contract with Stephen B. Comstock. There is no doubt, however, that Clayton was referring to the courthouse lot when he wrote December 4, 1837, that he had sent the deed from the partners to Comstock in Toledo.<sup>49</sup>

Naturally the Maumee interests were outraged at this "deal" and immediately began to agitate for removal of the county seat to Maumee, offering to raise the money there for the construction of the courthouse. Although the point is not clarified in any of the histories, nor in the Whittlesey letters, the Toledo proprietors were encountering enough difficulties raising the money they had promised, to suggest that they were ultimately unable to do so. Construction was halted on the courthouse in 1838, and the county offices were housed temporarily in Daniels' and Goettell's store until the county seat was moved to Maumee a few years later. The Toledo owners were not entirely discouraged, however, and even as late as February, 1839, Micajah Williams was writing to Whittlesey that the Whigs in the state senate would support their position "out of regard for Oliver."<sup>50</sup>

Many of the complications of this situation are reflected in a letter which Whittlesey wrote to Edward Wade in May, 1837, a portion of which reads as follows:

The commissioners after examining a week, and after much hesitation or rather deliberation fixed on a scite (*sic*) in Lot No. 3 south of Swan Creek. The proprietors who were present with these [theirs?] agents when represented by agents agreed to erect the public buildings to be paid in proportion to their interest at Toledo. We agreed to give also a square of lots in the Oliver Division of Toledo on Lot No. 3. Mr. Oliver had left there before I arrived. . . . He with the other proprietors agreed to meet at Toledo on the 10th of June for the purpose of making some arrangement about selling a part of the City Lots which are surveyed out on Lot No. three. It is desirable that all who are interested should be there at that time. I

hope all will assemble there who have any interest in the purchase you made of Stevens B. Comstock. I request you to be at Toledo on the 10th and to bring all the papers you have relating to any of the lands [in] which we have or have had an interest with you. I have written to Mr. Clayton to be there. If he cannot come I have requested him to state whether we are to repay the money we borrowed when the bond shall fall due. . . .<sup>51</sup>

Further careful study of the Whittlesey letters, of other correspondence and of the Lucas County land records might reveal a closer connection between the Comstock speculation and the "deal" for the location of the county courthouse than has been discovered in this study. It was at least unfortunate that Daniels and Myers, for reasons not entirely clear, refused at this time to furnish the money for the payments due Comstock. Whittlesey wrote Giddings that both these men seemed heavily involved in speculative city lots. Their financial embarrassment may well have been real, of course, in the spring and summer of 1837. Whatever the reason, it was embarrassing for Wade, Whittlesey and Giddings to have Daniels and Myers fail to carry out their contract just as the commissioners were fixing the site for the courthouse, and the Toledo proprietors agreeing to raise \$20,000 for public buildings. Giddings sued Myers and Myers sued Daniels. Comstock threatened to have the contract annulled by the state Supreme Court unless the payments were made to him promptly. What warrant he may have had for his feeling is not clear, but Daniels wrote to Whittlesey that Giddings was "one of the damndest scoundrels in the world. He has cursed himself in the estimate of the people of Toledo."<sup>52</sup>

Although the Comstock transaction thus remains more or less a mystery, references to it in the letters which follow suggest something of the nature of the relationships of the proprietors involved. Referring to the Comstock tract William Oliver wrote to Whittlesey: "I reserved control of the property." Wade had denied this "control," which was apparently the basis of Oliver's demand that all the Toledo proprietors contribute to the construction of the courthouse. Whittlesey had defended it, however, describing it to Wade as follows: "The interest was

made contributory in such sales, donations, gifts, & as might be thought proper, to be determined by majority of ownership."<sup>53</sup> Clayton's relation to the transaction seems to have been behind Whittlesey's comment to William Oliver, written about the same time, to the effect that Clayton had a "permanent interest" with them in the Toledo properties.<sup>54</sup> Probably, too, Clayton was a silent partner in the ownership of some of the land which appears under Whittlesey's name in the Toledo tax lists for 1836, mentioned above. In other words, although the Port Lawrence Company had divided its holdings in 1835, as mentioned, the proprietors continued to act in many respects as though the company continued, and the transactions of Wade, Newton, Clayton and Whittlesey had the effect of bringing them into the company.

Horace Wilder seems also to have been involved, judging from the letter which Whittlesey wrote him in June, 1837. He said, in part:

. . . I think we ought to have a definite understanding of what we intend to do. Otherwise we may lose the money advanced. If you have not a copy of the contract made with Mr. Myers by Mr. Giddings, I wish you would obtain it, and I should like to know your opinion whether Mr. Myers is obliged to pay Mr. Comstock the amount due to him, and that shall become due, on the contract between Mr. Comstock and E. Wade. The solution of this question is of great importance to Messrs. Giddings & B. F. Wade, if not to all who have any interest in the land contained in Comstock contract.<sup>55</sup>

The years from 1837 to 1839 were years of increasing financial difficulty for Whittlesey and his friends, as they were for all who owed money, or depended in any way upon the fictitious values in lands which had been created during the years preceding. The easy credit of the days before 1837 was a thing of the past. Clayton and Knapp were now in financial straits and demanding repayment of the money they had loaned.<sup>56</sup> Whittlesey and Giddings were busy raising money from every available source. It was practically impossible, they found, to collect anything from their own debtors. They relieved General Knapp by assuming his debt to the banker, Rufus Reed, apparently in order to secure a loan of \$5,000 from that source. The debt



seems to have been one of those involved in settling up the Comstock transaction.<sup>57</sup> Whittlesey borrowed on his stock in the Ohio Life Insurance and Trust Company, and then was embarrassed again when payment of this loan was demanded in 1839. Yet in spite of these heroic measures the Toledo tax lists for 1840 showed most of the lands owned by the partners to be delinquent. A large amount of Toledo property was listed "owners unknown."<sup>58</sup>

It is not the purpose of this paper to describe these financial difficulties, which came to a peak in 1839, in any detail. Three of the Whittlesey's letters dealing with such difficulties will be briefly noted, however. The first is to Edward Wade, who was apparently in the most serious difficulty of all. It would appear that something, at least, of Whittlesey's earlier apprehension in respect to Wade was justified. He wrote:

I have just received a letter from Mr. Clayton in which he says you have not paid him, and in addition to that, he says you will not answer his letters. When I saw you at Jefferson, you said there could be no doubt the money would be remitted to Mr. Clayton in a short time, and that you would write to him. He states his necessities are peculiarly pressing.<sup>59</sup>

A letter to William Oliver not only reveals the trouble Whittlesey was having, but reveals, also his reliance on Oliver and his Cincinnati friends. This letter is interesting also as it shows Whittlesey's view of the Toledo speculations two years after the peak of speculation and the crash. The pertinent part of the letter reads as follows:

Your letter dated at Cleveland on the 26th of Sept. arrived here when I was on a journey at the eastward. On my return the courts were in session, and I have been from home most of the time since or I should have apologized for not meeting you at Conneaut as you requested. I have wanted to see you exceedingly. I have no doubt of the importance of the locality of Toledo. It will be a place of business and land there will command finally a high price. But it has been held and sold too high for the present age of the town and the back settlements. My advice last winter was to put the Oliver addition into the market at a fair price, so as to attract business and capital. As there are several proprietors, I saw no way so safe for all

concerned, as to constitute a trustee. . . . My share is so small that I cannot do anything, for my own benefit nor for the benefit of others. As my plan seems not to have been acceptable, I think a decision had better be made. The present prospect is I must sell out to raise money to pay Mr. Clayton and the accommodation I got at the bank, when at Cincinnati a year since by hypothecating my stock. I am called on for that money wholly unexpectedly. Can my interest be sold at Cincinnati? Would not Judge Burnet buy it, or some of your other wealthy men? You would confer a great favour on me by selling it. Would not Mr. Williams and yourself buy it?<sup>60</sup>

The third letter is to Augustin Howell (?), in a vein of bitterness which is rare in Whittlesey, and, consequently, shows all the more clearly how seriously the difficulties of the times bore on him. "It will be impossible," he wrote, "to tell when our embarrassments will end. The administration of General Jackson has beggared tens of thousands."<sup>61</sup>

Yet Whittlesey's connections with Oliver and his interest in Toledo lands continued. In 1845, the Oliver Division in Toledo was resurveyed and replatted by the county surveyor for "Elisha Whittlesey, trustee for the owners." Incidentally, the same courthouse square was then reserved, and was soon to be taken up by the removal of the county seat back to Toledo the same year.<sup>62</sup>

Whittlesey's role in the development of the Maumee region was evidently greater than the historians of the region have been accustomed to point out. He and his Whig friends played a prominent role in this early speculative development, and, if the truth were known, probably had a great deal to do with making Toledo the county seat of Lucas County as well as with the initial stages of its development in other respects.

#### NOTES

1. For removal of the Indians see Royce, in *18th Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology* (1899), Pt. II, 644-964 and plates.
2. See articles in *Dictionary of American History*, "Ohio State Canals," and "Wabash and Erie Canal," by Alvin F. Harlow; also article "Canal Lands," by Harold E. Davis.
3. For the Michigan-Ohio boundary dispute see the article by E. H. Roseboom in the *Dictionary of American History*; Carl F. Wittke, "The Ohio-Michigan Boundary Dispute Re-Examined," *Ohio State Arch. & Hist. Quart.*, XLV

- (1936), 299-319; and Francis P. Weisenburger, *The Passing of the Frontier, 1825-1850* (Columbus, 1941), 297-307.
4. Charles Sumner Van Tassel, *Story of the Maumee Valley, Toledo, and the Sandusky Region* (Chicago, 1929), 1234; Harvey Scribner, *Memoirs of Lucas County and the City of Toledo* (Madison, 1910), I, 78.
  5. Charles Elihu Slocum, *History of the Maumee River Basin* (Indianapolis, Toledo, 1905), espec. 538-9; Van Tassel, *op. cit.*, 1234 ff.
  6. Van Tassel, *loc. cit.*; Clark Waggoner, *History of the City of Toledo* (New York and Toledo, 1888), 373-4, 694; Slocum, *op. cit.*, 538-9, 570-2.
  7. *Niles' Register*, December 28, 1833 (45: 290). For the biography of Whittlesey see Byron Sunderland, D. D., *Sermon Commemorative of . . . Elisha Whittlesey* (Washington, D.C., 1864), in Western Reserve Historical Society; *National Cyclopaedia of American Biography*, XIV, 523; J. Fletcher Brennan (ed.), *Biographical Cyclopaedia and Portrait Gallery . . . of the State of Ohio* (Cincinnati, 1879), 148; and sketch in *Biographical Directory of the American Congress, 1774-1927* (Washington, 1928).
  8. E. O. Randall and D. J. Ryan, *History of Ohio* (New York, 1912), III, 342, 345.
  9. Harold E. Davis, *Pennsylvania-Ohio Canal* (Hiram, Ohio, 1929); J. Sloane to Elisha Whittlesey, Ravenna, March 20, 1826; Id. to id. February 3, 1828; John McLean to E. Whittlesey, July 30, 1825 and accompanying papers from the War Department; EW to John Sargent, September 19, 1833; EW to Lester King, August 27, 1838; EW to J. B. Sutherland, December 7, 1835. The foregoing letters, and all hereinafter referred to will be understood to be from the Elisha Whittlesey Papers in the Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland. The author is deeply indebted to the Society and to the kindness of Dr. Elbert J. Benton for permission to use these papers as well as for other assistance. Elisha Whittlesey will be referred to in footnotes hereafter by the abbreviation EW.
  10. EW to C. C. Cambrelling, Washington, December 26, 1835.
  11. EW to Mathew B. Whittlesey, November 14, 1833.
  12. EW to O. H. Knapp, September 4, 1834.
  13. Alfred Kelley to EW, Columbus, August 2, 1834; E. Lane to EW, Coshocton, Ohio, September 26, 1834.
  14. EW to Daniel Kerr, September 10, 1834.
  15. EW to Joseph H. Larwell, September 10, 1834.
  16. EW to Elijah Hayward, Canfield, Ohio, March 26, 1835; EW to Levi Woodbury, September 2, 1834 and April 4, 1835; EW to Eben Lane, Canfield, March 26, 1835; EW to Daniel Kerr, Canfield, May 10, 1835.
  17. EW, "Memo" dated Norwalk, August 9, 1834, and EW to Joseph H. Larwell, September 10, 1834. Also J. H. Larson to EW, Bucyrus, December 3, 1835, April 30, 1835, April 9, 1835. Lane was judge of the Supreme Court of Ohio after 1830 and Chief Justice, 1835. See Brennan (ed.), *Biographical Cyclopaedia* (Ohio), for biography.
  18. Jacksonian, later Whig Congressman from Pennsylvania. See *Biographical Directory of the American Congress, 1774-1927*.
  19. EW to Eben Lane, Canfield, March 26, 1835.
  20. *Columbus Sentinel*, April 19, 1831. For biography of Williams see Charles Theodore Greves, *Centennial History of Cincinnati* (Cincinnati, 1904), I, 582.
  21. Whittlesey, too, had been considered for the post of president of the Ohio Life Insurance and Trust Company. The post of secretary had, in fact, been offered him by Alfred Kelley, strongly seconded by Simon Perkins. (Simon

Elisha Whittlesey

- Perkins to EW, New York, November 6, 1834.) He had declined, feeling that he could not accept and remain in Congress. (EW to Arthur Bronson, Washington, November 10, 1834, and Alfred Kelley to EW, New York, November 6, 1834.) He had, however, been made a trustee. (EW to Simon Perkins, November 14, 1836.)
22. Harold E. Davis, "Economic Basis of Ohio Politics, 1820-1840," *Ohio State Arch. & Hist. Quar.*, XLVII (1938), 288-318.
  23. M. T. Williams to EW, Cincinnati, April 15, 1835, and several letters of recommendation, same date.
  24. EW to Mrs. Whittlesey, April 14, 1835.
  25. EW to Daniel Kerr, Canfield, April 28, 1835.
  26. EW to M. T. Williams, Norwalk, June 12, 1835, and to Jessup Wakeman, Norwalk, June 12, 1835; J. H. Larwell to EW, Bucyrus, April 30, 1835.
  27. EW to Jessup Wakeman, Canfield, August 17, 1835.
  28. EW to Ethan A. Brown, Washington, December 2, 1835.
  29. EW to Mrs. Whittlesey, October 10, 1835.
  30. Id. to id., Lima, October 14, 1835.
  31. EW to Ethan A. Brown, Washington, December 2, 1835.
  32. Id. to id., December 3, 1835; to James Quinley, Washington, December 12, 1835; to Edward Wade, December 15, 1835; to Ethan A. Brown, December 19, 1835 (sending a favorable report from the surveyor general); J. H. Larwell to EW, April 9, 1836.
  33. EW to Eben Newton, December 14, 1835, December 18, 1835, December 20, 1835 and February 17, 1836; to Edward Wade, December 15, 1835, December 20, 1835, March 3, 1836.
  34. EW to Edw. Wade, Washington, Dec. 14, 1835.
  35. EW to E. Newton, Washington, December 18, 1835; E. Lane to EW, April 18, 1835.
  36. EW to Simon Perkins, November 14, 1836.
  37. EW to Rogers M. Sherman, November 15, 1836. One word is illegible.
  38. EW to Hon. Mr. Lawrence, Washington, March 5, 1836.
  39. EW to Hon. Wm. Woodbridge, Washington, January 18, 1836. This reference may be to the Michigan-Ohio boundary question and its settlement. See EW to Edw. Wade, March 3, 1837.
  40. Edw. Wade to EW, Toledo, June 2, 1836.
  41. Clark Waggoner, *op. cit.*, 326.
  42. Van Tassel, *op. cit.*, 1264-5; Harvey Scribner, *op. cit.*, I, 106. See, also, EW to Edw. Wade, Washington, December 15, 1835, where Whittlesey writes, in respect to removing the bars from the river near the village of Maumee, that although he may become interested in Toledo lands, his practice has always been "to live and let live."
  43. EW to E. Newton, June 27, 1836; EW to John M. Clayton, November 16, 1836 (Copy of extract from letter); and EW to Edw. Wade, March 3, 1837. No correspondence with Raymond appears in the Whittlesey Papers, but a Philander Raymond was interested in the Port Lawrence Company (Clark Waggoner, *op. cit.*, 373).
  44. EW to John M. Clayton, November 16, 1836; Edw. Wade to E. Newton, Jefferson, September 10, 1836; Edw. Wade to EW, December 24, 1836; EW to J. R. Giddings, May 25, 1837; EW to Horace Wilder, May 25, 1837.
  45. EW to J. R. Giddings, June 3, 1837; J. R. Giddings to EW, Jefferson, May 29, 1837.
  46. See footnote (3) above.

47. An address of M. V. Way (1868), quoted in H. S. Knapp, *History of the Maumee Valley* (Toledo, 1872), 244-247; Clark Waggoner, *op. cit.*, 306; M. T. Williams to EW, Xenia, February 8, 1839.
48. See Van Tassel, *op. cit.*, 1264-5; Harvey Scribner, *op. cit.*, I, 106.
49. Clark Waggoner, *op. cit.*, 383; receipt signed John M. Clayton, Dover, Del., December 10, 1836; John M. Clayton to EW, December 4, 1837.
50. M. T. Williams to EW, Xenia, February 8, 1839. The county seat was moved back to Toledo in 1845.
51. EW to Edw. Wade Esq., Canfield, May 25, 1837.
52. EW to J. R. Giddings, Canfield, May 25, 1837; and EW to Horace Wilder, Canfield, May 25, 1837.
53. EW to John M. Clayton, November 16, 1836; EW to William Oliver, Washington, December 6, 1836, quoting Oliver's letter "of recent date"; Edw. Wade to EW, December 24, 1836.
54. EW to William Oliver, Washington, December 23, 1836.
55. EW to Horace Wilder Esq., Canfield, June 3, 1837.
56. EW to Edw. Wade, July 25, 1837.
57. EW to Rufus Reed, Canfield, July 25, 1837; J. R. Giddings to EW, July 11, 1837.
58. Clark Waggoner, *op. cit.*, 326.
59. EW to Edw. Wade, November 28, 1839.
60. EW to William Oliver, Canfield, November 29, 1839.
61. EW to Augustin Howell (?), Canfield, November 28, 1839.
62. Clark Waggoner, *op. cit.*, 326.

## Navigation at the Foot of the Maumee Rapids, 1815-1845

MAURER MAURER

**H**ISTORIANS of the Maumee region have been concerned largely with the events attending the great military expeditions that ranged up and down the valley in the latter part of the eighteenth century and in the early years of the nineteenth century, but too little has been done in the direction of outlining the economic development of the district, one phase of which is concerned with the trade and commerce on the Maumee River.

The history of the navigation of the Maumee at the foot of the rapids goes back to the time when the region was a famous gathering place for the Indians plying the river in their light canoes or heavier dugouts, when the place was an important rendezvous for early traders and missionaries, and when the foot of the rapids was a strategic point for military operations. The French from Detroit, and later the English from Pennsylvania, pushed into the district to establish trading posts, bringing in supplies for the Indians in exchange for furs. The location was important because it was on the direct line of travel from east to west, by way of the lakes and the Maumee, across a short portage at Fort Wayne to the Wabash, and thence down to the Ohio and the Mississippi. At the same time the Indian trails of the northwest converged at the rapids, for only at this point was the river shallow enough to be forded.

The Indians and French had found the Maumee the natural route of transportation and communication into the interior of northwestern Ohio; the early settlers likewise turned to the lake and river for their main line of contact with the outside world. This was only natural in a region where the roads were almost impassable through the greater part of the year.

In the first decade of the nineteenth century, the Maumee country was occupied, especially in winter, by Indians. Traders shipped their goods to the foot of the rapids, hauled or packed

them to the head, and then carried them by boat to Fort Wayne, the distributing point for a large territory in the interior. The goods used in this trade consisted of red cloth, blankets, guns, hatchets, tobacco, whiskey, paint, hawk's bells, powder, lead, shot, beads, ribbons, rings, broaches, kettles, leather, blades, etc.<sup>1</sup> Light sailing craft, owned mostly in Detroit, carried on an extensive trade with the eight thousand Ottawa Indians along the river and bay, distributing goods in exchange for furs and other forest products.<sup>2</sup>

By 1810 this trade had grown to such dimensions that Major Amos Spafford was appointed collector of the Port of Miami, Erie District. The Major's report for the first three months, ending June 30, 1810, indicated that the exports from the district for this period were valued at \$5,640.85: \$5,610.85 in furs and skins; \$30, the value set on twenty gallons of bear's oil. During the War of 1812 the collector had to leave the region due to the pressure of the British and the Indians, but the report for 1814 indicated the following expenditures: salary, \$2.50; office rent, \$10; fuel and stationery, \$15.75. The absence of an affidavit to the report indicated the isolated nature of the port, as was explained by the Major: "There being no officer legally authorized to administer oaths nearer than sixty or seventy miles, I have not been able to attend to that part of the duty as the law requires."<sup>3</sup>

Shortly after the establishment of the custom house on the Maumee, regular communication was being maintained with the Lake Erie ports, and, after the War of 1812, there was a considerable immigration to the new country, many of the settlers coming by the way of the lake and the river from Cleveland and the ports below. Two towns, Maumee and Perrysburg, sprang up at the foot of the rapids, while others were located down the river, each ambitious and hopeful of becoming the future great city of the northwest. There was a great rivalry among the river towns but Maumee and Perrysburg, at the head of navigation, retained their dominant position until the early 1840's, when two factors lead to the rise of the great port of Toledo. By 1840 the lake vessels had become so large they

could no longer cross the "rock bar" that obstructed the river just below Perrysburg, and consequently the boats were putting in at Toledo; the construction of the Wabash and Erie and the Miami and Erie canals, with the terminal point at Swan Creek, made Toledo the point of transfer from canal boat to lake shipping, and greatly reduced the number of boats proceeding up the river to Maumee and Perrysburg.

In the fall of 1815, Captain Jacob Wilkison<sup>4</sup> sailed the *Blacksnake* up the Maumee to Fort Meigs, bringing several families to settle in the district. The Captain was no stranger to the region for in 1811 he had brought his family to the foot of the rapids, but, after seeing Hull's army cross the river on the way to Detroit, and hearing of the surrender of the American forces to the British, Wilkison followed the other settlers of the region in the flight before the expected attack by the British and their Indian allies.

The schooner *Blacksnake*, burden twenty tons, was a small craft to sail on the lake, but a number of passengers sailed with Wilkison from Cleveland in 1815, part being landed on the River Raisin, the remainder at Fort Meigs. On the return trip the *Blacksnake* carried about forty soldiers, as well as ordnance and military stores from Fort Meigs to Detroit, for it was at this time that the Maumee fort was abandoned and the garrison moved to Detroit. Peace having been restored on the Maumee, Jacob Wilkison again brought his family to the rapids, made a permanent home, and engaged in the business of building bridges and wharves until his death in 1834.<sup>5</sup>

The first steamboat communication with the Maumee country was established in the year 1818 by the *Walk-in-the-Water*, built by McIntyre and Stewart of Albany, New York, primarily for the run between Buffalo and the foot of the Maumee rapids. The builders had purchased a tract of land at Fort Meigs for the town of Orleans, at the point then considered to be the head of navigation on the river.<sup>6</sup> Job Fish, the captain of the *Walk-in-the-Water*, brought his craft up the Maumee and cast anchor at the mouth of Swan Creek. The agent at Perrysburg made soundings of the river but found that it was "not practicable to ascend



the river farther up" than the point where the craft lay at anchor. Since the ship could not reach Orleans, and since "there were no settlements of consequence below the Rapids, she never entered the river again."<sup>7</sup>

When Thomas W. Powell came to Perrysburg in 1820 he found that "the business of the place [was] far larger than that which would be indicated by the population of the place, and the amount of lake shipping that came up there to meet this commercial demand was quite considerable." At this time the produce of northwestern Ohio and northeastern Indiana was brought down the river on flat-boats and transferred to lake shipping at the foot of the rapids. The Indian trade was large, supplying furs, peltries, and maple sugar. The fisheries of the river constituted "a large item in the business of the place," while corn was exported to Detroit and other parts of the upper lakes.<sup>8</sup>

This trade continued through the 1820's, but the export of agricultural products did not become important until the latter 1830's and early 1840's. It is reported that a shipment of three hundred bushels of wheat was made from the valley to Buffalo in 1827, but it was not until 1838 that there was any noteworthy surplus of this crop for export.<sup>9</sup> The heavy timber, the swampy ground, and the ever present "ague," constituted the chief obstacles in the agricultural development of the region. But trapping and hunting were lucrative pursuits, the hides and peltries often being used as a medium of exchange in the absence of ready cash.<sup>10</sup>

The first large boat to enter the river from Buffalo was the *Enterprise* in the year 1823, bringing in settlers for Toledo, the Maumee Valley, Whiteford, Palmyra, Adrian, Tecumseh, Clinton, etc. In 1831 the steamboat *Gen. Gratiot* entered the river and made one or two trips during the season. In the fall of 1832 the *Gen. Brady* was completed and made a few trips; the following spring the *Andrew Jackson* made her appearance. The *Gratiot*, *Brady*, and *Jackson* made alternate trips between Toledo and Fort Gratiot, via Monroe and Detroit. The first regular line of communication between the Maumee and Buf-

falo was that provided by the *Pioneer*, chartered at Buffalo in the spring of 1833 by Seneca Allen and others, "to form a junction with the Buffalo boats at Sandusky city, and to keep up communication between that place and Toledo, then Vistula."<sup>11</sup>

The era of prosperity, with its attendant real estate speculation, that struck the west during the 1830's, brought a considerable influx of settlers to the Maumee region. Hundreds of people settled at Perrysburg, Maumee, Manhattan, or Toledo under the impression that a great city was destined to grow up in the Maumee Valley. It was during these years, the period from about 1833 or 1834 to 1837, that the commercial navigation of the Maumee River became well established, with regularly scheduled lines serving the river and connecting the region with the other ports of the lake. By 1837, eight steamboats were entering the river on regular trips, while numerous independent boats arrived almost daily. The commission and forwarding houses handled increasing quantities of merchandise and sent the products of the valley on their way to the eastern markets. Two forwarding and commission houses, Hollister & Smith and Bingham & Co., handled nearly all of the goods consigned to northern Indiana and a large portion of that destined for northwestern Ohio and southern Michigan. From Perrysburg, which at that time was as large as any port on Lake Erie with the exceptions of Buffalo and Cleveland, the merchandise was hauled by teams to the head of the rapids; keel boats, pirogues, and flat-boats carried the goods to Fort Wayne, the distributing point. The boats coming down the river brought furs, skins, and dried meats. By 1835 this commerce, together with the immigration to the region, "afforded a very lucrative business for nearly all the schooners and steamboats in the service."<sup>12</sup>

In the latter 1830's and early 1840's regular steamboat communication became established between the Maumee and the various ports of Lake Erie, including Buffalo, Cleveland, Sandusky, and Monroe, and had even extended beyond Detroit to ports on the upper lakes to include Chicago, Milwaukee, etc.

The first announcement of a steamboat plying exclusively between the towns on the Maumee is reported to have appeared

in the spring of 1838, when it was announced that the *Sun*, C. K. Bennett, Master, would make regular trips daily between Perrysburg, Maumee, Toledo, and Manhattan.<sup>13</sup> The following year the *Gen. Vance* began her trips between the various ports of the Maumee. Captain Spink took his craft from Perrysburg at 7:30 every morning, touched at Maumee and Oregon, arrived at Toledo before the train left on the Kalamazoo line for Adrian, and put in at Manhattan at 9:00. By noon the *Gen. Vance* was back in Perrysburg, leaving that place at 1:30, and from Toledo at 4 o'clock, "or after the arrival of the cars from Adrian." Besides the two regular trips made each day, the craft was offered for sailing parties "by giving a few hours notice to the Capt., or to the . . . agents," J. Hollister & Co., of Perrysburg. The Captain also was attending "promptly to all calls from Capts. of vessel who . . . [desired] to be towed either up or down the river."<sup>14</sup>

Captain Wm. H. Gallagher, with the steamboat *Andrew Jackson*, supplied service between Toledo and Monroe, leaving Toledo every morning at 8:00, and Monroe at 1:00 in the afternoon.<sup>15</sup> On alternate days, the steamboat *Commerce*, Captain V. P. Stevens, left Lower Sandusky (Fremont) at 7:00 in the morning for the Maumee ports, returning to the Sandusky the following day.<sup>16</sup>

The steamboat *Erie* connected the Maumee towns with Detroit, leaving Perrysburg on alternate days. In 1839 the *O. Newberry* was added to this line to supply a daily service, both ships touching at Toledo, Manhattan, Monroe, Brest, Malden, and Gibraltar.<sup>17</sup> The following year the *Erie* was running between Detroit and Cleveland, touching at Toledo on the way up and down, and, with the *Macomb*, was able to maintain a daily service between the Maumee and Detroit.<sup>18</sup> The *Erie* was reported to be one of the fastest boats coming into the river, and Captain Edwards, her master, was held as being "gentlemanly and accommodating to his passengers."<sup>19</sup>

The Western Transportation Company, which was to control much of the shipping on the lake, came into being when the proprietors of the Commercial, the Transportation, and the Telegraph lines of canalboats on the Erie Canal united their

interests "for the purpose of conducting a general FORWARDING AND COMMISSION BUSINESS on the Erie and Ohio canals, and on the Western Lakes." Six canal boats were started daily from Albany and Buffalo carrying freight and passengers; a daily line of steamboats maintained a schedule from Buffalo to Detroit, touching at Toledo and Perrysburg as well as other intermediate ports; a semi-weekly line of steamboats left for the upper lakes. The steamboats of the Western Transportation Company were the *Wisconsin*, *Constitution*, *Anthony Wayne*, *Commodore O. H. Perry*, *Columbus*, *Vermillion*, *Rhode Island*, and others. The *Rhode Island*, a ship of two hundred tons and the smallest in the fleet, put in at Lower Sandusky and Monroe to deliver and receive passengers and freight.<sup>20</sup>

Two of these boats operated by the Western Transportation Company are deserving of special interest in the study of the Maumee region, for they were built at Perrysburg and were commanded by men who played vital roles in the history of transportation on the Maumee River. The *Commodore Perry*, a steamboat of 350 tons burden, had been constructed in the Perrysburg yards in 1835, and was under the command of Captain David Wilkison. When the *Blacksnake* sailed up the Maumee in 1815, David Wilkison, a fifteen year old nephew of Jacob Wilkison, was a hand aboard the schooner. Two years later the *Blacksnake* was under the command of David Wilkison, making several trips to the Maumee, bringing in settlers, goods, etc., and carrying fish on the return run down the lake. In 1819 he was given command of the *Pilot* on the run between Buffalo and the Maumee, bringing in passengers, merchandise, salt, and lumber. By this time the valley had started to produce a small surplus of corn so that the vessel was loaded with corn, furs, and fish for its return trip. By 1828, when Captain David Wilkison moved his family to Perrysburg, he had successively commanded the *Blacksnake*, *Pilot*, *Mary Jane*, *President*, *Superior*, *Guerriere*, and *Eagle*.

The *Eagle* had been built at Port Lawrence (Toledo) in 1827 at the cost of \$3,000, and the captain did a profitable business with the boat, "as was the case with all lake vessels at that period." He left the *Eagle* in 1835 to take command of the *Com-*

*modore Perry*, making the run from Buffalo to Perrysburg. Ten years later he became captain of the *Superior*, remaining on the same run until the close of navigation in the year 1852.

David Wilkison, Master of the Western Transportation Company's *Commodore Perry*, spent thirty-seven years on the lake, during which time he never lost a vessel or steamer, nor did he meet with any serious accident. His success as a captain "was owing to his superior judgment, his coolness under the most trying circumstances, and his perfect knowledge of the lake." But even in 1838, when the company announced that the *Perry* would be under Captain Wilkison, his reputation was such that "as a Commander . . . [he needed] no eulogy."<sup>21</sup>

Second only to Wilkison in the reputation he enjoyed as a captain on the Maumee and Lake Erie, was Amos Pratt, Master of the *Anthony Wayne*. The *Wayne*, 350 tons burden, like the *Perry*, had been built in the Perrysburg yards, and had entered into the service between Buffalo and the Maumee. The Western Transportation Company advertised the ship as "new and well built, with twenty state rooms, and a gentlemen's cabin with fifty-two berths; also a ladies' steerage cabin with twenty-four berths . . . [making] her accommodations equal to any boat on the lake." The *Commodore Perry* and the *Anthony Wayne* ran alternately, always leaving Perrysburg and Toledo "on the arrival of the cars from Adrian." These two craft, together with the four other steamboats in the service, formed a six day line between the Maumee and Buffalo.<sup>22</sup>

The boat connection with Buffalo made rapid travel possible between the Maumee and the east. In 1839 passengers went from Toledo to New York in three days and fifteen hours, as follows:<sup>23</sup>

Toledo to Buffalo (steamboat)	39 hours
Buffalo to Rochester (stage and railroad)	9 hours
Rochester to Auburn (stage)	8 hours
Auburn to Albany (railroad)	12 hours
Albany to New York (steamboat)	10 hours
Delays between Buffalo and New York	9 hours
	—
Total	87 hours

Besides the line of steamboats, a number of sailing craft supplied connections with eastern ports. One in particular, the schooner *Caroline*, built at Perrysburg in 1835, occupied a prominent place in the history of the transportation on the Maumee. In 1838 this craft was making regular trips between Perrysburg and Cleveland, stopping en route at Maumee, Toledo, and Manhattan. At various times runs were advertised for boats to the ports of the upper lakes. In 1837 the steamboats *Detroit*, *Constellation*, *Bunker Hill*, and others were making connections with the ports on Lake Michigan.<sup>24</sup>

Most of the boats running between Detroit and Cleveland or Buffalo put in the Maumee for the ports of Toledo or Perrysburg; some of the lines to Detroit or the lower lake ports, had Perrysburg as a terminal point. The light craft of the early years could readily pass the fifteen miles up the Maumee to the foot of the rapids. In later years, however, the heavier vessels and steamers could not go beyond the "rock bar" that obstructed the channel about two miles below the Perrysburg landing. This "rock bar" was a blue limestone ridge across the channel, over which the water at common stage was about six and one-half feet deep. Since vessels drawing more than six feet of water could not safely proceed to Perrysburg and Maumee, much of the river trade from the lake was diverted to points farther down.<sup>25</sup>

While the heavier steamboats encountered difficulties at the "rock bar," even light sailing craft found navigation of the river above Toledo "extremely difficult and uncertain because of the narrow crooked channel." Even with a favorable wind the many windings and "want of room to 'beat' . . . [made] it difficult to pass some of the bends without considerable delay." Navigation by sailing craft to the foot of the rapids often required the aid of steam-towing above Toledo.<sup>26</sup> Several small towns sprang up along the lower valley, but Toledo eventually became the leader and succeeded in capturing the trade that had once gone to the foot of the rapids. Had navigation of the river been improved to the lower rapids, Toledo might never have been founded, or, having been founded, might never have been able to surpass Maumee and Perrysburg.<sup>27</sup>

The heavy lake steamboats, with few exceptions, were stopping at Toledo. In 1836, exclusive of the small steamboats plying daily between Toledo and Detroit, 610 craft entered the port at Toledo: 330 steamboats; 271 schooners.<sup>28</sup> During one thirty-two hour period in the middle of May, 1837, "NINE STEAMBOATS mostly of a very large class, one small one, three schooners and one sloop" entered the port.<sup>29</sup> On June 13, eight schooners and four steamboats arrived at the same place in twelve hours;<sup>30</sup> one week in the middle of August, twenty steamboats and three schooners arrived,<sup>31</sup> while the following week showed the arrival of twenty-five steamboats and two schooners.<sup>32</sup> The arrivals at Toledo from October 3 to October 10, 1837, totaled seventy-eight steamboats and schooners.<sup>33</sup> The total number of craft entering the port of Toledo in 1837 was 959; 756 steamboats and 203 schooners. Of the 756 steamboats, 207 were direct from Buffalo, 401 from Buffalo via Detroit, and 85 direct from Cleveland.<sup>34</sup> During the summer of 1838, the port averaged ten to twelve arrivals and departures daily.<sup>35</sup>

Newspaper advertising of the boat lines occupied considerable space, but other business cards also indicated the importance of the business in the Maumee region. Palmer, Bush and Co., forwarding and commission merchants, advertised for "1,000 cords good dry steam boat wood," in September, 1837, raising the amount to 5,000 cords in their card the following January.<sup>36</sup> The same establishment also offered a "fine lot of deck lumber for ship building,"<sup>37</sup> and announced the arrival of three hundred bushels dried apples, etc., etc., "on consignment, and this day landed from the schooner *Antelope*, J. L. Edmonds, Master."<sup>38</sup>

Ship building was an important and flourishing business in the Maumee Valley as far up as the foot of the rapids. Up to 1846 almost 7,000 tons of shipping had been constructed at Maumee, Perrysburg, Toledo, and other points on the lower river. These ships ranged in size from the twenty-five ton schooner, the *Miami*, built at Perrysburg in 1810, to the steamboats *St. Louis* and *Superior* built in 1844 and 1845.<sup>39</sup>

The *Superior*, a "floating palace" making her maiden voyage

to Buffalo in September 1845, went "forth as a specimen of the Art, Mechanism and handicraft of Perrysburg." Her dimensions were as follows: Length of keel, 184 feet; length of deck, 196 feet; breadth of beam, 27 feet and 8 inches; extreme breadth, 48 feet; depth of hold, 12 feet and 4 inches; burden, 646 tons. The editor of the *Blade* described her in the columns of his paper:

#### Upper Cabins

She has two gentlemen's cabins, one 60 and the other 70 feet in length—the two containing 30 large State-Rooms.

Two Ladies' cabins 33 feet each in length—the upper containing 6 State Room; the lower 10 State Rooms, together with 18 berths.

#### Steerage Cabins

She has four Steerage cabins; two of them expressly fitted up for females, being well finished and furnished with matrasses, &c.

#### Accommodations

The Superior can accommodate in the most comfortable and superior style 200 cabin, and 500 steerage passengers. . . .

Her upper cabins are finished in the finest style—no pains has been spared in her finishing, either in the wood-work or in the painting; and to add still more to the magnificence of the cabins they are enlivened on either side with large Portraits of eminent men, Landscapes, and Historical pieces, in oil—24 in number. . . .

With Captain Wilkinson as her commander and his noble crew to manage her, there is no danger but that she will meet with abundant success on the route she is going to take—between Buffalo and Chicago.<sup>40</sup>

Although lake boats could not pass up the Maumee beyond the foot of the rapids, navigation of the upper river was vitally connected with that of the lower river and lake. It has already been noted that merchandise was unloaded from the lake craft at the foot of the rapids, hauled to the head, and reloaded on river craft for Defiance and Fort Wayne for distribution. The products of the upper region were sent on their way to the eastern markets by a reversal of this procedure. Thus, in the early period, as during the canal and railroad eras, many of the shipments from the lower river originated far to the interior.



Travelers on the upper river were put to a great deal of inconvenience and hardship by the passage through the rapids. The river section from Defiance down to Grand Rapids was suitable for the navigation of larger boats, but the river down from Grand Rapids was broken by the Grand, Fowler, Bear, Wolf, Otsego, Roche de Boeuf, Presque Isle, and Maumee (Lower) Rapids. Travelers "were often obliged to wade in the river and aid in lifting and pushing the boat over the shallow places," while at other points, where the current was more sluggish, they had to "help pole the craft" up the river. At times they would become so discouraged as to abandon the boat, wade ashore, and proceed on foot.<sup>41</sup>

Before the construction of the canal parallel with the river from Defiance to Toledo, "scows, pirogues and canoes, laden with valuable stores, braved its [the Maumee's] currents from Fort Wayne to Perrysburg."<sup>42</sup> The larger pirogues, often called dug-outs, were made from two logs hollowed, matched, and pinned together, some being sixty or seventy feet in length. Because of their heavy construction they could withstand the rocks and rapids better than the bark canoes. The larger pirogues, manned by three or four men, could carry forty packs of furs, each of one hundred pounds, or (later) 175 bushels of wheat or corn.<sup>43</sup> At low stages of water and during the winter, "the carrying of stores, passengers and merchandise gave employment to a vast army of teamsters, horses and wagons." A team and loaded wagon required eight to nine days to make the round trip from Fort Wayne to Perrysburg, a situation that caused shippers to seek other methods of shipping, methods that would be more rapid and less expensive.<sup>44</sup>

In 1836 the steamboat *Anthony Wayne* was launched in the deep water above the rapids to make regular trips to the mouth of the Auglaise, and, at times of high water, even as far as Fort Wayne.<sup>45</sup> In June of the following year an announcement was made that the steamboat "would leave the head of the Rapids every day at one p.m. for the Flat Rock [just below the mouth of the Auglaise] where there would be coaches and teams to convey passengers and freight to Defiance."<sup>46</sup> At this time a

barge, fitted for passengers and freight, left Defiance every Friday for Fort Wayne, running through in three days.<sup>47</sup>

In the summer of 1837 a little steamboat, the *Phenomenon*, that had originally been built at Rochester, New York, as a canal boat, was brought to the foot of the rapids, where the captain astonished the natives "by the bold declaration that he was going up the Maumee." The boat passed Fort Meigs, Buttonwood Island, and the Presque Isle Rapids, and announced her presence at the lock in Nearing's dam with shrill blasts from her whistle. After a great deal of trouble and with the "assistance of ropes and tackle blocks and much pulling and puffing," the craft was maneuvered into the mill pond above the dam, where she was employed on the 4th of July giving free rides to the people who had assembled to behold the wonder.

When the captain started the boat up the river, "she met trouble again at Ruch-te-boo [Roche de Beouf] Rapids." Part of her cargo was carried ashore and hauled around to Otsego. The craft was hauled by men and horses with block and tackle so that she successfully ascended the remaining rapids and safely emerged in the deep water of the upper river. For a while the *Phenomenon* plied between the head of the rapids and Flat Rock, but after a time she was taken down the river to run between Perrysburg and the other ports of the Maumee under the name *Sun*. Another attempt was made later to get a boat, the *Crockett*, above the rapids, but the venture was abandoned at Nearing's dam.<sup>48</sup>

The foot of the Maumee rapids was a focal point for east and west and for north and south traffic, a natural trading point in the days when transportation was dependent upon river and lake shipping. The Wabash and Erie Canal, opened in 1843, and the Miami and Erie Canal, opened in 1845, became the main arteries of transportation from the lower Maumee to the south and the southwest. On the upper river the number of boats using man power declined as the canal came into use. However, for many years grain and timber continued to go down river at stages of high water.<sup>49</sup>

The effect of the junction of the canals with the lake was to

make Toledo the commercial center of northwestern Ohio. The Kalamozoo Railroad was constructed to Adrian in 1836, and by mid-century railroads radiated in every direction from Toledo. With these developments the older towns at the foot of the rapids lost much of their prestige and importance and gradually sank into the background, a trend shown in the removal of the custom house from Maumee City in 1846. By the mid-1840's navigation below the foot of the Maumee rapids had entered a new era, an era in which the history of navigation on the river is largely the story of the development of Toledo into a great commercial and industrial city.

## NOTES

1. [C. W. Evers and M. A. Leeson], *Commemorative Historical and Biographical Record of Wood County, Ohio*. . . . (Chicago, 1897), 31. Hereafter, this work will be cited as *Wood Co. Hist.*
2. [May Evers-Ross], *The Pioneer Scrap-Book of Wood County and the Maumee Valley* (Bowling Green, Ohio, 1910), 29. Hereafter, this work will be cited as Evers, *Pioneer Scrap-Book*. See also Clark Waggonner, *Scrap-Books* (in the Toledo Public Library), III, 12g, for an address before the Maumee Valley Pioneer Association at Antwerp, Ohio, August 17, 1893, for a list of goods sold to Indians and for the number of furs, etc., received as credit by a pioneer merchant of Paulding county in the early 1830's.
3. Charles Elihu Slocum, *History of the Maumee Basin from the Earliest Account of its Organization into Counties* (Defiance, Ohio, 1905), 582-3. Hereafter this work will be cited as Slocum, *Maumee Basin*. Evers, *Pioneer Scrap-Book*, 29.
4. This name is frequently found as Wilkinson.
5. *Wood Co. Hist.*, 358, 454-5, 1230-1.
6. Nevin O. Winter, *A History of Northwest Ohio*. . . . (New York, 1917), I, 245-6.
7. *Toledo (Ohio) Blade*, May 16, 1837; Winter, *A History of Northwest Ohio*, I, 245-6; Merchants and Manufacturers Exchange, *Toledo as a Commercial and Manufacturing City* (Toledo, Ohio, 1880), 3-4.
8. "Reminiscences of Hon. Thomas W. Powell," in H. S. Knapp, *History of the Maumee Valley* (Toledo, Ohio, 1872), 294-5.
9. Clark Waggonner told the Sandusky County Pioneers, at their meeting at Fremont on September 16, 1879, that the first cargo of wheat shipped from the Maumee River was from Maumee City in 1841. He gave as his authority Dennison B. Smith, a member of Hazard and Smith, the firm making the shipment. Waggonner also stated that up to 1841 the demand for wheat had been equal only to the home consumption. See Waggonner, *Scrap-Book II*, 96.
10. *Toledo Times*, November 6, 1927; Francis P. Weisenburger, *The Passing of the Frontier, 1825-1850* (Vol. III of *The History of the State of Ohio*, Carl Wittke, ed., Columbus, Ohio, 1941), 67-8.
11. *Toledo Blade*, May 16, 1837.

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12. Evers, *Pioneer Scrap-Book*, 124.
13. Winter, *A History of Northwest Ohio*, I, 247.
14. *Perrysburg Ohio Whig*, May 4, 1839.
15. *Toledo Blade*, June 13, 1839.
16. *Ibid.*, January 10, 1838.
17. *Perrysburg Ohio Whig*, March 23, 1839.
18. *Toledo Blade*, March 25, August 7, 1840.
19. *Ibid.*, October 31, 1838.
20. *Perrysburg Ohio Whig*, November 10, 1838.
21. *Wood Co. Hist.* 454-5; Knapp, *History of the Maumee Valley*, 436; Evers, *Pioneer Scrap-Book*, 135; Winter, *A History of Northwest Ohio*, I, 244; William Hodge, *Papers Concerning Early Navigation on the Great Lakes* (Buffalo 1883), *passim*.
22. *Perrysburg Ohio Whig*, November 10, 1838.
23. *Toledo Blade*, July 17, 1839.
24. *Ibid.*, June 27, July 11, August 15, 1837.
25. *Wood Co. Hist.*, 52; Henry Howe, *Historical Collections of Ohio* (Cincinnati, 1908), II, 140.
26. [Clark Waggoner], "Toledo History," *Toledo Blade*, February 25, 1882, citing the report of Samuel Forrer to the Legislative Committee on the Miami and Erie Canal; also see *supra*, 8, for Capt. Spink's offer of prompt towing service.
27. Howe, *Historical Collections of Ohio*, II, 140.
28. [Clark Waggoner], "Toledo History," *Toledo Blade*, February 11, 1882.
29. *Toledo Blade*, May 23, 1837.
30. *Ibid.*, June 20, 1837.
31. *Ibid.*, August 22, 1837.
32. *Ibid.*, August 29, 1837.
33. *Ibid.*, October 10, 1837.
34. [Clark Waggoner], "Toledo History," *Toledo Blade*, February 11, 1882.
35. *Toledo Blade*, September 5, 1838.
36. *Ibid.*, September 19, 1837; January 3, 1838.
37. *Ibid.*, November 29, 1837.
38. *Ibid.*, January 17, 1838.
39. *Perrysburg (Ohio) Miami of Lake Erie*, April 18, 1846. The editor compiled and published a list of craft built on the Maumee to this date. However, this should be compared with a similar list prepared by Captain David Wilkison and given by Clark Waggoner (ed.), *History of the City of Toledo and Lucas County, Ohio* (New York, 1888), 438-9.
40. *Toledo Blade*, September 6, 1845.
41. Charles Sumner Van Tassel, *Story of the Maumee Valley, Toledo and the Sandusky Region* (Chicago, 1929), I, 781, 790.
42. Evers, *Pioneer Scrap-Book*, 202.
43. Slocum, *Maumee Basin*, 446.
44. Evers, *Pioneer Scrap-Book*, 202.
45. *Wood Co. Hist.*, 274.
46. Winter, *A History of Northwest Ohio*, I, 247.
47. Waggoner, "Scrap-Book," I, 91.
48. Evers, *Pioneer Scrap-Book*, 202-5. Slocum, *Maumee Basin*, 481, says the *Anthony Wayne* was taken from the upper river in 1837 to be used on the lower river under the name *Dave Crockett*.
49. Slocum, *Maumee Basin*, 446, 478.