

COLUMBUS AND THE RAILROADS OF CENTRAL OHIO
BEFORE THE CIVIL WAR

DISSERTATION

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PREFACE

What began as a routine dissertation has ended by becoming something a great deal more -- a labor of enthusiasm. There are several names for people who fall in love with railroads and railroad history -- one of them is "railfan," another is "ferroequinologist." I doubt if by this time I can escape from wearing one of those labels, although I trust I have succeeded in avoiding the all-too-easy descent to the Avernus of "ferroequinolatry."

One consequence of such enthusiasm is that a student tends to ask almost as many questions as he answers. That has certainly been the case in the present study in which a number of topics that invite further research have been pointed out, in the selfish hope that other seekers after the truth may be recruited.

In order to present a well-rounded view of early railroading in Ohio an effort has been made to include as many aspects of the subject as possible. Inevitable space and time limitations have consequently forbidden a repetition of the same aspects for all the four major roads. Generally speaking, the story of each individual road has tried to stress different elements of the whole picture, with a minimum of overlapping. As a result no one railroad is described completely and there is very little comparative data.

A student who ventures to write about a cause dear to fans, antiquarians, hobbyists, collectors, aficionados, and people of that

sort works under both a curse and a blessing. He can hardly mention a detail without stirring up passionate feelings in the breast of some devoted amateur of the subject who will lose no time in telling the student just how wrong he is. Happy, in one way, is the writer who works in a field where the fan and the hobbyist don't play.

This handicap is offset, however, by the equally enthusiastic help and encouragement from every right-minded practitioner of the same cult. In the present case I have been overwhelmed with kindness from so many people, fanciers of the early iron horse and others, that to name them all would be impossible. As an example, I have received large quantities of helpful printed matter about railroads past and present from people all over the country, most of them strangers to me.

Some persons whose time and attention I have not been backward in claiming deserve particular thanks: James H. Rodabaugh, editor, and Henry J. Caren, associate editor, of the Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Quarterly, who have been more than generous with their help; the library staff of the Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society (my "home away from home"); the staffs of the Columbus Public Library (I am especially indebted to Miss Jean Lewis), of the Ohio State University Library and of the Ohio State Library, all in Columbus; the staffs of the Newberry Library and the Crerar Library in Chicago, of the Baker Library of the Harvard Business School in Boston, of the New York Public Library, and of that gold-mine of railroad material, the library of the Bureau of Railway Economics in Washington, where Miss Elizabeth Cullen presides.

To the officials of the New York Central, the Baltimore and Ohio and especially the Pennsylvania Railroad I am most grateful for their kindness in giving me untrammelled access to the records of their onetime subsidiaries. Miss Elva Ferguson, librarian for the Pennsylvania, was particularly helpful.

I am indebted to the editors of the railroad labor publications and the numerous Ohio newspapers who printed my letter asking for source material; to the officials of the local historical societies and the librarians in the libraries scattered over the state who went to considerable trouble in answering my inquiries on the same subject. In particular I thank Watt P. Marchman, director of research of the Hayes Memorial Library and Museum, and Russell H. Anderson, director of the Western Reserve Historical, for their generous and informative letters, and Charles E. Fisher, president of the Railway and Locomotive Historical Society, Inc., for his help and encouragement.

Professor Francis P. Weisenburger of the Ohio State University and Professor William T. Utter of Denison University read several chapters of this study in its early form and made enlightening comments, for which I am grateful. Most of all I am grateful to Professor Eugene H. Roseboom of the Ohio State University, my adviser, for his advice and help, and especially for his patience with my endless questions.

W.R.M.

Columbus, Ohio,
May, 1953

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INTRODUCTION

A little more than one hundred years ago Columbus was a quiet provincial capital of broad regularly laid out streets, wide brick sidewalks sheltered in many places by store arcades, and giant sycamores. A covered wooden bridge spanned the Scioto, carrying the National Road on its east-and-west way across the state. Brick was the material used in most of the principal buildings among which state institutions took first place: the penitentiary, the schools for the blind and the deaf and dumb, an asylum for lunatics and the new state capitol, of limestone, under construction on a ten-acre square in the heart of the city. Travellers found the place clean and pretty, with a southern flavor.

The people were probably more interested in politics than in business. Often they were upbraided in the press of nearby places for choosing the fare to be found in the political trough in preference to bread earned by the sweat of their industry and commerce. As the capital of a fast-growing state, Columbus most of the time (but, as will be shown, not always) grew along with it while unearned increment was probably producing more fortunes than any other single cause.

The city was in the center of Ohio and easy to reach, by the standards of the day. In addition to the National Road there was the branch or "feeder" waterway connecting Columbus to the Ohio and Erie

Canal, and a network of roads and turnpikes on which stage coach lines operated with great regularity. Less isolated by far than many of its sister communities, the capital entertained numerous distinguished visitors, foreign and domestic, and was fairly receptive to outside influences. The frequent reform movements of the times met with some response although the degree of fervor is hard to estimate. In one period of ten months Columbus sympathizers with Cuban, Hungarian and Irish "revolutionists" each held a public meeting for their cause.

It was reasonable that the new attractive idea of railroads should be well received there. It was equally in keeping with the city's relative deficiency in business enterprise that the inhabitants failed to follow with any literalness the editorial writers' frequent injunctions to "put their shoulders to the wheel" on behalf of the new mode of transportation. In short, the people seem to have started many rail ventures and to have completed almost none of them. They cannot be charged, however, with not supporting the main transportation arteries of earlier years, for the National Road and the canal were built by the federal and state governments respectively. In local roads the city seems to have done well enough.¹

The most numerous and far-reaching changes in transportation up to then ever witnessed in Ohio took place in the period covered by this study, roughly from 1830 to 1861. The canal system was launched

¹The varied facts in the foregoing mosaic of Columbus need hardly be pinpointed by specific references. The sources are encompassed in the Bibliography.

in 1825, reached its apogee not long thereafter, and by 1856 was showing the first of the deficits which led to its end. The National Road entered Columbus, the mid-point in the state, during 1833; its use was declining rapidly by the end of the Civil War. The great stage coach lines were born, flourished and died during the same period. The first turnpike company had begun somewhat earlier but by 1853 an act was needed to deal with abandoned 'pikes. The first plank road was built in Ohio in 1847 and the 1849-50 legislature chartered 111 plankroad companies, but within a few years they had dropped out of the picture.

The principal cause for these great changes was of course the railroad. In 1830 the first rail company was incorporated in Ohio, in 1837 the first train ran by steam, and by the time Fort Sumter was fired on the iron horse was master of land transportation and well on his way to putting waterways, both canals and rivers, into what seemed for many years like a permanent eclipse.

How this swift development produced the first rail lines to enter the capital of Ohio, what part Columbus played in their coming, and what effect they had on the city is the story which succeeding chapters will seek to make clear.

The number of railroads which entered Columbus before the Civil War is placed at four, despite the fact that trains from two more lines, the Steubenville and Indiana and the Springfield and Columbus, also ran into the city. The tracks of the former, however, came no

nearer the capital than Newark and those of the latter went only as far as London, from which points their trains operated over "foreign" rails. Eventually each would own the line which gave it access to the city (in one case the railroad would acquire an undivided half interest), but since such ownership did not come about until after the period covered by this work, the two roads are not considered to be in the same class with the four companies which had actually constructed their own tracks into Columbus by 1861.

CHAPTER ONE

THE LAY OF THE LAND

It is an odd fact that the capitals of the five states which were carved out of the largest part of the Northwest Territory seem to have been located almost without regard to the problem of how to get to them. Since Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Wisconsin all front on both a great lake and a great river, and Michigan's shore line faces three of the Great Lakes, one might think that the founding fathers would have made their new capitals easy of access by giving them waterfront sites instead of putting them well inland.

What they did, however, was to choose in each case a location in the geographical center of things. In Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois the approximate center of the state was chosen; in Michigan and Wisconsin it was the approximate center of the southern, more built-up area. Such locations apparently met the requirements of practical politics and evidenced a certain perfunctory impartiality as between the various furiously competing sections of the state, but in no case did they provide the capital with a body of water suitable for more than limited navigation. The result was that man-made transportation facilities were needed from the start.

In the case of Columbus, such facilities could be provided without the necessity of overcoming serious topographical barriers. The city

lies on the edge of the great central plain, which affords level approaches from all directions, and at the confluence of the Scioto and Olentangy Rivers, which could be bridged without difficulty. In Indian times the place was a point of some significance. Both rivers were navigable by canoe and they met near some particularly fertile corn fields where several of the main overland traces or trails came together. Such trails ran along ridges dividing the watersheds and not less than five of them touched what is now the capital of Ohio.¹

The white man had not long been there before he wanted better transportation than he could get by river and trail. As in turn he built the first rough roads through the forest around Columbus, then dug the feeder or branch which linked the city with the Ohio and Erie Canal, later constructed the National or Cumberland Road and finally laid down railroad tracks, he was impeded hardly at all by physical factors. To provide transportation facilities to Columbus, in a word, called for surmounting no important topographical obstacles such as the rivers and valleys of Cincinnati and Pittsburgh or the harbor and islands of New York and San Francisco. Instead, there were factors of economic geography which will be considered as occasion demands.

Need for Transportation

The dominant economic interest in any new country is the land and what it can be used for. Everybody expects to buy it cheap and make

¹Archer Butler Hulbert, "The Indian Thoroughfares of Ohio," Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Quarterly, VIII, (1900), 264-295.

a big profit either by selling it to later arrivals at a higher figure, thanks to the labor put into clearing it plus an unearned increment, by exploiting the timber and minerals, or by raising miraculously rich crops on the virgin soil. The sine qua non of this picture is transportation--to bring in the prospective settlers and to carry the products to market. In the case of Columbus, and all of Ohio, the problem was how to reach the east and south, for there the settlers and the markets were to be found, along with those things the frontiersman could not make and had to buy.

The first routes to the east ran from the banks of the Ohio River, or one of its numerous tributaries, up over the Allegheny Mountains and on to the seaboard, using waterways as much as possible. Carrying costs were very high. The opening of the National Road in 1818 from Baltimore as far as Wheeling made travel easier and cut costs but it did not add a new direction to the flow of traffic. Seven years later, however, the completion of the Erie Canal, which joined the Hudson River and Lake Erie and turned the latter into a great highway for water-borne traffic, created a new and relatively inexpensive route to the east. The northern part of Ohio quickly benefited.

Connections between Ohio and the south were almost entirely by river. In consequence, until the steamboat had reached a fairly high degree of reliability, the downstream traffic of Ohio's bulky exports far outweighed the difficult upstream traffic from the cotton and sugar country. The state found itself selling in markets where it was hard to buy.

All routes from the east and south terminated, it will be noticed, at the periphery of Ohio. To penetrate the interior the pioneers first used the rivers which, although extensive, were inadequate to reach enough of the great wooded spaces. Roads had to be built, of which the first important one was Zane's Trace opened in 1798. It ran from Bridgeport, opposite Wheeling on the Ohio river, diagonally across the southeast corner of the state via Zanesville, Lancaster, and Chillicothe to Aberdeen, also on the Ohio, opposite Limestone (now Maysville), Kentucky. The Trace served a triple purpose: it opened for settlement a large area of the state; it furnished an overland route to a point on the Ohio many miles downstream from Wheeling and hence a route free from the hazards and delays that so often beset transportation on the upper river; and, for a big section of Ohio, it furnished a means of access to a highly important waterway.

In the first years of statehood, the rivers, the Trace and the National Road provided the only transportation routes available to Ohioans until so many settlers had swarmed into the state and so many acres had been put under cultivation that the pressure for markets in which to dispose of the ever-swelling crops became irresistible. New York State's example in undertaking the Erie Canal spurred on other states -- Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois among them -- to engage in canal enterprises of various sorts. In 1825 Ohio started to build two canals, in the easterly and westerly parts of the state, to run north and south and link river and lake. Their primary aim, however

was less to connect those waterways than to reach them so that goods from the interior could move to the all-important markets farther away.

The same year, 1825, saw the beginning of another great transportation project, the extension of the National Road from the Ohio river at Wheeling almost due west across the middle of the state to the Indiana line. Like Zane's Trace, it opened up interior areas and gave access to the river; but, what was more important, it furnished a hard-surfaced road over the mountains from tidewater to the heart of Ohio. A third great event in the realm of transportation, the opening of the Erie Canal, also took place in the same year, with results so far-reaching and so well known that it seems unnecessary to dilate upon them here.

It is probably safe to say that at that time no state in the Union had a transportation system, actual and under construction, superior to Ohio's. Served by all the latest developments in the mechanical arts, at least in this country, the people of the state were proud of their progressiveness and confident of the future. And yet one voice, at least, was raised to carp at the splendid program and to wish for more. Colonel James Kilbourne, founder of Worthington in 1803, erstwhile member of the Congress, and long a leading citizen of central Ohio, wrote a letter to The Ohio State Journal and Columbus Gazette which appeared on December 29, two days before the end of the eventful year, 1825. The superiority of railroads, none of which then existed

in the United States, over the canals, the pride and joy of every loyal Buckeye, was the subject of the letter. A generation was to pass before his views were vindicated.

The Place of Columbus

In this great development of transportation Columbus had her fair share of the benefits. Her history began with one of the first important penetrations of the interior of the state, the northward movement of pioneers up the fertile valley of the Scioto from its confluence with the Ohio. By 1797, a settlement had been made at Franklinton, across the river from the high land on which Columbus was to rise. The first through road in the state, Zane's Trace, was opened the next year, passing more than thirty miles to the southeast.

The inhabitants of Franklinton, whose only links with civilization were the shallow and uncertain Scioto and what must have been a very crude route through the forest to Chilllicothe, resolved to connect themselves with the Trace at the point where it came nearest to them, that is, Lancaster. Accordingly, we find that on September 8, 1803, one of the first acts of the first court of the newly established county, in the first year of Ohio's existence as a new state, was to order a survey for a road from Franklinton to Lancaster.² Particular significance attaches to this proposed road because it was the first

²William T. Martin, History of Franklin County, Columbus, 1858, pp. 22-23.

of at least three links -- by road, canal, and rail -- which the people of Columbus (including the inhabitants of Franklinton in 1803 under that term) secured in order to join themselves to the principal cross-state transportation route of the time.

The resumption of work by the Federal government in 1825 on the National Road, in order to extend it from the banks of the Ohio westward across the middle of the state, placed what was by that time Columbus, the capital, squarely on an east-west thoroughfare that everyone could see was to be of great importance. The relation of Columbus to the two great north-south canals, however, which were also started the same year was quite different.

If one were to build a single north-south canal through the state, linking the lake and the river and providing maximum access to markets for the crops of the interior, the route would almost certainly pass through Columbus. But so intense became the demand for canal transportation that the state authorized two man-made waterways, one in the western and one in the eastern and southern part of Ohio. To the latter the city was connected by a so-called feeder line, which ran eleven and one-half miles to Lockbourne where it joined the main line of the canal. This was the second time the city had to reach out to join itself to a vital through route. Construction of the feeder was started about two years after work had begun on the main lines, and with the use of convict labor from the Penitentiary at Columbus progress was so slow that not until the fall of 1831 was the task finished.

Meanwhile, the value of some sort of transportation facility running due north from Columbus to Lake Erie with its splendid harbor at Sandusky was not overlooked by the people of the capital. Since by act of the legislature it was not to be a canal, local investors launched in 1826 the Columbus and Sandusky Turnpike Company which built "the first joint stock company road constructed, any part of which was in Franklin County."³ This project is of interest for a number of reasons: many of the leading lights of the community were associated with it, including a considerable number later active in railroad affairs; Congress granted nearly 27,000 acres of land in aid of the undertaking; violence and disorder checkered its unhappy career which ended when the legislature in 1843 repealed the act of incorporation. To us at this moment, however, most interest attaches to the route to be followed, which was substantially that of the northern part of the north-south canal originally dreamed of to bisect the state.

The importance of a connection between Columbus and a port on the lake has been always, one can say quite literally, in the minds of the people of the city. The advertisement of the first sale of land in Columbus, when the city was originally laid out in 1812, refers both to "easy navigation to the Ohio River" and to Sandusky Bay, the "only harbor" of value on Ohio's lake shore, 100 miles due north of Columbus. A mighty trade route, connecting lake and river and passing through the

³Ibid., p. 30.

new city was ~~freseen~~.⁴ The underlying realities do not appear to have changed greatly, for a 1953 railroad map shows five lines running between Columbus and ports on the lake.

1834

The Columbus-Sandusky turnpike was finished in 1834, a convenient date for surveying the transportation field in central Ohio. Columbus then possessed the following advantages: it was astride the National Road which was by that time pushing westward toward Springfield; it was the southern terminus of a new turnpike from a fine port on the Lake; it was connected to the great Ohio Canal, which ran between Cleveland and Portsmouth and was open for its entire length; it was the focus of a network of local turnpikes and roads. The city, moreover, was in a strategic position for getting the trade of that part of the state which lay between the two canals. This was because the Ohio canal, after coming north from Portsmouth to Columbus (in reality, Lockbourne) turned east, leaving Columbus jutting out, as it were, into territory not served by the great waterways.

The city would seem to have been as well provided with transportation facilities as any inland state capital not on a great river or lake could have desired. But at this very period in its history, when its citizens had every reason to congratulate themselves on their good fortunes, agitation was mounting for the railroads which were to reduce the canals to brackish desuetude and empty the National Road of its tolls-paying throngs.

⁴Ibid., p. 277.

CHAPTER TWO

FALSE DAWN: 1830-1835

A great outpouring of railroad charters in Ohio in the early 1830's made it appear that the state was fast on its way to securing an extensive network of rail routes. The appearance was deceiving, however, since the panic of 1837 and other causes halted virtually all railroad activity so that only four or five charters blossomed eventually into actual roads.

To understand the coming of the rails, we must shift our sights for a moment from Columbus and central Ohio and glance at the national scene. It was the time of the "reign" of Andrew Jackson, the "rise of the common man," (one of the first such rises, that is); of great expansion to the west, the building of costly internal improvements like canals and turnpikes; of wildcat banking, inflated land values, unsound currency. Land was expected to yield a harvest of unearned increment as well as crops, and efforts to provide means of transportation grew into a mania. It was, in brief, the era of one of the greatest booms in our history, a period ideally receptive to a new idea as promising as that of railroads, just then coming into use.

When and where the first railroad was built in this country is a matter of terminology, and is perhaps of more interest to antiquarians than to historians. One opinion leads to Boston in 1795; another to

Quincy in 1826; a third to Baltimore and to South Carolina in 1830, the year when the first common carrier railroads were operated, by horse power in the former place and by locomotive in the latter.¹ More significantly, in the five years that followed the successful opening of the Stockton and Darlington Railway in England in 1825, this country saw the development of a great and widespread interest in railroads far surpassing the rather desultory attention they had previously received.

Perhaps the first reference to railroads in Columbus and central Ohio is found in the pretty little story which Joseph Sullivant told of his father, Lucas Sullivant, the founder of Franklinton. In 1823, the year of his death, the elder Sullivant remarked to his young son, according to the latter's recollection, "I would not be surprised to see steam wagons running across these bottoms."² Still earlier was the notion of an anonymous letter writer from Xenia who suggested in 1817 the building of a road from Columbus to the lake for the operation of steam-propelled wagons running on a track of grooved logs instead of the iron rails used in Britain.³

More down to earth were the letters which Col. James Kilbourne, also a pioneer, wrote to the Ohio State Journal and Columbus Gazette

¹Association of American Railroads, Quiz on Railroads and Railroading, Washington, 1940, Questions No. 337 to 344.

²Joseph A. Sullivant, A Genealogy and Family Memorial, Columbus, 1874, pp. 135-136.

³Letter to Gov. Thomas Worthington, Oct. 22, 1817, Ohio Governors' Papers No. 313, (Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society, Columbus.)

in December, 1825, and January and February, 1826.⁴ He strongly advocated railroads, pointed out their superiority to canals (Ohio had just then started her very extensive program of canal building), and suggested possible routes, similar to those which the railroads later actually followed. At least one paper, the neighboring Delaware Patron, reprinted Kilbourne's letters. In 1827 it reprinted from the Baltimore American an account of a railroad projected from Baltimore to the Ohio River, as well as other railroad news, most of which also appeared in the Ohio State Journal. The people of central Ohio, it seems clear, were not in the dark as to railroad progress.

The First Charter

Interest in rail matters came to a head in 1830, in Ohio as in the nation at large, with the granting by the legislature of the state's first railroad charter on February 23.⁵ The "Act to Incorporate the Ohio Canal and Steubenville ~~Rail~~-way Company" authorized the construction of a "single or double rail-way or road" from Steubenville, on the Ohio River, to the Ohio Canal. Lack of space prevents an examination of the many interesting provisions of this charter. It should be noted, however, that it was drafted by W. B. Hubbard, at that time a resident of Steubenville, who later moved to Columbus, became a wealthy lawyer, a prominent Mason, and an officer

⁴ Ohio State Journal and Columbus Gazette, Dec. 29, 1825, Jan. 12, 1826, Feb. 23, 1826.

⁵ Ohio Local Laws, XXVIII, 184.

or director in three important railroads. His career has many significant points of similarity to that of Alfred Kelley, one of the great figures in Ohio's railroad history.

The first railroad was almost but not quite a flash in the pan, for it is heard of only once more, 1836. Thereafter the record is silent; but before we leave this anything but hardy pioneer, concerning which there is much that could be said, we must note that its career set a pattern for many of the still-born railroads which followed it: it obtained a charter, it obtained an amendment to the charter which did it no good, there was at least one gross error of drafting in the enactments -- and that is the last that history has to relate of it.

The beginning thus made in railroad legislation had no sequel in the next session, although consideration, but not approval, was given to a project for a railroad to connect the Mad River and Lake Erie, no doubt the embryo of the line created the following year between the same points. It was the session of 1831-32 which saw the smouldering fires of interest in the new mode of transportation finally break into flame with the chartering of twelve corporations. Railroad promoters had perhaps concluded that Jackson's veto of the Maysville Road Bill meant they would henceforth have to rely on private enterprise under state charter. But before this chronicle of the infancy of the iron horse in central Ohio is carried further, let us seek a better understanding of certain problems which faced the organizers of the early roads by examining in detail some charters enacted by the legislature.

From the various elements in a charter, four are arbitrarily selected as being of sufficient importance to warrant close study, namely: (1) the route; (2) the means of transportation; (3) the organizers, and (4) the sale of stock. These, together with a few curious or unusual provisions at which we will glance, will point up what are perhaps the dominant notes in those early days of railroading -- the trial and error nature of most of the undertakings, and the veritable mania that possessed almost every community to get on a railroad. One would probably be safe in saying that the atom bomb today is a subject of no greater interest and ignorance than railroads in the 1830's and '40's.

The Route

The questions, From where? and To where? are probably the first to be asked about a railroad. It is significant, therefore, that of the nineteen charters issued in the first five years, eighteen of them had at least one terminus and fourteen had both termini on a canal, lake, or navigable waterway. There was considerable justification for claiming that the railroads would add to rather than subtract from the traffic on the canals.

The terminal points of a railroad were not always clearly established by charter, and for good reasons. Topographical factors might delay decision as to route until a survey had been made; and, surveys, being expensive, were usually not ordered until the company had

organized. What was called a "reconnaissance," or hasty viewing of the terrain, often made on horseback, generally sufficed. Still more important was the necessity of running a railroad through the communities which gave the greatest financial support, something at times not determined until quite late in the day. Railroad organizers often persuaded the legislature to give them latitude in a choice of routes, a good example being the West Liberty Central Railroad, chartered March 18, 1850, with the right to build from any point in any one of four counties to "any practicable point" on either one of two other projected railroads.⁶

Sometimes it was a matter of proposing to meet another road of which the route was also undetermined, as happened several times in respect to the Baltimore and Ohio. The interminable negotiations, not to say jockeyings, as to the western terminus of that all-important route and the corresponding eastern terminus of an Ohio road to connect with it will be considered later. For an example of what one Ohio corporation put in its charter there is the concern chartered March 12, 1845,⁷ and variously called the Franklin and Ohio River Railroad Company and the Franklin and Washington Railroad Company, with a route from Columbus "to such point on the Ohio River as shall be opposite the actual terminus on said river of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad when

⁶Ibid., XLVIII, 243.

⁷Ibid., XLIII, 419.

finally determined." No one then foresaw that the B. and O. would have two termini on the river. Another road which also aimed at a connection with the B. and O., and was, in fact, the first to achieve it, namely, the important Central Ohio, set forth a route from Columbus by way of Newark and Zanesville to such point on the Ohio River as the directors might select.⁸

The Means of Transportation

The next question might well be, What means of transportation? Nowadays a locomotive is almost synonymous with a railroad; in the earliest days that was far from true. Witness the uncertainty in the case of the Lake Erie and Muskingum Road and Canal Company, chartered March 3, 1834.⁹ The enactment provided that transportation was "to be effected by canal, slack water navigation, railroad, track road, McAdamized road or turnpike" as seemed most appropriate. The charter granted the next year to the Ohio, Wayne, Richland and Crawford Canal or Rail-road Company specified either canal or rail-road, at the company's option.¹⁰ The Columbus, Delaware, Marion and Upper Sandusky Railroad Company, chartered 1836, was given the right to transport "by the power and force of steam, or animals, or of any mechanical or other power, or by any combination of them," a choice similar to that given a number of other early companies.¹¹

⁸Ibid., XLV, 178.

⁹Ibid., XXXII, 398.

¹⁰Ibid., XXXIII, 264.

¹¹Ibid., XXXIV, 175.

A like example of uncertainty and doubt is seen in the Urbana and Columbus Railroad authorized in 1836 to construct a railroad and also a canal, if it saw fit.¹² Twelve years later the incorporators of the Delaware and Kenton Railroad and Slackwater Company were given the choice of constructing a railroad or a slackwater route.¹³ And even as late as 1851, twenty-one years after it had approved the first railroad charter in Ohio, the legislature granted one of the last it was to issue before the new constitution went into effect to a little concern called the Paulding Rail or Plank Road Company.¹⁴

The Organizers

The third chief element, the organizers, cannot be clearly understood without reference to the two ways then in vogue of forming corporations. Charters following what we may call the commissioner method prescribed that a, b, c, etc., were appointed commissioners with the duty of causing subscription books for the capital stock to be opened at certain times and places, of receiving the subscriptions, and, when sufficient stock has been subscribed for, of convening the stockholders and conducting the election to choose the first board of directors. One gains the impression that the commissioners acted almost as agents of the state, or were supposed so to act, in over-

¹²Ibid., XXXIV, 504.

¹³Ibid., XLVI, 154.

¹⁴Ibid., XLIX, 442.

seeing the birth of a new corporation. What is puzzling is that sometimes the commissioners appear never to have performed any of the duties imposed on them by the charter, leading one to wonder if their role was perhaps like that of prominent citizens today whose names appear on philanthropic committees but who take no part in the committees' affairs.

A minor point in reference to commissioners was that in some cases the subscribers had to be called together by them before the corporation legally came into being, whereas in other cases as soon as the requisite number of shares had been subscribed, the subscribers were "declared and created a body corporate and politic by the name and style of..." without any further action on the part of the commissioners.

The second way of forming corporations, which we may call the corporator method, was for the legislature, by charter, to name a, b, c, etc., as "corporators" who, "together with such other persons as may hereafter become associated with them...be and are hereby created a body corporate by the name of" In other words, the legislature created a corporation composed of certain named persons, and authorized them to open subscription books and otherwise to proceed with the necessary formalities, without reference to the services of commissioners.

Why there were two methods and what legal importance attached to the differences between them are questions to which no ready answer

could be found. The author of the leading work on Ohio corporations, Elwyn G. Davies,¹⁵ does not furnish an answer, and inquiries of several members of the Ohio bar were equally unproductive.

The relation of this recondite and seemingly minor point to the early Ohio railroads in this: we must know if the commissioners named in the charters were largely figureheads, perhaps selected for reasons of politics or prestige, who had little if any real stake in the enterprises to which their names were attached, or, on the other hand, if they were the true promoters of the corporations, who invested their own money and held control. To take an example in the person of William Neil of Columbus, the great "Stage Coach King," who was designated either commissioner or coperator of nine different railroads which touched the capital city, did his role in the several corporations differ in accordance with the title by which he was designated? Was he financially interested in some and merely lending his name to others? The answer to these questions, which are really one, will be spread over many pages of this work.

There is considerable evidence, some of it conflicting, on the role of corporation commissioners as revealed in these early railroad charters; but space does not permit further consideration. Additional light will be shed, however, as detailed analysis is made of the charters of the thirty railroads which named persons from Franklin County

¹⁵A Treatise on the Law of Corporations, 2 vols., Cincinnati, 1942.

or which made Columbus a point on their route, from 1830 through 1860.

Selling Stock

Equally varied were the provisions as to the fourth principal element, that of selling stock in the railroads. The commonest plan provided for an issue of capital stock of \$50 par value, 10% of it the down payment, the balance payable in installments. A \$5 down payment seemed to some concerns too high, so they made it 5% of \$50 par in the case of the Columbus, Delaware, Marion, and Sandusky,¹⁶ or 5% of \$25 par, as in the Lake Erie and Muskingum,¹⁷ or even \$1 flat, with \$50 par, in the case of the Waterford, Cadiz, and Philipsburgh Railroad Company.¹⁸ The main inducement to a small down payment was the fact that a road could not start in business until a certain amount of its capital had been subscribed, a subscription consisting of the down payment and a promissory note for the balance. Even with these lenient provisions the amount called for by the charter as a preliminary to getting launched proved to be too high in some cases, and the legislature had to lower the requirements before a shovelful of earth could be turned. The Central Ohio, with a capital of \$1,500,000 (which could be raised to \$2,500,000 if necessary) was permitted to organize when \$10,000 had been subscribed.

¹⁶Ohio Local Laws, XXX, 147.

¹⁷Ibid., XXXII, 398.

¹⁸Ibid., XXXII, 168.

Considerable self-confidence was shown by the organizers of the Cleveland, Columbus, and Cincinnati, first chartered March 14, 1836,¹⁹ when they established the practically unique par of \$100 with a down payment of \$5; but it took a reviving act and fourteen years' time before the road commenced operations.

In most cases stock subscription books were opened only in counties traversed by the railroad, but occasionally authority was given to open books in other counties; and at least two roads were allowed to solicit funds any place in Ohio and even in Pennsylvania and elsewhere. The amount of capital stock was generally determined by the charter although in rare instances the legislature agreed to "any amount necessary."

The charter provisions relating to municipal (i.e., county, city, township, and town) subscriptions to railroad stock despite many variations had certain points common to most of them. Municipal subscriptions were limited either to a specific sum or to a certain percent (e.g., one or two percent) of the taxable property. However, one of the railroads in which the celebrated Neil family of Columbus was interested, the Great Eastern and Western (incorporated March 24, 1851),²⁰ obtained from the legislature a charter authorizing any municipality through or into which the road passed to subscribe any amount of capital stock approved by the voters. The requirement for a referendum vote on public aid to railroads seems to have been without

¹⁹Ibid., XXXIV, 533.

²⁰Ibid., XLIX, 447.

exception. By way of "sweetening" the proposal for the voters, some charters required that money derived from such municipal support be spent within the municipality.

Municipal subscriptions were a highly controversial matter until forbidden by the constitution of 1851. The extreme latitude sanctioned by the legislature no doubt had much to do with the change. For instance, the charter of the Dayton and Michigan Railroad, approved March 5, 1851,²¹ permitted its sponsors, the Cincinnati, Hamilton, and Dayton Railroad, to guarantee the obligations issued by any city, town, or county in aid of the Dayton and Michigan. Still more unusual was a law enacted March 22, 1850,²² which directed that in Champaign County aid for the railroads be raised by a separate railroad tax on the tax duplicate, and that roads in which the county subscribed for stock were to pay interest on the subscriptions until the time when regular dividends were inaugurated. Such interest was to be in the form of the railroad's capital stock, and the county was to give this stock to the taxpayers, in units of \$50, in amounts equal to the railroad taxes which they had paid. A somewhat similar arrangement was decreed in the case of the Columbus, Piqua, and Indiana Railroad.²³

Let us now return to our chronicle of the earliest railroads and Columbus's appearance on the scene. The time was ripe for its appearance, for the city was growing up. In 1829 the first

²¹Ibid., XLIX, 440.

²²Ibid., XLVIII, 287.

²³Ibid., XLVII, 155.

Hocking Valley coal had been brought there, by John L. Gill who became an important foundryman and manufacturer.²⁴ Not long afterward steam replaced horse power in the Columbus Foundry of Joseph Ridgway, who with his nephew, Joseph, Jr., figures frequently in this study.²⁵ About this time also the city went into debt to build a wharf and approaches to serve the "feeder canal." The manufacturing of coaches and wagons was a budding industry. These were the years, indeed, in which the country as a whole was enjoying good times, and Columbus along with the rest, until the panic year of '37 toppled prosperity. It is not surprising that the legislative correspondent of the Liberty Hall and Cincinnati Gazette wrote in the issue of January 18, 1832, that "the general prosperity of the state is evidenced by the vast amount of local business before the Legislature."

Just Before the Crest of the Boom

Twelve days after the opening of the session of 1831-32 the House found it necessary to establish a Standing Committee on Railroads to handle the many petitions being received. One petition was for an amendment to the charter of the very controversial Columbus and Sandusky Turnpike Company. This concern had been organized in 1826²⁶ by a

²⁴ Alfred E. Lee, History of the City of Columbus, New York & Chicago, 1892, I, 273.

²⁵ Lyder L. Unstad, "A Survey of the Industrial and Economic Development in Central Ohio with Special Reference to Columbus, 1797-1872," unpublished doctoral dissertation, The Ohio State University, Columbus, 1937, pp. 141-144.

²⁶ Ohio Local Laws, XXIV, 86.

group of prominent men of Columbus (among them William Neil) who, although they were not to complete their turnpike until 1834, were already seeking permission to construct "a double or single Rail Road along said turnpike" for its entire length. The legislature rejected the request and subsequently approved instead a charter, backed by a different group of business men, for a different railroad between the same two places. On the surface it looks as if the "turnpike company crowd" had been worsted by the new "railroad company crowd," but such a conclusion is questionable since the charter of the newer company provided that it should not take effect until approved by the stockholders of the turnpike company.

December 29 the first railroad charter of the session, and the second in the history of the state, was made into law when the Richmond, Eaton, and Miami Railroad Company saw the light of day for the first and probably last time.²⁷ The next charter, however, was of real importance and marks the beginning of de facto rather than de jure railroads, if one may so put it.

A charter for what was called in a newspaper the Lake Erie and Mad River Railroad Company²⁸ had been considered by the 1830-31 legislature but not passed. At that session no railroad enactments were adopted, despite the pioneering of the lawmakers the previous year. Now the time was ripe for the newest in transportation. On January 5,

²⁷ Ibid., XXX, 11.

²⁸ Ohio State Journal, Dec. 14, 1831.

1832, approval was given to a charter for the Mad River and Lake Erie Railroad Company, the first Ohio charter which was to result in the actual construction of a railroad in Ohio.²⁹ (The first railroad in the state was built under a Michigan charter, as will be told later.) When finally adopted, the act omitted the proposal for a branch to Columbus which appeared in the draft originally presented.

The route of the Mad River road, as it was generally called, was from Dayton, northern terminus of the Miami Canal, via or near certain designated points to Sandusky on Lake Erie (known as Sandusky City until 1844). It thus emphasized what was said earlier as to going north and south, the direction of the main flow of commerce in the state until the 1850's, and as to linking a canal and another body of navigable water.

This railroad was one of Sandusky's efforts to right what the inhabitants considered the wrong done them in 1825 when the legislature authorized canals running through the eastern and western parts of Ohio and abandoned the idea of a canal leading from their city to the central part of the state. That same year the Sanduskians had set afoot a movement to connect their splendid harbor with the western canal at Dayton by a "rail road," a still completely experimental, if not visionary, means of transportation. There was no railroad in the modern sense, in this country, and in England the first one was just beginning -- but the people of the little lake port were both daring

²⁹Ohio Local Laws, XXX, 15.

and determined. Led by Eleutheros Cooke, father of Jay Cooke the Civil War financier, the agitation was maintained on and off for seven years until the Mad River charter was approved.³⁰

The nearest to Columbus that the Mad River route came was the stretch between Springfield and Urbana, although the company was empowered to build also to certain nearby county seats, including London, only about twenty-five miles from the capital. Franklin, nevertheless, was one of the twelve counties in which commissioners were appointed to open books for stock subscriptions; and the annual meetings were to be held in Columbus unless the directors decided otherwise, which they soon did. Lincoln Goodale, Samuel Parsons, and Joseph Ridgway, all prominent wealthy business men, were the three commissioners named from the county. (Hamilton, also off the route, was assigned four.) There is no evidence that these three men lifted a finger to help the project or that any Columbus capital was invested in it.

Of the ten other railroad charters passed by this session of the legislature, in addition to the two already referred to, only two are of particular importance to this story. As if they were companion charters, the Mad River project and one properly known as the Columbus, Delaware, Marion, and Sandusky Railroad Company,³¹ but usually referred to as the Columbus and Sandusky, were frequently joined in the same

³⁰J.H. Kennedy, "The American Railroad: Its Inception, Evolution and Results," Magazine of Western History, VIII (1888), 123.

³¹Ohio Local Laws, XXX, 147.

newspaper item³² and with good reason, since the former linked Sandusky with Dayton on the Miami Canal and the latter linked it with Columbus on the Ohio Canal. It is difficult to determine if they should be considered as rival or complementary undertakings.

On the one hand, two of the three Franklin County commissioners for the Mad River were also commissioners for the Columbus and Sandusky, namely, Goodale and Ridgway. Associated with them in the latter company were three more commissioners from Franklin County. Its charter permitted building a branch from Marion to join the Mad River Railroad at or near Upper Sandusky, and gave the state the right to purchase the road, on certain conditions, after the lapse of twenty years. Curiously enough, on the same day that this charter was passed the lawmakers approved an act to amend the charter of the Mad River Company so as to extend from twenty to forty years the time limit after which the state might purchase that road. And in the same amending act there appeared as one of certain additional commissioners designated therein the name of John Carey of Crawford County who was also a commissioner for the Columbus and Sandusky. The down payment required for subscribing to a share of the stock of this latter road was \$2.50, compared with the usual \$5, a fact that may have had some competitive significance.

³²Ohio State Gazette and Delaware County Journal (Delaware), Dec., 1831, Jan. 1832, passim.

On the other hand, the evidence that the two roads were competitors abounds in the extended report of the speech which Col. James Kilbourne, the founder of Worthington, gave on February 22, at a celebration of the 100th anniversary of the birth of Washington. (The Mad River commissioners met on the same day to organize.) After showing the advantages that lay with the Columbus and Sandusky route over its rival -- shorter overall distance from the lake to river, easier construction, lower cost -- the speaker said that the Columbus and Sandusky Turnpike Company would, as authorized by charter, "appropriate" all their lands and stock to aid the railroad. He made the curious suggestion that one way to raise capital would be to give jobs on the road to friends of the investors.³³

Neither an ancillary road nor a competing road but a red herring was the true nature of the Columbus and Sandusky, in the opinion of the editor of the Ohio Register and Anti-Masonic Review, of Columbus. He believed there was no real intention of building it at all, that it had been proposed as a way of dividing the interest of Columbus between it and another project, the Milan and Columbus Railroad, in order to leave the way unopposed for the Mad River scheme.³⁴

The Ohio State Gazette denied this interpretation, pointing out that a railroad from Sandusky to Columbus connecting with the Canal from Columbus to Portsmouth would furnish a "Central Thoroughfare"

³³ Ibid., Mar. 1, 1832.

³⁴ Ibid., Mar. 15, 1832.

the length of the state. It went on to add: "Contrary to expectations, the people of Columbus have manifested a coldness and indifference relative to any and all of these railroad projects which has [sic] occasioned general surprise."³⁵ This criticism of the capital city is significant because it appears, sometimes with rebuttals, a number of times during the course of this story.

A similar criticism appeared the next month in the Ohio State Journal in a letter signed "W" which urged support for the Columbus and Sandusky road, declared that the commissioners of the Mad River were active in the promotion of their road and chided the citizens of Columbus and the backers of the Columbus and Sandusky for their inaction.³⁶ The chiding was deserved even though in 1844-45 the concern reappeared briefly before it vanished for good.

The case of the Milan and Columbus Railroad Company, the last of the roads to be considered of those incorporated at this legislative session, is rather different. Milan was an ambitious little town in Erie County, twelve miles east of Sandusky, which aimed at becoming a lake port by means of a three-mile canal and probably thought it could compete with Sandusky. The charter for the Milan and Columbus Railroad, authorized on February 11,³⁷ four days after one had been approved for the Milan and Newark Railroad Company,³⁸ called for a route from the

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Ohio State Journal, Mar. 24, 1832.

³⁷Ohio Local Laws, XXX, 280.

³⁸Ibid., XXX, 135.

head of the prospective Milan Canal, which had not yet been financed, let alone constructed, to Columbus. It went by way of Norwalk, Peru, Newhaven, and Mt. Gilead, towns whose main claims to rail fame might well be that although they were named in many a railroad charter, the commercial importance which they sought always eluded them. The three commissioners designated from Franklin County were not as prominent as those heretofore mentioned and were named in no other railroad charter.

Nevertheless the promoters of this venture were at least able to hold an organization meeting (if the Columbus and Sandusky Railroad group held one, they kept the fact well concealed), at which one of the Franklin County men was named chairman and a very enterprising, as well as naive, resolution was passed on the subject of opening stock subscription books. A committee was appointed consisting of some of the commissioners and, in addition, Robert Lucas, about to be the Democratic candidate for Governor, Allen Trimble, a former governor, and other leading Ohioans, (it is doubtful if any of them had the slightest interest in this jejune project), with instructions to open subscription books in New York, Philadelphia, Albany, Utica, Rochester, Buffalo, and Cincinnati. These cities are listed here to emphasize the part played in the thinking of the pioneer railroad promoters by "Eastern capital," one of the two principal "mystiques" of early Ohio railroading, as well as to underline the rather touchingly amateur character of the enterprises.³⁹

³⁹Columbus Sentinel, May 17, 1832.

The railroad enthusiasm which was so marked in the early part of 1832 began to cool off as the months rolled by. The newspapers tell of no more meetings of railroad organizers and there follows an almost complete absence of any kind of railroad news. Instead appear many items about cholera, advertisements of "The Cholera Gazette -- a periodical work," and above all a vast amount of attention to the presidential election that fall. Only one news item referring to transportation need interest us, one forming part of a curious little episode, the significance of which has not yet been made clear.

"Steam Carriages"

The Ohio Register and Anti-Masonic Review of August 18, 1832, referred to a report "printed during the last session of Congress" on the use of steam carriages on "common roads." "Mr. Stewart has written to England for information. He would like to get one for use on the Cumberland Road. It is understood that the stage proprietors will pay half the cost." The only thing unusual about this visionary scheme was that it did not die a-borning. Quite the contrary, for we find the idea taken up by William Neil, one of the principal capitalists in Columbus and head of the far-flung Neil, Moore, and Company's stage coach lines. On December 22 the Ohio Senate received "a memorial" from Neil asking permission to run a line of steam carriages on the National Road, and on January 5 a bill was reported to authorize him so to do. Another newspaper, commenting on this "magnificent project,"

said it understood that Neil would go to England at once to get the latest information on the subject if permission were granted.⁴⁰

The final mention of this particular transportation fantasy appeared on March 21 when the Delaware paper reprinted from the National Intelligencer a reference to an article in the English Foreign Quarterly Review entitled "Failure of Steam Carriages." Similar schemes, however, kept appearing during the next few years.⁴¹

This incident, in itself so trifling, may shed light on (1) the prevailing ignorance as to the limitations of steam transportation; (2) the attitude of a stage coach magnate toward a radically new form of transportation; and (3) the sort of man Neil himself was, since he came in later years to have a finger in so many railroad pies, most of them unsuccessful. Because the possibility always remains, however, that the whole steam carriage episode may have been nothing more than a press agent's puff for Neil, no more need be said about it.

The issuing of twelve charters in the 1831-32 session appeared to have exhausted the desires of the legislature, for in 1832-33 none was granted. Promoters may have been fearful of the consequences of Jackson's re-election and his veto of the Bank Bill. The next session, however, saw a mild revival of the spirit of enterprise with the approval of six railroad charters, including the Hockhocking Valley Railroad

⁴⁰Ohio State Gazette, Jan. 3, 17, 1833.

⁴¹American Railroad Journal and Advocate of Internal Improvements, Dec. 31, 1836.

Company, first of the many rail projects touching that region of mineral wealth.

The year 1834, in fact, may well mark the beginning in Ohio of the last soaring phase of the boom which was to reach its peak in the panic of '37. Governor Lucas's message to the lawmakers urged state support for internal improvements, including a railroad from Sandusky to Dayton, by way of the Mad River, and railroads from Columbus to Sandusky and from Pittsburgh to the Ohio Canal.⁴² The legislators responded by adopting a resolution asking the U. S. Congress to grant a quantity of land to aid the Mad River and Lake Erie Railroad Company, on the grounds that Ohio was unable to do so. They also chartered the Ohio Life Insurance and Trust Company, with \$2,000,000 capital, which was to become "one of the largest institutions of its kind in the country."⁴³ Many acts to lay out and establish state roads and a number of new bank charters were approved by the legislature. Ohio differed in this respect from New England, where railroad stocks were much depressed at the time.⁴⁴

The year 1834 likewise marked the resumption of the forward movement of Columbus which briefly seemed to have slowed down. Once again

⁴²Ernest Ludlow Bogart, Internal Improvements and State Debt in Ohio, New York, 1924, p. 49.

⁴³Francis P. Weisenburger, The Passing of the Frontier, 1825-1850, Carl Wittke, ed., History of the State of Ohio, Columbus, III (1941), 309.

⁴⁴Alvin F. Harlow, Steelways of New England, New York, 1946, p. 144.

the city was humming with enterprises: the Clinton Bank of Columbus was started by William Neil and associates; the borough of Columbus was given a charter as a city divided into three wards; a very considerable labor supply was made available when the Penitentiary started the contract labor system, thereby laying the foundations for several Columbus fortunes; the great turnpike to Sandusky was opened, as already related, and the Ohio and Erie Canal for its entire length and the National Road from Columbus to the east were by then in full operation.

The momentum of this activity did not at once reflect itself in charters for railroads to serve the capital city since most of the seven charters which were authorized in 1834-35 were in the Western Reserve and none related to Columbus. This gentle revival of interest in the iron horse became almost over-night, however, a great flood of charters in the 1835-36 session when they totalled 32, the largest number ever granted by an Ohio legislature in one year.

APPROXIMATE CHRONOLOGY
IN PARTIAL
CONSTRUCTION

CHARTERED

1832, Jan. 5 - Mad River & Lake Erie
 1833, April 22 - Erie & Kalamazoo (by Territory
 of Michigan)
 1834, March 3 - Cleveland & Newburgh
 1835, Feb. 23 - Painesville & Fairport
 1835, March 9 - Monroeville & Sandusky City
 1836, March 11 - Little Miami
 1844, March 12 - Columbus & Xenia
 1845, March 11 - Cleveland & Pittsburgh
 (revived & amended) 5
 1845, March 12 - Cleveland, Columbus & Cin-
 cinnati (revived & amended) 6
 1845, March 12 - Columbus & Lake Erie
 1846, March 2 - Cincinnati, Hamilton & Dayton
 1848, Feb. 18 - Cleveland, Painesville &
 Ashtabula

1835 - Mad River &
 1835 - Erie & Kala
 1835-6(?) Monroevi
 City
 1836 (?) Painesvi
 1836-7(?) - Clevel
 1838 - Little Mian
 1847 - Columbus &
 1847 - Columbus &
 1847 (?) Cleveland
 1848 - Cleveland,
 cinnati
 1850 - Cincinnati,
 ten
 1850 - Cleveland,
 Ashtabula

NOTE 5 - Charter of March 14, 1836 lapsed.

NOTE 6 - Charter of March 14, 1836 lapsed.

(See "Comments" on pages 36 - 37)
 (= next 2 pages)

APPROXIMATE CHRONOLOGY OF THE EARLIEST RAILROADS IN OHIO

IN PARTIAL OR TOTAL OPERATION BEFORE 1852

CONSTRUCTION STARTED

1835 - Mad River & Lake Erie
 1835 - Erie & Kalamazoo
 1835-6(?) Monroeville & Sandusky
 City
 1836 (?) Painesville & Fairport
 1836-7(?) - Cleveland & Newburgh
 1838 - Little Miami

 1847 - Columbus & Lake Erie

 1847 - Columbus & Xenia

 1847 (?) Cleveland & Pittsburgh

 1848 - Cleveland, Columbus & Cin-
 cinnati
 1850 - Cincinnati, Hamilton & Day-
 ton
 1850 - Cleveland, Painesville &
 Ashtabula

PARTIAL OR TOTAL OPERATION STARTED

1836 - Erie & Kalamazoo¹
 1837-9(?) Painesville & Fairport
 1838 - Monroeville & Sandusky Ci

 1838 - Mad River & Lake Erie

 1838 - Cleveland & Newburgh²
 1841 - Little Miami

 (1846) - see Note 3

 (1849) - see Note 4

 1850 - Columbus and Xenia
 1851 - Columbus and Lake Erie
 1851 - Cleveland, Columbus & Ci

 1851 - Cleveland & Pittsburgh

 1851 - Cincinnati, Hamilton & D

 1851 - Cleveland, Painesville &
 Ashtabula

NOTE 1 - Horse drawn at first.

NOTE 2 - Horse drawn throughout
 life which lasted but

NOTE 3 - Rail service between M
 and Mansfield started
 & Sandusky City R.R.,
 successor to Monroevil
 City R.R.

NOTE 4 - Service began on Findl
 which, under its own c
 16 miles of track from
 on the Mad River & Lak
 was for all practical
 of that company. It i

RAILROADS IN OHIO

BEFORE 1852

PARTIAL OR TOTAL OPERATION STARTED

1836 - Erie & Kalamazoo¹

1837-9(?) Painesville & Fairport²

1838 - Monroeville & Sandusky City¹

1838 - Mad River & Lake Erie

1838 - Cleveland & Newburgh²

1841 - Little Miami

(1846) - see Note 3

(1849) - see Note 4

1850 - Columbus and Xenia

1851 - Columbus and Lake Erie

1851 - Cleveland, Columbus & Cincinnati

1851 - Cleveland & Pittsburgh

1851 - Cincinnati, Hamilton & Dayton

1851 - Cleveland, Painesville &
Ashtabula

NOTE 1 - Horse drawn at first.

NOTE 2 - Horse drawn throughout its
life which lasted but a few years.

NOTE 3 - Rail service between Monroeville
and Mansfield started by Mansfield
& Sandusky City R.R., corporate
successor to Monroeville & Sandusky
City R.R.

NOTE 4 - Service began on Findlay Branch R.R.
which, under its own charter, built
16 miles of track from Findlay to Carey
on the Mad River & Lake Erie R.R. but
was for all practical purposes part
of that company. It is here so treated.

COMMENTS ON TABLE 1. "APPROXIMATE CHRONOLOGY OF THE
EARLIEST RAILROADS IN OHIO."

1. Several dates are tentative, subject to correction when better evidence has been found.

2. In certain particulars this list is in disagreement with (a) the Annual Report for 1867 of the Ohio Commissioner of Railroads and Telegraphs;¹ (b) "The Railroads of Ohio, Their Rise and Progress,"² and (c) Frederic L. Paxson's "The Railroads of the 'Old Northwest' Before the Civil War,"³ three sources often used by writers in this field. The differences in general are of no great moment.

3. Counting the railroad charters issued in Ohio seems to be an activity in which each counter sets his own rules. Porter found fifty-six chartered from 1830 to 1840, of which only one was actually built.⁴ Gephart reported twenty-four chartered in the same period, and one actually built.⁵ Tables 1 and 2 herein claim seventy-seven charters issued, with four railroads constructed.

¹Columbus, 1868.

²Cincinnati Gazette, Jan. 28, 1862, and often reprinted.

³Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters, Transactions, XVII (Oct. 1912), Part 1, pp. 243-274.

⁴Eugene O. Porter, "Financing Ohio's Pre-Civil War Railroads," The Ohio State Archaeological & Historical Quarterly, LVII (July, 1948), 217.

⁵William F. Gephart, Transportation and Industrial Development in the Middle West, ("Columbia University Studies in History, Economics and Public Law," XXXIV New York, 1909), 161.

4. As Paxson in the article referred to takes pains to make clear, what is meant by "operation" of a railroad, either partial or total, is largely a matter of definition. Here the term is applied to railroads regularly carrying passengers or goods and charging therefor.

5. To this Chronology an antiquarian might add what was humorously called the "Olentangy Railroad," the line, at first horse-drawn, to bring stone from the state's quarry for the construction of the new State House in Columbus. It may also have served to a limited extent as a common carrier. Newspaper wits of the city made it a frequent target. (See Chapter Four.)

CHAPTER THREE

ANNUS MIRABILIS: 1836

That 1836 was an election year in no way seemed to create a feeling of uncertainty among promoters in the field of transportation. In addition to the thirty-two railroad companies for which charters were issued during the 1835-36 session, five bridge companies, five canal companies, eleven road and turnpike companies were also chartered, fifty-two acts were passed to lay out and establish state roads, and five other acts benefiting railroads were added to the statutes.

Of the railroad corporations, only one, the celebrated Little Miami Railroad,¹ was able to survive the perils of birth and infancy and reach maturity as a going concern without lapsing and reviving. Appropriately enough it is very much alive today and probably sounder than ever. Two others, the Mansfield and the New Haven Railroad² and the New Haven and Monroeville Railroad,³ drew a few breaths and soon became part of the line known as the Mansfield and Sandusky City Railroad⁴ of which we will hear more. Another two, the Cleveland and Pittsburgh Railroad⁵ and the Cleveland, Columbus and Cincinnati

¹Ohio Local Laws, XXXIV, 404.

²Ibid., XXXIV, 452.

³Ibid., XXXIV, 357.

⁴Ohio General Laws, XLI, 63.

⁵Ohio Local Laws, XXXIV, 576.

Railroad,⁶ lapsed, were revived and flourished, the latter to play a very important part in Columbus railroad history. Perhaps four or five others left some barely visible traces on the written records and then were no more seen. One, the notorious Ohio Railroad,⁷ "That Famous Structure Built on Stilts" as C. P. Leland named it in his amusing article,⁸ ended in a blaze of infamy. The great majority of the railroads given charters by the Legislature in that year, however, seem to have died a-borning, probably victims of the panic of '37 and its aftermath.

Columbus was made a point, as the expression then was, on six of the thirty-two proposed rail routes, but in only one case does it seem very clear that the company was of Columbus origin, a matter often difficult to determine. The Little Miami Railroad, although it did not reach the capital, became so important in the city's transportation history that it will nevertheless be treated at some length.

Confusion Twice Confounded

First to be chartered of the six companies with routes touching Columbus was the Columbus, Delaware, Marion and Upper Sandusky Railroad, on February 29, 1836.⁹ The name is the same as that of the concern authorized in 1832 (see Chapter Two) save for the addition of the word

⁶Ibid., XXXIV, 533.

⁷Ibid., XXXIV, 319.

⁸Magazine of Western History, XIII (1891), 742-756; published also as Tract No. 81 of the Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland, Ohio.

⁹Ohio Local Laws, XXXIV, 175.

"Upper," but the only connecting link appears to be Joseph Ridgway who was a commissioner in both and also figured in two more railroads started that year. The other Columbus commissioners in the 1836 Company included William Neil, Wray Thomas and Lyne Starling, Jr., and three more of little importance. The route was from Columbus via Delaware and Marion to an intersection with the Mad River Railroad at or near Upper Sandusky.

The change in terminus from Sandusky in the early charter to Upper Sandusky in the later one is a good illustration of what pioneer railroad promoters often sought to do, namely, to establish rail connection between two points but to let somebody else do as much of the construction as possible because of the scarcity of capital. In this case, since the Mad River Railroad (to continue using its short title) was under construction southward from Sandusky, the line from Columbus, by intersecting it en route, would have effected a clear saving of about fifty miles, the equivalent of a large investment of funds.

This company on paper only, this mere shadow of a railroad, which never stuck a shovel in the ground, had a second aspect characteristic of some early roads and is conducive to another generalization. Occasionally one finds a group of companies, chartered to operate railroads between substantially the same two points or areas,

which are so inextricably intertwined that from this distance it is almost impossible to determine whether they were competitive, complementary, or merely overlapping. The lines between Columbus and Sandusky or Upper Sandusky fall into this category and perhaps can be understood if set forth in the following form:

1. February 8, 1832 Columbus, Delaware, Marion, and Sandusky Railroad Company chartered. Commissioners included Joseph Ridgway.
2. February 29, 1836 Columbus, Delaware, Marion, and Upper Sandusky Railroad Company chartered. Commissioners included Joseph Ridgway and William Neil.
3. March 4, 1844 Columbus, Delaware, Marion, and Sandusky Railroad Company (which had lapsed) revived. Commissioners included William Neil.
4. January 21, 1845 Columbus, Delaware, Marion, and Sandusky Railroad Company again revived and act of March 4, 1844, repealed. Commissioners included Joseph Ridgway and William Neil.
5. March 8, 1845 Columbus, Delaware, Marion, and Upper Sandusky Railroad Company (which had lapsed) revived and name changed to Columbus and Sandusky Railroad Company.

Included in the above acts were various changes of route which had the effect of making the lines virtually co-extensive.

This extremely complicated picture is here enlarged upon because it was not unique. Similar situations developed among the lines between Columbus and Springfield, Columbus and Dayton, and, later, between Columbus and the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, and also between

Columbus and the Erie Railroad. It makes one wonder whether some of even these very early corporations were conceived as stockselling schemes. Indeed, it was not until 1891 that a railroad was at last built to connect Columbus and Sandusky. Why an undertaking that appeared so logical should have been so long in materializing would perhaps make an interesting study in business history and economic geography.

The second 1836 charter in which Columbus was made a point was that of the Columbus, London, and Springfield Railroad Company, approved March 12.¹⁰ Two commissioners were named from Franklin County, Gustavus Swan and William S. Sullivant who had an interest with Neil in the stage lines. Through travel on this railroad between the two termini was in direct competition with the stage coaches on the National Road; way travel competed only in part since the rail route did not parallel the road but ran via London and South Charleston, perhaps for that very reason.

Here is another tangle of corporations through which it is almost impossible, if indeed it is worthwhile, to make one's way. In tabular form the record shows:

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| 1. March 12, 1836 | Columbus, London, and Springfield Railroad Company chartered. Commissioners included William S. Sullivant. |
|-------------------|--|

¹⁰Ibid., XXXIV, 429.

2. March 2, 1846 Springfield and Columbus Railroad Company chartered. Commissioners included Wray Thomas and Michael L. Sullivant (brother of William S. Sullivant.)
3. February 24, 1848 Dayton, Springfield, and Columbus Railroad Company chartered. Commissioners included Wray Thomas and Michael L. Sullivant.
4. February 16, 1849 Springfield and Columbus Railroad Company chartered. Commissioners included Michael L. Sullivant.
5. May 7, 1869 Columbus, Springfield, and Cincinnati Railroad Company chartered.

The reason for the extreme zeal in seeking a line to Springfield may well have lain in the second of the two principal "mystiques" of early Ohio railroading, that is, "Western Trade."

March 14, 1836

March 14, 1836, two days after the first of the foregoing charters was approved, might almost be called "the day the dam broke," since on that occasion the legislature passed eleven railroad charters, four of them affecting Columbus. By far the most important of the four was the Cleveland, Columbus, and Cincinnati Railroad Company which was in time to become one of the most profitable lines in the country and to be widely known as the "Three C's" or the "C. C. & C.," by which convenient short title we shall hereafter refer to it.

It was clear from the start that the C.C.& C. was destined for great things. Its sixty commissioners (probably a record number for

one road) represented fourteen counties and included Nicholas Longworth and six others from Hamilton County; Lyne Starling, one of the four original founders of Columbus in 1812, William Neil, and John A. Bryan, editor and office holder, the three from Franklin County; Hosea Williams, one of the most prominent citizens of Delaware, who became a commissioner or corporator in more railroads than perhaps any other man in the state, and four other men representing Delaware County; and a total of eight from Cuyahoga county, (Cleveland) among them Richard Hilliard, and Truman P. Handy, a leader in many enterprises and the capitalist who was later to lend John D. Rockefeller \$2,000 to help him expand his infant business.¹¹ The impetus for organizing the road came from Cleveland which was incorporated as a city in this year and was the focus of much railroad interest.

Considerable latitude was allowed as to route, the only required point beside the three cities named in the title being Wilmington in Clinton County. The total distance involved, about 255 miles, was enormous for those days, probably the longest route thus far authorized by the legislature, and justified the \$3,000,000 capital. Par was \$100 per share, with a down payment required of \$5. The stockholders were allowed to meet and organize as soon as \$400,000 had been subscribed, which meant when \$20,000 had been paid in. After the down payment the balance was due in installments not to exceed \$10 every

¹¹William Ganson Rose, Cleveland, The Making of a City,
Cleveland and New York, 1950, p. 291.

60 days, at which rate the minimum time for paying up would be about 20 months. These details serve to emphasize anew the chief problem facing the early promoters of railroads, that of raising hard cash rather than mere subscriptions or promissory notes.

The rates which the road could charge were itemized, an early exercise of legislative power sometimes overlooked today. Tolls were $1\frac{1}{2}\text{¢}$ per ton per mile and transportation set at 5¢ per ton per mile for goods and 3¢ per mile for passengers. These were the usual rates fixed by law for such purposes. The toll charge is a reminder that in 1836 a railroad was sometimes considered a variety of public highway on which anyone could operate his own vehicle upon payment of toll. This charter said so categorically, with the stipulation that it had to be done subject to the company's by-laws.

Since a railroad was to be a considerable extent a monopoly, the fear of such a "monster" as inspired by Andrew Jackson and the political climate of his time had to be taken into account in the charter. Hence the state was given the option, after thirty-five years, to buy the property at cost plus fifteen percent. It was also authorized to tax dividends above six percent at the same rate as it taxed the dividends of any other railroad company. Construction had to start within three years and be completed ten years after that.

These charter provisions are set forth at length since many of them were common to other railroads of the day. It remained to be seen how much they would have to be amended before operations could start.

The three other roads chartered on March 14 which touched Columbus can be swiftly disposed of. The Urbana and Columbus Railroad¹² seems to have been a purely Urbana organization with not even a Columbus commissioner. The Columbus and Marysville Railroad¹³ had but one Columbus commissioner, John McElvain, whose name appears in no other charter in this work; and it gave no evidence of any other Columbus connection. Like the Columbus, Delaware, Marion, and Upper Sandusky and the Urbana and Columbus, it was authorized to connect with the Mad River Road, now under construction and unmistakably a cynosure of neighboring eyes.

The Muskingum and Columbus Railroad¹⁴ was the western member of a pair of roads, authorized the same day with virtually identical charters, and planned to extend west and east respectively from Zanesville on the Muskingum River. The eastern member was called the Muskingum and Ohio Railroad.¹⁵ The three Muskingum and Columbus commissioners from Franklin county were Joseph Ridgway, Jr., whose uncle has already been identified with several railroads; P. B. Wilcox, a prominent Columbus lawyer, and, interestingly enough, Alfred Kelley. How it came to pass that Kelley, an outstanding figure in canal, financial, and political activities in the state, who was later to be equally important in rail circles, should have selected the abortive little Muskingum and Columbus as the only road of which he was ever a commissioner or

¹²Ohio Local Laws, XXXIV, 504.

¹³Ibid., XXXIV, 489.

¹⁴Ibid., XXXIV, 529.

¹⁵Ibid., XXXIV, 538.

corporator, is a question not yet answered.

Financial Aid

In addition to charters, this eventful session of the legislature passed five other acts relating to railroads which should be considered here since they were the start of a great flood of laws to aid the financing of the new form of transportation. It almost seems as if every time the promoters of a railroad encountered difficulties in launching their project, they went to the legislature to get a law for easing the conditions imposed by their charter or for some form of subsidy. During the 1835-36 session two laws were passed to modify charters and three to go even further. One act approved an increase up to \$1,500,000 in the capital stock of the "Steubenville and Ohio Canal Rail-way Company," no doubt an erroneous transposition of the title of the first railroad incorporated in Ohio in 1830, as set forth previously. With this amendment the history of the concern ends.¹⁶

The Oxford and Miami Rail Road Company, chartered only the year before, was already in need of amendatory aid, which the legislature gave by changing the tolls and extending the time limits for starting and completing.¹⁷ One of the incorporators was an important man in Ohio, Ebenezer Lane, whose career was to include the Chief Justiceship of the state, the presidency of two railroads, and interests in other rail concerns.

¹⁶Ibid., XXXIV, 590.

¹⁷Ibid., XXXIV, 222.

The three acts relating to financial assistance were all for the benefit of the Mad River and Lake Erie Railroad which, chartered in 1832, had started construction in 1835 and was already in need of government aid. Hence the legislature in 1836, influenced in part, no doubt, by noticeable railroad activity in the neighboring states of Pennsylvania, Virginia, Kentucky, and Michigan, passed two acts authorizing the counties of Champaign and Clark, respectively, to subscribe to stock in the road.¹⁸ It went further and passed a third, authorizing the state to loan its credit to the road in the amount of \$200,000.¹⁹ This was the first direct state aid to railroads. (The survey of the Mad River line, made by request in 1833 by United States Engineers, could be held an indirect subsidy.)

The people of Columbus were not untouched by the surge of interest in railroads. Early in January, 1836, a public meeting in the state house, with the Jacksonian Democrat, Governor Lucas, as chairman, endorsed the proposal for a mighty rail line from Cincinnati to Charleston, South Carolina. This was a widely publicised project, with John C. Calhoun endorsing it at the southern end and a committee in Columbus assisting in Ohio.

It is also fitting that 1836, the year the state's lawmakers seemingly left no law unpassed which might benefit the new mode of

¹⁸Ibid., XXXIV, 287; XXXIV, 604.

¹⁹Ibid., XXXIV, 570.

transportation, was also the year goods and passengers first moved by rail in the state. There is ample authority for saying that the first railroad operations in Ohio began in October, 1836, when the Erie and Kalamazoo started using horse-drawn cars on a few miles of its freshly laid road.²⁰ It was this company, mentioned earlier, which had been chartered in 1833 by the Territory of Michigan to build from Port Lawrence, Michigan, to the Kalamazoo River. Port Lawrence soon changed its name to Toledo and then its allegiance to Ohio when the settlement of a boundary dispute transferred it from Michigan to the Buckeye State. In consequence the Erie and Kalamazoo found itself the first railroad operating in Ohio. There are a number of other events, some curious, some ironic, connected with this little company; but space does not permit their inclusion here, except to add that the corporation is still in existence and that its recent dividends have been at the rate of \$3.25 a year.²¹

All these happenings and reports of happenings, important or trivial, added up finally to this, that in Ohio the railroad was on the verge of becoming a reality and the great boom was nearing its climax.

²⁰Frederick L. Paxson, "The Railroads of the 'Old Northwest' Before the Civil War," Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts, and Letters, Transactions, XVII, (Oct. 1912) Madison, Wisconsin, 1914, pt. 1, 247; Anon, "The Erie and Kalamazoo Railroad," Historical Society of Northwestern Ohio Quarterly Bulletin, XII, (April, 1940), No. 2, 15-20.

²¹Moody's Manual of Investments -- American and Foreign -- Railroad Securities, New York, 1951, p. 992.

CHAPTER FOUR

A DEPRESSING DECADE: 1837-1846

The ten years between the panic of 1837 and the 1847 "Railroad Elections" in Columbus were in the main years of heartbreak for the backers of the iron horse in Ohio, except for two groups of determined pioneers. By pluck and by luck, by hook and by crook, by main strength and awkwardness, the men in charge respectively of the Mad River and Lake Erie Railroad and the Little Miami Railroad almost succeeded in completing their task in the case of the first named, and entirely succeeded as to the second, by the latter year. The Mansfield and Sandusky City Railroad (including its predecessor companies) was also constructed during the same period but does not compare as an accomplishment with the two just named. This chapter will tell a little of these two early successes as well as something about the many failures, among them several Columbus projects.

The Panic Year

The session of the Ohio legislature which ushered in the year 1837 was in some ways curiously restrained. The record-breaking total of thirty-two railroad charters granted by the previous legislature and the continuance at first of good times in the business world did not lead to another outburst of activity in rails. Only eleven charters

were approved, none relating to Columbus or the central part of the state, and authorizations were given to only two counties to subscribe to stock. It almost seems as if all promotional and speculative fervor had concentrated itself in two pork barrel acts passed four days apart, the "Plunder Law" of March 24¹ and the law distributing surplus federal funds of March 28.²

The former, like a somewhat similar law in Kentucky, authorized (a) loans of credit by the state to railroad companies and (b) subscriptions by the state to the capital stock of turnpike, canal and slackwater navigation companies. This interesting and important act, the full history of which yet remains to be written, was the basis on which state aid was advanced to six railroads, of which one proved to be a great fraud, two were complete failures and of the other three only one did not result in a loss to the taxpayers. The Little Miami Railroad, which got \$115,000, paid its debt in stock at a discount which was later sold at par. The \$270,000 loan to the Mad River and Lake Erie Railroad was secured by stock sold at less than ten cents on the dollar. The Mansfield and Sandusky City Railroad obligation of \$33,333 was liquidated eventually at little more than one cent on the dollar. Meanwhile, the law had been repealed in 1840.³

¹Ohio General Laws, XXXV, 76.

²Ibid., XXXV, 97.

³Ibid., XXXVIII, 55; see also Bogart, Internal Improvements and State Debt, p. 49 et seq.

The second law also had the effect of supplying funds for internal improvements. In 1836, with no national debt, the federal treasury had more money than it had use for and accordingly by vote of Congress the surplus was distributed to the states. The amount Ohio actually received was some \$2,000,000 which the state lawmakers proceeded to apportion among the counties for loans to railroad, canal and other internal improvement companies and to certain additional borrowers. Alfred Kelley, with his usual conservative approach to such matters, unsuccessfully argued for employing the windfall to launch a state bank. Much of the money appears to have been loaned to individuals and the amount spent on railroads was small and largely unproductive.⁴

Less than sixty days after the passage of these two laws the banks of New York, followed by those of Cincinnati and elsewhere, suspended specie payment and the panic of 1837 was under way. In the older communities in the east the immediate hardships that resulted were great, but in Ohio and other areas nearer the frontier there seems to have been less suffering, and it developed later. The most noticeable consequence in the Midwest may well have been the damper put on speculative railroad schemes.⁵

Table II preceding Appendix A shows a drop in the number of Ohio railroad charters granted from 32 in 1836 and 11 in 1837 to 2 in

⁴Weisenburger, Passing of the Frontier, pp. 330-333.

⁵Ibid., p. 339; Unstad, "Industrial & Economic Development," p. 541.

1838, 4 in 1839, and 2 in 1840. With the exception of the Little Miami Railroad there is no trace of any road starting construction in the years immediately after the panic and living to tell the tale, and even that dynamic company came close to perishing, as did its counterpart the Mad River and Lake Erie Railroad.

This temporary decline in optimism as to rail matters is reflected in a well-known book which appeared at that time. Caleb Atwater, the historian, writing about the money invested in "roads," by which he meant both railroads and highways, said: "Our Ohio roads will never refund a cent of the capital spent on them."⁶

Although new rail projects were few and far between, these years saw a number of charters for concerns to build toll bridges and turnpikes and several acts to allow county commissioners to subscribe for stock in the latter type of company. One might also note that the humorously although accurately named Circleville Squaring Company was incorporated in 1838 and that in the following year the Milan canal was completed and the Urichsville Transportation Company was chartered to build a towing path along the banks of Stillwater Creek in Tuscarawas County and to charge tolls for its use. In Columbus, although railroad interest was almost non-existent, the year 1839 marked the start of construction on a very large building to house the Neil House, one of the great hotels in the Midwest. And the Buckeye State itself had enough courage to start work on a new state capitol.

⁶ Caleb Atwater, A History of the State of Ohio, Natural & Civil, 2nd ed., Cincinnati (1838), p. 281.

Such scattered evidence that the spirit of business enterprise was alive in Ohio in the years following the panic is supplementary to the fact that by the fall of 1838 two important rail projects were on the march. The Mad River road, to give it its short title, in the spring of the year had commenced operations, using steam locomotives, between Sandusky and Bellevue, a distance of 16 miles. In September the Little Miami directors let their first contract and somehow managed to keep going until December, 1841, when they opened for traffic a fifteen-mile section north from Cincinnati to Milford, also using steam power.

These accomplishments deserve more than passing mention because the Mad River and the Little Miami were the real pioneers in Ohio rail history after full credit has been given to their tiny predecessors and contemporaries. The Erie and Kalamazoo Railroad, which soon changed from horse to steam power, was in operation before either of them and the Monroeville and Sandusky City, the Cleveland and Newburgh, and the Painesville and Fairport lines, all horse drawn, were doing business before the Little Miami had run its first train. Nevertheless, they were so small and they seem to have had so little influence on the development of railroading in the state that their chronological priority entitles them only to what might be called genealogical interest. Further spade work in the Firelands and the Western Reserve, however, and especially around Sandusky, an undertaking beyond the scope the present study, might produce reasons for changing this judgment.

The Mad River and the Little Miami, on the other hand, signal the start of effective rail transportation and, interestingly enough, each in its way became something of an example to the companies that followed. The former's career illustrated errors, misapprehensions and problems besetting the path of a beginner; the latter's showed how the obstacles were overcome. For a moment, therefore, this review of the charters issued during the decade 1837-1847 is interrupted in order to sketch briefly the story of these two important pioneer lines.

The Mad River and Lake Erie Railroad

The Mad River line, one of the two chartered in 1832 to serve Sandusky (see Chapter Two), reflected that community's determination to share in the internal improvements then being agitated. Three years later General William Henry Harrison broke the ground for construction; within three more years the sixteen-mile track to Bellevue had been completed on the way to Tiffin. One train daily ran each way consisting of a locomotive and two small cars (one passenger and one freight), on strap rail laid to a gauge of four feet ten inches. These details are significant.

Going to Bellevue at all seems to have been a mistake since the line was abandoned fifteen years later for a shorter and more direct one through Clyde. Bellevue was a real estate speculation in which one of the engineers who laid out the route was said to be financially interested. The operation of the minimum number of daily trains, with

minimum equipment, emphasizes the infant size of these pioneer railroads and their lack of capital.

Strap rail was important in the early life of the iron horse. The first rails in this country were of wood which of course wore out very fast. To extend their life a strip or strap of iron, here about five-eighths of an inch thick, was fastened to the top of the wood. These also wore out soon, or broke with unpleasant consequences. Ten years later the Mad River, with the other important Ohio roads, was trying to raise money to replace strap rail with the modern style T or H rail.

The final detail, that of gauge, was obviously important to every railroad since any two connecting lines of different track widths had to reckon with the heavy expense of trans-shipping. Nevertheless, some early railroaders argued that when your gauge was different from the other fellow's, he could not use your cars, which hence would not wear out so fast.⁷

A reason differing from that generally accepted to explain the Mad River's choice of a track width of four feet ten inches (which unwittingly fixed what became known as the Ohio gauge) appears in a letter to the Railroad Record of December 9, 1858, written more than twenty years after the event and hence to be accepted with reservations. The writer was John H. James of Urbana, author of articles on early

⁷J. H. Westbay, "The Standardization of the Track Gauge on American Railways," Bulletin of the Railway and Locomotive Historical Society, No. 34 (May, 1934), 28-35.

Ohio history, bank president, state senator, a leading Swedenborgian, and president, in 1836, of the Mad River road, who ordered its first locomotives and selected a gauge for them.

He wrote that after consultating with the president of the great New York and Erie Railroad, which had not yet chosen its own gauge, he guessed that that line would use one wider than the typical eastern track width of four feet eight and one-half inches. Seemingly he picked the figure of four feet ten inches out of thin air (although that gauge was used by some lines in New Jersey), since the Erie soon thereafter, under a different president, settled on a width of six feet.⁸ Perhaps more light may be shed on this point when the diaries of President James, which are to be published, make their appearance.⁹

Inevitably the gauge of the first important railroad operating in the state was chosen by subsequent roads as each laid its track to connect with an existing line. The Little Miami was built to link with the Mad River, the Columbus and Xenia connected with the Little Miami, the C.C. & C. joined rails with the Columbus and Xenia -- and

⁸ Alvin F. Harlow in his interesting and generally reliable history of the New York Central Railroad writes at some length about the Mad River road but does not refer to this letter of James and gives a different version of how the gauge came to be determined. The Road of the Century, New York, 1947, p. 342. See also Edward Hungerford, Men of Erie, New York, 1946, pp. 50-52.

⁹ Dean and Mrs. W. E. Smith of the Graduate School of Miami University, Oxford, Ohio, have this work in hand.

in no time four feet ten inches was the accepted gauge for Ohio railroads. In 1848 it was made mandatory, with certain exceptions, for all roads in the state.¹⁰

The first locomotive to run on the Mad River tracks was the "Sandusky," weighing nine tons, which was also the first built by Rogers, Ketchum and Grosvenor in Paterson, New Jersey, soon numbered among the greatest American locomotive builders. The next important railroad to start operations in Ohio, the Little Miami, three years later bought their first locomotive, weighing twelve tons, from the same firm. Within a few years railroad engines were being built in Cincinnati, Cleveland, Zanesville and Mt. Vernon, Ohio, but never, apparently, in Columbus.

From Bellevue the Mad River tracks were slowly extended until in 1841 they entered Tiffin. Here the southern terminus stayed for several years, years dolorous for all rail enterprises in the state, until at last in 1848 the line made its connection in Springfield with the Little Miami which had arrived two years earlier. In another three years it reached Dayton, the terminus specified in the charter.

Slow progress was largely due to shortage of funds. From the beginning the Mad River had insufficient capital despite the legislature's frequent authorizations of public aid, both stock subscriptions by counties and the state loan of credit of \$270,000 on the basis of the "Plunder Law" of 1837. What little private capital there was in the sparsely settled region between Sandusky and Dayton did not give enough

¹⁰Ohio General Laws, XLVI, 40.

support to the enterprise.

The Mad River therefore joined with the Little Miami, at this time also under construction, to seek that Eldorado, "Eastern Capital," for which all western railroads strove. The legislature in 1845 permitted the former to borrow \$300,000 and the latter, \$200,000, at not over seven percent interest, with power to mortgage their properties.¹¹ These were the terms on which, in Boston, the money was raised by William Mills, the "brisk and enterprising" proprietor of Yellow Springs in Greene County, Ohio, later the founder, with Horace Mann, of Antioch College.¹²

Most buyers of the Little Miami bonds, finding they had invested wisely, probably exercised their option to convert the bonds into stock. Save for a few brief moments, however, the Mad River was never a financial success. By 1847 we find a newspaper reference to "Eastern capitalists" (presumably the bond holders) taking control of the road and preparing to extend it into Springfield, which, as shown above, they did the following year.¹³ Among the four New England directors put on the board was David A. Neal, wealthy sea captain of Salem, Massachusetts, then prominent in railroad circles.¹⁴ He was one of the Yankee entrepreneurs whose operations in the rail lines of Michigan and other western states have been related with little reference to their Ohio activities.

¹¹Ohio Local Laws, XLIII, 146.

¹²Robert L. Black, The Little Miami Railroad, Cincinnati, 1940 pp. 48-49; Springfield Ohio Republic, Feb. 14, 1845.

¹³Ohio Statesman, Sept. 30, 1847, quoting Sandusky Mirror.

¹⁴Harlow, Steelways of New England, pp. 154, 415.

A study of Sandusky's role in securing eastern funds for such early Ohio enterprises as the Mad River, the Mansfield and Sandusky City, and the "Lake Shore" railroads might add a useful chapter to the economic history of the state.

Not all the consequences of the influx of capital from the seaboard were happy. A few years later an editorial in the authoritative American Railroad Journal sharply criticized the Mad River line which was said to have broken down already because "absentee" owners farmed out their properties to people in search of immediate profits. "For a company to go on as this has done is most discreditable," the editor wrote.¹⁵

The dependence of the early railroads on public funds has been mentioned. The political consequences, at least in the case of the Mad River, should also be noted. In 1843, when business conditions were bad and neither that road nor the Little Miami could meet the obligations they had previously incurred under the "Plunder Law," the legislature stopped all further advances of credit and agreed to accept railroad stock in payment of the debts.¹⁶ The election of Colonel William Hunt of Clark County as president of the Mad River that year was allegedly the result of a political arrangement between Hunt and Governor Wilson Shannon, both Locofoco Democrats. The governor was charged with ordering those members of the railroad's

¹⁵June 2, 1855.

¹⁶Ohio General Laws, XLI, 63.

board of directors who represented the stock accepted by the state in place of the debts, to vote for Hunt as president as a consolation prize for losing in a race for a seat in Congress.¹⁷

The Mad River line shared at least one more characteristic with many another early little road. The property comprising the original Mad River Railroad changed hands many times, more often perhaps than any of the rest. Sometimes the changes resulted from financial distress and consequent reorganization, sometimes from new ownership and affiliation. Anyone interested in the lines of this period must be prepared for railroad marriages and divorces as frequent as those of Hollywood.

Briefly, the changes in ownership or management of the Mad River's property were: Mad River and Lake Erie Railroad to Sandusky, Dayton and Cincinnati Railroad; to Sandusky and Cincinnati Railroad; to Cincinnati, Sandusky and Cleveland Railroad; to Indiana, Bloomington and Western Railroad; to Ohio, Indiana and Western Railroad; to Cleveland, Cincinnati, Chicago and St. Louis Railroad (the "Big Four"). This ownership, reached about 1890, continues today, making the road a subsidiary of the New York Central Railroad.¹⁸

The Little Miami Railroad

The significance of the Little Miami to this study is two-fold. It played an essential part in the history of the Columbus and Xenia,

¹⁷Xenia Torchlight, Nov. 2, 1843.

¹⁸New York Central Railroad corporate records, New York.

the first railroad to enter Columbus, with which its ties grew ever closer until it all but extinguished that little pioneer. In its own right it was the first road in Ohio that was truly a financial success. On both counts it merits attention.

Besides showing "the novelty of the enterprise and the inexperience of all connected with it," which, as one of its early presidents said, were indeed the chief characteristics of the Little Miami in its infant days,¹⁹ its history also relates one of those heart-warming success stories that Americans fondly believe are more typical of their country than of any other. It has been written with great charm and affection (and a few errors) by Robert L. Black, its current president, in his very readable book The Little Miami Railroad, and hence will be retold here in only the sketchiest way, with emphasis on a few selected aspects which shed further light on pioneer railroading in central Ohio.

In the first place, the route of the railroad, from Cincinnati to Springfield, thrusting up the valley of the Little Miami River, was a dynamic reaching out of the Queen City for business to the north, just as its marked enthusiasm for the long-agitated Cincinnati, Louisville and Charleston line, chartered at this time by Kentucky, expressed its determination to hold on to its all-important trade to the south. The Ohio river took care of the east-and-west trade.

¹⁹Black, Little Miami, p. 34.

The objectives of the road were three: (1) to open up the Little Miami valley by providing an outlet for products made with its great water power (e.g., flour); (2) to connect Cincinnati with the National Road at Springfield; (3) to form a link in an all-rail route between Charleston, South Carolina, and New York by joining the Cincinnati, Louisville and Charleston and the Mad River roads, "each of which is now in progress."²⁰ Columbus was not mentioned.

The organizers were among the principal men of Cincinnati, men of the sort who today are directors of Community Chests and similar civic enterprises. Railroads were generally still too new for the ohicanery that later was to stigmatize some of them. The first survey (a faulty one) was made by Ormsby M. Mitchell, one of the many United States Army officers, all presumably West Point graduates, who pioneered as surveyors and engineers of the early Buckeye railroads. From a technical point of view, Mitchell was probably the poorest surveyor of the lot.

In relying on public funds the Little Miami was no different from the Mad River save that it appears to have escaped political interference. The shoe was rather on the other foot, since by 1850 a member of the state legislature was saying of the road that "it was a wealthy company with a powerful lobby on the spot."²¹ It received

²⁰O. M. Mitchell, Little Miami Railroad, Survey of, Reports & Estimates Made to the Board of Directors, Cincinnati, 1837.

²¹Daily Ohio Statesman, Mar. 16, 1850.

a loan of credit from the state under the law of 1837 amounting to \$115,000, out of which the state eventually made a profit; it received stock subscriptions from the city of Cincinnati and the counties of Greene and Clark totalling \$275,000 and a loan from Cincinnati of \$100,000, repaid promptly. A half million dollars or so against a total cost, in 1850, of \$2,130,627, makes a not unfavorable showing for private capital. Warren, the only other county through which the line passed, subscribed nothing, probably because of resentment felt by the county seat, Lebanon, which wanted a location on the railroad and failed to get it.

The Railroad Record and Journal of Commerce, Banking, Manufactures and Statistics (it was really only interested in midwestern railroads) edited in Cincinnati by the well-known E. D. Mansfield, in one of its first issues²² told in a reminiscent vein of the poverty-stricken early days of the Little Miami: how the tracks were wound around a farm because of lack of funds to buy a direct route, how the road could not get credit for a load of coal, how creditors waited at the end of every train run to snatch cash from the conductors (tickets were usually bought on board rather than at stations.)

Efforts to raise money at times seemed to lead only to frustration and never to funds. At one point the company offered in payment of its debts some of the notes it had received for stock subscriptions but they were of so little value that no creditor would take them. On another occasion, in 1839, it was reported to the directors that

²²Daily Ohio Statesman, June 9, 1853.

during the preceding three years only eight percent had been paid in cash on the stock subscriptions. Several farmers made payment in cattle on the hoof.²³

In the spring of 1841 the skies cleared for a while after public authorities paid some cash on their stock subscriptions, a thing they never seemed to be in a hurry to do. European capital was enlisted to the extent that the road sold State of Ohio bonds in London, at a discount, to the famous house of Baring Brothers and used the proceeds to pay for English railroad iron. But the clouds gathered again, and although by December the line was able to start regular operations as far as Milford,²⁴ the following year the company was bankrupt. The state was not far from bankruptcy itself.

So low sank Ohio's credit that the Little Miami could borrow not over fifty percent of the face amount of the state bonds it offered as collateral to Winslow, Lanier and Company, the Wall Street house which handled the financing of most Buckeye railroads. The task of persuading the Democratic legislature to take the steps required to maintain the solvency of the state was accomplished by Alfred Kelley, the great Whig leader.²⁵

Nevertheless the infant railroad managed to keep alive and push its tracks forward. By the end of 1842 fourteen more miles beyond

²³Black, Little Miami, pp. 45, 28, 46-47.

²⁴Ohio Commissioner of Railroads and Telegraphs, Annual Report for 1867, Columbus, 1868, erroneously gives this date as 1842. See Xenia Torchlight, Dec. 23, 1841.

²⁵Weisenburger, Passing of the Frontier, p. 412.

Milford were in operation, yielding a modest revenue. The following summer, although the company was assigned to a trustee, it kept on laying rails. When unpaid and angry Irish laborers demanded their money, the trustee butchered the cattle received in payment of stock subscriptions and distributed the meat. The legislature helped in 1844 with an act to revive and extend the life of the corporation, since the original enactment of 1836 required completion within seven years. The capital was increased from \$750,000 to \$1,000,000 and the city of Cincinnati authorized to loan the company \$100,000 worth of city bonds, subject to the approval of the voters. They gave it, despite Locofoco opposition.

That year the line reached Morrow and in August, 1845, it was open to Xenia for regular business. Just a year later the first Little Miami train steamed into Springfield, the terminus in its charter.

Greene County had first planned to use for purchasing Little Miami stock the \$35,000 received as its share of the surplus revenue distributed in 1837 but then voted for a \$50,000 subscription. It would not pay up, however, until contracts for work in the county had actually been let (parochialism of this sort was not rare) and then, after paying part of the amount, advanced more only as a loan secured by the personal endorsement of certain directors.²⁶

Clark County was an even harder nut to crack. In 1842 it voted 1076 to 1076, and hence not favorably, on a \$30,000 subscription to

²⁶Xenia Torchlight, Feb. 27, 1847, but see Ibid., Mar. 12, 1846.

Little Miami stock. Three years later a referendum approved the sum of \$25,000, payable, following the usual practice, in county bonds. The legislature had authorized any sum up to \$40,000. The investment enabled the county to get, in effect, two railroads for the price of one, for it later sold its Little Miami shares and put the money into Mad River stock to aid that line in reaching Springfield, the county seat.²⁷ Madison County in similar fashion was to sell its Columbus and Xenia shares to obtain funds for helping the Springfield and Columbus line.

The Little Miami fast became a highly prosperous concern. In December, 1843, according to the annual report for that year, the road had one locomotive in good repair, two passenger cars and eleven freight and miscellaneous cars. Four years later the report showed seven locomotives and 103 cars of all kinds. In December of 1845 and in the fall of the following year the freight houses were overflowing and the road could not handle all of the business offered. Even before the rails had reached the end of the line at Springfield the directors were able to declare the first dividend, three percent payable in stock, in December, 1845.

The years 1845-1851 inclusive yielded a total of 50 percent in dividends, all in stock. In 1852 the first cash dividends, amounting to 10 percent, were declared, and thereafter a dividend was paid every year in cash or bonds, or both. From 1845 to the present day the road

²⁷ Cleveland Herald, June 17, 1847.

has never failed to make a payment to its shareholders, an unbroken record of 108 years that can be matched by not many other corporations.

It should be noted that these dividends were on the stock of the Little Miami Railroad alone, and did not include the distributions of profits made by the Columbus and Xenia Railroad. Their Joint Annual Reports must be read with the greatest care in order to distinguish between the two companies, especially in regard to investments which they made in other lines.

The eventual absorption by the Little Miami of the Columbus and Xenia, the Dayton, Xenia and Belpre, and the Dayton and Western (which in turn had a perpetual lease of part of the Richmond and Miami line) set a pattern that led, in 1869, to the end of its own career as an operating railroad but not of its corporate existence. In that year the Pennsylvania, through its subsidiary, the Pittsburgh, Cincinnati and St. Louis Railway ("The Panhandle"), leased in perpetuity the Little Miami and its component parts for a rental that has ever since made the stock of the lessor one of the bluest of blue chip investments.

The Rest of the Decade

With the story of the Mad River and the Little Miami companies as a background for the rest of the Ohio railroad scene, let us return to the charters issued during the decade 1837-1847 and resume with the years following the panic.

From the table of railroad charters it is seen that the decline in the number of new rail lines, which reached two in 1840, continued

into 1841 with one new venture, followed by two in 1842 and none in 1843. In addition to wariness born of hard times there was another reason for restraint. An act passed by the Democrats on March 7, 1842, to regulate corporations was so stringent that an end to all new railroad companies in the following year was the result.²⁸ Three, however, were started in 1844 and when the law was repealed in 1845²⁹ the number rose to eight.

It must be borne in mind that to the Locofoco (or "left wing" as we say today) Democrats of the Jacksonian and post-Jacksonian administration, banking and railroad corporations were monopolistic, un-democratic and greatly suspect.

Additional discouragement was given to the friends of rail transportation by the corruption and fraud that surrounded the public demise in 1843 of the Ohio Railroad, ("That Famous Structure Built on Stilts,") and by legislation which spread to general view the misfortunes of the Monroeville and Sandusky City, the Mad River and Lake Erie, and the Little Miami Railroads.³⁰

The banking situation in the state was similarly unpropitious for new enterprises. From the year of the panic until Kelley's Bank Act of 1845 the banks had been subjected to both economic and political strains, to which, in Columbus, were added a series of bank

²⁸Ohio General Laws XL, 67.

²⁹Weisenburger, Passing of the Frontier, pp. 117.

³⁰Ohio General Laws, XLI, 63.

scandals that extended over several years.³¹ Further discomfort to the business interests in the capital city followed the repeal of the charter of the powerful Columbus and Sandusky Turnpike Company, in which important figures of the community were interested. From 1837 to 1843, inclusive, not a charter was issued for a railroad that touched Columbus.

In the face of these adverse factors, it is interesting that 1844 should have been the year both for launching the Columbus and Xenia Railroad, one of the three chartered at that time and the only one worth naming, and also for reviving the Columbus, Delaware, Marion and Sandusky Railroad, first incorporated in 1832 but never brought to life. Both of these companies will be referred to later.

With the coming of 1845 it seemed that a time for expanding and launching new enterprises was again at hand. Overseas, in the early months there was mad speculation in railways in England and France. In this country, expansion in the form of annexing Texas and Oregon was a leading issue as men's minds turned to the vast spaces of the west and southwest where Mexico lay on the horizon. In Ohio, the financial interests felt safe from further Locofooco assaults, thanks to Kelley's Bank Act, and three new banks were started in Columbus.³² The legislature, controlled by Whigs, repealed the Locofooco law of 1842 which had so hamstrung Ohio corporations. The completion of the

³¹Unstad, "Industrial & Economic Development," pp. 247. et. seq.

³²Jacob H. Studer, Columbus, Ohio: Its History, Resources & Progress, n.p., 1873, p. 543.

Miami and Erie Canal gave a fillip to commerce, and the purchase by the state of a quarry near Columbus to furnish stone for the long-planned new State House, as it was generally called, was further evidence that things seemed to be taking a turn for the better.

Across High Street from the State House was the Neil House, the great hotel with 300 rooms and a country-wide reputation, owned by the Neil family. When, in January, 1845, Joseph Ridgway, a close associate of theirs, gave a dinner party in the hotel to influence votes in the legislature to complete the capitol, enemies of the Neils charged that they wanted the building finished because it would attract business to their hostelry. In view of the family's position in the business and financial world of Columbus the accusation seems carping.³³

The Neils

Like so many early settlers in Ohio, William Neil and his brother Robert came from Kentucky. In 1818 when the former, the more significant of the two, was about thirty years old he arrived in Columbus with his wife Hannah and was soon cashier of the Franklin Bank in which William S. Sullivan, one of the greatest capitalists of the city, had a large interest. He was not long in getting into transportation, for by 1822 the mail between Zanesville and Columbus was being carried by William Neil and Company; in 1826 he was an organizer

³³Ohio State Journal, Jan. 24, 1845.

of the celebrated Columbus and Sandusky Turnpike Company, and two years later he was reported operating stages between Wheeling and Cincinnati, via Columbus, a route in which Robert Neil was also interested. Robert, however, sold to William his holdings in the Ohio Stage Line, under which name the operations were conducted, and some years later became a member of the state legislature.

William Neil started a partnership with Henry Moore of Wheeling and they expanded their stage lines until they stretched for some 1,500 miles and in the repair shops alone in Columbus gave employment to twenty men. Philip D. Jordan in his highly readable work The National Road, to which I am indebted in respect to Neil's stage coach activities, writes of William: "Called the 'best god-damned stager on the road,' Neil practically monopolized Western traffic."³⁴

His interests went far beyond staging. He was the first president of the great Clinton Bank of Columbus, organized in 1834 with the aid of capital from New York and London, England, which for long was the only United States depository north and west of the Ohio river, and was alleged never to have suspended specie payments.³⁵ From the Neil House ("biggest hotel in the west"), a newspaper wrote, William Neil received as rent ten percent of the gross receipts.³⁶

As befitted a man of his stature, his railroad activities were on no mean scale. He was an organizer of nine different roads, and

³⁴Indianapolis and New York, 1948, p. 185.

³⁵Studer, Columbus, pp. 539-541.

³⁶Ohio State Journal, Jan. 9, 1849.

became an officer or director of four or five more. When, in the late 1840's, plank roads had a brief vogue, William and his son were active in the movement. The marriage of the son, Robert E. Neil, to Jane Marshall Sullivant, great-niece of Chief Justice John Marshall and oldest child of William S. Sullivant, strengthened still further the association between Neil and Sullivant, begun in the Franklin Bank in 1818.

Contemporary accounts frequently failed to distinguish between Robert Neil, the brother, and Robert E. Neil, the son, of William Neil, thereby making it difficult for writers a century later to avoid confusing them.

Another matrimonial alliance also resulted favorably for the Neils. Ann Eliza, their eldest daughter, was married to William Dennison, Jr., who in the course of time became a railroad leader, banker, prominent lawyer, was governor of Ohio when the Civil War broke out and served as postmaster-general under President Lincoln.

Such, in brief, was the family whose name figures so often in the transportation activities of the Columbus region, especially in the year 1845 when rail promoters were beginning to take heart again. The chief object of their desires seemed to be a connection between Columbus and Sandusky, that goal which took so long to realize. To find our way through the maze of railroad and highway interests involved therein, it may prove helpful to set down the bald sequence of events.

Between Columbus and Sandusky

First, as already told, the company that operated the turnpike to Sandusky, in which William Neil was interested, was put out of business by the legislature. The next year, the company for a railroad to Sandusky was revived, with Neil among the sponsors.³⁷ The following year, 1845, the legislature seemed to try to please everybody by passing as many bills as possible in reference to transportation between the capital and the lake. It began by repealing the 1844 revival of the rail line to Sandusky and approving in its stead a third charter for the same project, still called the Columbus, Delaware, Marion and Sandusky Railroad, still with William Neil's name among the commissioners.³⁸ Next, it authorized seven counties lying between Columbus and Lake Erie to subscribe to stock in any company building a railroad or turnpike or plank road to connect those places.³⁹

Two days later a charter was approved for the Columbus and Sandusky Turnpike and Plank Road Company, William Neil being an incorporator along with several of his close business associates.⁴⁰ At the same time the lawmakers revived and amended the charter of still another railroad going from Columbus toward Sandusky, the long

³⁷Ohio Local Laws, XLII, 123.

³⁸Ibid., XLIII, 33.

³⁹Ibid., XLIII, 232.

⁴⁰Ibid., XLIII, 271.

dormant Columbus, Delaware, Marion and Upper Sandusky Railroad, and changed its name to Columbus and Sandusky Railroad. Not changed, however, were the original commissioners, among whom we find William Neil.⁴¹

Four days after that (March 12, 1845), the Legislature concluded its labors by passing three more acts relating to transportation between the capital and the lake: (1) the existing Columbus and Sandusky turnpike, built by the company which had been dissolved two years before, was declared to be a public road and county commissioners authorized to maintain it;⁴² (2) the Cleveland, Columbus and Cincinnati Railroad's charter was revived and amended so that only the part of the line from Cleveland to Columbus was to be built and new commissioners appointed, including Robert Neil and certain close associates of his family;⁴³ (3) finally, a charter was issued to the Columbus and Lake Erie Railroad for a line from Columbus to Mansfield or some other point on the railroad being constructed between Mansfield and Sandusky, Here again, Robert Neil and associates were among the commissioners. The last section of the charter, that the state of Ohio should not own any stock in the company "either directly or indirectly,"⁴⁴ probably stemmed from memories of the "Plunder Law."

⁴¹Ibid., XLIII, 300.

⁴²Ibid., XLIII, 388.

⁴³Ibid., XLIII, 405.

⁴⁴Ibid., XLIII, 415.

A conjecture that may explain these confusing and somewhat contradictory events is the following: the Neils and their allies, who apparently dominated stage coach operations in Ohio and adjacent areas -- although there is evidence that their power was not as great as sometimes represented -- were becoming aware that railroads would soon supersede stage lines. We saw earlier that as far back as 1832 William Neil was interested in steam locomotion. A railroad line from Columbus to Sandusky must have appeared supremely logical since it would traverse a part of the state not served by the two canals (at that time in successful operation), would have in Sandusky a fine port midway between the lake terminals of the canals, and would run north and south, still a more important direction for Ohio traffic than east and west. Their connection with the turnpike between the two places, moreover, had given the Neils a familiarity with the region.

Neil interest in the railroads is understandable, but why they also wanted a charter for another turnpike and plank road company is not clear, unless it was to preclude competition. With their stage lines, their railroad and their new plank road, they would have had a tight monopoly of all transportation between the two points.

This does not complete, however, the record of that year's legislation in which the Neils were interested. Liberalizing amendments were made to the charter of the Columbus and Xenia Railroad, of

which several of William Neils' associates, including his son-in-law William Dennison, were commissioners.⁴⁵ And, as evidence that the Neil outlook was not limited to north and south traffic, a charter was approved for the Franklin and Ohio River Railroad (sometimes called the Franklin and Washington Railroad) likewise with William Neil and associates named as corporators.⁴⁶

Its route was described in Chapter Two as going from Columbus eastwardly to a point on the Ohio River opposite whatever terminus the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad selected. The project can be regarded as Columbus's answer to the efforts of Cincinnati to link itself with the western outlet of the Baltimore and Ohio by means of the Belpre and Cincinnati Railroad which had been chartered earlier in the same session.⁴⁷ To establish a connection with this great eastern line was the dream of a number of Ohio communities.

Of the dozen railroads thus far chartered to make Columbus a point, the Franklin and Ohio River was only the second to run toward the east and the first to dream of a connection with one of the eastern trunk lines at that time pushing westward. The Neils, whose project this seems to have been, were not lacking in imagination, nor did they lack persistence, for we will find them some eight years

⁴⁵Ibid., XLIII, 309.

⁴⁶Ibid., XLIII, 419.

⁴⁷Ibid., XLIII, 280.

later still trying to connect one of their projected Ohio roads with another eastern line, that time the Erie.

The activities of this important stage coach family as it transferred its operations to a new mode of transportation deserve study. The change made by the Neils from horse to steam might well be compared with the change made by similar entrepreneurial families from carriage to automobile in later years.

The question raised in Chapter Two about the role of commissioner and corporator in these early rail ventures appears to be answered by implication in this chapter in which the Neils and their associates are treated as the responsible organizers. The fact is that a majority of the railroads with which the Neils were linked seem to have made greater efforts to materialize themselves than the corporations, most of them ectoplasmic, which named various other Columbus capitalists in their charters. Admittedly that is not the final answer, but the evidence thus far available does not permit of ironclad conclusions.

Of the eight railroads chartered in 1845 we have so far considered three, in two of which the Neils had a hand. The remaining five did not concern Columbus and may be disregarded. The legislature also revived five dormant charters, each of them dealt with separately in this study save for the Venice and Margareta Railroad which, for all its romantic name, made no impression on the pages of history.

The Meeting at Mansfield

The crux of the railroad situation as the legislature left it at adjournment in the spring of 1845 was that charters were outstanding for four roads between Columbus and the lake, three aiming at Sandusky and one at Cleveland -- and the Neils, their relatives and associates had a hand in all four. With interest in rail transportation running so high, a prompt untangling of these lines was clearly in order.

Early in April the Franklin and Delaware county commissioners for the Cleveland, Columbus and Cincinnati Railroad, the Columbus and Lake Erie Railroad and the Columbus and Sandusky Railroad (formerly named the Columbus, Delaware, Marion and Upper Sandusky Railroad) met at the Neil House and issued a call for a meeting of all the commissioners of the three roads, to be held at Mansfield on May 1.

The fourth road, the Columbus, Delaware, Marion and Sandusky, took no part in either the preliminary proceedings or those at Mansfield, and, in fact, is never heard of again, an odd fate for a company to which the legislature had granted three different charters. As recently as the preceding February a meeting of the citizens of Marion had urged that this road be started, only a month after the third charter had been approved, but the plea was ignored. It was the same concern, under another of its charters, which in 1832 had been accused of being a "red herring" to divert attention from a more important project.

There is ample evidence that the C.C. & C. was a Cleveland project, backed by the principal business interests of the city.⁴⁸ There is virtually no evidence, however, as to what places should be considered the primary sponsors of the other two lines, nor is there clear proof that any one of the three is entitled to the tag of "Neil project." Consequently it is easy to point out that at the Mansfield meeting the "Cleveland crowd" triumphed, but hard to say over whom. At all events, the C.C. & C. charter was selected as the one "under which it is expedient to organize." Franklin County appears to have played an unimportant part in the meeting although Columbus was the only city sure to be on whichever route was finally chosen.

According to the official report of the proceedings there were a large number of persons present who acted harmoniously and "indicated a fixed determination to carry out the project in reference to which they had met." The phrase quoted can be read, it should be observed, as either an expression of resoluteness or as a defiance to any who might seek to upset the decision arrived at.⁴⁹

The two railroads not favored at Mansfield did not at once vanish from the scene. The Columbus and Sandusky reappeared two years later when an effort, in which the Neils were involved, was made to revive it, but without success. The Columbus and Lake Erie, about the time the Columbus and Sandusky was breathing its last, started building a

⁴⁸Rose, Cleveland, passim; Cleveland Herald 1845-1851, passim.

⁴⁹Ohio State Journal, May 6, 1845.

line from Mansfield to Columbus by way of Newark, but it newer was able to get beyond the latter point. After a singularly unquiet career it was merged with two other roads to form the Sandusky, Mansfield and Newark, another child of misfortune, which the Baltimore and Ohio engulfed in its push to Chicago after the Civil War.

More fine talk than hard cash followed the Mansfield meeting. The supporters of the Cleveland, Columbus and Cincinnati Railroad, like those of the Columbus and Xenia who were similarly occupied, apparently met with slight success in raising capital, despite whatever help the backing of the Neils supplied. Perhaps the latter family was finding the going somewhat rough in the closing months of 1845, if we can believe a sharp attack on William Neil which first appeared in the Steubenville Union and was reprinted in the Whig Ohio State Journal. It was ignored by the Democratic Ohio Statesman under the editorship of the redoubtable Samuel Medary who was often friendly to Neil although they were in different political parties. (Neil had recently named a stage coach the "Samuel Medary.")

The attack said that Neil had been forced out of Neil, Moore and Company, that he was heavily in debt, and that the Clinton Bank, of which he was president, was in difficulty. The Ohio State Journal denied the charges.⁵⁰ That Neil was succeeded in the following month as bank president by William S. Sullivant may or may not be relevant.

⁵⁰ Ohio State Journal, Dec. 22, 1845.

On the other hand, a well-informed source says that Neil "had retired (owing to ill health) from the Bank and the still more important concern, The Stage Company," and that Sullivant, whose daughter Jane had married Neil's son, Robert E., took his place in both companies.⁵¹ Sullivant was the remarkable business man, interested in four of the early railroads aiming to reach Columbus, who in middle life turned from a successful commercial career to become America's greatest bryologist.

The activities of the Neils during 1846 would not lead one to conclude that their fortunes had suffered any lasting hurt. After ceasing to be president of the Clinton Bank in January, William was elected in July president of the Columbus and Sandusky Turnpike and Plank Road Company which at last got under way. He apparently remained as president of the Columbus and Xenia Railroad from his election in April, 1845, to December, 1846, when he was succeeded as president and director by his brother, Robert. At the same time his son, Robert E., was elected a director, and his son-in-law, William Dennison, became treasurer.

In the Cleveland, Columbus and Cincinnati Railroad as well the position of the Neils appears to have remained unchanged, at least during that year. At the October 11, 1845, election of directors, William, his son Robert E. and his associate, Sullivant, were among those chosen, and William was made treasurer. The next election of

⁵¹Andrew, Denny Rodgers, III, "Noble Fellow" William Sterling Sullivant, New York, 1940, p. 174.

which there is record was held January 13, 1847, when no Neil was named and only one director selected from Columbus.⁵²

On the Upgrade Again

Despite the growing tension between this country and Mexico, soon to break out into war, and the great excitement over the Oregon boundary, the legislature's 1845-1846 session pursued a fairly even course and passed a considerable number of railroad measures. In all, eleven new roads were chartered, four acts authorized ten different subdivisions of the state to subscribe to stock in prospective rail lines, and seven amendatory or supplemental acts concerning railroads were put on the books. The pressure for internal improvements called forth a law to regulate the mode of proceeding when county commissioners acted upon authorizations to subscribe to the capital stock of railroad, turnpike and similar incorporated companies. Most unusual is the fact that a majority of the roads chartered during this session were actually constructed.

Columbus was made a point on but two of the eleven projected lines, of which the Columbus and Pittsburgh Railroad appeared to be the most important. It was to go from the capital to the Ohio River above Steubenville and no doubt aimed to intercept a road proposed to run to the northwest from Pittsburgh, western terminus of the recently launched Pennsylvania Railroad. The concern was organized by Knox County interests and listed William Neil and Joseph Ridgway, Jr., as

⁵²C.C. & C.R.R., Minutes of Stockholders' Meetings. The minutes of the meetings of the directors for this period are missing.

the two Franklin County commissioners.⁵³

Subsequently three different sessions of the legislature amended its charter to allow this road to connect itself with some other line, but it never did so.⁵⁴ Enough stock was sold to permit the stockholders on November 3, 1848, to organize and elect directors (none from Columbus) but there is no record of further activity.

The other company with a route which touched Columbus was the Springfield and Columbus Railroad, the second of the five lines chartered between those places, as related in Chapter Three. It was mainly a Springfield undertaking to which the two incorporators from Columbus could not have added much since the corporation apparently never organized. Its charter was repealed and another one passed in its place in 1849.⁵⁵

The year 1846 also saw the launching of two little roads in the Dayton area, both to become of interest to Columbus. One, the Dayton and Western,⁵⁶ was mentioned above in connection with the Little Miami Railroad. The second was the Greenville and Miami⁵⁷ (later called the Dayton and Union), one of the shortest and seemingly most unpromising roads imaginable, which helped bring the fabulous "western trade" to central Ohio. Of the other railroads incorporated that year which actually came to life there is no room for any mention here.

⁵³Ohio Local Laws, XLIV, 254.

⁵⁴Legislative sessions of 1847-48, 1849-50, and 1850-51.

⁵⁵Ohio Local Laws, XLIV, 271; XLVII, 150.

⁵⁶Ibid., XLIV, 93.

⁵⁷Ibid., XLIV, 189.

The state-wide interest in organizing new rail companies reflected the general prosperity of the times and a continuation of the expansiveness observed in 1845. The capital city shared generously in these blessings. What was called by Unstad in his voluminous work on the economic history of Columbus "probably the first incorporated production company in Columbus" that lasted for any length of time⁵⁸ was chartered in 1846 when a number of prominent citizens launched the Columbus Gas Light and Coke Company. It did not begin general operations until 1850, although two years earlier it had commenced service to the state prison "to enable the prisoners to read in their cells."⁵⁹

The start of work on the "prison railroad" to bring stone from the state's quarry to the penitentiary for cutting and thence to the capitol under construction; a "feeler" about building a telegraph line through Columbus; a new paper mill on the product of which the Ohio Statesman printed its issue of June 19, 1846; a new steam starch factory -- here was evidence that the city was not longer in the doldrums. The outbreak of the Mexican war in May brought a quick reaction in the shape of an advertisement for women workers "wanted immediately" to make military uniforms.⁶⁰ Conclusion of the Oregon boundary dispute aroused a great national land hunger which led to an "Oregon Rail Road Meeting" in Columbus as in many other places. (The Walker tariff of 1846 lowering the duty on rails gave particular encouragement to railroad promoters.)

⁵⁸Unstad, "Industrial & Economic Development," p. 337.

⁵⁹Daily Ohio Statesman, Sept. 9, 1848.

⁶⁰Ibid., June 5, 1846.

When it came to constructing new railroads in Ohio however, one may imagine that the completion during 1846 of the lines described in this chapter was a more effective stimulus to further rail laying than most other evidences of prosperity. The stage was being set for the closing years of the decade and the early 1850's when the "railroad fever," as it was called by one who saw it, reached such great heights.⁶¹ It was during these years also that Alfred Kelley took his place as one of the principal figures in the world of Ohio rails.

⁶¹Martin, History of Franklin County, p. 317.

CHAPTER FIVE

RAILROAD FEVERS AND CHILLS: 1847-1861

As far as actually building railroads to Columbus was concerned, the decade ending with the close of 1846 had been a period principally of frustration. In the years that followed, until the outbreak of the war, the pulse of rail activity in the city and the central part of the state was anything but steady as good times and bad alternated irregularly. This chapter begins with the upturn in 1847, completes the analysis of charters relating to Columbus as issued by the legislature, considers the railroad laws put on the books as a result of the adoption of the new state constitution of 1851, reviews the rail charters filed from then until 1861, insofar as they affected the capital city, returns to the year 1847 when the "Railroad Elections" started on their way the first two roads built to Columbus, and ends with a thumbnail sketch of Alfred Kelley, president of the same two roads, who was to bring them to their triumphant conclusion.

"'Progression' is the Characteristic of the Age."

The business upturn in 1847 came in the year which saw the beginning of telegraph service to Ohio's capital and the consequent appearance of its two leading newspapers as dailies the year around instead of only during the legislative sessions. (Similarly four

years later the new railroad service available in Columbus was to lead one of the papers to publish in the morning instead of the evening, thus taking advantage of the wider distribution made possible by transportation facilities.)¹

In another form of transportation also, the upturn of 1847 let the city prove that it was worthy of the accolade "progressive." A total of eleven local turnpike and plank road corporations were launched in the years 1847-1851, as shown in the figures below. The Neils were interested in a number of them, including those building to Worthington, Johnstown and Granville.

TURNPIKE AND PLANK ROAD COMPANIES CHARTERED IN OHIO
1847-1851

Legislative Session	TURNPIKES		PLANK ROADS	
	State Total	Local* Co's	State Total	Local* Co's
1846/7	11	1	-	-
1847/8	24	1	7	-
1848/9	34	2	36	1
1849/50	39	1	111	3
1850/1	36	2	43	-
Totals	144	7	197	4

*Local refers to a company with the name Columbus in its title.

NOTE: Free turnpikes are not included in this table.

The turnpike between Columbus and Portsmouth, incorporated sixteen years earlier, was finally completed in 1847. Forty shares of its stock

¹Ohio State Journal, Aug. 12, 1851.

were owned by Alfred Kelley at the time of his death (1859) and brought twice their par value when sold by his executors.² R. E. Neil was also interested in the company.

In the years immediately following 1847 Joseph Ridgway added the manufacture of steam engines to the business of his Columbus Foundry;³ the Neils were selling much land at apparently good prices;⁴ another new foundry was erected;⁵ Greenlawn Cemetery was established;⁶ building materials were in great demand and short supply;⁷ what was presumably the city's first sanitary sewer was begun.⁸ These activities were in addition to the work on the two railroads and were a part of what various persons in the city were doing in anticipation of the advent of the rails.

A good over-all view of some of the main enterprises which had elicited investment capital and contributions from the people of the city during the preceding two years appeared in a letter signed "Truth" in the Ohio State Journal of August 21, 1848. In defending the inhabitants against a charge of illiberality towards the railroads the

²Estate of Alfred Kelley, File No. 3609, Franklin County Probate Court.

³Weekly Ohio State Journal, Aug. 31, 1848.

⁴Ohio Statesman, Apr. 11, 1848; Ohio State Journal, Apr. 21, May 10, 1848.

⁵Ohio Statesman, Apr. 10, 1849.

⁶Ohio State Journal, Jan. 25, 1849.

⁷Ibid., May 4, 1849.

⁸Ohio Statesman, May 22, 1849.

writer cited as "contributions for public causes" the following:

1.	To Columbus & Xenia Railroad, by individuals.	\$130,000
2.	To Columbus & Xenia Railroad by city & county	100,000
3.	To Cleveland & Columbus Railroad, by city & county	100,000
4.	To Cleveland & Columbus Railroad by individ's. . . (circ.)	70,000
5.	To Columbus & Harrisburgh Turnpike Road	20,000
6.	To Columbus & Portsmouth Turnpike Road	10,000
7.	To Magnetic Telegraph	6,000
8.	To Survey of Central Railroad, etc.	5,000
	TOTAL	\$441,000

It is noteworthy that this list omits three other rail projects, all of importance to the city, the subscription books for which had been duly opened in Columbus during 1847, namely, the Central Ohio, the Columbus and Sandusky and the Franklin and Washington companies. It is also probable that efforts were made during that year to sell stock in the Columbus and Lake Erie Railroad. Thus, with the addition of the rail undertakings in the list above, a total of five and more probably six railroad groups were seeking to raise funds among the inhabitants of the capital, all at about the same time.

The revival of popular interest in rails which began that year is apparent from the following figures:

RAILROAD LEGISLATION 1847 THROUGH 1851

Session	Railroad Charters		Acts Authorizing Public Subs'p'ns To Railroads ^a	Charter Amendments & Miscell.
	Total Issued	Totching Columbus		
1846/7	4	1	7	8
1847/8	15	2	5	10
1848/9	12	2	10	18
1849/50	20	3	25 _b	23
1850/1	21	2	23	42

^aMost of these acts authorized subscriptions by more than one municipality, often to more than one railroad. The actual number of subscriptions involved cannot be determined.

^bIncluding a loan of credit by Dayton.

Last of the Legislative Charters

Columbus shared in this activity to the extent that in each of the five years from 1847 to 1851 two more charters, on an average, were added by the legislature to those already relating to the capital. In the aggregate these ten enactments produced the same sort of confused picture observed in earlier years: duplications, excessive and probably preclusive charterings, interlocking interests beyond explanation, careless legal draftsmanship. Only three of the ten ever reached the point of laying rails.

Of the roads intending to touch Columbus, none led to the north, one each went east, southeast and south, and six went west. The one to the east, and first chartered of this group, was the Central Ohio Railroad, to be described in detail in Chapter Eight.⁹ To the southeast went the Lancaster Railroad, with no Columbus sponsors, which apparently never drew a breath after the voters at the "Railroad Elections" of 1850 had denied its appeal for a stock subscription, along with the appeals of two other lines.¹⁰

The road pointing south was the Franklin, Pickaway and Ross County Railroad, interesting for several reasons.¹¹ It was the first

⁹Ohio Local Laws, XLV, 178.

¹⁰Ibid., XLVI, 179; see Chapter Eight.

¹¹Ibid., XLVIII, 270.

rail line ever chartered to run due south from Columbus, a fact which may be a tribute to the vitality of the Ohio and Erie Canal. A Neil was among the organizers, in the person of Robert. Although it also failed in 1850 to get a favorable vote for public aid it was revived three years later, with much newspaper support, and hoped to build to the Ohio River opposite Maysville, Kentucky. In so hoping it became the first of an almost countless number of enterprises which tried to link Columbus with that pioneer river town from which so many Kentuckians had crossed into the Buckeye State. Some of these concerns got no further than procuring a charter, some were able to sell stock, a few did a little clearing and grading, and a very small number actually built tracks, either standard gauge or narrow. But the two terminal points have never been connected, or even half-way connected, by a railroad.

Of the roads running to the west, a line between Columbus and Springfield seemed to have an especially powerful attraction for promoters. Two have already been mentioned. A third was chartered in 1848¹² and a fourth the next year,¹³ in each case with evidence that interests close to the Neils were involved. The year after that, a fifth undertaking of the same sort was given legislative approval. An amendment to the charter of the Mad River and Miami Central Railroad, originally intended to run from Springfield westward to the Indiana line, permitted the company to build in the opposite direction also,

¹²Ibid., XLVI, 259.

¹³Ibid., XLVII, 150.

that is, eastward to Columbus. For that purpose the charter was so extensively rewritten as to create in effect a new corporation, and additional incorporators were named, among them William Neil and some of his associates.¹⁴

It will be noticed that the sum of the two parts permitted by the amended charter constituted a road from Columbus to the Indiana line by way of Springfield. Such a route would seem to be fairly competitive with that of the Columbus, Piqua and Indiana Railroad, incorporated the year before, which reached the state boundary by way of Urbana, about fifteen miles north of Springfield. Dennison, Ridgway and William S. Sullivant were involved in the latter concern which in the course of time became a major Neil undertaking.¹⁵

The same legislature that in 1850 sanctioned the second line from Columbus to the Indiana boundary gave its approval also to a third. The charter of the Bellefontaine and Columbus Railroad Company provided for a route between the two places named and permitted as well the building of an extension westward to the state boundary, on condition that it be kept well to the north. Robert Neil and Dennison were interested in this venture which seems to have originated in Bellefontaine.¹⁶

As if all these railroads leading west from Columbus were not ample to transport the products of a still thinly settled country,

¹⁴Ibid., XLVIII, 322.

¹⁵Ibid., XLVII, 155; see Chapter Nine.

¹⁶Ibid., XLVIII, 244.

the 1851 legislature chartered two more, designed to run between Columbus and Dayton. Instead of imitating the judgement of Solomon and dividing the prize (the privilege of building a road between the two cities), the Buckeye solons followed the modern radio practice of doubling it.

The companies thus chartered were the Dayton Railroad Company,¹⁷ presumably originating in that city, and the Great Eastern and Western Railroad Company¹⁸ which had five Franklin County corporators, among them William Neil and another striking figure, Peter Hayden, the great leader in the iron and coal trades. According to a contemporary newspaper, Hayden "has made money faster than any other business man in Ohio."¹⁹ Curiously enough, this is the first railroad charter which bears his name.

Both lines were authorized to connect with the "Columbus and Zanesville Railroad Company" at or near Columbus. Since no charter had ever been issued to a concern by that name, one may suppose that the Central Ohio Railroad, under construction at the time between those two places, was what the promoters and law-makers had in mind.

More important than these "phantom" corporations was the Dayton, Xenia and Belpre Railroad, authorized at the 1850-51 session, which was actually completed between the two places first named in its title.

¹⁷ Ibid., XLIX, 454.

¹⁸ Ibid., XLIX, 447.

¹⁹ Daily Ohio Statesman, Sept. 10, 1849.

Eventually, as already told, it became a part of the Little Miami. The third name in the title, Belpre, was not only never attained but was never intended to be, since the road was to run only ~~to~~ a connection with the Belpre and Cincinnati Railroad "at or near Rattlesnake Creek in Highland County." As in probably all such cases, the addition of the name of a far-away place was designed to lend importance and aid the sale of stock.²⁰

Another product of these years of optimism was the first major piece of general railroad legislation in Ohio (in contrast to that termed local legislation, which included charters). "An Act Regulating Railroad Companies," approved February 11, 1848, sought to introduce uniformity into the flood of charters pouring from the legislative mill by prescribing as to new roads a variety of matters, like the mode of forming a corporation, its financial arrangements, the time limits within which certain steps had to be taken, the manner of exercising the right of eminent domain, the rates to be charged, the gauge to be used, the reports to be made, and a number of other items.²¹

Since acceptance of the provisions of this law by roads already chartered was optional, and the inducements held out to do so were only moderately attractive, many companies preferred to function with whatever special acts they had been able to wangle from the legislature. From time to time the lawmakers passed amendments to existing charters,

²⁰Ohio Local Laws, XLIX, 432.

²¹Ohio General Laws, XLVI, 40.

effective on condition that the provisions of the new regulatory act be also accepted as binding on the corporation. One can only guess at the amount of politics involved in such manoeuvres.

During the Mexican War, shortly before this time, the legislature had also tried another way of getting certain clauses made a part of existing charters. It agreed to pass amendments desired by the railroads (this happened to the Little Miami and Mad River roads among others) only on condition that the companies accept other amendments relating to charges of transporting troops and munitions of war.

Constitutional Convention

The efforts of the lawmaking arm of the state to enlarge its control over railroad corporations was in line with the strong "radical" sentiment of the day. Such sentiment found expression in the Locofoco movement in politics which was "in part a reaction against the abuses resultant from a system of unregulated corporations, subsidized in many cases with public funds."²² When the constitutional convention of 1851, which owed its existence in large measure to radical backing, came to the subject of internal improvements, including railroads, it made fairly sweeping changes.

Neither the state itself nor any subdivision thereof was permitted to use its credit for, or become the holder of stock in, any company

²² Eugene H. Roseboom, The Civil War Era, 1850-1873, Carl Wittke, ed., History of the State of Ohio (Columbus), IV (1944), 126-7.

created for any purpose. Corporations were to be formed by general act, with no more charters secured by special acts. Corporate property would be taxed at the same rate as the property of individuals. A new constitution containing such provisions was approved by the voters in the fall of 1851.

To implement the enactment, the legislature on May 1, 1852, approved "An Act to Provide for the Incorporation and Regulation of Incorporated Companies,"²³ the first part of which dealt with railroads. Thereafter, the law set forth, corporations would come into existence upon filing the necessary certificate with the secretary of state, with no reference to legislative action. This meant that the charters of railroads (and other corporations) formed after that date would be copied into record books in the office of that official instead of being printed in the Acts of the legislature.

The effect was to make it difficult to assign a definite date to a new charter, since not all of them were dated, frequently they were acknowledged before a notary public on another day, and the date of filing was often not given. In consequence, it is not always possible to determine which of two corporations was organized first. Furthermore, the place of signing (presumably the place of origin of the enterprise) and the provenience of the incorporators were frequently omitted. The dates used herein are those of the charters, where available, or else of the acknowledgments.

²³Ohio General Law, L, 274.

In the same session the legislature passed two more acts relating to railroads. The first²⁴ required all roads to have a uniform gauge from end to end and allowed them when connecting with or crossing another line to adopt its gauge, notwithstanding the law of February 11, 1848, for a uniform gauge throughout the state. The second²⁵ prescribed a tariff of freight rates for railroads operating "in the vicinity of or to a point of intersection with any navigable canals or other state works of internal improvement." This law was complied with by Ohio railroads even less than the first one.

Charters by the New Method: 1852-1861

The first railroad charter under the new law filed with the secretary of state was dated May 31, 1852, followed by six more during the year, none of them relating to Columbus. One of the six was the Clinton Line Railroad,²⁶ a grandiose project, and part of one still more grandiose, known as the New York and Council Bluffs Railroad, which actually spent large sums trying to construct a line between the two places named in its corporate title.

The year 1853 saw a great boom in Ohio railroads with 37 charters filed, the largest number for any one year in the period before the Civil War. Four of them touched Columbus. First and most important

²⁴Ohio General Laws, I, 126.

²⁵Ibid., L, 205.

²⁶July 5, 1852.

was the Atlantic and Ohio Railroad,²⁷ the line which probably as much as any other deserved the label of "Neil Project."

It was apparently intended to be a six-foot-gauge extension of the Erie Railroad from the state line in Trumbull County through Columbus to the Ohio River about opposite Maysville, Kentucky, but after letting a contract for the stretch between Columbus and Circleville it disappeared from view in the minor recession of 1854. The Columbus incorporators were William Neil, John Miller, John F. Bartlit, John L. Gill and Samuel Medary, most of whom are met again in these pages.

Organized at almost the same time was the Columbus, Dublin and Marysville Railroad,²⁸ a Dublin venture with apparently no incorporators from Columbus. Filing a charter seems to have been all it ever did.

The route which promised the greatest benefits to the capital and for years was most agitated in the press was one to the Hocking coal region, with an extension to the Baltimore and Ohio terminus at Parkersburg. Such a line, the Columbus and Hocking Railroad (generally and erroneously referred to as the Columbus and Hocking Valley, and not to be confused with the Columbus and Hocking Valley Railroad of 1867 which actually built its line between those points) was formed at Landaster²⁹ with William Dermanson, son-in-law of William Neil, the only Columbus incorporator. No more than its unsuccessful

²⁷ June 18, 1853.

²⁸ June 20, 1853.

²⁹ July 11, 1853.

predecessor of 1850, the Lancaster Railroad (see Chapter Eight), did it reach the point of turning a shovelfull of earth. Like many other enterprises it succumbed to the hard times of 1854.

Last of the 1853 charters relating to Columbus was that of the Scioto Valley Railroad,³⁰ organized in the city to run to Portsmouth where the Scioto River empties into the Ohio. Confusion must again be guarded against since it was not this road but the Scioto Valley Railway Company, incorporated February 25, 1875, which in point of fact constructed the first railroad line along this route.³¹ The early company had ~~few~~ incorporators A. F. Perry, George M. Parsons, Theodore Comstock, A. P. Stone, James H. Storing (also written Stouring), A. G. Hibbs, J. M. Walcutt, Joseph Eldridge, N. H. Swayne, P. Hayden, John W. Andrews, and Henry B. Carrington, many of them prominent men in Columbus. Despite such substantial backing, at least on paper, the company seems never to have drawn the breath of life.

In 1854 the second railroad charter to be filed, although it listed the names of no incorporators from Columbus, related to the capital since it specified a route from the Pennsylvania boundary southwesterly across the state, through Franklin County to the vicinity of Cincinnati.³² It called itself the Ohio Railroad Company, the same name used by "That Famous Structure Built on Stilts," (see Chapter Three) which came to so disgraceful an end. The 1854 company's

³⁰Sept. 21, 1853.

³¹O. Comm. of R.R. & Teleg. Annual Report for 1880, p. 1223.

³²Jan. 3, 1854.

route diagonally across the state made it a rival of Neil's Atlantic and Ohio line, and, like that expansive project, it also probably hoped to connect with a rail carrier to the seaboard. Getting the charter, however, was about the only thing it ever did in its ephemeral existence.

Although general business conditions took a turn for the worse in late 1853, the year 1854 saw the launching of two big speculative ventures, the Clinton Line Extension Railroad,³³ allied with the Clinton Line Railroad mentioned above, and the Pittsburgh, Maysville and Cincinnati Railroad.³⁴ The latter was the new name of a tiny proposed line called the Sharon Railroad which, when it assumed the more expansive title, increased its capital from \$30,000 to \$12,000,000 and changed its route to compete with the Atlantic and Ohio and the Ohio railroads just cited. It later got the nickname of "Calico Railroad" and engaged in much reprehensible financiering. It does not appear, however, that Columbus capital was involved.

The following year, 1855, likewise saw the organization of one road that concerned the capital, the Columbus, Bellefontaine and Chicago Railroad.³⁵ The name indicates the route it proposed to follow. William Neil was one of the Franklin County incorporators,

³³Apr. 9, 1853, filed in 1854.

³⁴Apr. 4, (?), 1853, filed in 1854.

³⁵May 20, 1855.

the others being W. B. Hubbard and H. B. Carrington. It seems likely, at least in the cases of Neil and Hubbard, that they could not have given any attention at all to this venture since the former was heavily concerned with another rail company which was at that time close to bankruptcy and the latter had just been made president of an equally debilitated line.

From the formation of the Columbus, Bellefontaine and Chicago Railroad, which never existed save on paper, to the outbreak of the Civil War no charter was filed for a railroad relating to Columbus except for a street railway. A charter was indeed filed for the Columbus and Indianapolis Railroad on October 22, 1857, but that was nothing more than a reorganization of the ailing Columbus, Piqua and Indiana Railroad, the concern in which William Neil was heavily involved. The latter line did not take the name of the new company, however, until 1863.

In view of Neil's interest in steam carriages on the National Road, referred to in an earlier chapter, a glance might be cast at an enterprise chartered in Dayton in 1857 to build "land locomotives," although it does not seem to have influenced transportation in Ohio.³⁶ When the great panic of that year started in August it nipped in the bud many burgeoning ventures, including a number of railroads, and was likewise responsible for the small number of rail charters issued in the next few years. Its effect on the lines operating to Columbus will be considered later.

³⁶May 18, 1857.

In street railway promotion, also, Columbus showed little interest, for only one of the thirty-one charters which seemed to propose that form of transportation was for a company in the capital, compared with more than a score in Cincinnati. The charter of the Columbus Street Railroad Company was dated June 8, 1859, and filed two days later, but service did not commence until 1863. It is interesting because it was the first filed for a street railway which describes clearly just what such a company planned to do, unlike many of its kind which are virtually indistinguishable from those for the usual steam railroad. The proposal was to construct and operate a line or lines of iron railway on certain streets, to be traversed by cars or carriages drawn by horses and mules, for the accommodation of passengers only, exclusive of heavy freight. None of the incorporators played an important part in any steam railroad.

An almost total cessation of activity in organizing rail lines of any sort in Ohio occurred in the months before Fort Sumter was fired upon. Promotional activity seemed concentrated on oil companies, inspired presumably by the boom in petroleum which had begun in 1859 in western Pennsylvania.

The end of the trail has been reached as to incorporating rail lines to Columbus. To see how companies existing at first only on paper developed at last into the railroads which inaugurated train service to Ohio's capital, it is necessary to return to the year 1847 when the first two lines to the city began to take shape.

The Railroad Elections: 1847

In the early part of 1847 the editor of the Ohio State Journal was upbraiding the people of his city for their lack of railroad spirit, asking rhetorically, "...why then should Columbus rest in such utter listlessness?"³⁷ Four months later he was commending them for their interest in railroads which he called "the subject of the day."³⁸ The change in attitude undoubtedly sprang from the ringing success at the polls of the proposition for an investment of \$200,000 of public funds in two projected lines.

The legislative authority for Columbus and Franklin County to vote on this matter provided in substance that (1) subject to the approval of the voters, the city and county were each permitted to subscribe for \$50,000 capital stock of the Columbus and Xenia Railroad and simultaneously for the same amount in the Cleveland, Columbus and Cincinnati Railroad (usually referred to hereafter as the C.C.& C.). A subscription for only one of the two lines was not permitted. (2) The money would be raised either by a separate tax in the case of the county or included in the general levy in the case of the city, to amortize the bonds issued in exchange for the railroad stock. The roads had to find buyers for the bonds. (3) If the vote was adverse

³⁷ Jan. 29, 1847.

³⁸ May 27, 1847.

at the spring election the question might be re-submitted at the election in the following October.³⁹

Two provisions not relating to the public subscriptions were also in this act: the Columbus and Xenia was authorized to borrow up to \$300,000 on a mortgage, and it was permitted to connect with the Little Miami Railroad at some point other than Xenia if it so desired. This last was no doubt an admonition, or threat, to the people of Xenia and Greene County who two days earlier had received legislative permission to vote once more on subscribing to stock in the road to Columbus. The year before, an authorization to vote on a similar proposal had not been utilized owing to failure to observe the statutory time limits.⁴⁰

In voting on aid for new railroads the people of Columbus and Franklin County were both following a path already well worn by other Ohio communities and also keeping in step with the times. Similar questions in that year were being submitted to the voters in many places, including all the important municipalities along the route of the Columbus and Xenia and several on the route of the C.C. & C.

Even before the legislature had approved voting on the question it was probably clear to friends of the two roads that there would be local opposition. The people of Worthington at a meeting in January, speaking, they claimed, for the northern end of the county, had opposed

³⁹Ohio Local Laws, XLV, 56.

⁴⁰Xenia Torchlight, Apr. 2, 1846.

a county subscription to the C.C.& C. on the grounds that it would (1) increase the debt, (2) hurt business on the Ohio Canal, and (3) spoil the chances for another railroad, apparently the Columbus and Sandusky.⁴¹ There was also evidence of sentiment in favor of the Columbus and Lake Erie Railroad, by implication at the expense of the C.C.& C., although the latter was not directly attacked.

Two weeks after the passage of the referendum, notice was given of a "Franklin County Railroad Meeting" to be held March 3 to support the "Great Central Route", i.e., railroads to connect Columbus with Cincinnati and Cleveland. (In later years the term was generally applied only to east-and-west routes.) Thirty-seven prominent citizens signed the call for the gathering. Kelley was not one of them.

The arguments for the subscriptions, as advanced at the meeting, show what was expected to appeal to the voters: Columbus was already a center of stage coach travel and should be the same for rails; stock of some New England railroads was selling above par; the Ohio Canal would not be hurt by the new mode of transportation: the cost of the subscriptions would raise taxes very slightly; prices received for farm products in Xenia, already located on a railroad, were now higher than in Columbus; population would be increased; the city would be made a depot (distributing center) for the surrounding counties; manufacturing would be brought to the city; Columbus would clinch its

⁴¹Ohio State Journal, Jan. 12, 1847.

position as the state capital and would become "the common center of the United States." There was real danger at the time that the capital might be moved elsewhere.

The meeting passed a resolution which began, "Resolved, That 'progression' is the characteristic of the age," and appointed a committee to draw up an Address to the people to explain the matter fully. The importance of this gathering is hard to determine since the Statesman⁴² reported there was not a big crowd, and the Journal⁴³ called it a "large and enthusiastic meeting."

The Address, published some two weeks later, repeated the former arguments for an affirmative vote and added new ones: Columbus should not be so dependent on government employees and payrolls -- a point that critics of the city never failed to harp on -- but should encourage manufacturing by getting railroads; the profit which Greene County made on its Little Miami stock, some of which it had already sold, was emphasized; Columbus must not be left out of the great wave of railroad construction about to begin, if not already in progress.

Doubting Thomases and opponents of the subscriptions had not waited for the appearance of the Address, however, to start their attacks. The first of a number of letters, most of them signed with pen names, was published three days after the meeting and others appeared irregularly until the time for voting. It is unfortunate that information

⁴²Ohio Statesman, Mar. 5, 1847.

⁴³Ohio State Journal, Mar. 4, 1847.

as to the opposition should be derived solely from the newspapers but the minutes and records of the two railroads for this period are missing and no other contemporary references have been found. It is doubly unfortunate in that several of the objections which were raised are confusing and hence more light on them is needed.

Opposition centered on the Columbus and Xenia, which was largely a local enterprise, with virtually no attacks directed at the C.C.& C., of Cleveland origin. Four principal objections applicable to the first named road were offered.

(1) Part of the money to be raised might go to reimburse "the old company" for the expense previously incurred in building a bridge over the Scioto for the use of both the so-called "prison railroad" and the line to Xenia. What "the old company" was is not clear, perhaps the organization which the Columbus and Xenia sponsors had set up in the spring of 1845 when they reported with such suspicious speed that the necessary stock had been sold. Soon thereafter they contracted to build the bridge.

The prison railroad, which, with its related quarry, was loaded with political implications, must have loomed large in the public eye, to judge by the amount of newspaper space devoted to it. In order to furnish stone for the new capitol (usually called the State House), the state had bought a quarry on the right bank of the Scioto River from William S. Sullivant (the associate of William Neil) in preference to buying one from Samuel Medary, redoubtable editor of the

Democratic Ohio Statesman. The state then built a makeshift railroad, with wooden rails, from the quarry to the penitentiary where the stone was to be worked for use as building material, crossing the river on the bridge erected by the Columbus and Xenia. There was enough width for two tracks, the state's and the company's, and a certain amount of joint use of facilities was contemplated. Some kind of financial impropriety in this transaction appears to be hinted at, but it was never brought out in the open.⁴⁴

(2) Parochialism in its narrowest form raised the argument that public aid to the railroads should be opposed unless the Columbus and Xenia agreed to locate its station in the southern part of the city, to balance the C.C. & C. station which was to be in the northern part. Other evidences of petty jealousy between the two ends of town were also manifested. The directors of the first named railroad played safe by announcing they would make no decision until after the election.

(3) Defeat of the proposition was urged unless the directors from Columbus agreed to resign in the event of a favorable vote, to make places on the board for directors representing the stock which the county and city would then hold. The Columbus directors finally agreed to the plan, three of them, however, on condition that the cheapest and best entrance into the city, as determined by the engineers, whether it were in the north or the south part, should be the one chosen. Meanwhile a public meeting had favored locating a junction point for the

⁴⁴Ohio Statesman, Mar. 10, 1847, and passim.

C.C. & C. and the Columbus and Xenia midway between the two ends of the city.

(4) What seems to have been the most substantial argument was that the public subscriptions would in effect go to extricate the railroad and its directors from the plight they were in as the result of having heavily inflated the original private stock subscriptions. According to the charter, \$200,000 in stock had to be subscribed (10% down payment in cash or notes) before the company could organize. After the subscriptions had been made and the company established, the legislature permitted the railroad to buy back a great deal of this stock, which meant, it would seem, allowing, the original subscribers to be released from a large part of their obligations.⁴⁵

According to John J. Janney, whose researches, in spite of many errors, are often helpful, the corporation bought back \$187,800 worth of stock from individual directors at the annual meeting on December 1, 1846, "with the agreement that no liabilities would be created until \$100,000 of that amount should be sold."⁴⁶ The argument seemed to be that the \$100,000 stock to be sold to the city and county would constitute the amount needed to render operative the balance of the agreement. At least that is the interpretation that best fits the rather scanty facts at hand.

No question was raised as to the legality of this transaction

⁴⁵Ohio Local Laws, XLIV, 157.

⁴⁶Janney in Lee, History of Columbus, II, 242-249.

since the legislative permission just mentioned had on February 23, 1846, authorized the railroad to reduce individual subscriptions, if requested, provided the total remaining did not go below \$50,000. Janney's comment was: "This seems to have been done in order to enable some of the subscribers to transfer part of their subscriptions to another company."⁴⁷

The vote on the county subscription was held first, on April 5, when 2707 favored the proposal to 1247 opposed. All five city wards were in the affirmative as were 13 of the 18 townships. Three townships were against the plan and there were two ties.⁴⁸ A week later the voters in the city (but not the county) went to the polls again to ballot on the city's subscription, although in considerably smaller numbers, no doubt because the success of the proposition seemed assured. This time also the results favored aid to the railroad, by 828 to 214. In the voting for municipal offices the Whigs were successful. There is no evidence, however, of overt party politics in the railroad vote.

The favorable outcome of the referendum was in line with the trend of that year. Of the other places in central Ohio which expressed themselves on the subject of aid to a railroad, Licking, Madison and Greene counties and the towns of Springfield, Dayton and Xenia approved and only Delaware County was opposed. Three years later when, for the second and last time (at least in those early days of railroading),

⁴⁷ Idem.

⁴⁸ Ohio Statesman, Apr. 7, 9, 1847.

Columbus and its county again voted on help for the promoters of the iron horse, help was denied by decisive majorities.

To conclude this general view of the 1847 railroad scene in Columbus and vicinity, it appears that the successful outcome of the elections spurred on supporters of other proposed roads in their efforts to raise capital. The five or six companies in the field received considerable newspaper publicity, a number of "Railroad Meetings" were held, and Columbus editors broke a few lances with editors in neighboring towns who failed to agree with them as to where certain rail lines should be located. There is little evidence, however, that any noticeable amount of cash was actually put into most of the projects, perhaps because as an editorial in the Ohio State Journal put it, "For a business man, Columbus affords but little feverish excitement. Fortunes are not often made or lost in a day."⁴⁹

"....energy, perserance, and success."

The man in Columbus who probably more than any other both practiced and profited from conservative financial ways was Alfred Kelley, one of four brothers who all achieved prominence in Ohio. The events of his life (1789-1859) are so representative of the principal events and trends of his times that to write of him is virtually to write of his whole age and place, although, in point of fact, his activities were almost entirely limited to the state of Ohio. His great

⁴⁹Ohio State Journal, June 10, 1847.

grand-parents were early settlers in Norwich, Connecticut, a town which has had many ties with Columbus. From it came the Thomases, Huntingtons and Griswolds, families active in pioneer central Ohio railroads, and also the ancestors of Washington Gladden, the most celebrated clergyman ever to live in Ohio's capital city.

Like many of the early inhabitants of the Western Reserve, Kelley was born in Connecticut, coming to Cleveland in 1810. Later that year he reached the age of 21 and hung out his shingle as the first practicing lawyer in the village which had been founded fourteen years before. Very rapidly he became a leading figure in the community: prosecuting attorney for twelve years; youngest member of the state House of Representatives to which he was elected as soon as he was old enough to hold a seat; village president; an organizer of the Commercial Bank of Lake Erie; a founder of Trinity Protestant Episcopal Church; later, a member of the state Senate.

The movement for canals in Ohio, spurred on by the great success of the Erie canal in New York, found in Kelley one of its early and most vigorous supporters. His work for that cause, added to the experience he had gained from four years as a state Representative and his recent election as state Senator, made it logical in 1822 that he be named by Governor Brown ("Father of the Ohio Canals") one of the seven commissioners to investigate canal routes and costs. Thereafter for about twenty years he was a member of either the Canal Commission, frequently as one of the acting (i.e., executive)

commissioners, or of the Canal Fund Commission which was responsible for the financial management of the canals. He worked so hard at these tasks that he impaired his health, according to the biography which his son-in-law wrote of him.⁵⁰

After living in Cleveland a score of years Kelley left there to settle in Columbus, for reasons which he did not make public. In his new home, where he spent the remaining twenty-nine years of his life, he duplicated the success he had won on the shore of Lake Erie. He was a number of times elected to the state legislature, serving in both the House and the Senate; he became a large stockholder and a director of the Franklin Bank of Columbus; he was a director of the Ohio Life Insurance and Trust Company of Cincinnati; he took an active part in the Columbus Lyceum, (he was once scheduled to give an address on "Heat and Its Practical Uses.") He donated a plot of ground to the Columbus Female Benevolent Society on which was erected the first free school in the city. He served on a commission to select a site for a state penitentiary, was one of the three Ohio commissioners to settle the dispute over that state's boundary with Virginia, and declined an Anti-Masonic nomination for governor.

In the legislature he was responsible, said his son-in-law, for the adoption of a measure for which he had long fought, the ending of imprisonment for non-payment of debts. The state's school system also

⁵⁰ Hon. James L. Bates, Alfred Kelley, His Life and Work, Columbus, 1888, p. 93.

received his support. His efforts to apply Ohio's share of the federal surplus toward the establishment of a state bank, rather than toward the construction of railroads or other internal improvements, met, however, with no success, for the pork barrel laws of 1837 were what the solons finally put on the books.

The deterioration of the state's finances during the next few years came to a head in the latter part of 1841 when the Democrats won control of both houses of the legislature and conservative businessmen grew apprehensive. The state had to borrow money and Kelley was sent to New York, where he was already known for his work in financing the canals, to get it. He did so by pledging his personal credit as security for the credit of the state.⁵¹ A few months later he made a trip to Europe, also in the interest of state finances. It is almost literal truth to say that when Kelley smote the rock of credit, abundant streams of cash poured forth.

The people of Franklin county "promoted" Kelley in 1844 from the House of Representatives to the state Senate, in which he had served while a resident of Cleveland. He justified their good opinion by getting on the books the Kelley Banking Act of 1845 which "became the basic law for the banking system of Ohio until the Civil War."⁵² It gave the state a banking structure that was at once conservative, adequate for all reasonable needs, and sound in time of trouble. In

⁵¹Ibid., p. 118.

⁵²Weisenburger, Passing of the Frontier, p. 424.

the same session he was accused of dictatorial methods in securing the passage of a resolution against the annexation of Texas, which he opposed for anti-slavery reasons.⁵³

The last of this man's principal achievements in state finance was to sponsor what was known as the Kelley Revenue Act of 1846 which "provided for a fairly extensive revision of Ohio's taxation system."⁵⁴ The bill wiped out exemptions from taxation enjoyed by many types of property and generally modernized procedures. Kelley did not seek re-election to the Senate that fall. In 1855-57, however, he served once more in that body, in which he found himself the oldest member. Death came two years later.

The home which he built in 1836 on his farm in the eastern end of Columbus, now described as 285 East Broad Street, stands today as one of the finest examples of Greek Revival architecture in the state. Kelley himself is given credit for a major part of the design. It was clearly the most impressive residence in the city, worthy dwelling of a man who had made his mark. The hospitality he was there called upon to dispense to the numberless people who came to see him reminds one of the demands made on Jefferson's kindness at Monticello.

The year Kelley built this splendid dwelling was the year the Muskingum and Columbus Railroad was incorporated, the only road of which he was ever a corporator or commissioner. As told earlier, this road was never constructed and apparently never drew a breath.

⁵³ Ibid., p. 444.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 429.

From then on there is no record of any interest that Kelley had in rails until in 1847 the question arose of a proposed extension of the Baltimore and Ohio through the Buckeye state.

The president of that company requested Kelley's written advice on where to locate their western terminus, with which so many roads in the state, chartered but unbuilt, yearned to connect themselves. When he recommended Wheeling he came under bitter attack from the northern and southern parts of Ohio through which a connecting line would not pass. Just about this time he was installed as president of both the Columbus and Xenia and the C.C. & C. railroads, positions for which his accomplishments in state finance made him a logical choice when the need for a "miracle worker" became evident.

The thin line of his tightly closed lips, the corners of his mouth somewhat drawn in, the straight prominent nose, the large forehead, and above all the sharp cold glance as seen in Kelley's portrait make him worthy of the tag "Old Roman." This label, given in later years to another celebrated resident of Columbus, Allen G. Thurman, not only describes Kelley's appearance but reveals accurately enough how he was looked upon by his contemporaries. Henry Clay is reported to have said of him that he had "too much cast iron in his composition to be popular."⁵⁵ His son-in-law, who obviously admired him but did not display in his biography any outstanding affection for him, quoted

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 422.

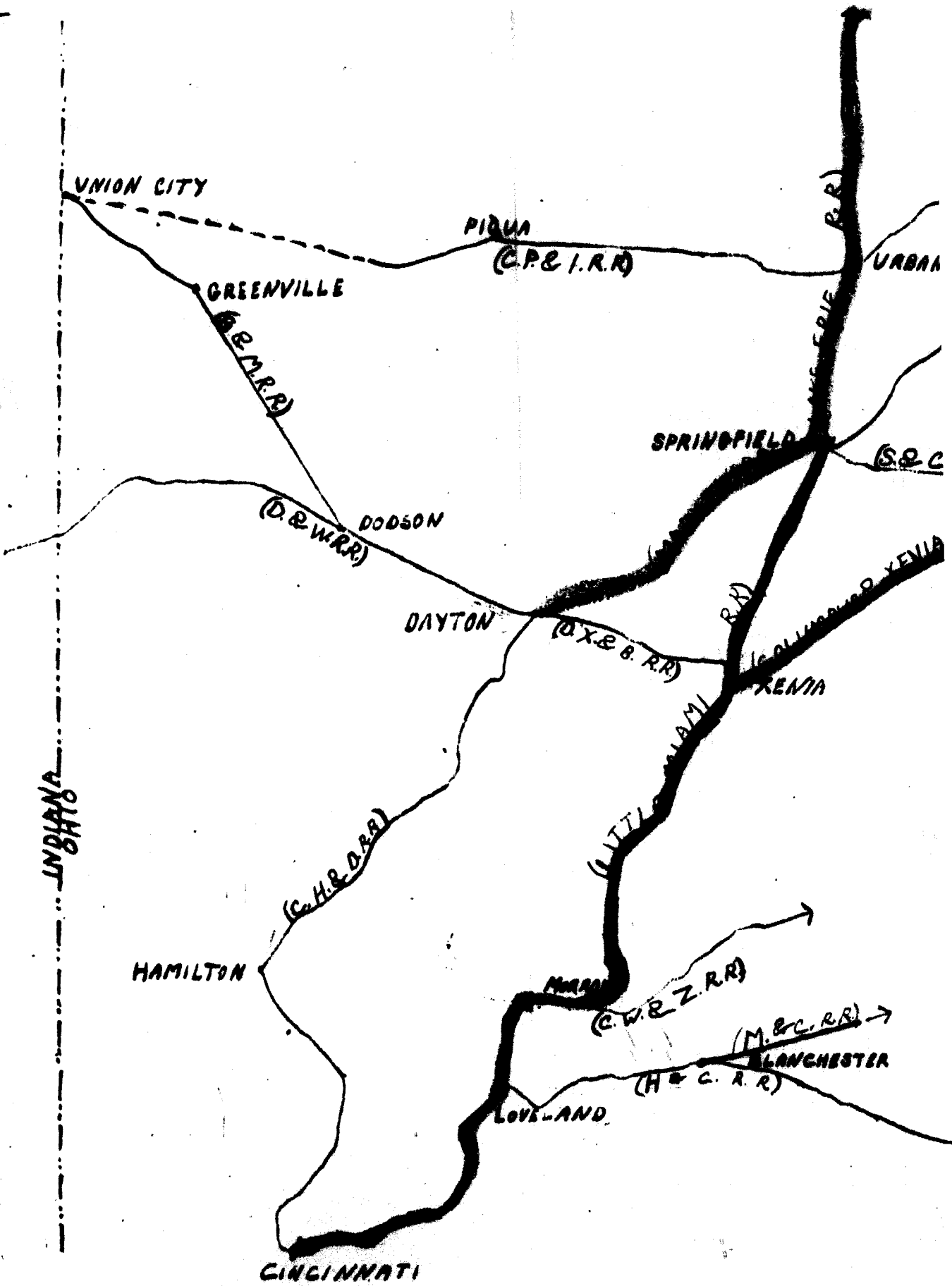
the pedantic comment of Alfred Yapple that Kelley "possessed emphatically the fortiter in re with but little or none of the suaviter in modo."⁵⁶

An editorial in the Ohio State Journal telling of his work in the summer of 1848 to raise money for the C.C. & C. spoke of Kelley's "personal application and indefatigable efforts," and went on: "He is not apt to fail in his undertakings when he sets his mind fully upon them [as is clear from] a knowledge of his character for energy, perseverance and success."⁵⁷

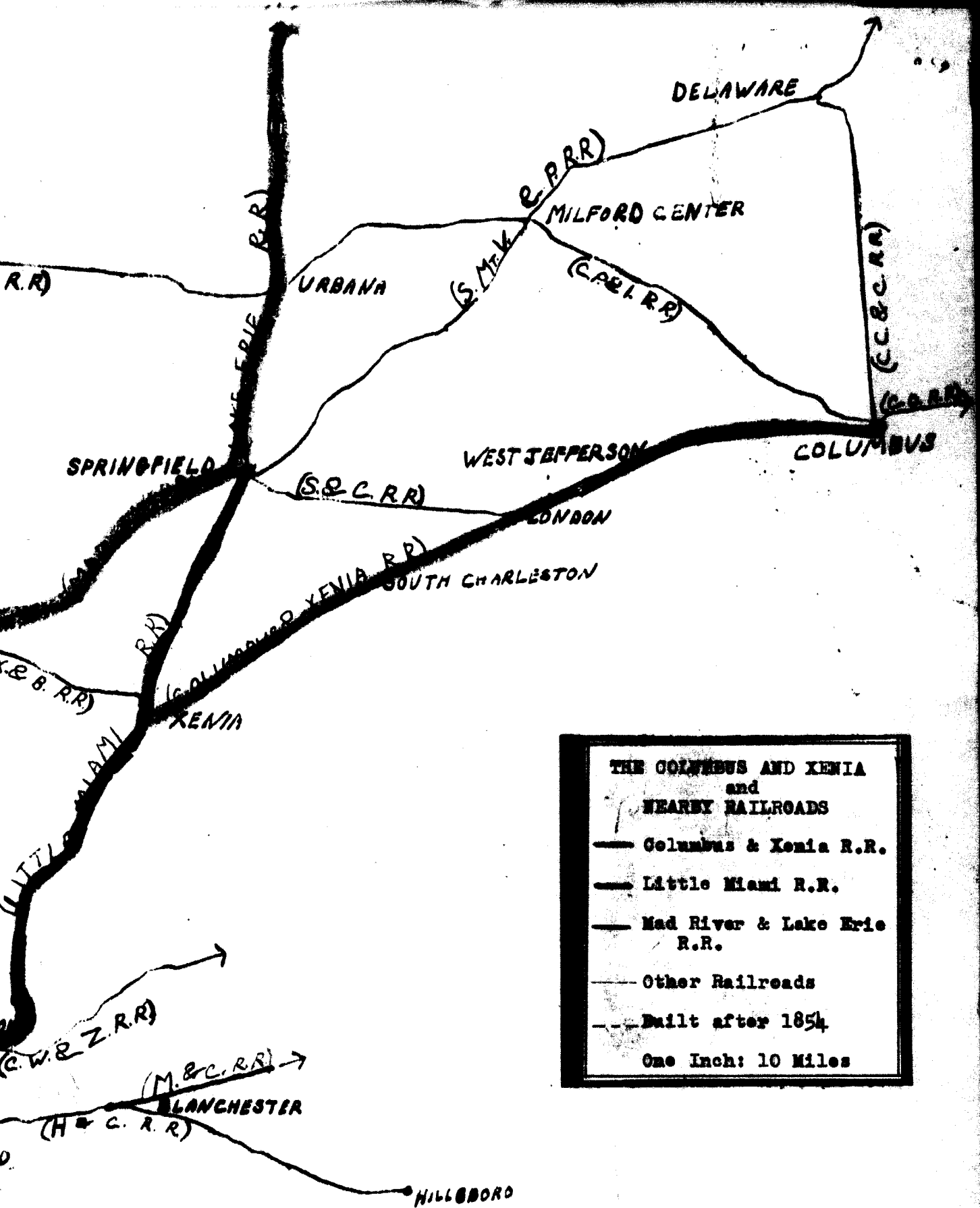
This, then, was the man to whom the people in control of the Columbus and Xenia and the C.C. & C. railroads turned when their ventures were in crying need of a leadership in which the general public and investors alike could have confidence. The talents which had yielded for Kelley a career as a great canal builder and as a master of state finance were now to lead to a third triumph. In the untried field of railroading he was to succeed handsomely in constructing the first two lines of rail into Columbus.

⁵⁶Bates, Kelley, p. 204.

⁵⁷Ohio State Journal, Aug. 16, 1848.



MAP 1. THE COLUMBUS AND XENIA AND NEARBY RAILROADS



**THE COLUMBUS AND KENIA
and
NEARBY RAILROADS**

— Columbus & Kenia R.R.

— Little Miami R.R.

— Mad River & Lake Erie R.R.

— Other Railroads

--- Built after 1854

One Inch: 10 Miles

CHAPTER SIX

THE COLUMBUS AND XENIA RAILROAD: FIRST INTO COLUMBUS

In launching the Columbus and Xenia Railroad Company in 1844 the people of Columbus were for the third time reaching out to link their city to a new and important cross-state transportation system, in this case the north-south line which would be formed when the Little Miami and the Mad River and Lake Erie railroads connected their tracks at Springfield.

The reasons for a rail link between the capital and the great through route are evident, but the reasons for going by way of Xenia instead of Springfield are purely conjectural. Since the route to Springfield was twelve miles shorter and probably no harder to build, the answer must be the same as to so many other problems of the early iron horse - a matter of money. Xenia no doubt seemed more likely to invest money in the project than Springfield, where the citizens in 1842 had failed by a tie vote to carry a proposal for a public subscription to the stock of the Little Miami.

The only evidence as to the identity of the promoters of the Columbus and Xenia is the names of the commissioners in the charter; the actual part played by these men remains an open question. The leading newspapers in the two places barely mentioned the project, as,

for instance the Ohio Statesman of Columbus which merely said: "We have no doubt but the stock in these roads [sic] will, in time, be very valuable."¹

The seven commissioners - a small number compared to many other companies - were: from Franklin County, Joseph Ridgway, Samuel Medary and William Dennison, Jr.; from Madison County, A. Toland and Richard Cowling; and from Greene County, Major James Galloway and Joshua Martin.

Medary and Dennison have already been identified. Ridgway, whose name is often confused with that of his nephew and business associate, Joseph Ridgway, Jr., was a prosperous foundryman and iron manufacturer, ("known the State over as Honest Ja."²) who became interested in several railroads. Galloway, at this time a director of the Little Miami road, made the only apparent link between the two lines. Both he and Martin were well-to-do residents of Xenia, interested also in other rail ventures. Toland and Cowling do not appear again.

The charter, approved March 12, 1844,³ provided in part as follows: "the most practicable route" from Columbus to Xenia; capital stock of \$500,000 with par of \$50, \$200,000 to be subscribed before the company could organize; tolls (i.e., fares and freight rates) charged on the road not to exceed tolls charged on the Ohio canals; whenever dividends exceeded six percent the legislature might tax such dividends at the same rate as other railroad company dividends were taxed; the

¹Ohio Statesman, Mar. 12, 1844.

²Cleveland Herald, Feb. 24, 1851.

³Ohio Local Laws, XLII, 194..

board of directors must organize within eighteen months; and sundry other provisions.

Compared to most early railroads, the Columbus and Xenia got off to a rather fast start. Barely a month had elapsed after the approval of the charter before newspaper advertisements in the two communities gave notice that stock subscription books would be opened June 11 and stay open for three days. From that point on, however, the going must have been very difficult since nothing more is heard of the project until a year later when the legislature approved charter amendments designed to smooth its way.

The revisions no doubt show what were the obstacles to further progress: the time within which the state had the right to buy up the road was extended from 20 to 35 years; the respective time limits within which the subscribers were required to organize, let contracts and complete the work were lengthened; the five dollar down payment per share in cash was changed to permit credit, and a limit was set on the debts the corporation might incur. Clearly, as one would expect, the earliest problems must have been financial.⁴

Again subscription books were opened, at Columbus, London and Xenia, and this time within forty-eight hours the commissioners in Columbus were writing to those in Xenia that they had \$260,000 on the books in the capital city alone (only \$200,000 was necessary to

⁴Ohio Local Laws XLIII, 309.

organize), and that the stockholders would meet in the Neil House a week later to elect directors.⁵ The Springfield Republic⁶ reported receipt of a letter to the same effect, with the additional information that some of the subscribers had been: William Neil for \$100,000; Neil, Moore and Company for \$50,000; and Joseph Ridgway for \$10,000.

The paper added "We understand that Mr. Neil is at this time East, filling up the subscription." Neil's haste to get control of the company is a subject for speculation, and the genuineness of the large subscriptions was later questioned.

Of the twelve directors elected at the organization meeting a majority were close associates of Neil: the two Ridgways, Sullivant, Deshler, Medary, Dennison and Orange Johnson, in addition to William and Robert E. Neil. Others chosen were Charles H. Wing, Aaron F. Perry and Joshua Martin. William Neil was made president, Ridgway, Jr., secretary, and Deshler, treasurer.

Late in May the fifty-four mile route was surveyed under the direction of General Stockton, one of the numerous military men who laid out Ohio's early rail lines. Two of the directors accompanied him on the ten-day trip. Four months later, for reasons not stated, the route was surveyed again, this time by Sylvester Medberry, who had worked on the Ohio canal system. Immediately thereafter bids for constructing part of the work were advertised for, and then, within two months, the

⁵Xenia Torchlight, Apr. 10, 1845.

⁶Springfield Republic, Apr. 11, 1845.

engineers and staff of the railroad were unaccountably laid off "until further notice." It was apparently during this summer that the new directors had contracted with the penitentiary authorities to build over the Scioto the double-track bridge which would figure so prominently in the 1847 railroad election. (See Chapter Five.)

It seems probable that once again lack of money was the reason for the suspension. After the first survey was made William Neil had gone to Cincinnati to raise funds and had got, it was reported, about half the \$50,000 he sought; thereafter the two main Columbus papers carried editorials and pseudonymous letters pleading for support for the enterprise. The lay-offs followed. The election of William Neil as director and treasurer of the C.C. & C. Railroad in October, in addition to his many other interests, may have led him to over-extend himself, for it was in December of this year that there appeared the Steubenville story, already mentioned, of his financial difficulties.

At Xenia, meanwhile, a public meeting in which the road's directors played a leading part had strongly endorsed the project and petitioned the legislature to allow Greene County and its county seat Xenia to subscribe to the stock. The lawmakers complied but subsequent disregard of certain legal requirements nullified the permission for that year.

The role played by Xenia and its county in the history of this railroad would make a useful case study, applicable to a great many Ohio

communities. For two years after the public meeting the town was scheming and counter-scheming, endorsing and condemning, voting and promising before it was irrevocably chosen over its great rival Springfield as the western terminus of the line from Columbus.⁷ But there is no room for that study in the present work.

In the twelve months that followed the report of Neil's troubles the name of the road to Xenia, with one major exception, was practically never to be found in the papers. Business in Columbus was brisk, encouraged by the Mexican War, existing Ohio rail lines were doing well and new ones were being promoted, but the Columbus and Xenia seemed to have vanished from the earth, except in the legislature where still more amendments were authorized with the obvious intention of making things ever easier for the lagging project.⁸

Seven of the twelve old directors were re-elected at the annual meeting on December 1, 1846, including Robert and Robert E. Neil, but not William. Robert succeeded William as president. It was at this meeting that the board agreed to repurchase, or reduce, the subscriptions for stock which certain directors had agreed to buy. (See Chapter Five) The presence among the new directors of Dr. Lincoln Goodale, one of Columbus's wealthiest men, and Jacob Strader, powerful figure in Cincinnati affairs and treasurer of the Little Miami Railroad, gave hope of more prosperous days ahead.

⁷Ohio Statesman, Nov. 11, 1847.

⁸Ohio Local Laws, XLIV, 109, 157, 258.

Prosperity came, but the Neils went. Columbus, Franklin County and Madison County voted public stock subscriptions to the road, whereupon the directorate was reorganized and no Neils presumably were on it. At least no Neils were on the slate proposed in the reorganization but we have no guarantee of who was in fact elected since at this point the records fail us. We can only be certain that on March 11, 1847, Robert Neil was president of the road⁹ and that on October 13 Alfred Kelley was president.¹⁰

Besides changing heads, the road between those dates took a new lease on life: it opened (for the third time) subscription books for the sale of stock to the public; settled on a terminus in Columbus north of the National Road, and agreed to put in a spur or siding to the warehouses on the canal south of that road, with horses for motive power; issued a call for the first ten percent "requisition" or installment payment on the stock which had been subscribed; and made ready to seek bids again for the first construction contract. This burst of activity sounds more like the work of Kelley than of the former unsteady management, although he was also hard at work on the C.C.& C. at this time.

The Columbus City Council helped the cause by granting the company sweeping powers to run its tracks on any street or alley north of Broad, except on High Street. The locomotives were not to exceed four miles per hour, however, and the railroad was to pay for any damage done to

⁹Ohio State Journal, Mar. 11, 1847.

¹⁰Ibid., Oct. 13, 1847.

private property.¹¹

The Columbus and Xenia directors promised to pay semi-annual interest on money received on stock subscriptions until dividends could be declared, in accordance with the optimistic practice of the day. They accepted an offer of the Little Miami Railroad to build for them the western end of the road from Xenia to the Greene County line and take stock in payment, and they fixed the following annual salaries: president, \$1500; treasurer, \$300; and secretary, \$150. The voters of Greene County and Xenia approved stock subscriptions of \$50,000 and \$5,000 respectively, before Xenia was chosen over Springfield as the western terminus.

The favorable vote in Greene County gave the signal for the start of building operations. The election there was held October 12 and the next day an advertisement sought bids from contractors for the first section of roadbed, a thirteen-mile stretch from the west bank of the Scioto River at Columbus to beyond the two Darby creeks. The timing of this advertisement was characteristic of Kelley, whose name signed to it is the earliest indication that he had become president of the road. The actual letting of the contract, it was reported, was delayed by severe rains. No mention was made of a little ground-breaking ceremony, such as most railroads held on similar occasions, when work finally started in November.

¹¹Journal of Columbus City Council, July 15, 1847.

Building a Railroad

The actual construction of a railroad in those early days probably bulked larger in the over-all picture, in comparison with chartering, financing, operation, traffic, and the other aspects, than it did in later years when machinery went so far in displacing hand labor. A brief digression into some of the details of building, using the Columbus and Xenia as an object lesson, should prove enlightening, especially in view of the rather reluctant compliment paid it by the Zanesville Gazette that "doubtless had the best railroad ability of the State engaged in it."¹² By way of comparison, other railroads will also be cited.

From Columbus to Xenia the terrain was singularly favorable for railroad construction, with very slight grades and only the two Darby creeks to offer any problems. The line in consequence had almost no curves, a factor of added safety in the days when signalling devices were elementary. In that region, however, gravel was hard to find and when first built about one-quarter of the roadbed was of clay and three-quarters of twelve inches of gravel. The defect was quickly remedied, since the travelling public was becoming aware that more gravel meant smoother riding and less dust. The C.C. & C., built on a great deal of clay and muck, also gravelled its roadbed as soon as it could.

¹²Quoted in Ohio State Journal, July 5, 1853.

The usual width of the right of way, or "road track" as it was sometimes called, was 100 feet, which, if necessary, could be cut to 50. At first it was not fenced, with the result that livestock often disputed occupancy with the trains, to their mutual loss. Many animals were killed, and many trains wrecked, until the companies learned that it was cheaper to fence their land when the road was being built. The C.C. & C. after a while made it a rule to pay half the loss for cattle and horses killed by its trains,¹³ and the Little Miami found that cowcatchers did not always prevent accidents.¹⁴ By 1852 the Columbus and Xenia reported its line nearly all fenced.¹⁵

This company, like the C.C. & C. and most others, barely had money enough for a single track, but the lure of a double one, combined with the natural optimism of the time and place, led to the construction of certain bridges and all the masonry on a scale big enough for two tracks. Frequent "turnouts", or sidings, were provided (every five miles on the C.C. & C.) to allow easy passing. As traffic grew and train lengths increased, the sidings had to be made longer.

Actual clearing and grading ("graduation") were done by hand labor, aided by horse power. There was no mention of any machinery, although "four powerful steam excavators" were used at Chillicothe

¹³C.C. & C.R.R., Minutes of Directors' Meetings, Mar. 3, 1855.

¹⁴Ohio Statesman, Sept. 11, 1849.

¹⁵Columbus & Xenia Railroad, Third Annual Report, 1852, p. 24.

a few years later on the Marietta and Cincinnati Railroad.¹⁶ When the Little Miami advertised for "Hewers and Choppers" to clear the way between Xenia and Springfield it gave notice they had to furnish their own axes.¹⁷

After the right of way had been cleared, graded and in some cases gravelled, the superstructure was laid. This varied somewhat with the different railroads, depending on the views of the engineers. The type favored by the Columbus and Xenia was as follows: on the earth or gravel were laid sub-sills, 4 by 10 inches, from 14 to 30 feet long. Planks 2 by 10 inches, from 10 to 20 feet long in multiples of 2 feet, were also advertised for, but what their use would be was not specified. On top of the sub-sills, or perhaps the planks, were placed what we now call the ties, then referred to as sleepers or cross-sills, which were required to be either black locust or burr oak, 7½ feet long and about 6 by 6½ inches.¹⁸

As told in a previous chapter, the early Ohio roads had been laid with strap rails which were beginning to be replaced about 1848 with the much superior heavy rail called T or H from the form of its profile or cross-section. The Columbus and Xenia was the first road in Ohio to

¹⁶Railroad Record, Apr. 30, 1863, gives no date for the use of these machines. Mr. G. H. Coleman of Columbus, well informed as to such matters, says they were used in 1853. Black, Little Miami, p. 109, confirms Coleman.

¹⁷Xenia Torchlight, July 10, 1845.

¹⁸Ohio Statesman, July 25, 1848.

lay the new rails from the start, a point very much in its favor in the eyes of the public which would shun strap rail lines when it had a choice of routes.¹⁹

Since the rails specified for the road out of Columbus weighed 61 pounds to the yard and were 18 feet long, the problem of transporting them was not an easy one. The place of manufacture was England (or Wales), whence they came by water to Montreal, at which point they cost the railroad $1\frac{1}{2}$ cents per pound. To get them to Columbus cost another $1\frac{1}{2}$ cents for transportation by water via Cleveland and the canal.²⁰ Some rails probably went by way of Sandusky and the railroads to Xenia since track was being laid at both ends of the route simultaneously. Democratic editors did not miss the chance to jibe at the railroads, most of them controlled by high tariff Whigs, for having to pay 30% duty on imported iron.²¹ Rebates reduced this cost somewhat.

What was called an entirely new process was employed to fasten the rails to the ties on this line. Wrought iron plates, termed chairs, $\frac{1}{2}$ inch thick and 6 by 7 inches broad, using four $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch bolts, held the rails in place.²²

¹⁹S.S.L.'Hommedieu / Statement of the Existing Controversy Between the Two lines of Railroads from Cincinnati to Lake Erie. Letter to Stockholders of the C.H. & D.R.R., Cincinnati, 1854, p. 3.

²⁰Ohio Statesman, Nov. 1, 1849, Some rails may also have been shipped via New Orleans; cf. Ibid., Mar. 28, 1849.

²¹Ibid., Aug. 21, 1848

²²Ohio Statesman, Nov. 1, 1849.

The advertisement of the Columbus and Xenia which furnished details as to superstructure invited contractors to submit their own plans for bridges over the Big Darby and Little Darby creeks. The type known as Howe's Patent Truss Bridge, very popular at the time, was finally adopted for all six bridges on the line. Sometimes in the early days railroad bridges were designed to be used also by the highways, and many were covered, such as the one this road built over the Scioto between Franklinton and Columbus.

The danger from sparks emitted by woodburning locomotives was very great and resulted in a curious set of precautions in the case of another railroad entering Columbus. The bridge over the Miami River at Piqua, built by the Columbus, Piqua and Indiana Railroad, was a covered one with openings near the eaves to let the smoke out, while on the roof was a row of water barrels on each side, with stationary ladders and trap doors to be used by the firemen. A flood rather than a fire accounted for its end.²³ Now and then parts of bridges were covered with tin as a precautionary measure, and in one case an engineer favored a "firm coating of fire-proof wash."²⁴

Tunnelling, another source of frequent trouble for the masters of the iron horse, was nowhere needed on the Columbus and Xenia, but, like

²³John A. Rayner, comp., The First Century of Piqua, Ohio, Piqua, 1916, p. 158.

²⁴Eaton & Hamilton R.R., First Annual Report, 1854, p. 10.

every other railroad, it had to get fuel and water, a matter not as easy as it sounds. At first, to be sure, in a region as wooded as Ohio,²⁵ landowners were glad to have the trees cut as a step in clearing the land, but even then there remained the matter of having it corded and on hand when and where needed. This railroad contracted for wooden sheds, 40 by 85 feet, to be spaced along the route, perhaps one about every eight miles, to hold the cordwood used as fuel. Similarly, seven brick buildings, 21 feet high and 18 by 18 feet, were built as water stations, to contain wells or cisterns, and pumps.²⁶ Windmills were tried two or three years later, but proved successful in only one place.

The Columbus and Xenia was apparently free from difficulties due to poor quality of water, a matter quite troublesome to some roads. Likewise it did not have to contend with an unhealthy part of the country, abounding with malaria and other ills such as beset certain lines.

Stations and engine houses, or "engine stables," were constructed last. Nearly two years before the line was opened, the directors advertised for proposals for ten to thirty acres of land for a "freight

²⁵ B. G. Huntington of Columbus in a conversation on June 14, 1951, quoted his father, Pelatiah Webster Huntington, who was living in Columbus in the 1850's as constantly referring to Ohio as "The Forest."

²⁶ Ohio Statesman, Aug. 31, 1849.

depot and other fixtures" in Columbus, north of Broad Street,"for the Columbus and Xenia and other railroads,"²⁷ which presumably included a passenger station. According to one report the directors of the Columbus and Xenia and the C.C.& C., acting together, agreed by a majority of only two votes in favor of a site almost where the station is today in preference to the northeast corner of High and Spring Streets.²⁸ At that, trains into Columbus did not use the chosen location until December 14, 1850, nearly ten months after the road had been opened.

The canny, conservative way in which the company set about building the necessary stations on the line to Xenia suggests the influence of Kelley. To spend the least money possible until revenue began coming in, the company stopped the tracks leading into Columbus at Franklinton, the part of the city lying on the west bank of the Scioto River, where a makeshift station was used. It was time enough to bridge the river and run the tracks to High Street after regular operations had started. The same held true for the rest of the line, on which no depot was built except at Xenia, and this one was unfinished when the road opened.²⁹

Equally canny foresight was noticed by the Cincinnati Gazette which wrote that wood and water were found at each stop made for passengers

²⁷ Ibid., Mar. 23, 1848.

²⁸ Janney in Lee, History of Columbus, II, 245.

²⁹ Ohio Statesman, Feb. 28, 1850, copying from the Springfield Republic.

instead of the "practice generally pursued on western railroads of watering at one point, wooding at another and taking in passengers at still a third."³⁰ There were seven station stops on the line after leaving Columbus: Rome, West Jefferson, London, South Charleston, Selma, Cedarville and Xenia.³¹

Excellent management, lack of serious financial worries, terrain almost ideal for railroading, and freedom from opposition and discord (as far as the record goes) created a situation favorable to the development of this fortunate enterprise. Its actual accomplishment was nothing spectacular: it took about two years and three months to complete some forty-one miles of the fifty-four-mile road, the rest of which was built for it by its paragon of a neighbor, the Little Miami. Nevertheless, it had a few difficulties.

Cholera probably caused most trouble. The first summer little or none was reported, but in 1849 it struck early and by May was widespread. Irish laborers who died of it while working on the Xenia end of the line had to be taken for burial to Dayton where the nearest priest was to be found.³² From Springfield came a report of "cholera on the cars"; in Columbus the Board of Health issued periodical Cholera Bulletins as people left town to escape the peril. Business

³⁰ Reprinted in Ohio Statesman, Mar. 28, 1850.

³¹ American Railway Guide, New York, 1851, p. 50. [Facsimile]

³² Xenia Torchlight, July 5, 1849.

along the Mad River and the Little Miami railroads fell off so much that service was cut to one train a day between Cincinnati and Sandusky and that did not pay for itself.³³ Fortunately the epidemic abated quickly and construction was resumed.

It seems clear that railroad labor was the heaviest sufferer from the disease, although in another outbreak the following year one of the leading directors, Joseph Ridgway, Jr., and Eliza Wheeler Sullivant, brilliant wife of William S. Sullivant, lost their lives. Despite the fact that their lot was not an easy one, the laborers on the Columbus and Xenia appear from the record to have been less dissatisfied than those on other roads. About the only reference to labor trouble appeared in the spring of 1848, when work on the eastern end was reported to be progressing slowly, with hands scarce, workers independent, several strikes called, and common laborers on some jobs getting as much as one dollar a day.³⁴ If there were any other differences between employers and employees they seem to have been overshadowed, at least in the minds of newspaper editors, by the politics of the presidential election of 1848 and the first reports of gold from California.

Considering the interest shown in gold and the numerous groups reported setting out to look for it in the West, one is surprised that the central Ohio labor market was so little upset, at least in 1849.

³³ Ibid., July 12, Aug. 9, 1849; Weekly Ohio State Journal, July 4, 1849.

³⁴ Xenia Torchlight, May 11, 1848.

That April, laborers were said to be scarce in Columbus, but since there was a mild building boom in progress the fact was not surprising.³⁵ Later, however, the exodus toward the setting sun was seriously to affect the city.³⁶

No distractions delayed for long the work on the Columbus and Xenia, and soon the rails were enroute from abroad whence, it was reported, they had been originally scheduled for delivery via New Orleans. A considerable amount of iron imported for Ohio's railroads came by that route, but most if not all of the order for the line to Xenia seems finally to have arrived from Montreal.³⁷ Characteristically, four canal boats loaded with rails were delayed at Hebron by an early freeze, an occurrence of the sort that made it easy for the railroads to put the canals virtually out of business.

The arrival of the iron heralded the beginning of the end of construction. To Xenia first and then to Columbus came the rails which soon were being laid at the rate of three-quarters of a mile a day.³⁸ Once some of the track was in place, a locomotive started working out of each terminus to help in the operation. Where these locomotives came from is not certain. A statement, although extremely plausible, that the one used on the Columbus end of the construction had been bought from the Little Miami and carted in pieces

³⁵Ohio Statesman, Apr. 20, 1849.

³⁶Studer, Columbus, Ohio, p. 70.

³⁷Vide ante.

³⁸Ohio Statesman, Nov. 1, 1849.

from Springfield over the National Road, cannot be reconciled with the locomotive roster of that railroad.³⁹

A contract for "bridging and ironing" the road was held by the firm of Harbach, Stone and Witt, formerly of the East and by then of Cleveland, who were also the highly competent builders of the C.C.& C. Whether their work comprised the entire Columbus and Xenia, up to the section built by the Little Miami Railroad, or only a part, is not clear.⁴⁰

The contractors at the Columbus end arrived at the Greene County line before those working out of Xenia reached there. The entire road was finished February 21, 1850. The next day, Washington's Birthday, the first train left Columbus for Xenia on a trial run, pulling only a flat car, at an average speed of eighteen miles an hour. Under normal conditions an average of twenty-seven was to be expected. The various railroad and other dignitaries who made the trip spent the night at Xenia and returned the next afternoon in two passenger cars drawn by the brand new locomotive "Washington,"⁴¹ said to be the eighteenth engine made by Anthony Harkness of Cincinnati. It had a weight of about nineteen tons, double driving wheels six-feet in diameter (a foot greater than the ordinary), and a maximum speed estimated at fifty-three miles an hour. It cost about \$8,000.

³⁹Unidentified newspaper clipping, post 1883, giving reminiscences of J.A. Champion.

⁴⁰Cleveland Herald, Feb. 14, 1851.

⁴¹Ohio State Journal, Feb. 25, 1850.

The first train into Columbus, despite the fact that it was pulled by the latest thing in locomotives, was slightly delayed, the editor of the Springfield Republic explained, "owing to some coltish freaks of of the new 'iron horse.'"⁴² The "Very Important People" (in the modern idiom) who made the trip were taken in omnibuses, free of charge, from the temporary depot in Franklinton to the Neil House. The next day, although Sunday, the train and visitors returned to Xenia.

The curious minor key in which the press of Columbus wrote of what was a major event in the history of the city lacks explanation. After so many stirring pleas to the people of the community to put their shoulders to the wheel in support of this all-important enterprise, the editors told of the actual opening with a restraint that could not have been further removed from the excitement and passion they injected into every reference to politics. The Ohio State Journal, organ of the party in whose ranks were found practically all the capitalists, railroad and otherwise, devoted less space and less fervor to the opening than did the Ohio Statesman, once again under the editorship of fiery Samuel Medary, the spokesman for the Democrats of Ohio whose party principles had certain reservations as to railroads.

In Xenia, the coming of its second rail line aroused about the same enthusiasm shown in Columbus. The Torchlight, an excellent Whig

⁴² Reprinted in the Ohio Statesman, Feb. 28, 1850.

paper, gave the event a one-sentence editorial under a "cut" or reproduction of a train of cars: "Look Out For The Locomotive / The Columbus and Xenia Railroad, we are happy to inform our readers, is completed." Just a week later the editor wrote a petulant little piece complaining that the railroad would not advertise with him.⁴³

The railroad was indeed completed, after a fashion, and it is time now to consider how much it cost and where the money came from.

Costs and Finances

In early railroading days, and today as well, the cost of a line was figured in two ways, total cost and cost per mile. The latter figure was then compared with the per-mile cost of as many other lines as one could find the statistics for. One gets the impression that the early railroaders believed their enterprise was sure to succeed if only they could build it for a certain quasi-mystical cost-per-mile figure.

This was true, although to a lesser extent than the average, in the case of the Columbus and Xenia with its highly realistic and competent management. Medberry, who made the road's second survey and later became its engineer and superintendent, took pains to point out in the First Annual Report that the original estimate for the part built by the company itself, exclusive of the part built by the Little

⁴³Xenia Torchlight, Feb. 21, 28, 1850.

Miami, was at the rate of \$14,000 per mile, that up to then it had cost \$13,720, and in the end would not go over the estimate. The total cost he gave as \$1,019,170 which almost agrees with the figure of \$1,027,843, the total investment as arrived at in another manner. (See below)

The fallacy of placing so much emphasis on per-mile cost lay in this, that differences in terrain, type of construction, quality of work and other factors made comparisons meaningless. When promoters of an American railroad advertised that the estimated cost per mile of their road would be a certain figure and that such and such a famous English road cost five times as much, they did not say (if they knew) that the line in England was of permanent construction from the start, including bridges and tunnels, whereas their road was to be built in the first instance in the cheapest possible manner, including wooden bridges and unlined tunnels, and only later was it to be reconstructed on a permanent basis.

Even the Columbus and Xenia, well-built as it was in comparison with some of its rattletrap contemporaries, counted on rebuilding its bridges and filling in its trestles as soon as it had the money to do so.

The management of this road during its first years did more than merely get the line constructed. While the pick and shovel work was in progress, and later, while routine operations were being perfected, it obtained from the legislature four grants of additional power. For reasons that are not clear, the company was authorized to build a

branch to Delaware and, two years later, for obvious reasons, an extension to Dayton.⁴⁴ The capital stock was tripled from \$500,000 to \$1,500,000, and authority given to borrow money by selling bonds as needed to complete the road. The latter proviso was applicable also to the C.C. & C. Railroad.⁴⁵

The financing of the Columbus and Xenia was handled skillfully. The following statement, put together from figures in the First Annual Report⁴⁶ and elsewhere, shows in summary form where the money came from:

SOURCES OF FUNDS FOR BUILDING THE ROAD

1. Bonds	(a) Eastern Loan, 1st Mortgage, 7%	\$299,000	
	(b) Domestic Loan (5 year notes), 7%	<u>84,100</u>	\$ 383,100
2. Stock	(a) Issued to Little Miami R.R.	232,600	
	(b) Issued to public bodies:		
	Franklin County	\$50,000	
	Greene "	50,000	
	Madison "	20,000	
	Columbus (city)	50,000	
	Xenia (town)	5,000	175,000
	(c) Issued to individuals and for construction, real estate and debts.	<u>151,400</u>	559,000
3. Bills payable			<u>85,743</u>
	Total		\$1,027,843

⁴⁴Ohio Local Laws, XLVI, 79, and XLVIII, 264. The latter was the last special act passed for the benefit of this railroad.

⁴⁵Ibid., XLVI, 140, and XLVII, 157.

These figures need comment. The Eastern Loan was a \$300,000 issue -- the discrepancy between that figure and the \$299,000 given in the Report was not explained -- negotiated by Kelley in the New York market in March, 1849. His son-in-law, James L. Bates, asserted it was one of the first, if not the first, western rail issue to be sold there.⁴⁷ (The Boston market had bought the Mad River and Lake Erie and the Little Miami bonds.) The Columbus and Xenia securities had a term of ten years and were convertible at the option of the holder into capital stock. Winslow, Lanier and Company, the purchasers, were a Wall Street house that in the years to come acquired almost a monopoly in handling Ohio rail issues and hence played a very large part in the economic history of the state. Kelley was known in Wall Street, thanks to his financial activities for the canal system.

Kelley pulled a long face over the terms of this loan, referred to the unfavorable condition of the money market and "considerable sacrifice" in the sale, and wrung his hands a little. He must not be taken too literally, however, for few Buckeye railroads got better terms or financed themselves with less difficulty. Had he known what the backers of other early roads entering Columbus were soon to contend with, he might have complained less.⁴⁸

⁴⁶Columbus & Xenia R.R., First Annual Report, 1850, *passim*.

⁴⁷Bates, Life of Kelley, p. 175.

⁴⁸Columbus & Xenia R.R., First Annual Report, 1850, pp. 3,7.

The Domestic Loan consisted of unsecured obligations which today would be described as "notes" but then were termed "bonds." They were sold in Columbus and vicinity (hence the title) and were first advertised in January, 1850, in an issue of \$100,000 in denominations of \$500 and \$1,000, convertible into capital stock at the option of the holder. The advertisement asked for bids on part or all of the issue, payment to be one-quarter cash down and the balance in three installments.⁴⁹ There is no indication of the price finally paid for them, but one may safely assume a not-insignificant discount. Not more than \$95,000 in these bonds appears ever to have been sold.⁵⁰ From time to time the company would issue some of these bonds and others like them, most of which were eventually converted into stock rather than redeemed in cash. All railroads made use of obligations of this sort, often in payment of debts when the creditors would not accept stock.

The amount of stock in the Columbus and Xenia which the Little Miami held grew very fast in the next few years. The figure of \$232,600 represents the original cost of that part of the line which it build (the work was actually done by five contractors). To this were added dividends paid in stock and apparently other items so that by 1857 the Little Miami balance sheet showed a holding of \$425,650 in these shares. Before the first dividend was declared the issuer of the

⁴⁹Ohio Statesman, Jan. 30, 1850.

⁵⁰Columbus & Xenia R.R., Fifth Annual Report, 1854, pp. 9-10.

stock paid the Little Miami \$16,383 in interest for the year 1850 on the money invested.⁵¹

Stock issued to public bodies was paid for by them with their own bonds rather than in the cash which the road needed. Hence an advertisement appeared in the Statesman on May 12, 1848, signed by a committee of two directors, inviting bids for all or part of the Columbus, Franklin County and Madison County issues held by the road, in denominations of \$100 to \$5,000. The Columbus bonds bore interest at 7%, payable semi-annually, the Franklin bonds at 7%, payable annually, and the Madison bonds at 6%, payable annually. The other side of this municipal financing is seen in an advertisement in 1849, addressed "To Capitalists," asking for bids on 5-600 shares of Little Miami stock held by Greene County.⁵² When the county sold part of its holdings in that road two years before, it had made a considerable profit.⁵³ Some of the stock taken by Madison County was used in a few years to provide the \$6,000 subscribed by that county for the line from Springfield to London, where it connected with the Columbus and Xenia.⁵⁴

⁵¹Little Miami R.R., Eighth Annual Report, 1850.

⁵²Weekly Ohio State Journal, July 4, 1849.

⁵³Ohio State Journal, Mar. 18, 1847.

⁵⁴History of Madison County, Ohio, W. H. Beers and Company publisher, Chicago, 1883, p. 528, cited by Vera Luczka, "The Effect of Rail Transportation Upon the Economic Growth of London, Ohio," unpublished Master's Thesis, The Ohio State University, Columbus, 1927, p. 24.

In those days it was assumed that an important enterprise like a railroad would get help from the public treasury. Practically all roads did their best to secure such aid, the most notable exception being the Cincinnati, Hamilton and Dayton line. The part played by taxpayers' funds in the building of the Columbus and Xenia, about one-sixth of the total cost, was less than in the case of some other roads.

The item "Stock-Issued to individuals and for construction, real estate and debts" is one of the best clues as to how much money the people of Columbus actually put up for their first railroad, a question that lies at the heart of this study. In order to understand the relations between a community and its railroads, at least in the early days, one should know whether the inhabitants were willing to risk their money in the venture. Those were truly cases where actions spoke louder than words.

The several elements comprising this item deserve analysis. It is probably safe to assume that more than half the stock issued to individuals went to people in Columbus. Neil's trip to Cincinnati to sell shares in 1845 met with only partial success, Xenia was small and had little money, and no other place on the line was worth mentioning, so the capital city must have taken the lion's share.

Of the stock issued in payment of real estate the percentage that got into Columbus hands is unknown. The land acquired by the road consisted mainly of the right of way lying between Columbus and Xenia

and it is unlikely that very many of the owners in the cases in which the company had to buy it were residents of the capital.

Real estate needed by the early rail lines was often donated to them by landowners influenced in part by public spirit and in part by a desire for the unearned increment which they counted on to bless the remainder of their holdings. When the railroads could not get the land free they tried offering stock for it. Payment in cash was a last resort, it would appear. An interesting chapter in Ohio real estate history could be written on the various ways in which railroads acquired title to their land holdings.

There is no way of telling how much of the stock issued for construction and debts, the final elements in the item we are analyzing, was paid to Columbusites, since we do not know who the recipients were. One of the few Columbus and Xenia advertisements signed by Kelley as president was a notice to contractors, saying in part that, other things being equal, "bids offering to take railroad stock in payment will have a preference."⁵⁵

The items "Bonds--Domestic Loan" and "Bills Payable" would seem on the face of them to have represented a considerable amount of local funds.

If now we add the only three of the foregoing items to which can probably be traced any private Columbus capital, we find the following:

⁵⁵Ohio State Journal, July 24, 1848.

ITEMS PROBABLY CONTAINING PRIVATE COLUMBUS CAPITAL

Domestic Loan Bonds	\$ 84,100
Stock issued to individuals for construction real estate and debts	151,400
Bills payable	<u>85,743</u>
	\$221,243

Only a part of this total, however, can fairly be credited to entrepreneurial capital in Columbus. The actual amount was probably much less, as indicated by the comments made above. To say that \$200,000 of the total was the maximum would be generous. Or, to put it another way, not more than one-fifth of the total cost of slightly over \$1,000,000 came from the pockets of residents of the city. To go further and conclude that any such sum was either adequate for the capital of Ohio, and hence a favorable reflection on the enterprise and public spirit of her citizens, or that it was unworthy of such a city and indicative of a lack of spirit, would be imprudent, given the scanty evidence at our command.

Of one thing we can be certain: when we consider the stock issued for the items listed above, as well as for the part of the work done by the Little Miami, and add the bonds delivered in payment of other obligations, we see that the amount of actual cash, as distinguished from goods and services, put up by local people was not very large. In the light of the relatively undeveloped condition of the state as whole, however, that fact is interesting rather than surprising.

Railroad Influences

Even before the railroad was in regular operation and producing the benefits so eagerly awaited, it had made some slight mark on the city. The manufacture of railroad cars was the most obvious addition to the local economy. The enterprising Ridgways, the uncle-and-nephew partnership interested in the Columbus Foundry and various rail lines, formed a company called Ridgways and Kimball to go into that business and supply cars for the Columbus and Xenia of which railroad Ridgway, Jr., was a director and secretary. Their associate, Pearl Kimball, "came on" from Massachusetts to provide the experience which he had gained from eight years of car building in that state. They erected in Franklinton a large two-story stone plant with a siding from the railroad, which at that point was on an embankment, so that the tracks entered on the second story level. Operations began in 1849, and fifty men were said to be employed.

The company's first contract called for four first-class passenger cars, two baggage cars, forty freight cars of several types and sundry other cars. The Ridgways' foundry supplied the wheels and axles, Peter Hayden's plant furnished various wrought iron parts and Ridgways and Kimball made the bodies and put the cars together. Apparently the entire product could be labelled "Made in Columbus." The Ohio Statesman

pointed out that but for this concern the business would have gone to Cincinnati.⁵⁶

One cannot help wondering why the Neils with their great shop on Front Street for building and repairing stage coaches did not get into car building. They were personally close to the Ridgways, and two of their employees, one a foreman, went to work for the new company. Four years before, the Neils had been reported on the point of entering that line of work but soon thereafter the mysterious events took place which prompted the attack by the Steubenville paper -- and no more was heard of their car building project.⁵⁷

About the time they allied themselves with Kimball the Ridgways started the manufacture of steam engines as an addition to their regular stove and plow business, but there is no hint that they planned to make locomotives.⁵⁸

It is not surprising to see that a few minor businesses tried to capitalize on the word "Railroad," which they used rather freely in their advertisements, once the trains were running. We find a "Railroad Omnibus Line" (established by the great Ohio Stage Company at the time the railroad opened;) a foundry advertising "Railroad Work, viz, Switches, Switch-stands, Frogs," and so forth; a "Railway Hotel";

⁵⁶Much of the information concerning the Ridgways and Kimball operation is derived from Richard H. Osgood, "Some Recollections of the first railroad car building in Columbus, Ohio, and of the first railroads built into the city," The "Old Northwest" Genealogical Quarterly, XIV, (1911), July-Oct. issue, 117-128, and from the Ohio Statesman, Sept. 14, 1849.

⁵⁷Janney in Lee, History of Columbus, II, 322, and Ohio Statesman, Aug. 27, 1845.

⁵⁸Ohio Statesman, Aug. 9, 1848.

a "Railroad Exchange" (a restaurant), and what was in effect probably the first parking lot in Columbus advertised as "Union Hotel, Franklinton / Opposite Railroad Depot / Leave horses there if you wish to take the cars." About this time the Ridways and Kimball firm began advertising their railroad car business. A number of out-of-town forwarding and commission merchants also started advertising in Columbus newspapers.

Such scattered activities were some of the outward and visible signs of the imprint of the iron horse on the city. The effect on the cultural and social aspects of Columbus is too large a topic to be considered here, except for a reference to a single aspect of the social life of the city.⁵⁹ The following is copied in full from the Ohio Statesman of June 13, 1850, about four months after trains began running into Columbus:

Fine Excursions / Among the pleasant afternoon excursions from our city, none holds out pleasanter inducements than leaving here in the cars at two o'clock and going as far as Xenia, spending a few hours and returning at 9 o'clock in the evening.

The run is over one of the best of Rail Roads and the finest of cars. Quite a company left this afternoon and will return this evening.

Although it is difficult to point to many specific businesses or other activities and show that they were due to the coming of the rails, the city was nonetheless on its way to a period of considerable

⁵⁹ David Mead, Yankee Eloquence in the Midwest: the Ohio Lyceum, 1850-1870, East Lansing, Michigan, 1951, shows how the railroad made it possible for distinguished lecturers from the East to spread "culture" in the Midwest.

prosperity, some of which should undoubtedly be credited to the improvements in transportation facilities. (See Chapter Ten for further comments on this matter.)

Regular Service

When the trial runs, described above, showed the road to be in working order, the management advertised that regular passenger service, in connection with the Little Miami road, would start on February 27, 1850, on a schedule of two trains daily each way between the state capital and the state's largest city. From Columbus they left at 1 P.M. and 12 midnight and took eight and ten hours, respectively, to reach Cincinnati. The northbound trips left at 6 A.M. and 2:30 P.M., arriving in Columbus at 2 P.M. and 11 P.M. On Sundays the early train in each direction was omitted. Considerable self-confidence was shown in operating a night train from the start instead of waiting for the road bed to settle.

At Columbus the Ohio Stage Company (the Neil Concern) gave service between the "Depot" and any point in the city with its fleet of 18-passenger omnibuses, not made by Neil in Columbus but in Troy, New York, "finished substantially but neatly. The landscapes painted on them are the best we have seen in that style, and are almost fit for a lady's boudoir."⁶⁰ When a passenger bought his railroad ticket at the office of the Ohio Stage Company in the Neil House, he could arrange to

⁶⁰Ohio Statesman, Sept. 20, 1849.

have an omnibus call for him anywhere in town and take him to the station. Exactly one hundred years later passengers were buying airplane tickets and arranging for limousine service at the office of the Trans World Airlines in a newer Neil House on the same site.

The historic significance of the departure of the first regularly scheduled train on the 27th was not lost on the editor of the Ohio State Journal. In his issue of that date he reported that the train had left at one o'clock in the presence of a large crowd, and then added, "We put this fact on record." The Ohio Statesman on the same date refrained from sententiousness and reported that the departure took place at half-past twelve with from eighty to one hundred passengers. That weekend the Columbus and Xenia Railroad, in conjunction with the Little Miami, put on a memorable "junket" -- a trip to Cincinnati and return -- for the governor, the legislature, editors and other notables. The affair seems to have been a huge success.

Then the skies that had smiled on the little railroad grew dark, figuratively and literally. The management was forced to advertise that "owing to a disappointment in procuring the necessary machinery" only one train a day could be run each way, a schedule that prevailed until June 3, when a daily freight train with passenger cars attached was added. Two days after the service was curtailed it was stopped altogether for a brief period when heavy rains caused a flood which washed out the stop-gap timber trestle over Deer Creek in Madison County. It was quickly replaced with a Howe patent bridge. A little

while later it was reported that the elegant new locomotive Washington had already twice blown itself up, but the story seems exaggerated.⁶¹ It was sold in 1852 for \$7,500.

These minor setbacks of course affected the progress of the road hardly at all. No sooner were regular operations well started than bids were sought for a covered bridge from Franklinton across the Scioto, via a little islet variously known as Bloody Isle, Brickell's Island and Willow Island, and another bridge over Spring Street to the site of the new station.⁶² That building was erected just outside the city limits, at the northeast corner of what were then called Worthington Avenue and North Public Lane, now High Street and Naghten Avenue, and was no doubt designed from the start to handle the traffic of the C.C.& C. as well as of the Columbus and Xenia. Unexplained delays ensued so that the new "Depot" was not put into operation until December 15, 1850. A few days later the company offered free rides home for Christmas to members of the legislature. The trains were by then being referred to as "the western cars."

Review of the First Year

The First Annual Report covers the ten months ending December 31, 1850, and is a treasure trove of important and interesting information. As was nearly always the case at the start of pioneer rail lines,

⁶¹ Ohio State Journal, Apr. 2, 1850.

⁶² Map of Columbus, Ohio, published by Burr and Randall, Columbus, 1853.

passenger business ranked above freight. The road had carried 37,334 passengers who paid \$47,017, and freight that yielded a revenue of \$19,348. From the sum of these receipts, expenses of \$28,916 were subtracted, leaving a net income of \$37,449 on outstanding capital stock of \$559,000, a yield of about 6.7%.

Kelley is careful to point out in the President's part of the Report that receipts were not swelled by charging to construction and crediting to revenue the cost of transporting the supplies used in building the line, as some other roads did. The net profit for the second year he estimated would be ten percent.

Three-fifths of the passengers were classified as "through," (i.e. whose journey extended beyond the limits of the Columbus and Xenia line) and two-fifths as "way" or local, a ratio that grew in favor of the "through" as the state's rail network expanded. The principal items shipped were merchandise, corn and hogs. Wheat, "the staple product of the state for exportation," was short because of a poor crop. The items carried into central Ohio by the railroad were led by groceries, merchandise and molasses.

There is little record of the rates charged for freight, save that in the following year it was reported that a train of cars loaded with "live hogs" was sent from Columbus to Cincinnati at a cost of about 25 to 30 cents per hog.⁶³ The passenger fare from Columbus to Xenia

⁶³Ohio State Journal, May 27, 1851.

was \$1.60, cheaper by \$1.00 than the former stage coach rate, and from Columbus to Cincinnati, \$3.50.

The alert Ridgways had arranged that their warehouses should be used by the road as its freight houses, but they soon proved inadequate, Superintendent Medberry complained in his part of the Report. Despite an expansion program, nearly every succeeding Report bore a similar complaint, a fact not surprising in view of the ninefold increase in freight revenues in the first six years of operation.

Rolling stock consisted of the cars made by Ridgways and Kimball and some additions, including four more passenger cars, "three with saloons." Beside the Washington, the locomotives were the Franklin, Jefferson and Columbus, and four more were said to be needed. Two years later the road was planning to sell some of its locomotives because they were not powerful enough.

Information as to employees is almost non-existent. Shortly before the road was opened the Xenia Torchlight reported that over 250 applicants were seeking the position of conductor.⁶⁴ Among them were probably some stage coach drivers, victims of technological unemployment. One conductor engaged by the road was Malcolm McDowell of Franklinton, younger brother of Irwin McDowell, the Union general at the battle of Bull Run.⁶⁵ Division hands were provided by the company with a dwelling at Darby Creek, no doubt because there was no community nearby in which they could find housing.

⁶⁴Xenia Torchlight, Feb. 7, 1850.

⁶⁵Osgood, "Some Recollections," p. 122.

Even in the first Report, references were made to extending the scope of the line's activities. The importance of the Central Ohio Railroad, which was to connect Columbus with the Baltimore and Ohio near Wheeling, was emphasized and mention made of the considerable help in selling stock which the Columbus and Xenia Company was giving it. The value of a line from Xenia to Dayton was also stressed. Kelley, who wrote this part, made no important reference, however, to the Little Miami Railroad.

Relations with Other Roads

For the rest of its life the really important matters in the history of the Columbus and Xenia were its relations with the other Ohio railroads.

In April, 1851, a month and a half after the C.C. & C. Railroad was opened, the first "quick train" sped over the three connecting roads between Cleveland and Cincinnati, thereby fixing forever the subsequent character of the Columbus and Xenia as merely a link, and emphasizing that inherent unity of the three which no logic was ever strong enough to reduce to corporate form.

The first of several attempts at consolidation was made in September of the same year, when the C.C. & C. sought closer ties with the other two lines and also with the Cleveland, Painesville and Ashtabula Railroad, a lake shore ally connecting Cleveland with the east.⁶⁶ The move came to naught.

⁶⁶C.C. & C.R.R., Minutes of Directors' Meetings, Sept. 5, 1851.

Four months later the Columbus and Xenia proposed a second attempt, and the C.C. & C. (and perhaps the other roads as well), after a special committee had investigated and approved, gave the plan its endorsement.⁶⁷ Failure again was the result, although the C.C. & C. did enter into a joint operating contract with the Cleveland, Painesville and Ashtabula, often called the Lake Shore Road, which was in a few years to be head-lined as "The Most Profitable Railroad in the World."⁶⁸ The opening of that line in November, 1852, gave the Columbus and Xenia a "continuous railroad avenue to the Atlantic cities throughout the year."⁶⁹

Conservative railroad financing in those days did not frown when a brand new road, like the line to Xenia, put \$60,000 into an unfinished connecting road, the Central Ohio, in order to help it get under way. The details are illuminating: the Columbus and Xenia issued \$60,000 of five-year income bonds, unsecured, non-convertible, (like the domestic bonds already mentioned, these would today be called "notes"), in exchange for a like amount of capital stock of the Central Ohio, which agreed to pay 8% interest thereon until the regular dividends reached that figure. This was a better proposition than the Central Ohio made to its individual stockholders, who were to get 8% only until the road was placed in operation. The Columbus and Xenia, however, could not sell the stock without the permission of the issuer.

⁶⁷ Ibid., Jan. 14, Feb. 13, 1852.

⁶⁸ Railroad Record, Oct. 27, 1864.

⁶⁹ Columbus & Xenia R.R. Third Annual Report, 1852, p. 15.

There was a counter obligation, unrealistic to a degree, on the part of the poverty-stricken Central Ohio, to buy \$60,000 of stock in the Columbus and Xenia, "to be made available before the completion of their extension to Dayton." Arrangements of this sort, which could be called the ferro-equinological equivalent of taking in each other's washing, were fairly common, especially between very weak lines which had a fondness for adding their practically valueless endorsements to the practically valueless securities given them by roads which seemingly could not say "No."

The Columbus and Xenia's general policy as to its weaker neighbors was set forth in the Report for 1853 by Robert Neil who was then president: to encourage local business and to look favorably on more local lines as feeders, but not to favor extending them into through lines. Accordingly, during the year the company had agreed to buy \$50,000 stock in the Dayton, Xenia and Belpre road and the same amount in the Springfield and Columbus line, and was prepared to make a generous proposition to the Steubenville and Indiana Railroad.

The Dayton, Xenia and Belpre, or the D.X.& B., to give it a short title for the moment, was designed as a connecting line between Xenia and the fabulous "western trade" that was supposed to pour into Dayton from Indiana and further points. As related earlier, several attempts had been launched to channel this golden flow through Columbus, but without success. The Little Miami and the Columbus and Xenia decided to help finance construction of a line under the D.X.B. charter rather than under the Columbus and Xenia powers, and the \$50,000

subscription followed to help build the stretch of fifteen and one-quarter miles between Xenia and Dayton.

The investment turned out badly almost at once. The little D.X.& B. opened for business in June, 1854, and by December, 1856, the joint Columbus and Xenia-Little Miami management was recommending that the item be charged off the books as worthless. No reason was given for the sudden decline in value.⁷⁰

Curiously, the same thing happened in the case of the Springfield and Columbus road into which in 1854 the Columbus and Xenia also poured \$50,000. Four years later that was written down to \$1,000. This twenty-mile line from Springfield to London, where it joined the Columbus and Xenia, opened in 1853 and was intended to furnish an additional entrance into the capital city. It was prevented from doing so, however, by a financial coup of which the details, if they were available, would doubtless make interesting reading. The Cincinnati, Hamilton and Dayton, a very able company, wanted its ally, the Mad River Railroad, to enjoy an independent entrance into Columbus, so it put up \$40,000 to help construct the Springfield and Columbus line. The Columbus and Xenia saw the threat to itself and by putting up \$50,000 was able to halt the construction at London, despite the fact that a certain amount of grading had already been done between that point and Columbus. The Cincinnati, Hamilton and Dayton could only hope

⁷⁰Little Miami R.R. and Columbus & Xenia R.R., First Joint Annual Report, 1856, pp. 8-9.

to get its money back, but apparently it never did.⁷¹

Within the year the Mad River got its revenge. When the Springfield and Columbus began operations the locomotive service was furnished by the Columbus and Xenia which sought thereby to get its toe in the door of the trade of Springfield. Very quickly, however, the Mad River obtained a fifteen-year lease on the line to London and the Columbus and Xenia's influence was removed. Some years later the latter and its overlord, the Little Miami, tried to buy the Springfield and Columbus outright, but failed. Not until 1871, and under a different corporation, was the twenty-five mile stretch from London to Columbus finished, seemingly at a very handsome profit to the promoters.⁷²

To strike a balance as to these investments in other lines by the youthful Columbus and Xenia, that is, to determine if they were ultimately beneficial, would be a difficult task, especially since it cannot be determined how much additional traffic resulted from the outlays. One would no doubt be safe in concluding that if there was any net loss to the railroad, it probably was not very great.

Of the other events of these first three or four years only one or two need hold our attention. Unlike the directors we will not spend much time over the problem of a suitable eating place at the Columbus station, where D. W. Deshler, the road's treasurer, operated the

⁷¹Railroad Record, Mar. 24, 1858, reprinting "Report of Investigating Committee" of the Cincinnati, Hamilton and Dayton Railroad.

⁷²Comm. of R.R. & Teleg. Annual Report for 1880, pp. 776-778.

restaurant. Nor need we be surprised that a stock transfer office was opened in New York, in view of the profits so quickly earned and paid out.

The dividend record is impressive, beginning with the first distribution, five percent in stock, paid barely sixteen months after the road opened. The tally for the first six years follows:

DATE	AMOUNT	PAID IN
July 1, 1851	5%	Stock
Jan. 1, 1852	6%	Stock
July 1, 1852	10%	Stock ^a
Dec. 1, 1852	5%	Optional, stock or cash
June 1, 1853	5%	Optional, stock or cash
Dec. 1, 1853	5%	Optional, stock or cash
June 1, 1854	5%	Stock
Dec. 1, 1854	none ^b	----
June 1, 1855	5%	Stock
Dec. 1, 1855	5%	Bonds
June 1, 1856	5%	Bonds
Dec. 1, 1856	5%	Bonds
June 1, 1857	5%	Cash

^aIncludes net earnings of previous year until then undivided.

^bOmission due to adjustments arising from "Contract of Union" with Little Miami Railroad.

Such a high rate of earnings was due in part to ignorance of the proper rate of depreciation. President Dennison in the Fifth Annual Report for 1854, admitted they really did not know what the annual charge should be. Some roads never referred to depreciation at all.

Dividends were paid in stock mainly for two reasons: it represented a way of plowing back earnings into the business, which was a thrifty thing to do, and it conserved cash for other uses. In his

Report for the following year, Dennison commented rather smugly on the woes of some other roads which had paid in cash but only by selling securities at a loss. The Columbus and Xenia stockholders seemed satisfied to receive stock since practically all of them chose it over cash when they had an option.

Because railroad accounting procedures were not yet well understood and many years were to pass before the Interstate Commerce Commission was to require uniformity, the importance of the information given on the early balance sheets is debatable. Bookkeeping practices changed frequently; so figures for different years are often not comparable. As an example, the Columbus and Xenia's figures for freight receipts included earnings from carrying the mails only after 1853. Where they appeared in the statements before that time was not revealed.

In order that the comprehensive view of an organization which a balance sheet affords may not be lacking, the statement for one year has been selected arbitrarily and set forth here in slightly condensed form. The figures are those for 1856, when the road had reached what might be called its maturity. That year, also, its figures were first published in the same document with those of the Little Miami as the start of Joint Annual Reports.

COLUMBUS AND XENIA RAILROAD COMPANY
Balance Sheet (Slightly Condensed)
December 1, 1856

ASSETS

Construction Account	\$ 1,261,434.01
Real Estate	21,101.46
Little Miami and Columbus and Xenia Co.'s stock account.	371,082.12
Second track	43,928.65
Dayton, Xenia and Belpre Railroad Stock	51,000.00
Springfield and Columbus Railroad Stock	50,000.00
Central Ohio Railroad Stock	60,000.00
Eastern Deposit.	50,472.22
S. E. Wright, Treas.	22,874.98
Other Assets	<u>78,377.36</u>
	\$ 2,010,270.80

LIABILITIES

Capital Stock.	\$ 1,490,450.00
Mortgage Bonds	18,000.00
Bonds due February 1, 1857	55,000.00
Dividend Bonds	139,600.00
Bills payable	50,500.00
Dividend No. 11, December 1, 1856	74,522.50
Other liabilities	2,558.17
Surplus	<u>179,640.13</u>
	\$ 2,010,270.80

Probably the only item above which may call for comment is the asset "Little Miami and Columbus and Xenia Co.'s stock account." This stood for the assets which the two roads held jointly, such as rolling stock. In accordance with the "Contract of Union," the Little Miami's undivided interest therein was two-thirds and the Columbus and Xenia's was one-third.

From almost its earliest days, once operations had started, it seemed clear that the road had "arrived" and that a rosy future could confidently be expected. There was no premonition that the twelve months between the running of the first train and the inauguration of the C.C.& C. were to be the time of the line's greatest individuality, and that each year thereafter it would occupy a more dependent position. Up to February, 1851, and the opening of the road to Cleveland, the fifty-four-mile Columbus and Xenia line was a fairly independent enterprise that provided the only rail service to the state's capital and connected it with the important Little Miami route to Cincinnati. Once the C.C.& C. got under way, however, the little road as merely a link between two greater lines retained but slight freedom of action. A year later this fact was made very plain.

A sweeping agreement between the Columbus and Xenia and the Little Miami companies, effective March 1, 1852, provided that the two roads were to be "worked upon joint account," which meant that "the entire distance from Columbus to Cincinnati is managed as one line, the expense and profit being divided on the basis of the capital stock."⁷³ Personnel and rolling stock were pooled. As a result, the very able Little Miami management took charge of the operations of the Columbus and Xenia, to the benefit of all concerned.

⁷³"Second Annual Report of the Columbus and Xenia Railroad" as given in part in the Weekly Ohio State Journal, Mar. 30, 1852.

This arrangement is not looked upon by the Pennsylvania Railroad, which now embraces both the early lines, as definitely marking the start of joint operations. It gives to that event the date of November 20, 1853, when the "Contract of Union" was signed to provide a closer bond between the two roads.⁷⁴ This latter agreement, to run in perpetuity, to all intents and purposes marked the end of independent operations on the smaller line although its corporate existence was not affected and its stockholders were paid dividends at the same rate paid to holders of shares in the Little Miami.

This subordination is very marked in the Columbus and Xenia Minutes where all resolutions begin with the routine phrase "Resolved, (the Little Miami Railroad concurring) that ...". When the Little Miami leased itself to the "Panhandle," the subsidiary of the Pennsylvania Railroad, in 1869, its little vassal trailed along behind and sank one rung lower in the hierarchy of railroads. There it stayed, a parasite in the eyes of its great overlord from the Keystone State but a veritable gold mine for its stockholders.

For, rather like a kept woman, the Columbus and Xenia, in return for giving up its freedom of action, extorted a very high price. The "Contract of Union" and the 1869 contract between the Little Miami and

⁷⁴"A Corporate History of the Pennsylvania Railroad as of the Date of Valuation, June 30, 1918. Prepared in Accordance with the Requirements of Valuation Order No. 20, issued by the Interstate Commerce Commission, May 13, 1915," in the files of the Pennsylvania Railroad, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

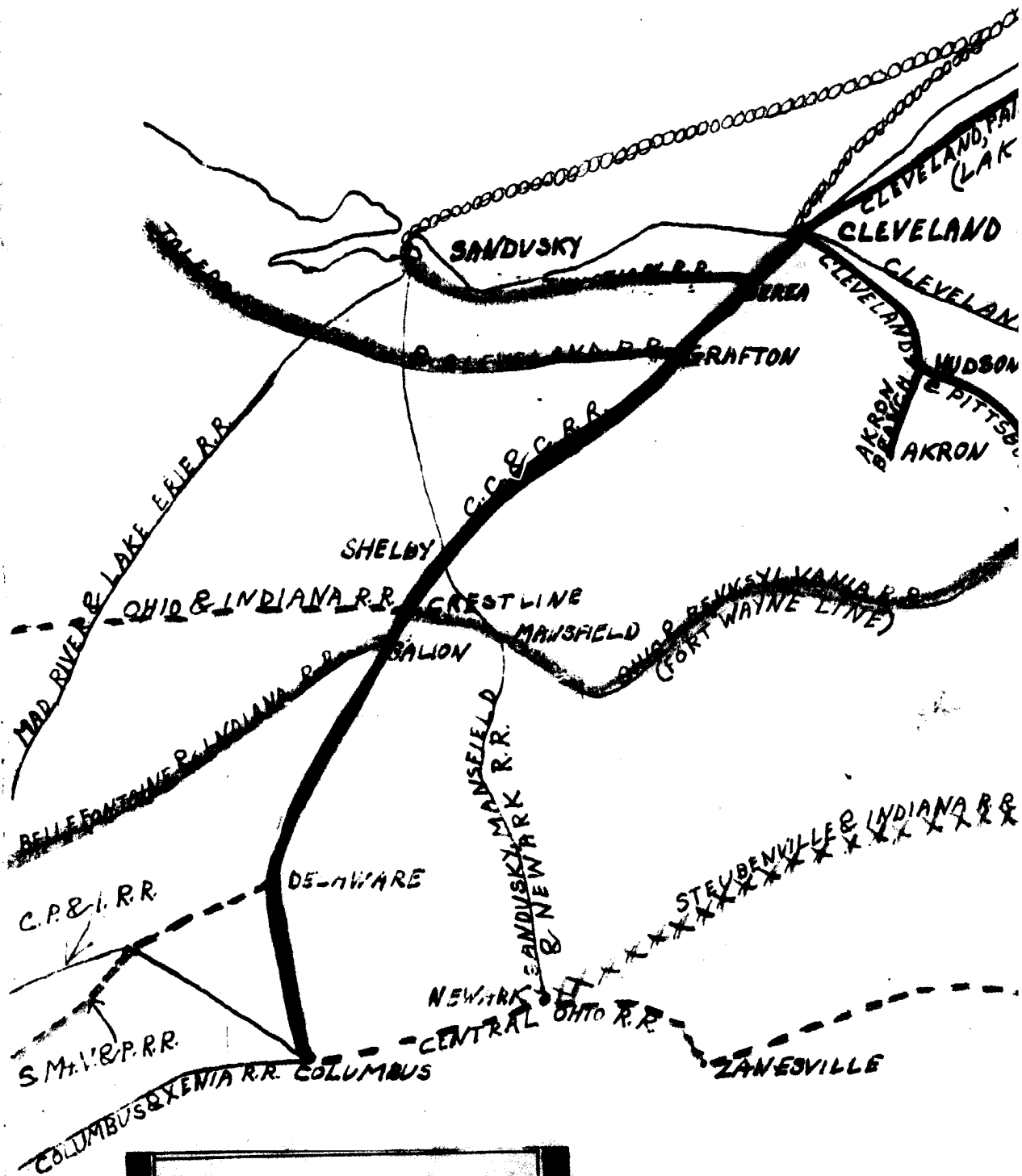
the "Panhandle," the latter contract being guaranteed by the Pennsylvania, bound the lessees so tightly that they almost had to be down to their last cent before daring to omit payments to the Columbus and Xenia. In addition to that protection, the stockholders of the latter had the comfort of knowing that any money which the Pennsylvania spent to improve the line it had leased from them inured more to their benefit than to the spender's, since the credit went largely to the lessor. The lawyer responsible for this ultra-safe arrangement was Judge Joseph R. Swan, according to the Columbus banker, B. G. Huntington, a former director of the road, who called the Columbus and Xenia guaranteed stock second to none in the country and the lease of that road to the Little Miami the tightest and best railroad lease (from the lessor's point of view) that he had ever seen.⁷⁵

The Pennsylvania, weary at last of paying through the nose for the use of some fifty-four miles of track, decided to buy all the stock and dissolve the corporation. The shareholders, well aware of the value of what they held, were reluctant to sell, and Mr. Huntington, as an agent for the purchasers, had difficulty in persuading some of them to accept the handsome profit which was offered. Among the holders appeared the names of families living in Columbus ever since the road started, although it was not indicated on the records that they had held their stock for that entire time. Some of the names were Swan, Buttles,

⁷⁵Conversation with B. G. Huntington, June 14, 1951.

Hubbard, Platt, Deshler, Strader and Parsons, all associated with early Ohio railroads. (See Table 4.)

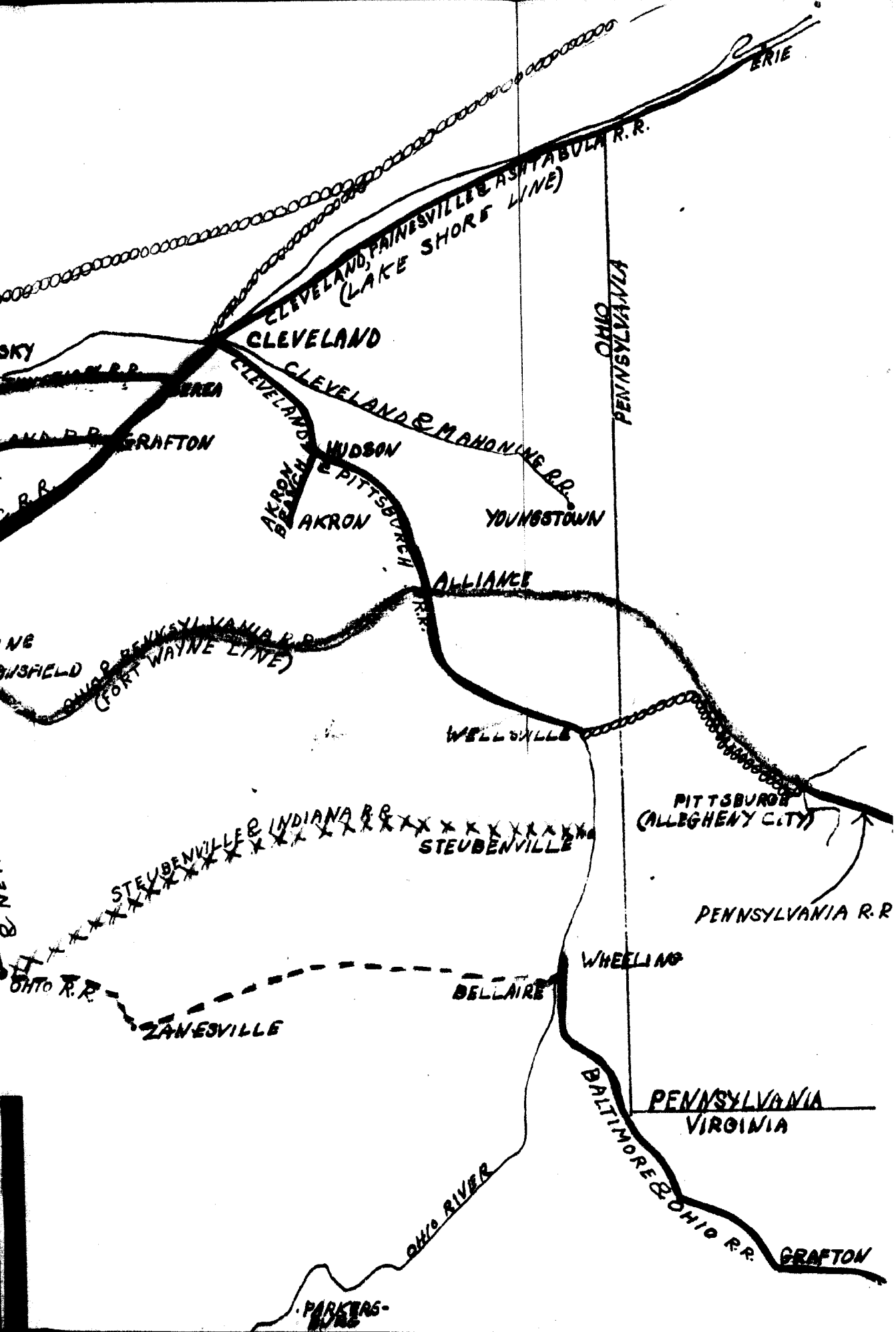
The coup de grace come in 1943 when the last of the stock had been gathered in. By agreement dated June 29 the Columbus and Xenia was formally merged into the Little Miami and its corporate life extinguished in its ninety-ninth year.

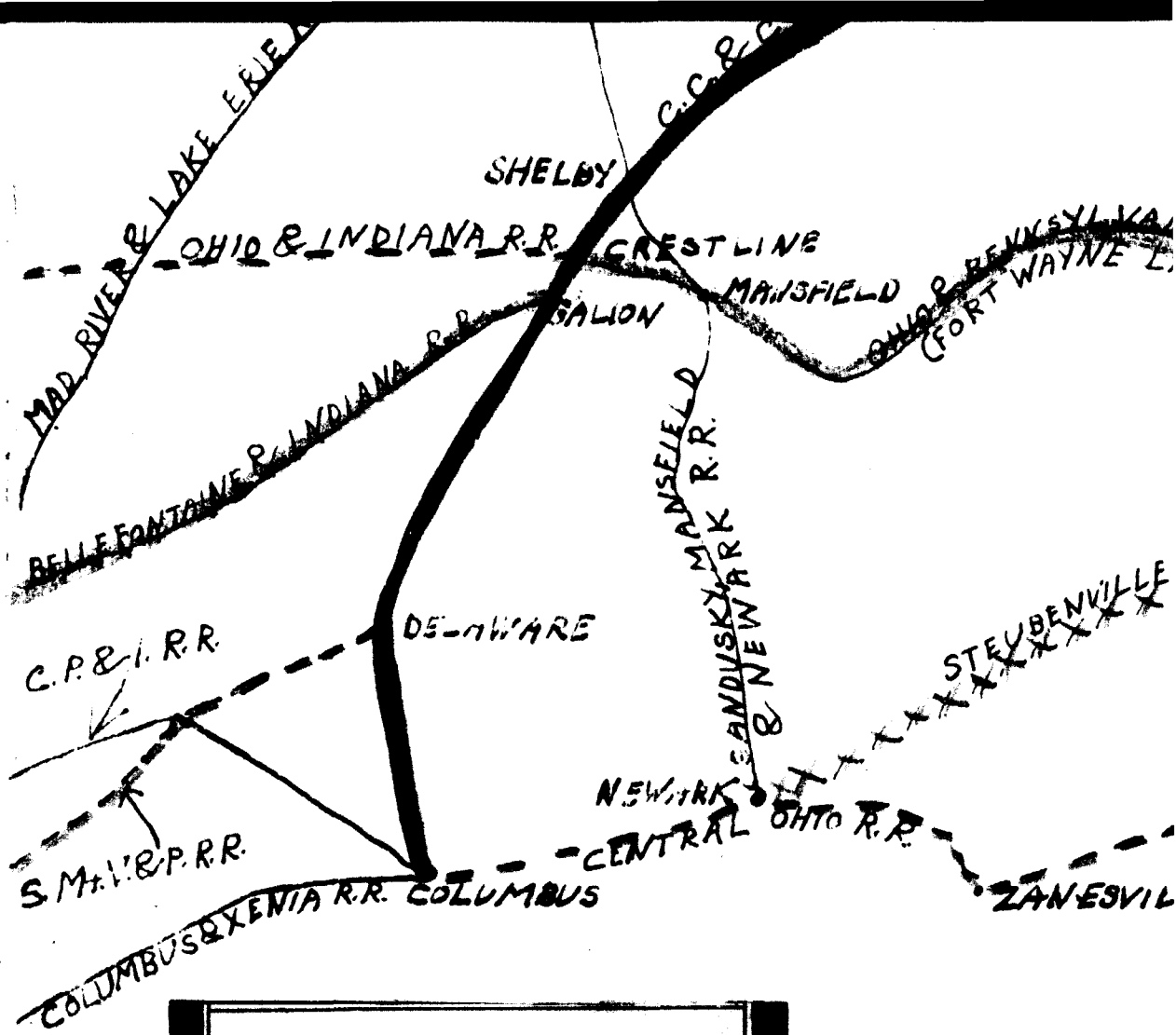


**THE C.C. & G.R.R. AND CERTAIN
CONNECTING RAILROADS, 1852-55**

- C.C. & G.R.R.
- Railroads Completed during 1852
- Railroads Completed during 1853
- Railroads Completed during 1854
- Railroads Completed during 1855

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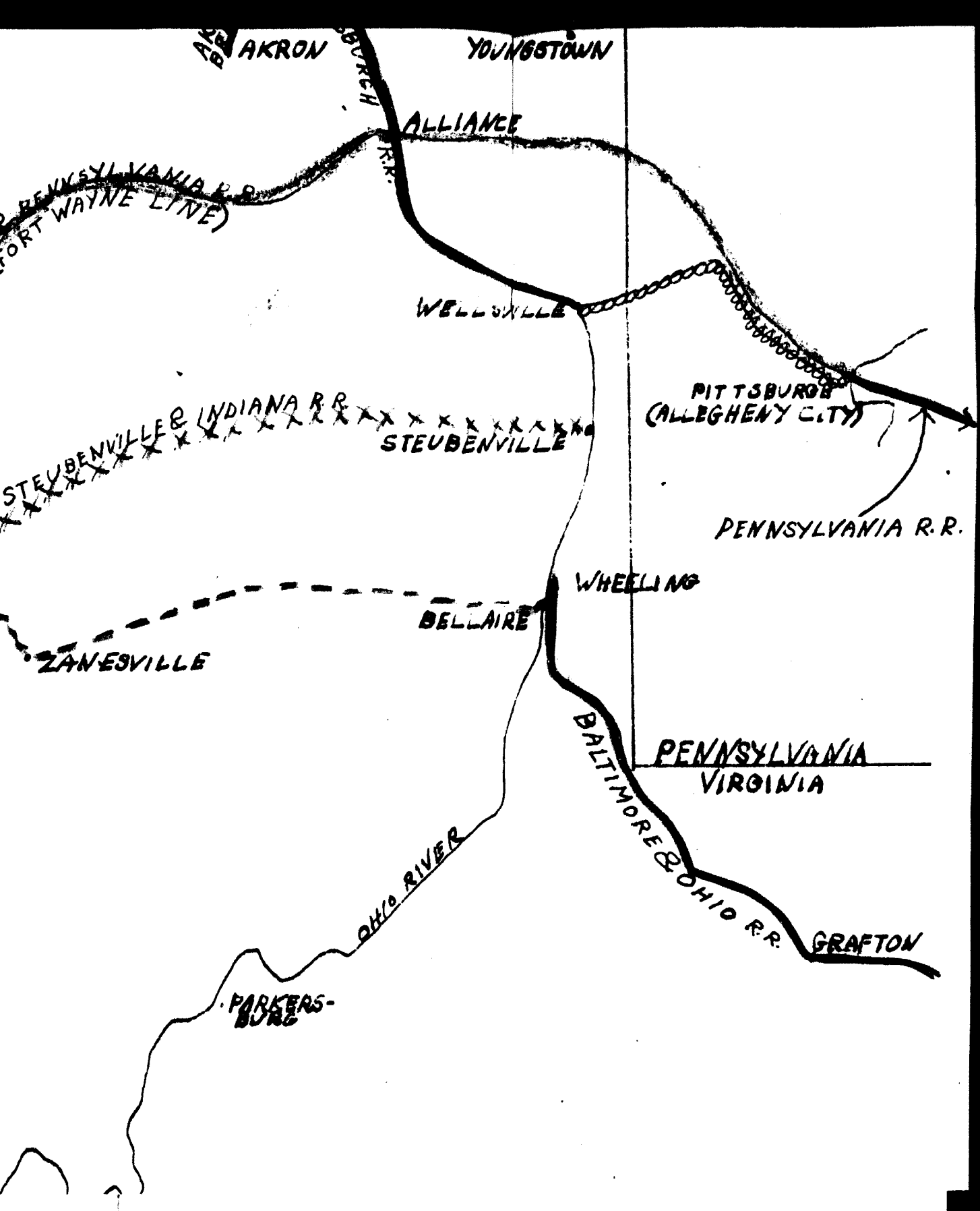


THE C.C. & G.R.R. AND CERTAIN CONNECTING RAILROADS, 1852-55

- C.C. & G.R.R.
- Railroads Completed during 1852
- Railroads Completed during 1853
- Railroads Completed during 1854
- XXXX** Railroads Completed during 1855
- OOOO** Steamboat Lines
- Other Railroads

One Inch: Apprex. 16 miles

MAP 2. THE C.C. & G.R.R. AND CERTAIN CONNECTING RAILROADS, 1852-55



CHAPTER SEVEN

THE CLEVELAND, COLUMBUS AND CINCINNATI RAILROAD: GREATEST INTO COLUMBUS

The C.C. & C., to continue using the short title by which it was so widely known, is the most important of the four railroads which entered Columbus before the Civil War. It was conceived in Cleveland as a grandiose project, grew into one of the great roads of the state and one of the most profitable in the country, expanded westward to become the nucleus of a large midwestern system, and at length, under the name of the Big Four, its corporate successor, took its place as an important segment of the New York Central System, where it is today.

Its route in the original 1836 charter,¹ connecting Ohio's principal lake port with its principal river port (and leading city) via the state capital, followed the dominant traffic flow of the day by running roughly north and south. The town of Wilmington managed to get itself made the only other mandatory point on the line. The uncertainties of steamboat service on the Ohio, especially the upper part of the river between Pittsburgh and Cincinnati, had encouraged the backers of the company to think that much of the traffic eastbound from Cincinnati would take their railroad to Cleveland and then the lake route to the East in

¹Ohio Local Laws, XXXIV, 533, and see Chapter Three.

preference to going up the river to Wheeling or Pittsburgh and thence over the mountains.²

A year after the legislature had approved the charter (its principal terms were given in Chapter Three), the panic of 1837 chilled the ardor of promoters of internal improvements. Hard times laid low the C.C.& C. as they did so many other railroads and no further trace of it is to be found until 1845, when, along with four more lines, its charter was revived and amended.³

Now the route was shortened to go from Cleveland only as far as Columbus; permission was given to unite with any other railroad with a similar route, and organization sanctioned as soon as \$50,000 had been subscribed, compared with \$400,000 in the original charter. Since a five percent down payment was stipulated this meant it took only \$2,500 cash to launch the venture. The company was released from any implied requirement that the whole capital of \$3,000,000 had to be subscribed; the rates in place of those itemized by the legislature were to be such as seemed reasonable to the directors; the property might be mortgaged if need be, and actual construction had to start within five years. These provisions represented a marked relaxing of the limitations in the earlier document.

The personnel also was considerably changed. New commissioners were named, but they came only from six counties through which it was expected the line would pass. Six were from Cuyahoga, as against eight

² C. Williams Report upon the Preliminary Surveys of the Cleveland, Columbus and Cincinnati Railroad to the President and Directors, Cleveland, 1846, pp. 59-60.

³ Ohio Local Laws, XLIII, 405.

in the 1836 version, several men figuring on both lists; six were from Delaware, including the ubiquitous Hosea Williams; various numbers represented Medina, Richland and Marion, and nine were from Franklin, six more than formerly. None of the three representing that county in 1836 was among the commissioners of 1845 who included Robert Neil and several associates of his family. The Neils appeared to be ready to take a leading part in the enterprise as revived.

The first task confronting the new commissioners was to clarify the position of this company vis-à-vis the three other lines also holding charters to run between Columbus and the lake. Their success at the Mansfield conference in persuading their competitors to support the C.C.& C. has already been told. (See Chapter Four.) The next step was to raise the capital and no time was lost in getting started.

Stock subscription books were opened in June in Columbus, Cleveland, Delaware, and doubtless other likely places, but it appears that the investing public stood aloof. The only detailed report was from Delaware where about \$24,000 was subscribed conditionally and some \$1,800 definitely, on which the down payment of five percent amounted to \$90. The conditions probably related to whether or not the route was to pass through the town of Delaware. To stimulate interest the backers there set up a "Committee of Correspondence," but unlike its historic colonial namesakes it seems to have met with no success. Money was reported very tight in Ohio that spring.⁴

⁴Ohio State Journal, May 29, 1845.

Money was certainly hard to raise and, what was worse, time was running out. It seems, and this fact was not included in the official report of the Mansfield conference, that the backers of the C.C.& C. had six months to show what they could do in the way of launching their project, presumably with the understanding that in case of failure, they would have to step aside in favor of another group. Our information about this affair comes from John W. Allen of Cleveland, first president of the road, who nearly forty years afterward wrote his reminiscences of what transpired. His story, corroborated in its principal parts by the minutes of the company, as well as by the newspapers, is as follows:

The men back of the C.C.& C. discovered that it was easier to get donations for the expenses of organizing, and so forth, than to get subscriptions for stock which, even when obtained, were mostly subject to conditions. With the six months nearly up and the company still not in a condition to be organized, Allen went to Columbus and agreed with four prominent men of that city that they would subscribe for half the necessary \$50,000 stock, the amount required for organization, and become directors, that four men in Cleveland would do the same, and that Allen would serve as president and ninth director (the charter provided for nine). An organization meeting would quickly be held in Columbus "and that on the question of calling for payments the writer [i.e., Allen] would vote with them [the four from Columbus] and that their checks in the Clinton Bank [of Columbus] for the five percent should be held till they were ready to pay them." The Neils and their friends controlled the bank.

Everything worked according to plan, Allen reported, adding, "The requisitions of the law were not complied with in spirit or in fact, but we made a good show on paper, nobody was hurt, nor was it meant that anybody should be."⁵

By good fortune, it is at this point that the minutes of the meetings of the stockholders of the C.C. & C. commence. The first meeting recorded in the worn volume now in the vaults of the New York Central in New York was that of October 11, 1845, held in Columbus, when 403 votes were cast by 19 stockholders, of whom 4 from Columbus cast 70 votes each, namely William Neil, the president of the Clinton Bank, his son, Robert E., and their close associates William S. Sullivant and Samuel Medary.

The Cleveland participants did not follow the plan since all the other stock holdings were small save that of Allen who cast 76 votes as proxy and 5 in his own name. The figures show that the Neil interests with their total of 280 votes had a majority not only of the votes cast but of the 500 votes to which the minimum required capital of \$50,000 was entitled.⁶

The only recorded action was the unanimous election of the nine directors, as follows: the four named from Columbus and Allen, Peter M. Weddell, Richard Hilliard, John M. Woolsey, and Henry B. Payne, all

⁵Hon. John W. Allen, "Our First Attempt in Railroad Building," Annals of the Early Settlers' Association of Cuyahoga County, No. V, Cleveland, Ohio, 1884, pp. 96-98.

⁶C.C. & C.R.R., Minutes of Stockholders' Meetings Oct. 11, 1845.

leading men of Cleveland. The notice of the election given to the press said that none had been named from intermediate points lest hurt feelings result, since the route had not yet been chosen.⁷ At the ensuing meeting of the directors, Allen was named president and William Neil, treasurer.

The resemblance between this scheme and the one used a few months earlier for the organization of the Columbus and Xenia, in which the Neils were also deeply involved, will not be missed. (See Chapter Six.)

Allen deserves a brief comment. He was close to being the foremost citizen of Cleveland, a lawyer who was to serve as mayor, state senator, representative in Congress, to be president of a bank and late in life postmaster of the city. Together with Truman P. Handy, likewise for many years active in the C.C. & C., he had probably started his rail career when he backed the tiny Cleveland and Newburg line, a horse-drawn, strap-iron affair which in 1838 was the first railroad into Cleveland. Later he was associated with the Cleveland and Mahoning and the Cleveland and Pittsburgh roads.⁸

With directors and officers installed, the C.C. & C. appeared ready to go forward. Its supporters in Cleveland moved to obtain legislative approval for a \$200,000 city subscription to capital stock, two surveying parties were sent out to report on possible routes, amateur

⁷Ohio State Journal, Oct. 13, 1845.

⁸William Ganson Rose, Cleveland. The Making of a City, Cleveland and New York, 1950, passim.

financiers wrote letters to the press on how to raise the necessary funds. Despite a crop failure that fall in northern Ohio, the people of Cleveland also went ahead with plans for two other railroads.

The surveyors' report, presented as an attractive pamphlet with definite "sales appeal,"⁹ was issued while the 1845-46 legislature was in session, and since it offered a choice of seven possible routes it won enough votes to secure the railroad three helpful acts: (1) authorizing the \$200,000 stock subscription by Cleveland along with a considerable number of alleviatory amendments to the charter;¹⁰ (2) empowering six of the counties through which the route might pass to subscribe up to \$100,000 each in a railroad company,¹¹ (3) permitting Wayne County to invest between \$50,000 and \$100,000 in the C.C. & C. on certain conditions.¹² The session had hardly ended before a public meeting in Cleveland was taking steps to sell more stock. In Columbus, also, the stock was touted, with emphasis on the big profits expected.

Even these efforts were insufficient to insure adequate financing for the road, and a period followed when its fortunes rose and fell almost rhythmically. Crawford County's voters by better than four to one refused to subscribe for the stock. The writer of a bantering

⁹Williams, Preliminary Surveys.

¹⁰Ohio Local Laws, XLIV, 167.

¹¹Ibid., XLIV, 192.

¹²Ibid., XLIV, 250.

letter to the Cleveland Herald said that the previous year the road's troubles had been blamed on crop failures; what would they blame them on now, he asked.¹³ President Allen admitted not enough money was yet on hand but hoped to let a contract in the fall. A letter in the Ohio State Journal (of Columbus) feared lest the new road harm the capital city by making it merely a point to be passed through on the line between Cleveland and Cincinnati, an argument based on the difference between terminus and angle in rail lines, in accordance with one of the fine-spun theories about railroad operations then prevalent.¹⁴

Nevertheless the company managed to go so far as to receive bids in December for forty miles of road from Cleveland to Harrisville (near Lodi in Medina County), supposedly to be paid for in ~~the~~ city of Cleveland scrip 50%, in railroad stock 25% and in cash 25%.¹⁵ There is no record, however, that after the bids had been opened any contract was signed.

Conflicting Loyalties

The year 1847 began with a remarkable shift in control of the enterprise. The annual meeting of stockholders, from then on held in January, elected to the directorate no members of the Neil family and

¹³Cleveland Herald, July 3, 1846.

¹⁴Ohio State Journal, Aug. 20, 1846.

¹⁵Ohio Statesman, Dec. 7, 1846.

only one man from Columbus, Joseph Ridgway, Jr., who was, however, always quite close to the Neils. Six directors were chosen from Cleveland, one more than in the preceding year, and two from intermediate points. There was no hint of a contest and all were elected unanimously. There was also no hint as to why the shift took place.

Again the legislature extended a helping hand, this time in the form of three more acts embodying five principal provisions. Columbus and Franklin County were each permitted to subscribe \$50,000 apiece in both the Columbus and Xenia and the C.C.& C., but not in only one of them, subject to approval of the voters (see Chapter Six); Cleveland was authorized to make payment in New York City of interest on obligations issued in aid of the road; extensive power was granted the company to build branches; any county through which the route passed might subscribe up to \$100,000 stock; and any previous requirement that the road be built to or through any particular place was repealed.¹⁶ So much aid should have cleared the tracks for rapid progress, but events went the other way.

April proved to be a decisive month in the history of the concern. On the 3rd, J. M. Woolsey, a director, reported to the board that his trip to Cincinnati and the East to raise funds had been unsuccessful. On the 5th, Franklin County voters approved a subscription for \$50,000 stock in the venture and Delaware County voters refused to subscribe. On the 12th the city of Columbus voted a subscription for \$50,000. Two

¹⁶Ohio Local Laws, XLV, 56, 50, 95.

days later the directors of the C.C. & C. suddenly raised the white flag and issued a statement announcing the suspension of all operations other than those necessary to preserve the organization of the company and maintain control of the charter.¹⁷

The reasons given for this dramatic move fail to carry complete conviction: the money market in the East was too busy with government financing for the war with Mexico to be interested in the proposed \$200,000 issue of Cleveland bonds which the city planned to deliver to the railroad in payment for its capital stock; and the board felt that it might not be able to complete the road. Therefore, since other rail lines were being projected for Cleveland and Columbus and nearby places, and since the C.C. & C. did not wish to impede their efforts by lingering on after all hope was gone, it would withdraw and leave the field open to them. The statement, written in a decidedly apologetic and timorous tone, closed with conventional hopes that perhaps in the future the road's prospects might improve, and similar platitudes. It was signed by all six Cleveland directors and no others.

The Cleveland Herald carried the announcement in its issue of April 14, 1847, together with a brief editorial note which passed no judgment on the suspension but pointed out that the field was thereby left open for the Cleveland and Pittsburgh Railroad. It is time now to consider that project.

¹⁷Ohio State Journal, Apr. 17, 1847.

On March 14, 1836, the day the legislature approved the first charter for the C.C.& C., it also approved a charter for the Cleveland and Pittsburgh.¹⁸ Like the former, the latter languished until on March 11, 1845, an act was passed to revive and amend its charter.¹⁹ The following day the revival of the C.C.& C. was authorized. The principal amendments in the case of the road to Pittsburgh were to designate new commissioners and to shorten the route so that it went only as far as the Ohio River "at the most suitable point." The new Cuyahoga County commissioners of the railroad included Allen, Philo Scoville and Irad Kelley, a brother of Alfred Kelley, who were among those also named commissioners for the revived C.C.& C. In June of that year stock subscription books for the two roads were opened, separately, with similar lack of success. That fall, after an improvement in their respective affairs, the C.C.& C. organized in Columbus, as told above, and the Cleveland and Pittsburgh gave notice of an organization meeting to be held at Ravenna, which presumably took place in due course. Control of this latter road was by then no longer in Cleveland but in Ravenna and Wellsville, which was to become the terminal point on the river.

The similarities between these enterprises stress the fact that they were Cleveland's two principal rail projects for a number of years

¹⁸Ohio Local Laws, XXXIV, 576.

¹⁹Ibid., XLIII, 401.

and that several of the same men were involved in both. When the C.C.& C. was officially pronounced dead, or at least in a state of suspended animation, the backers of the other line moved with ghoulish speed to enlist for their road the support which had hitherto sustained their competitor. Accordingly, the day after the announcement of the suspension of the C.C.& C., prominent notice was given of a public meeting to be held the very next day by the friends of the road to Pittsburgh "to set the ball in motion" for it.²⁰

The statement supplied to the press after this meeting said that (1) the charter of the Cleveland and Pittsburgh was now controlled by the directors from Wellsville; (2) the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad was expected to locate its western terminus at Pittsburgh (to which the road from Cleveland hoped some day to extend), and (3) the C.C.& C. had raised more than \$100,000 in stock subscriptions in Cleveland before giving up the ghost, capital which the other road hoped would be transferred to it. Four days later the Herald printed the text of a proposed act to authorize the city to subscribe for \$200,000 stock in the Cleveland and Pittsburgh. The act also named five men to administer its provisions on behalf of the city and to vote the stock when bought, at least four of whom, including Allen had been active in the C.C.& C.²¹

²⁰ Cleveland Herald, Apr. 15, 1847.

²¹ Ibid., Apr. 19, 1847.

The meaning to be drawn from these rather confusing facts seems to be that some of the backers of the C.C.& C. had decided they were biting off more than they could chew in that large project and wanted to transfer their interest to the Cleveland and Pittsburgh. The latter would need considerably less capital since from Cleveland to Wellsville was 97 miles compared with 135 miles to Columbus. The people along the eastern end of the shorter line, moreover, had already raised no small part of the money needed. In addition, by putting their funds into the Cleveland and Pittsburgh road the capitalists of the former city might perhaps regain control of the company, and in any event a good case could be made for the economic advantages of building Cleveland's first real railroad (the Cleveland and Newburg may be disregarded) to the Ohio River, and eventually to Pittsburgh, before building one to the state capital. Whether the directors of the Cleveland and Pittsburgh who were also interested in the C.C.& C. were being entirely candid with their associates in the latter is problematical.

One, at least, of their erstwhile associates, William Neil, was highly critical of their conduct. He wrote a sharp letter to the Cleveland Plain Dealer to the effect that there was much dissatisfaction in Columbus over the unilateral action of the Cleveland directors of the C.C.& C., who had not conferred with those from the other end of the line, and declared they should resign if they could not do something. He scorned the reasons advanced for shutting down the enterprise and asserted that Columbus was ready to carry on.²² Despite his brave

²²Ohio Statesman, May 17, 31, 1847.

words, however, there is evidence that Columbus was not as unanimously behind the company as he tried to make out since some of its citizens were favoring the Columbus and Lake Erie Railroad, a rival route to the lake, which seemed to have many backers and that month let a construction contract.

The outlook for the C.C. & C. at this point appeared almost hopeless. The apparent defection of many of its supporters in Cleveland and the competition of rival enterprises in Columbus pointed to an early end of the project. The only remaining sign of life was this: two Cleveland directors, Hilliard and Payne, who were not commissioners for the Cleveland and Pittsburgh and were perhaps stung by the public criticism, agreed to give three months of their time to one final effort to raise some money.²³

"Masterly Inactivity"

Hard work of that sort apparently was the prescription needed to revive the moribund railroad. Sogn stockholders and friends of the line held a meeting in Cleveland, condemned the "masterly inactivity" of the sponsors, urged that city to put up its \$200,000 at once, demanded action or resignations. What they actually got was the appearance on the scene of two men, an eastern capitalist named Dwight, a visitor at that time in Cleveland, and Alfred Kelley of Columbus, whose

²³James Harrison Kennedy, A History of the City of Cleveland, 1796-1896, Cleveland, 1896, p. 322.

efforts between them seem to have put the company back on its feet.

Just who Dwight was is not absolutely clear since the contemporary references to him differ markedly. Most probably he was Edmund Dwight of Massachusetts, the "great textile builder," one of the organizers of the important Western Railroad Corporation of that state, and related by marriage to George Bliss, also a leading New England railroad man who about this time was extending his interests to the Midwest. Dwight is credited with two moves in the resurrection of the C.C.& C.: he advised the employment, as a matter of policy, of an eminent engineer, and he bought \$15,000 of stock in the company, which made him the largest individual holder.

Dwight's participation was an aspect of the movement of New England capital into Ohio railroads. The management and control of the Mad River and Lake Erie road had passed into Boston hands which set about extending it to Dayton, the terminus called for in its charter. The other road operating out of Sandusky, the Mansfield and Sandusky City line, had also attracted the attention of "the Bostonians," who put considerable money into it as well as into the Lake Shore road (the Cleveland, Painesville and Ashtabula.) These financial relations were, to be sure, but a few among the varied ties that linked tidewater New England with its freshwater offspring, the Western Reserve. Yankee capital was also going into Michigan railroads at this same period.²⁴

²⁴Two of Harlow's readable books make various references to Dwight and Bliss, vis., Steelways of New England, (New York, 1946) and The Road of the Century. The same books mention the exportation of New England capital, for which a good contemporary Ohio reference is found in the Cleveland Herald, Sept. 27, 1847, quoting the Sandusky Mirror.

Kelley, of course, stood second to none in Ohio as a prominent figure whose record of accomplishment made him a "catch" for any new enterprise. Hilliard and Payne, aided by another brother of Kelley's, Judge Thomas M. Kelley of Cleveland, were able to persuade him to accept the presidency of the C.C.& C. At the same time he was also about to become head of a second railroad under construction into Columbus, the Columbus and Xenia.

By August of 1847 it was reported that the C.C.& C. had over \$400,000 in stock subscriptions, a figure that must have included the municipal subscriptions mentioned above. On the 13th of that month Kelley was elected president and was soon working closely with the "eminent engineer from the East," Captain John Childe, formerly chief engineer of the Tray and Albany Railroad and the Connecticut River line, who was looking over the route "for the benefit of Eastern capitalists."²⁵

At last the C.C.& C. was really under way, to the accompaniment of an apologetic editorial in the Ohio State Journal whose editor wanted to make it clear that in writing enthusiastically of Kelley's election as president he had not meant to reflect on others in the company, which was not in new hands and in which there was no change in stockholders.²⁶ The Cleveland and Pittsburgh Railroad was similarly under way, having let its first contract in August, the same month, incidentally, that telegraph service started in Cleveland, a fortnight later than in Columbus.

²⁵Ohio State Journal, Aug. 31, 1847, quoting Cleveland Herald.

²⁶Ibid., Aug. 31, Sept. 28, 1847.

With an understanding of public relations which did them credit, Kelley and the other directors ceremonially broke ground that fall to mark the start of actual pick-and-shovel work, and then paid a solitary man to dig and haul earth from that time until more than a year later in order that charter requirements as to construction might be fulfilled, to which one is tempted to add: for thus spake the law and the profits. At first it had been planned to put under contract the ten-mile stretch from Cleveland to Berea, but if it was ever done it probably was not completed. Some work, not specified, was however authorized. As other signs of life the company ordered two alternative routes surveyed to Columbus and issued a call for payment of a ten-percent installment on the capital stock. Then winter put an end to activity, except, perhaps that of the solitary digger.

In the absence of evidence to the contrary, it may safely be assumed that the gauge selected at this time for the C.C.& C. was the same as the gauge to which it was finally built, namely, four feet, ten inches. That was the track width favored by most Ohio roads and the one made mandatory in 1848. When this railroad opened for service the only line it crossed or touched which had a gauge different from its own was the Sandusky, Mansfield and Newark (to use the convenient title it did not get until later) with a track width of five feet, four inches.

The year 1848 began with the annual election of directors when Allen and Woolsey, seemingly the most faint-hearted members of the board, were none the less returned to office. New members were Kelley,

Leonard Case (two years later elected mayor of Cleveland), and George M. Atwater, the hotel proprietor who was sometimes identified as from the Forest City and at other times from New York. They took the places of one director who had died and two from communities between the two terminals. Kelley was reelected president. The only stockholder present who was recognizably from Columbus was Kelley with ten votes.

The legislature was appealed to for the fourth year in succession to smooth the way still more for this enterprise. It responded by passing additional alleviatory amendments to the charter, in particular some which related to the power of the city of Cleveland to subscribe to the road's capital stock.²⁷ About the same time, however, the lawmakers authorized the Columbus and Xenia Railroad to build a branch to Delaware, a town which the C.C. & C. was eyeing as a point on its own line. It is not clear why the permission was given and why it was never used.

At this session also the legislature put on the books a large number of acts relating to other railroads, including charters for four lines which later were to connect with the C.C. & C., viz.: the Cleveland, Painesville and Ashtabula, the Cleveland and Mahoning, the Ohio and Pennsylvania, and the Bellefontaine and Indiana. The first two included among their organizers a number of Clevelanders active in the affairs of the C.C. & C., of which the slow progress thus far did not seem to dampen the promotional ardor of the people of the city.

²⁷Ohio Local Laws, XLVI, 93.

That spring the C.C. & C. stockholders accepted certain provisions of the permissive general law which had just been passed to regulate railroad companies. (See Chapter Five) Cleveland thereupon appears finally to have voted the long-delayed subscription of \$200,000 at about the same time it resolved to seek permission to put \$100,000 (one-half the amount first proposed) in the shorter Cleveland and Pittsburgh Railroad. With financial support from its two terminal cities and seemingly unlimited legislative backing, the C.C. & C. was getting about as much encouragement from governmental sources as it had a right to expect. Clearly the time had come for the company itself to get going, with Kelley at the throttle.

Still, for about two months there were no signs of life, and then another crisis must have arisen. In the summer, notice was given of a public meeting to be held in Cleveland for the purpose of deciding whether to try to keep on with the enterprise or to drop it for good. There was no explanation for the despairing tone of the announcement. The day seems to have been saved by Kelley who spoke for an hour in his usual vigorous and matter-of-fact way to his former fellow-townsmen -- he had lived in Cleveland for twenty years before moving to Columbus and had been one of its most prominent citizens -- and succeeded on the spot in getting pledges for \$73,000 stock toward the \$120,000 additional which he called the absolute minimum needed from Cleveland. The road should be built all at once and not in sections, he insisted.²⁸

²⁸Daily Ohio State Journal, Aug. 7, 1848.

At the Columbus end of the line Kelley also took the lead. In a forceful letter to the Daily Ohio State Journal he urged the citizens to pledge the \$40,000 more necessary to reach the goal of \$100,000 in individual subscriptions assigned to the capital city. He referred to the "apathy" of Columbus (a point always made in criticism of the place), and said:

Columbus has long been reproached for its lack of enterprise and public spirit -- if justly, it is time to change our course; if unjustly, it is time to prove by our acts the falsity of the charge.²⁹

The most important part of his letter was an exposition of the plan proposed for financing the road, ~~an~~ anything but candid statement since it specifically omitted the cost of rails (which eventually came to about one-quarter of the total) and went into details only as to the sale of capital stock. The figures Kelley gave can be shown as follows:

Proposed Distribution of Capital Stock

Principal contractors (in part payment for work)	\$ 300,000
Cleveland: city subscription	200,000
by individuals	275,000
Columbus: city subscription	50,000
by individuals	100,000
Franklin County subscription	50,000
Places between Cleveland and Columbus	<u>325,000</u>
Total	\$1,300,000

This total, he estimated, would cover the cost of construction including the right of way. To pay for the rolling stock, \$200,000

²⁹Ibid., Aug. 15, 1848.

convertible bonds would be issued. Other types of bonds were not mentioned.

No explanation was given as to why Columbus with a population the same as Cleveland's, if not a trifle larger, was expected to raise less than a third as much capital stock. At all events both cities turned to with a will and somehow the money was obtained. The pressure put on the people of Columbus must have been quite heavy, if one can judge from an ironic letter to the press which criticized the rich for not subscribing and joked about using sewing societies and tea parties as means to raise money.³⁰

But this was not all the pressure. Twice in a week the Daily Ohio State Journal made editorial excuses for Columbus's poor showing. In one case, it alleged the people had been too busy with other matters, and in the second it endorsed a letter in its columns listing a considerable number of other enterprises which had drawn heavily on local capital.³¹ It was to be expected that this intensely Whig paper would support the new railroad with considerable ardor and in particular Kelley's share in it, since he was one of the Elder Statesmen of the party. Its great Democratic competitor, the Ohio Statesman, just as staunchly partisan, all but completely ignored the C.C.& C. in favor of the Columbus and Xenia and the Central Ohio, two railroads in which the Neil interests were very heavy. The friendliness of this Democratic paper for the Neils, who were Whigs, brings to mind what is said to be an aspect of the Columbus political scene at the present time.

³⁰Idem.

³¹Ibid., Aug. 16, 21, 1848, and see Chapter Five.

The efforts in the summer of 1848 sufficed to put an end to the "off-again-on-again" character of the C.C.& C. They were decisive, and from that point the progress of the enterprise was never halted. In quick succession a report was received from the engineers, Childe and his associate Frederick Harbach, a route decided upon, and a contract let. The action of the voters of Delaware County that fall in approving a subscription of \$100,000 capital stock tells its own story.

In place of the seven alternative routes proposed in the original survey by Williams (see above), Childe and Harbach offered two of approximately the same length - about 136 miles - and of nearly equal cost. They recommended using 65-pound T rails laid on cross ties which in turn would rest on sub-sills, rather similar to the ties. The total estimated cost of the entire project was \$2,348,235.³²

The directors selected the route via Wellington, Shelby, Galion, Mt. Gilead and Delaware and let a contract to the firm of Harbach, Stone and Witt. An editorial note in the Cleveland Daily True Democrat expressed the hope that "the company will insist that the contractors regularly pay their laborers."³³ It is unlikely that the comment was directed specifically at these contractors since they were esteemed as easterners well qualified in railroad work.

Frederick Harbach had been brought up near Springfield, Massachusetts, had worked on various eastern roads, and had been employed by George Bliss

³²John Childe and Frederick Harbach, Report on the Surveys, Estimates and Income of the C.C.& C.R.R., Cleveland, 1848.

³³Oct. 6, 1848, in W.P.A. in Ohio, Annals of Cleveland, 1818-1935, Cleveland, 1938, Vol. XXXI (1848).

on Michigan and Ohio rail enterprises, including the little Erie and Kalamazoo. For the C.C. & C. he was first an engineer and surveyor and later one of the three contractors. His death of heart disease at the age of 33, a week before the first train rolled into Cleveland, dramatically ended a promising career. Amasa Stone, Jr., also born in Massachusetts, was a brother-in-law of William Howe, designer of the popular Howe Patent Truss Bridge, and grew to be a noted and ultimately tragic figure in the railroad world of the Midwest. Stillman Witt prospered in Cleveland along with others interested in the C.C. & C. and became a prominent citizen in the community.

The contract price for grading, bridging, laying the superstructure and a few other items came to \$1,250,000, of which sum, as shown in the foregoing table, the three men agreed to take \$300,000 in capital stock. One hardly knows which to marvel at more, their nerve or their foresight. In the case of so many Ohio railroads, the stock which the deluded contractors accepted in lieu of cash turned to dust and ashes almost before their eyes -- or before they could pass it on to their creditors. The C.C. & C., on the other hand, soon became highly profitable and its stock soared to a great premium. Also unusual was the extent of the work to be done under a single contract, since it comprised the entire line. A majority of the early roads were built by small contractors, each working on a section of the whole.

The end of the year 1848 saw the C.C. & C. with most of its troubles behind it and bright prospects on the road ahead.

"With railroads and gaslight we can strut considerably."³⁴

Like the cooings and gurglings of a happy baby in a crib, almost the only sounds that came from the C.C.& C. from this time until routine operations began were those indicating steady, gratifying progress. The entire board of directors was re-elected; contracts for rails were placed at favorable prices; cash received for stock subscriptions from Mt. Gilead was returned with interest when a slight change in route bypassed that town; Kelley travelled to New York, to Montreal, to Quebec, to see about rails, to sell bonds, and always successfully; arrangements were discussed for steamboat connections between the trains at Cleveland and those at Buffalo; delinquent subscribers to the stock were warned to pay up; the board finally made up its mind to run the tracks into the town of Delaware, on either a "curve" or an "arm." (A "curve" was the eventual choice.)

George Bliss, the New England railroader, guaranteed two of the contracts for rails imported from England. Whether the guarantee covered performance by the buyers or sellers, however, is not made plain in the minutes of the directors' meeting, the first available volume of which begins in March 1849.³⁵

At the end of October, 1849, what was called the first locomotive

³⁴Daily True Democrat, Sept. 20, 1849, in Annals of Cleveland.

³⁵C.C.& C.R.R., Minutes of Directors' Meetings, Apr. 25, 1849.

ever seen in Cleveland was placed on the tracks.³⁶ By the time it could travel five miles out of the city on the C.C.& C.'s new roadbed a locomotive was also going the same distance out of Xenia on the Columbus and Xenia line, the other of the two roads Kelley was serving as president and which was likewise under construction. The engine on the C.C.& C. was the product of the Cuyahoga Steam Furnace Company, started in Cleveland in 1834, which built many of the C.C.& C.'s engines before it went out of business about 1860.³⁷

Progress on the line as a whole must have lagged for a while in 1849, perhaps because of the outbreak of Asiatic cholera that summer, and the contractors were unable to win a bonus for speed which the directors held out to them. An additional payment of some \$450 per mile, plus other considerations, was approved when the original contract was changed to provide for laying the rails on stout planks, instead of cross-ties, from Wellington to Columbus, a distance of about 100 miles. The reason for this hare-brained scheme remains unknown, for it seems to have made no further imprint on the company's records, although nearly a year later a Columbus newspaper mentioned it.³⁸

From time to time as the tracks were pushed south from Cleveland and north from Columbus the directors and other dignitaries could not

³⁶William B. Thom, "Early History of the Old Bee Line Railroad and its Completion by Hon. Alfred Kelley in 1851," The Firelands Pioneer, new series, XXII (Jan. 1921), 104-122.

³⁷Kennedy, History of City of Cleveland, p. 257.

³⁸Ohio State Journal, Oct. 29, 1850.

resist nibbling at the treats held out to them in the shape of "first rides" which "dashed" over the newly opened sections. Regular commercial service from Cleveland to Wellington, some 36 miles, was inaugurated in June, 1850, but even before then the directors were planning for more rolling stock than originally ordered, so bright were the prospects.

Work on the roadbed continued during the summer despite an outbreak of cholera even worse than that of the year before. It claimed the life of Joseph Ridgway, Jr., one of the two directors from Columbus. After his place was filled by the appointment of Hosea Williams of Delaware, the capital city was represented only by Kelley. The influence of eastern money in the railroad was enlarged when the board accepted the offer of H. Dwight, Jr., of New York to buy \$100,000 of the Domestic Bonds (convertible). He was not identified but was perhaps the rather spectacular financier of that city who failed in 1853, and not to be confused with the Boston Dwight referred to earlier. That he purchased the unsecured rather than the mortgage bonds was about the highest compliment he could pay the enterprise, since the safer mortgage obligations were what eastern investors usually chose to buy. The last day of 1850 saw the last of the issue of unsecured bonds (they were what are today called debentures) offered for sale at 88, three points higher than the price when first put out.

"The chariots shall rage in the streets."³⁹

Rail progress in Ohio and general prosperity in Columbus -- as well, no doubt, as in Cleveland -- went hand in hand in 1851. At the start of the year four Buckeye railroads were operating over their entire length: the Erie and Kalamazoo, the Little Miami, the Mansfield and Sandusky City, and the Columbus and Xenia. (The Cleveland and Newburgh and the Painesville and Fairport had ceased running.)

During the next twelve months four new roads were added to the list: the Cincinnati, Hamilton and Dayton; the Mad River and Lake Erie (including the anomalous Findlay Branch) which finally reached Dayton; the Columbus and Lake Erie which ran between Mansfield and Newark, and the C.C. & C.

Besides welcoming the latter, Cleveland enjoyed the start of partial service on two more lines, the Cleveland and Pittsburgh as far as Ravenna, and the Cleveland, Painesville and Ashtabula as far as Painesville, both of which companies were to become closely associated with the line running to Columbus. On the national stage the mighty New York and Erie Railroad inaugurated its "trunk line" between the seaboard and the Great Lakes, and through rail service was established between Boston and Ogdensburg on the St. Lawrence River.

Unlike the Columbus and Xenia company, which just a year before had opened its road with scant ceremony, the C.C. & C. made an event of its completion. The scene, some fifty miles north of the state capital,

³⁹ Nahum, II, 4.

was at Iberia. This place and Wellington (another fifty miles farther along on the same line) were each in later years the locale of one of the most famous fugitive-slave incidents in the state's history. Here at Iberia on February 21, 1851, a trainload of dignitaries from Cleveland met a trainload of their opposite numbers from Columbus and Cincinnati, as well as state executives and legislators. Before this gathering, President Kelley and Mayor Case of Cleveland (with his "reddest kind of red hair and whiskers"), who was also a director of the company, supervised the laying of the last rail and drove the last spikes.

The event gained added attraction from the fact that the "last rail" had actually been connected three days earlier (i.e., February 18, a date sometimes given for the completion of the road) and apparently had been taken up in order that it might be laid afresh with proper *éclat*.⁴⁰ The four or five hundred people present gave three cheers at the firing of a cannon and the whistling of the two locomotives. Then the "upper crust" of the Columbus contingent climbed aboard the Cleveland train to push on to the celebration planned at that terminus while the remainder of those from the capital city returned home.

The next day, Washington's Birthday, was doubly memorable in Cleveland. In the morning a parade and other festivities celebrated the completion of the C.C. & C., and in the afternoon a trial trip for

⁴⁰ Ohio Statesman, Feb. 18, 1851.

local and visiting notables marked the opening to Hudson, twenty-two miles away, of the western end of the Cleveland and Pittsburgh Railroad, whose career thus continued to parallel that of the line to Columbus. (The rails entered Ravenna in November.) The opening was considered a success despite an accident on the way back from Hudson when the train ran off the tracks and did not get its passengers home until a very late hour. One of the features of the Cleveland parade was a small ship, fully rigged, and manned by eight sailors, which was loaded on the "cars" and carried to Cincinnati where the following day it was launched in the Ohio to symbolize the linking of lake and river.

The inauguration of Ohio's second line of rail transportation across the state was so clearly a significant event that the resulting torrent of platitudes and sententiousness calls for no particular critical comment here. The Daily True Democrat of Cleveland, did, however, say one pregnant thing, i.e., that the opening of the new route was "a strong Union measure."⁴¹ The impressive contribution which the C.C. & C. made to the Union cause during the Civil War was to confirm the editor's judgment.

From the very start the line between Cleveland and Columbus did a large business and dividends were soon being declared. A month before the opening, the directors, with a self-confidence rarely matched, had decided to pay no more interest after June 1 on money paid in on

⁴¹Feb. 13, 1851, in Annals of Cleveland.

the capital stock, so sure were they, it seems, of early dividends.⁴² They soon proved themselves right by declaring a four-percent distribution for the six months ending November 30, 1851, payable in January, 1852. Then, with what must have been an inward if not a visible swagger, on the day after New Year's Day, 1852, they declared another four-percent dividend, also out of earnings for the same six-month period, but this time payable September 1, 1852.

Dividends totalling eight percent for the first six months of operation of a brand new railroad did not leave much to be set aside for depreciation and other reserves, but since the whole matter of railroad accounting and financing was relatively new, almost nobody knew enough to worry about saving for a railroad's rainy day. The dividend record of this road, which may be regarded, if one chooses, as a piece of bravura, is set forth here for the first seven years as an indication of the immediate success of the enterprise.

C.C.& C. RAILROAD--DIVIDENDS PAID, 1851-1858

<u>DATE</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>	<u>PAID IN</u>
December 1, 1851	4%	Cash
December 1, 1851	4%	Cash (Payable Sept1,1852)
August 1, 1852	7%	Cash
February 1, 1853	5%	Cash
April 1, 1853	3%	Stock (Extra Dividend)
August 1, 1853	5%	Cash
February 1, 1854	5%	Cash
July 1, 1854	4%	Cash
July 1, 1854	4%	Stock (Extra Dividend)

⁴² C.C.& C.R.R., Minutes of Directors' Meetings, Jan. 23, 1851.

<u>DATE</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>	<u>PAID IN</u>
January 1, 1855	5%	Cash
July 1, 1855	5%	Cash
January 1, 1856	5%	Cash
February 1, 1856 (?)*	5%	Stock (Extra Dividend)
July 1, 1856	5%	Cash
January 1, 1857	5%	Cash
July 1, 1857	5%	Cash
January 1, 1858	5%	Cash

*The Minutes are not clear as to the exact date.

One further comment as to dividends is in order. The Annual Report for 1853 recapitulated the distributions made to August 1, of that year, which totalled 28% for 26 months of routine operation, and announced that regular 10% dividends could be expected thereafter. To this it added, "The day for extravagant dividends has passed."

Needless to say the value of the stock rose spectacularly and by December, 1852, it sold on the New York Stock Exchange as high as 133 (par was 100). It was certainly not the only rail security to boom, but it did manage to escape being involved in some of the frauds committed by New York transfer agents who represented out-of-town railroad companies and seem to have played fast and loose with the stock of their clients until public exposure in 1854 brought reforms. The C.C. & C. instituted a new safeguard by requiring the signature of a registrar as well as of a transfer agent to effect a transfer of its stock.⁴³

No doubt for fear lest it get into the hands of "strangers," the

⁴³ Railroad Record, Sept. 14, 1854; C.C. & C.R.R., Minutes of Directors' Meetings, Aug. 8, 1854.

company began to buy back, at a usual premium of about 25 or 30%, the stock it had sold to the four municipalities in its early days. Delaware County divided its profit among "Hosea Williams and ⁴⁴ others" who had personally given their promissory notes, with satisfactory security, to guarantee the principal and interest of the bonds which the county had issued to pay for the railroad stock. These personal endorsements were in addition to the road's guarantee of the same bonds.

Franklin County also got a handsome premium, but only after much loud wrangling in public over legal technicalities.⁴⁵ Cleveland and Columbus seem to have taken their profits in silence.

The road's earnings at the start came more from passenger than freight traffic, but the latter quickly forged ahead. The first year passenger receipts were double those from freight, but by 1854 freight provided the larger part of the income and continued to do so thereafter. In 1853, in fact, a peak was reached in passenger fares that was not attained again for some years. Freight revenues likewise did not continue to rise indefinitely without an occasional decline. Competition as much as changes in general business conditions was doubtless the explanation for these ups and downs; competition mainly with the other railroads which were fast criss-crossing Ohio, but also

⁴⁴C.C. & C.R.R., Third Annual Report (for 1854), p. 7; and Circular of the Cleveland, Columbus and Cincinnati Railroad Company, Relative to Delaware County (Ohio) Six Percent Bonds, New York, 1850.

⁴⁵Ohio State Journal, Dec. 21, 1852.

with river carriers and, to some slight extent, with the canals, nearly all of which were owned and operated by the state.

To protect its investment in the canals, the state engaged in rate-cutting, a policy that seems to have resulted in keeping rail rates from rising too high rather than in attracting any considerable business to the waterways. (Kelley was no longer associated with the canal system.) Just a month after the C.C. & C. ran its first train, the state advertised fairly heavy cuts in canal tolls.⁴⁶ The move came too late to keep in operation the packets between Cleveland and Akron, which, it was reported, were to be shifted that spring to a new line between Columbus and Portsmouth.⁴⁷

Once its regular operations were started, the C.C. & C. began developing with the assurance of a well-established concern rather than with the hesitation and uncertainty that characterize the average fledgling venture. The matters acted upon by the directors in the first year showed as much: the roadbed was ordered gravelled as far as possible; more rolling stock was bought; a huge pier was commenced at Cleveland; more income bonds were sold to finance expansion moves. By May three trains daily were steaming (always with wood-burning locomotives, of course) between Cleveland and Columbus -- an express, an accommodation, and a freight and passenger, taking respectively six, seven and eighteen and one-quarter hours.

⁴⁶Bogart, Internal Improvements and State Debt, p. 98.

⁴⁷Cleveland Herald, Mar. 19, 25, 1851.

Thereafter in the years immediately following the directors increased their own number by two to provide for one more each from New York and Columbus; they raised the capital stock to \$6,000,000; they experimented with Winslow's Patent Compound Rail (two pieces riveted together to form a single rail), and within four years replaced it as unsatisfactory; they tried to run rolling stock built for 4-10 and 4-8½ gauge on track with a gauge of 4-9½ and found it did not work; they offered prizes of suits of clothes worth \$35 to the engineers using the least lubricating oil per 100-mile run. One might note that the great expansion of the railroads in the 1850's provided the petroleum industry, which got its real start in 1859, with a ready-made and growing market.

The C.C.& C. was among the early Ohio railroads to experiment with a coal-burning locomotive. In 1861 it successfully converted one of its wood-burners to the use of coal, a fuel against which the objections had been raised that its great heat would melt the iron grate bars and that the sooner the forests were cut down, the sooner new settlers would be attracted and the land put under cultivation. But within five years the road was reconverting to wood, because of the high price of coal, and some time was to elapse before it was irrevocably committed to the new fuel.

Once the C.C.& C. had been well launched it seemed to lose interest for Kelley who in the spring of 1851 took on an additional duty, the presidency of the Cleveland, Painesville and Ashtabula Railroad,

a company with which he had been closely connected since its birth in 1848. He had, in fact, been chosen its first head but refused the office which he later accepted and held until 1854. This line, the Lake Shore, which was also sometimes referred to as the Cleveland and Erie, ran 95½ miles to Erie, Pennsylvania, and had extremely close ties with the C.C.& C. Later in 1851 Kelley gave up the active management of the latter, retaining only the title of president and the management of the "foreign correspondence and business," i.e., outside the state of Ohio, at a salary of \$1,500. Henry B. Payne of Cleveland was named acting-president at a salary of \$2,000.

Payne was a former state senator and unsuccessful candidate on the Democratic ticket for United States senator in 1851 after a fight that stirred the state. Thirty-three years later, still a leader in politics and business, he was to succeed in winning that office after another fight that was even more sensational. His descendants down to today have been prominent in business, sports and society.

Relations with Other New Railroads

From here on, the aspect of the C.C.& C. that might be called its "internal affairs," as contrasted with its relations with other carriers, becomes less important, although it is certainly not lacking in interest. The management's attention was centered mainly on competition, alliances, consolidations, joint operating agreements, "Western trade," "through routes," and like matters, which must have appealed

to the imagination of the directors, eager novices as they were at running a railroad.

Even before its first trains started rolling, the C.C. & C. as a corporation and some of its directors as individuals had been casting about for more iron horse ventures to put their money on. Four of its directors were designated as the incorporators from Cuyahoga County in the charters of two roads sanctioned by the legislature in 1851, the Coshocton, Wooster and Cleveland Railroad⁴⁸ and the Cleveland, Coshocton and Zanesville Railroad.⁴⁹ These were virtually twins as to route, personnel and, particularly, charter provisions authorizing the C.C. & C. to extend to them unlimited financial aid. Each was allowed to continue its line to the Ohio River. Their raison d'être was the coal fields they expected to reach.

The first-named of this pair will not be referred to again; the second made a single appearance three years later in the minutes when the C.C. & C. agreed to guarantee the interest on \$150,000 of its mortgage bonds.⁵⁰ Thereafter it was heard of no more.

The same session of the legislature which had travelled to Cleveland for the gala opening celebration adopted, not long afterward, three more measures beneficial to the C.C. & C. One allowed it to sell to other roads any rights it might have received to build branches, and

⁴⁸Ohio Local Laws, XLIX, 446.

⁴⁹Ibid., XLIX, 452.

⁵⁰C.C. & C.R.R., Minutes of Directors' Meetings, Jan. 12, 1854.

to give financial assistance to such purchasers. The same act empowered it to build a branch to Wooster, a point through which both the "twin" roads named above were also expected to pass.⁵¹ The second measure allowed the town of Worthington in Franklin County to subscribe up to \$3,000 in stock for a branch to be built to that place.⁵² The third, and perhaps the most significant, permitted the C.C. & C. to extend its line southward from Columbus by way of Washington (now Washington Courthouse), Leesburg, and Hillsboro to Aberdeen on the Ohio River opposite Maysville, Kentucky, to connect or consolidate with the Hillsboro and Maysville Railroad which had received its charter nine days earlier, and to increase its (C.C. & C.'s) capital stock as much as necessary to do all this.⁵³

What catches one's attention is the reference to Maysville, that place which exerted such a pull on the imagination of Ohio's rail promoters, as told in Chapter Five. For the "Drang Nach Maysville," as it might be called, to make itself felt in the Cleveland headquarters of the C.C. & C. was a sign that the management was enlarging its horizons. It was also probably a sign that the company wanted to be able to threaten possible competition when dealing with the Little Miami-Columbus and Xenia combination, its only outlet to the south.

After discussing, apparently inconclusively, some kind of connection with the organizers of the newly-formed Toledo, Norwalk and

⁵¹Ohio Local Laws, XLIX, 485.

⁵²Ibid., XLIX, 524.

⁵³Ibid., XLIX, 530.

Cleveland Railroad, the C.C.& C. directors took up the matter of consolidating with the Cleveland, Painesville and Ashtabula (the Lake Shore) of which Kelley was by then the president, and also the matter of joint operation of the three roads linking Cleveland and Cincinnati. An agreement with the Lake Shore was reached the following year but never could the three links in the chain between the Forest City and the Queen City weld themselves into a single whole.

The Toledo, Norwalk and Cleveland came back into the picture at the annual stockholders' meeting on January 14, 1852, when unanimous approval was given a contract with that line providing for "running in connection with" it, as the phrase was, meaning, it would seem, to co-ordinate their train schedules. "Iron Bonds" of the Norwalk Road, to use its shortened name, issued to pay for the rails it was then laying, were guaranteed by the C.C.& C. up to \$200,000. The stockholders at the same meeting voted life passes to all present and past directors and to the widows of two who had died, in compensation for services while the road was being built and directors were receiving no pay.

For the first time the minutes give information as to who the stockholders were and what their interests amounted to (at least of those who voted in person or by proxy). The record shows that the largest holders were: city of Cleveland, 2,000 shares; county of Delaware, 1,000; county of Franklin and city of Columbus, 500 each. The total held by persons recognizably from Columbus was 953, including

100 held by Kelley (the same number he had at his death in 1859),⁵⁴ 91 by members of the Hubbard family, 75 by Lincoln Goodale, 50 by Judge Parsons and 30 by Robert Neil. The total, representing \$95,300 of Columbus private funds invested in the enterprise, is probably not a great deal less than the stock bought and paid for by the people of the capital city in the Columbus and Xenia Railroad, their own "hometown" enterprise. (See Chapter Six.)

The day the stockholders met, the directors were also in session, considering a proposition from the Columbus and Xenia for complete consolidation -- not merely "joint operation" as suggested earlier by the C.C. & C., -- of the three companies on the Cleveland-Cincinnati route. It is uncertain whether Kelley was still president of the Columbus and Xenia at that time. The proposition was referred to a committee which a month later brought in a report urgently recommending immediate consolidation of those three roads and of the Lake Shore as well. The idea was approved in principle by all the directors present, except Leonard Case (owner of 339 shares of stock), and twice steps were taken to put the plan into effect. Unaccountably, however, the story ends there; no more is heard of the consolidation plan, despite its apparent importance.

One step, at least, toward closer relations with a neighbor was consummated that summer when the C.C. & C. approved an agreement, dated July 1, 1852, for joint operation with the Lake Shore, to be described

⁵⁴Estate of Alfred Kelley, File No. 3609, Franklin County Probate Court.

later. Another step, proposed about the same time, was for a "convention" of representatives from railroads running between Cincinnati and Lake Erie to be held that summer in Columbus. Since "convention" was then sometimes used in a sense different from the way it is today, it is not clear just what kind of a gathering was intended, nor indeed, is there any proof that it ever took place, although the following year the lake-to-river lines got together on a far-reaching agreement to restrain competition.

The Beginnings of Competition

The first truly competitive situation in Ohio railroading had arisen in 1851 when the final section of the Mad River and Lake Erie line was completed from Springfield to Dayton in January, the C.C.& C. was opened in February, and the Cincinnati, Hamilton and Dayton was opened in September. Until then not enough roads had been in operation to provide anything that could be called competition. Thanks to the new trackage, however, the state was traversed by two distinct lake-to-river routes, unmistakably rivals. One went for 218 miles from Cincinnati via Hamilton, Dayton and Springfield to Sandusky; the other for 254 miles from Cincinnati via Xenia and Columbus to Cleveland. (The mileage figures of those days must not be taken too literally, being of a tendentious nature and antedating by many years the measured distances demanded by the Interstate Commerce Commission.)

Severe competition inevitably broke out between the two routes. Trans-Ohio travel was mainly through travel, a land link between two

steamer trips, with passengers yielding more revenues than freight. Of the factors influencing a traveller in his choice of routes, such as the type of rails on the roadbed, the water, weather and ice conditions on river and lake, and the available steamer connections, it is only the latter that we have room to consider here. Since the C.C.& C. Railroad is our main concern we will, for the same reason, pass over the connections with the river boats at Cincinnati and examine no more than the connections with the steamers on Lake Erie.

Each of Ohio's two principal lake ports, Cleveland and Sandusky, was the terminus of steamboat lines to New York's two principal lake ports, Buffalo and Dunkirk, as well as being the terminus of a rail line extending across the Buckeye State. Each New York lake port in turn was similarly the western end of a rail line, or chain of lines, reaching across that state to tidewater. The New York and Erie ended at Dunkirk, and the chain that was later to form the New York Central ran to Buffalo. The competitive permutations and combinations inherent in such a situation need hardly be set forth in detail.

Inevitably, alliances were made between Buckeyes and Yorkers, involving among other things the operation by each group of its own steamers, and ruinous consequences might have followed had not the two Ohio combinations decided that the pen was more profitable than the sword. In other words, they made an agreement to pool their earnings and stop competing. Since this appears to be the first such agreement made in the state, its terms are important.

In accordance with a "convention" of the roads involved, held in Columbus, a contract dated April 21, 1853, was entered into between, on the one hand, the three companies operating the Cincinnati-Cleveland line and, on the other, the two companies operating the Cincinnati-Sandusky route to which was added a third road, still under construction, to run between Sandusky and Cleveland and known as the Junction Railroad. The former route was designated the East Line and was made up of the Little Miami, the Columbus and Xenia and the C.C. & C. railroads. The latter was designated the West Line and comprised the Cincinnati, Hamilton and Dayton, the Mad River and Lake Erie and the Junction Railroads. It was agreed that each individual company would retain 50% of its gross earnings to cover its expenses and would pool the balance, the pool to be divided, 60% for the East Line and 40% for the West Line. Only "through business" was involved, meaning between Cincinnati and Buffalo, via either Sandusky or Cleveland. Dunkirk was not mentioned by name but the rates on the two lines were to be the same from Cincinnati to "any other point east of Cleveland." Freight and passenger charges were stipulated and the agreement was to go into effect June 1, 1853, or as soon thereafter as the new boats for the Buffalo-Sandusky run were put in operation.⁵⁵

⁵⁵Text of contract annexed to Report of the Investigating Committee of the Cincinnati, Hamilton and Dayton Railroad Company, Cincinnati, 1858, pp. 23-24.

It was also agreed that business solicitors, who would be "neutral" and represent both lines, were to be employed at strategic points such as Louisville, Evansville, Cairo, Memphis, and St. Louis, as well as Buffalo and New York. The names of the river ports reinforce what was said above on the relation of river traffic to the cross-state railroads.

Barely a year elapsed before a sharp controversy had broken out between the two sides, with each rushing to the printers to issue a pamphlet defense of its position. The charges and counter-charges may well be disregarded except for a complaint of the West Line that the East Line (meaning in this case the C.C. & C.) had become financially interested in the Lake Shore road and in a line of steamers between Cleveland and Buffalo, statements which were essentially true.⁵⁶ Although the pool seems to have been terminated by the controversy, there are references in 1855 and in 1857 which point to some sort of arrangement as to other "East Lines" and "West Lines," but the details are not at hand. Such understandings were sure to prove unstable, in part because the general railroad picture in Ohio was changing so fast.

The General Railroad Picture in Ohio

Despite its not inconsiderable wealth and economic importance, the state of Ohio in the 1850's and still in part today can be looked at,

⁵⁶ [S.S.L'Hommedieu, President of the C.H. & D.R.R.] Statement of the Existing Controversy between the Two Lines of Railroads from Cincinnati to Lake Erie, Cincinnati, 1854, and Little Miami Railroad Company, Explanatory Letter to the Stockholders, Cincinnati, 1854.

in matters of transportation, as primarily a corridor or channel for through traffic between the eastern seaboard and the west. This was apparent even in the early days, when, of the first eleven railroads to start operations in the state (see Table I, "Approximate Chronology of Earliest Railroads in Ohio," preceding Chapter Three) -- one may omit the trivial Cleveland and Newburgh and Painesville and Fairport lines -- at least seven of them had as a primary aim to become a link in an important through route, and only one, the Monroeville and Sandusky City, was unmistakably laid out to cater principally to local traffic. Two others, the Columbus and Lake Erie and the Cincinnati, Hamilton and Dayton, were not predominantly of either type.

Most through traffic moved north and south within Ohio, between lake and river, until the opening of railroads east and west across the state, from about 1853 on, started some of the commerce flowing in that direction. These latter roads came into existence when they did largely because by then the four great trunk lines serving New England and the Middle Atlantic region had been completed from tidewater to the Great Lakes or the banks of the Ohio River and were seeking rail connections with what lay beyond. Their goal, of course, was the "western trade," that great constant in American economic life ever since the first seacoast merchant started doing business with the interior.

Of the four trunk lines, the B. and O. influenced least the part of the state served by the C.C. & C.; its relations with Ohio roads will be reserved for the next chapter. The other three, namely the New York

and Erie Railroad (later named simply the Erie), the gaggle of little lines which became the New York Central, and the Pennsylvania (at first frequently called the Pennsylvania Central) all made themselves felt in what may be described as C.C. & C. territory.

The Erie and the New York Central were both reached from Ohio by the Cleveland, Painesville and Ashtabula, or Lake Shore road, which followed the lake east from Cleveland to Erie, Pennsylvania, whence connections of a sort eventually led to the two trunk routes. The importance to the C.C. & C. of a close relationship with the Lake Shore thus becomes clear since the latter was, for a time, the only link (except for a route through Canada) between Ohio and points further west on the one hand and the two great New York lines on the other. The C.C. & C. in turn was in a fairly strategic position because a good part of the traffic from Ohio and territory to the west and south had to pass over its tracks to reach the line going east from Cleveland. (The accompanying map illustrates the point.)

Access from Ohio to the Pennsylvania Railroad by rail (the Ohio River must not be overlooked) was possible by several routes, the most important of which could be reached from the greater part of the state only over the tracks of the C.C. & C., which here again was strategically situated.

One can therefore say in general and approximate terms of the C.C. & C. that it was to a considerable extent an access or "bridge" road over which most of the traffic from the north, the west and the south-west sections of the state had to move to reach the trunk lines to

New York and Philadelphia. It is true that on the map the combination of the Central Ohio and the Steubenville and Indiana railroads appears to offer the most direct route from the center of Ohio to the Pittsburgh end of the Pennsylvania line, but inadequate connections of one sort and another delayed until 1865 the running of through trains between Pittsburgh and Columbus on anything but a roundabout route.

Further Relations with Ohio Railroads

With the early trunk line relations of C.C. & C. territory thus summarily sketched in, that road's relations with certain Ohio carriers will next be considered. The roads are listed in the "Outline of Railroad Connections" at the end of this chapter and will be taken up in the order in which they appear on the accompanying map, beginning with those running to the east, of which the first and most important was the Lake Shore.

Even before it had operated its first train in November, 1852, the Lake Shore had contracted with the C.C. & C. for joint operation. Kelley, it will be recalled, was president of both corporations. There was to be a common superintendent working under a committee from the two lines and receipts were to be divided proportionately to their respective mileages. When the contract, which was to run for five years, proved too complicated at the end of half that time, it was cancelled in favor of a close working arrangement with a free interchange of rolling

stock and other benefits.⁵⁷

Since the C.C. & C. undoubtedly routed over the Lake Shore as much of its eastbound traffic as it could, its relations with the other carriers running in that direction were of secondary importance. The lines of two began at Cleveland: (1) the Cleveland and Mahoning which was not opened until 1857 and availed little for through traffic; (2) the Cleveland and Pittsburgh which also offered poor service eastward, at least until 1856 when it began running its cars into Allegheny City (Pittsburgh) over the tracks of the Fort Wayne.

At Shelby, the four-foot, ten-inch gauge road of the C.C. & C. crossed the five-foot, four-inch gauge tracks of the variously named line between Sandusky and Newark. It is doubtful if there was any appreciable interchange of traffic.

At Crestline was the western terminus of the Ohio and Pennsylvania (which soon became part of the Fort Wayne combination), and once it began to compete to some extent with the Lake Shore it could expect but little from that road's ally.

From Columbus the Central Ohio and later, in a roundabout fashion, the Steubenville and Indiana constituted the two eastbound routes. The second of those two, at least, mattered to the C.C. & C., since in 1860 the latter had a falling out with its good friend the Columbus and Xenia

⁵⁷Certain records of the New York Central Railroad, Harlow in The Road of the Century (p. 351) and the present writer all differ as to details of the agreement between the two roads.

on the grounds that the Xenia line's aid to the Steubenville and Indiana was harmful to it (the C.C. & C.).⁵⁸

The westward connections of the C.C. & C., now to be outlined in the same summary fashion as those to the east, were six in number in addition to the Columbus and Xenia which went to the southwest.

The two nearest the lake, the Junction and the Toledo, Norwalk and Cleveland (whose bonds the C.C. & C. had guaranteed), were merged in 1853 to constitute the Cleveland and Toledo which offered the best route from Cleveland toward Chicago. It had to operate over some twenty-five miles of C.C. & C. tracks to reach the Forest City, and in 1856 it leased a half-interest in them, together with the use of depots and other facilities for which it paid the C.C. & C. a rent of \$65,000 a year.

At Crestline began the Ohio and Indiana, the westward extension and ally of the Ohio and Pennsylvania (see above). Each of these companies had \$300,000 of its capital supplied by the Pennsylvania Railroad which in 1853 invested large sums in certain Ohio roads which it believed would yield handsome returns in the fabulous western trade. These two, together with the Fort Wayne and Chicago, made up the route used by the Pennsylvania to reach Chicago and the northwest. Its counterpart to Cincinnati and the southwest was established a few years later.

⁵⁸C.C. & C.R.R., Minutes of Directors' Meetings, Jan. 11, 1860.

The three links in this chain to Chicago were consolidated in 1856 under the name of the Pittsburgh, Fort Wayne and Chicago Railroad. Generally speaking, during the time covered by this study the Fort Wayne, as it was called, can be regarded as a close ally, but not yet a subsidiary, of the Pennsylvania, and most of the time also as on fairly good terms with the C.C. & C., since the latter loaned it \$20,000 in 1858 to put its track in order between Crestline and Fort Wayne and otherwise helped it.

At Galion, just below Crestline, was the eastern terminus of the Bellefontaine and Indiana, probably the C.C. & C.'s most important westward connection, which, linked with its Hoosier ally, the Indianapolis and Bellefontaine, gave access to Indianapolis. We will refer to them jointly as the Bellefontaine Railroad, a name they did not actually acquire until their consolidation in 1864; the people who used the road gave it the nickname "Bee Line."

In July, 1853, the Bellefontaine began running its first trains to connect with the C.C. & C., which more than a year earlier had approved a loan of \$60,000 from its Surplus Fund to certain individuals (presumably C.C. & C. directors) to buy stock in the Bee Line. The year after the opening a memorable special meeting of the C.C. & C. stockholders, presided over by W.B. Hubbard of Columbus, guaranteed \$200,000 income bonds of the Bellefontaine, secured by a deposit of stock of twice that amount; assumed payment of \$117,500 in subscriptions made by various persons to the stock of the same road, and jointly and severally

with it guaranteed \$400,000 third mortgage bonds of the Columbus, Piqua and Indiana road, a matter of which a great deal will be heard in a subsequent chapter. Purchase by the C.C. & C. of \$10,000 stock in the Columbus, Piqua and Indiana, as required by the contract governing the bond endorsement and effected in due course, was not mentioned in the minutes.⁵⁹

Still working our way south along the line of the C.C. & C. we come next to Delaware and the fifth railroad leading to the west, the Springfield, Mt. Vernon and Pittsburgh. One of the feeblest of the early Buckeye rail enterprises, it operated for a few years between Springfield and Delaware (except for one or two intervals when its trains ceased running at all) and in 1861 was bought by the C.C. & C. for \$140,000.

At Columbus we encounter the last of the lines leading to the west, the Columbus, Piqua and Indiana, a most ill-starred railroad which exerted an influence on the line to Cleveland more by costing it a large sum than by bringing traffic to its portal.

The Guarantee of the C.P. & I. Bonds

As just mentioned in connection with the Bellefontaine Railroad, the two companies forming that line had joined with the C.C. & C. in 1854 to guarantee \$400,000 third mortgage bonds of the Columbus, Piqua and Indiana. The latter we will refer to as the C.P. & I. One year

⁵⁹C.C. & C.R.R., Minutes of Stockholders' Meetings, July 1, 1854.

and four months after the guarantee had been approved, the guarantors were notified they would have to make good on the endorsements. Before the C.C.& C. could advance more than one semi-annual interest payment, however, it was enjoined by a stockholder's action alleging that the directors had lacked the power to give such a guarantee. The eventual decision upheld the directors in what was called "a case of great importance as settling the rights of bondholders."⁶⁰ We cannot tell how much this extension of credit ultimately cost the C.C.& C. since it also had to pay some of the Bellefontaine's share and the accounts became very complicated, but in 1861 it seems to have disbursed to redeem the guaranteed bonds the sum of \$362,405.⁶¹

The same stockholders' meeting which had approved the guarantee to aid the C.P.& I. approved also the purchase of \$50,000 capital stock in another rail venture called the Mississippi and Atlantic. It is not clear, however, whether the C.C.& C. actually paid out that entire sum or only a part of it. In any case, the recipient, according to Harlow who treats the matter at some length,⁶² existed only on paper, with an Indiana charter but none in Illinois where nine-tenths of its line would be built.

⁶⁰ Railroad Record, Mar. 24, 1858, gives text of decision of Judge John McLean of the Circuit Court of the United States for the Northern District of Ohio in the case of Christian A. Zabriskie vs C.C.& C. Railroad Company, John A. Butler and others, bondholders.

⁶¹ C.C.& C.R.R., Eleventh Annual Report, (for 1861), Cleveland, 1862.

⁶² Harlow, Road of the Century, p. 359 et. seq.

The road was to run to St. Louis from Terre Haute, thereby stretching from Gallion on the C.C.& C. as far as the west bank of the Mississippi the string of railroads under the domination of the energetic John Brough, president of the Bellefontaine. Brough was the newspaper editor, politician and promoter, active in both Ohio and Indiana, who became one of the three Civil War governors of the Buckeye State, all of them interested in railroads.

That this purchase of securities in a non-connecting rail line was a blunder was made clear when \$18,000 of the stock was charged off as worthless only a year and one-half later.⁶³ The experience of the C.C.& C. in this respect differed little from that of other prosperous Ohio roads, constantly too generous in extending financial aid to rail carriers which seemed sure to bring them traffic.

The investments which the line to Cleveland had made in the Bellefontaine itself were likewise risky and productive of considerable trouble to the benefactor. In the long run, however, the latter profited since the stock which it was gradually accumulating paved the way for the merger in 1868 of the Bellefontaine and the C.C.& C. to form the Cleveland, Columbus, Cincinnati and Indianapolis Railway Company which for the succeeding score of years also advertised itself as "The Bee Line."

A comprehensive view of the financial aid extended to other railroads by the C.C.& C. during the years when it was most open-handed is

⁶³C.C.& C.R.R., Minutes of Directors' Meetings, Jan. 8, 1856.

given below. The list includes the items mentioned in the foregoing pages but omits other guarantees and purchases which were authorized but not consummated.

FINANCIAL AID EXTENDED BY THE C.C. & C. RAILROAD
TO OTHER RAILROADS, 1852-1854

<u>Recipient</u>	<u>Nature and Amount of Aid</u>
Toledo, Norwalk and Cleveland	Guarantee of \$200,000 "Iron Bonds."
Bellefontaine and Indiana	Loan of \$60,000 to individuals to purchase capital stock.
Columbus, Piqua and Indiana	Purchase of \$10,000 capital stock.
Columbus, Piqua and Indiana	Guarantee (with other roads) of \$400,000 Third Mortgage Bonds.
Bellefontaine and Indiana	Guarantee of \$200,000 Income Bonds.
Bellefontaine and Indiana and Indianapolis and Bellefontaine	Assumption of subscriptions to \$117,500 capital stock made by individuals.
Mississippi and Atlantic	Purchase of \$50,000 capital stock authorized; at least \$18,000 bought.

The last four of the items above were laid before the stockholders at the special meeting on July 1, 1854, by the directors who wished their own approval to be confirmed. The stockholders did so, but apparently feeling that was as far as they should go in extending aid to others they adopted a resolution that their consent would be necessary, after due and explicit notice, before any more railroads could be helped in

this fashion. (The general economic picture was darkening, just then.)

As further evidence of a growing conservatism they considered three resolutions introduced by Alfred Kelley, who was still a director:

(1) to set aside depreciation reserves; (2) to set up a special reserve fund for contingencies to permit uniform cash dividends; (3) to authorize the use of cash earnings for extensions or additions to road or machinery, capitalized by the issuance of stock dividends. The resolutions were referred to a special committee of stockholders, one of whose members was Thomas W. Olcott of Albany, New York, later a power in the New York Central Railroad which was eventually to become the owner of the C.C.& C.

Another way of looking at what the latter road did with some of its large and quickly earned profits (those not distributed as dividends) is to cull from a balance sheet its holdings in various enterprises, both rail and others. The statement below includes what might be termed investments and also items such as the loan to the Mahoning Railroad which was probably no more than temporary advance.⁶⁴

C.C.& C. HOLDINGS IN VARIOUS ENTERPRISES
July 1, 1855

Loan to Mahoning Railroad	\$ 24,000
Telegraph company stock	3,000
Columbus and Xenia Railroad stock	5,300
Stock in two lake steamers	54,390
Bellefontaine and Indiana Railroad stock	60,000
Indianapolis and Bellefontaine Railroad stock	70,000

⁶⁴Railroad Record, Aug. 23, 1855.

C.C.& C. HOLDINGS IN VARIOUS ENTERPRISES (cont'd)
July 1, 1855

Columbus and Piqua [sic] Railroad stock	\$ 10,000*
Mississippi and Atlantic Railroad stock	<u>18,000*</u>
TOTAL	\$244,690

*Charged off January 8, 1856

This total of approximately one-quarter of a million dollars must be considered in relation to the company's outstanding capital stock of \$4,647,570 and a bonded debt of \$98,900, in the light of which it does not reflect too unfavorably on the road's investment policy. The contingent liability on \$800,000 bonds guaranteed for three other carriers, is, however, not included.

Although they may seem to have been over-generous with the company's funds, the directors of the C.C.& C. were probably aware of what they were doing. The Third Annual Report (for 1853)⁶⁵ announced that the road's policy would be not to build branches as a means of expanding traffic but to offer financial assistance to lines which proposed to connect with it. Since it was usual for a company putting up money under such circumstances to obtain the stocks or bonds of the beneficiary at a considerable discount, the road with the helping hand counted on a profit from both an increase in traffic and a rise in security values.

In addition to not building branches there were a number of other activities, popular at the time among Ohio railroads, which the C.C.& C. also apparently eschewed. It did little to promote directly the

⁶⁵Cleveland, Ohio, 1854, p. 10.

commercial development of its territory; it exploited no natural resources; it did not engage in land-selling; it avoided "blue sky" financiering, and after 1851 it got no more legislative favors (at least on the record.) In short, it concentrated on building up its traffic by the financial methods just described and also by making contracts with its neighbors, the details of which are seldom found in the records. Such contracts related in general to co-ordinating schedules of trains, interchanging traffic and rolling stock, and, sometime, pooling receipts from certain routes and preferential treatment for certain connecting roads.

Since most of the Ohio lines were short and much of the business was through business, agreements of this kind usually embraced several roads which thereby became links in a chain, to use the figure of speech employed ad nauseam in the writings of the period. Unlike conventional chains, these were usually weaker than their weakest link, being temporary and fragile, made and broken with apparent ease, and reminiscent of the ephemeral alliances of the Italian city states of the Renaissance.

A good example of such a chain is one of which the C.C.& C. was a part a year or so before the outbreak of the Civil War. Its directors authorized a contract dated August 25, 1859, for a through route for freight and passengers between Cincinnati and Cleveland (and thence to the east via the Lake Shore) as follows:⁶⁶

⁶⁶ C.C.& C.R.R., Minutes of Directors' Meetings, Aug. 30, 1859; Springfield, Mt. Vernon and Pittsburgh R.R., Minutes of Directors' Meetings, Oct. 1, 1859; Sandusky, Dayton & Cincinnati R.R. Co., Report to the Stock and Bondholders, July 1, 1860, Sandusky, 1860, pp.6-7.

THROUGH ROUTE: CINCINNATI TO CLEVELAND

<u>ROUTE</u>	<u>RAILROAD LINE</u>
Cincinnati to Dayton	Cincinnati, Hamilton & Dayton
Dayton to Springfield	Sandusky, Dayton & Cincinnati (Successor to Mad River & Lake Erie)
Springfield to Delaware	Springfield, Mt. Vernon & Pittsburgh
Delaware to Cleveland	C.C.& C.

The Little Miami-Columbus and Xenia railroad combination was not included. When the Little Miami wrote to the C.C.& C. to inquire what, in the light of the latter's new alignment, its intentions were in respect to the contract between the two of them on the interchange of traffic - a contract that had been in force since early 1852 -- the reply was to throw the blame on the Columbus and Xenia. That road, said the C.C.& C., had greatly aided the Steubenville and Indiana Railroad by a loan of money and otherwise, despite the protests of the C.C.& C. which was getting much competition from the Steubenville line.

This through route lasted but a short while. Soon the Little Miami decided to make peace with its chief competitor, the Cincinnati, Hamilton and Dayton, with which it ran roughly parallel for many miles, and, early in 1860, agreed with it to pool their earnings and charge the same fare between Cincinnati and Columbus on either line.⁶⁷ The result, of course, was to dissolve the preceding chain and so, to paraphrase the

⁶⁷Black, Little Miami, p. 134.

minutes of the C.C.& C.,⁶⁸ since all the other roads had abandoned the contract of August 25, 1859, that road followed suit. The story of this particular arrangement is told at some length because it was typical. The making and breaking of other chains followed as time went on but need not concern us since the start of the Civil War soon thereafter marks the end of this study of the C.C.& C.

Epilogue

Columbus may well be proud of having had a part in the creation of what so quickly became one of the most profitable railroads in the country, and one that spread far afield. In 1861 the C.C.& C. bought the property of the Springfield, Mt. Vernon and Pittsburgh at bargain rates. In 1868 it merged with the Bellefontaine Railway to form a new Bee Line which reached to Indianapolis and soon to St. Louis. In 1872 it got its own entrance into Cincinnati by financing and then taking over its subsidiary, the Cincinnati and Springfield road, to which it added stretches of track between Springfield and Dayton and between Springfield and Columbus, also gathered in at about the same time. In consequence, by the end of 1872 it ran on its own (or controlled) rails from Cleveland to Columbus, Cincinnati, Indianapolis and St. Louis and was one of the leading roads of the Middle West.

The Vanderbilts, who controlled the New York Central and wanted to expand to the west, began buying into the Bee Line and in time became dominant. Another great Middle Western line, the Cincinnati, Indianapolis,

⁶⁸Minutes of Directors' Meetings, June 13, 1860.

St. Louis and Chicago, called the Big Four, had also attracted their attention, thanks to its outstanding president, Melville E. Ingalls, and in 1889 they combined the Bee Line and the Big Four under the title of the Cleveland, Cincinnati, Chicago and St. Louis Railroad which kept the familiar name of Big Four. In 1930 the entire line was leased to the New York Central for ninety-nine years.

The name of Columbus was no longer in the title of the successor to its greatest rail enterprise, a loss that may have touched the civic pride of the inhabitants, and yet in a way this fact was a vindication of the judgment of the pioneers who had started the C.C. & C. For the builders of all the early Ohio railroads were sure that even though their wobbly little lines might at first run only from one Buckeye village to the next, they would in time become essential links in a chain uniting mighty cities.

OUTLINE OF RAILROAD CONNECTIONS
MADE WITH THE C.C. & C.
(In order as nearly chronological as possible)

1851

When the C.C. & C. began service this year it was connected with the

(1) Sandusky, Mansfield and Newark Railroad (to use the convenient title it did not properly acquire until 1853). The two lines crossed at Shelby, Richland County, but the gauge of five feet, four inches on the road to Sandusky forbade any transfer of rolling stock.

- (2) Columbus and Xenia Railroad at Columbus.

1852

(1) Cleveland and Pittsburgh Railroad, opened for its full length between Cleveland and Wellsville, Ohio, where a steamboat connection on the Ohio River reached to Pittsburgh.

(2) Cleveland, Painesville and Ashtabula Railroad, (the Lake Shore), opened for its full length between Cleveland and Erie, Pennsylvania.

1853

(1) Toledo, Norwalk and Cleveland Railroad, opened for its full length between Toledo and Grafton, a point on the C.C. & C. about 25 miles from Cleveland.

(2) Ohio and Pennsylvania Railroad, opened for its full length between Allegheny City (i.e., Pittsburgh) and Crestline, a point on the C.C. & C. about 75 miles from Cleveland.

(3) Bellefontaine and Indiana Railroad, opened for its full length between Union City on the Ohio-Indiana line (where it met the Indianapolis and Bellefontaine Railroad leading to Indianapolis), and Galion, a point on the C.C. & C. about 79 miles from Cleveland.

(4) Junction Railroad, apparently opened for its full length between Sandusky and Berea, a point on the C.C. & C. about 12 miles from Cleveland.

NOTE: The Central Ohio Railroad and the Columbus, Piqua and Indiana Railroad started service to Columbus in 1853 but they did not open for their full lengths until 1854 and 1859 respectively.

1854

(1) Springfield, Mt. Vernon and Pittsburgh Railroad, opened the only part it ever completed, the section between Springfield and Delaware, a point on the C.C. & C. about 25 miles from Columbus.

(2) Ohio and Indiana Railroad, opened for its full length between Fort Wayne, Indiana, and Crestline, a point on the C.C. & C. where it connected with its affiliated road, the Ohio and Pennsylvania (see above under 1853) and formed a through route from Fort Wayne to Allegheny City, often called the Fort Wayne line.

(3) Central Ohio Railroad, opened for its full length between Columbus and Bellaire on the Ohio River, across from and slightly south of Wheeling, the northwestern terminus of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. A ferry connected the two roads until 1871 when a bridge was completed.

1855

NOTE: The Steubenville and Indiana Railroad opened for its full length between Steubenville on the Ohio River and Newark where passengers and freight were transferred to the Central Ohio Railroad for Columbus and the C.C. & C. A physical connection at Newark between

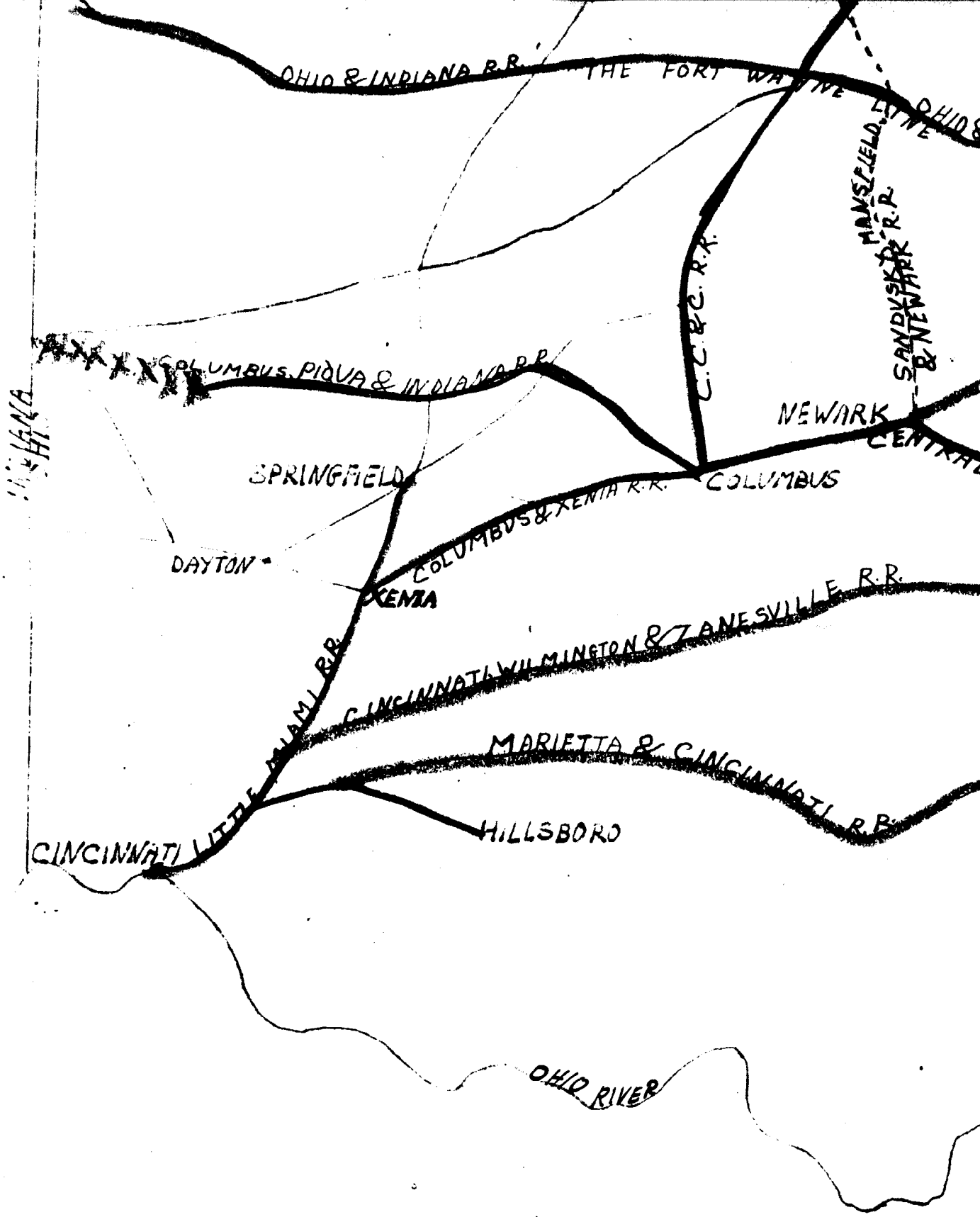
the Steubenville and Indiana and the Central Ohio was not made until 1857. The Steubenville road did not have an equity in tracks which reached Columbus and the C.C. & C. until it bought an undivided half-interest in the road between Newark and Columbus in 1863.

1857

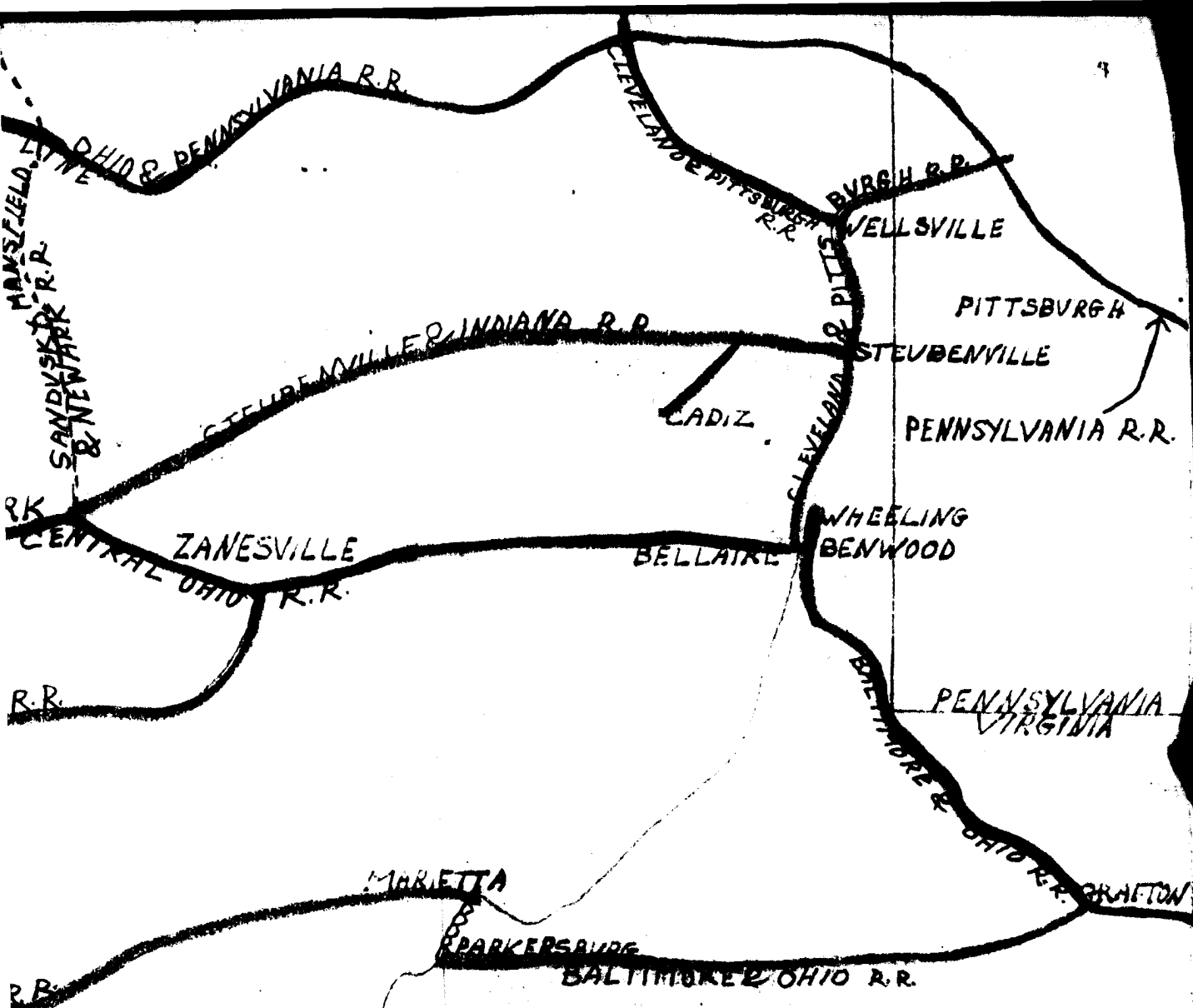
Cleveland and Mahoning Railroad, opened between Cleveland and Youngstown, almost its entire length.

1859








Columbus, Piqua and Indiana Railroad, opened for its full length between Columbus and Union City on the Ohio-Indiana border where it met the Bellefontaine Railroad line.



MAP 3. THE CENTRAL OHIO R.R. AND CONNECTIONS



CENTRAL OHIO R.R. AND CONNECTIONS

-  Central Ohio R.R.
-  Railroads in operation in 1854 when Central Ohio line was completed
-  Railroads put in operation 1855-57
-  S.M. & N.R.R. with gauge of 5 ft. 4 in.
-  Part of C.P. & I.R.R. completed 1858-59
-  Ferryboat line
-  Other railroads

One inch: approx. 16 miles

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE CENTRAL OHIO RAILROAD: DIFFICULTIES UNDERESTIMATED

Almost from the day that the B. & O. Railroad was chartered in 1827 to build from the shores of Chesapeake Bay to the banks of the Ohio River it was obvious that in the state of Ohio a railroad would be built to meet it. At least three or four lines with that goal had been authorized, but none had materialized, before the legislature on February 8, 1847, chartered the Central Ohio Railroad Company to construct a line from Columbus by way of Newark and Zanesville to such point on the Ohio river as the directors might select. Permission was included for the company to extend its tracks westward to the Indiana boundary whenever it was expedient to do so. The Ohio road was looked upon as an extension of the B. & O., a link in the chain that would ultimately unite Baltimore with St. Louis.

The difficulty for this and all other proposed Buckeye roads seeking to connect with the B. & O. was that the latter had not made up its mind where it would reach the river. The long and involved story of why it finally selected Wheeling, or some point south of Wheeling, over Pittsburgh, need not be told here except to observe that this was one more important matter in which Alfred Kelley played a part. How decisive a part is not clear, but it is certain that he

was asked by President Louis McLane of the B. & O. to give his opinion in writing of the best route across Ohio, a matter that would weigh heavily in a selection of a terminus on the river. The route he recommended, which in general went along the 40th parallel, was substantially that of the Central Ohio (chartered a few months earlier) and was the one with which the B. & O. decided to connect.

Kelley's reasons for selecting it were that the terrain was gentler and the territory more prosperous than a route on a more northerly line, such as through Massillon, or on a more southerly line, as for instance via Marietta, which seemed to be the two principal rival lines to one through Columbus and the central part of the state.¹

It was the Central Ohio's misfortune that Kelley did no more for it than this, for soon after he had made his report he became president of the Columbus and Xenia and the C.C. & C. railroads and led them to great financial success. The Central Ohio, on the other hand, turned into a fiasco, thanks to inexperience, bad management and inadequate traffic connections at each end.

The initiative for this venture, which considered itself a "part of the Grand Central Line projected as an extension of the B. & O. Railroad,"² came from Zanesville which by rail lies 58 miles east of Columbus and 79 miles west of the Ohio River at Bellaire. Twenty-six

¹Ohio State Journal, Aug. 5, 1847.

²Ibid., (advertisement) May 9, 1850.

corporators were named, nine from Muskingum County (Zanesville), twelve from Licking County (Newark), and five from Franklin County (Columbus) consisting of Robert Neil, brother of William Neil "the stage coach king," Samuel Medary, editor of the Ohio Statesman, Joel Buttles, Joseph Ridgway and Bela Latham. There were no corporators from the section between Zanesville and the river, probably because the actual route there was yet to be selected.

The charter provided for a capital of \$1,500,000 in \$50 shares with the privilege of increasing the total to \$2,500,000 if necessary. Organization could be effected as soon as \$10,000 in stock had been subscribed (a figure below the usual limit), but this had to be accomplished within three years, and within six years at least twenty miles of the road had to be built or the charter would be void. For the first ten years the rates of toll could be whatever the corporation thought reasonable; thereafter, the legislature would have the right to act in respect of the rates.³

A piece of good fortune came the way of the company early in its life. A committee from the B. & O. went to Wheeling in June, 1847, to see about the western terminus (and hence connections into Ohio) of their road. The Columbus City Council sent three representatives, Joseph Ridgway, Dr. Lincoln Goodale and Kelley, to confer with them on what could be done to locate the Ohio connection through Columbus.⁴

³Ohio Local Laws, XLV, 178.

⁴Journal of the Columbus City Council, Apr. 23, 1847.

(This was the occasion for Kelley's report, mentioned above.) The next month the Pennsylvania Railroad sent a similar committee to Cincinnati to consider a connection to that city from their western terminus at Pittsburgh. The route of the Central Ohio clearly could fit into the plans of either or both of these trunk lines, a fact which must have given it favor in the eyes of the public.

Steps toward organization of the new company were soon taken. The Muskingum County corporators, as the prime movers in the venture, by newspaper advertisement invited the corporators in the other two counties to meet with them in Zanesville on July 1 for "general consultation" in order to "unite and concentrate the public feeling" on the subject of railroad connections in the central part of the state.⁵ The Franklin County delegation was given prominence, a conventional way of trying to stimulate interest: Robert Neil was named one of the secretaries and Robert McCoy, a Columbus city councilman but not a corporator, was made chairman of the meeting.

It was resolved to open stock subscription books for two days at the end of the month and to call an organization meeting of stockholders as soon as the minimum \$10,000 had been subscribed. Then followed a bit of typical inter-urban recrimination, with the Zanesville Courier chiding Columbus for failing to support the undertaking and the Columbus Ohio State Journal (but not the Ohio Statesman) answering the "sneers" by saying that a few people in the capital city had taken the amount assigned to that place without the necessity of circulating the

⁵Ohio Statesman, June 18, 1847.

subscription books widely.⁶ The amounts assigned were: Zanesville, \$5,000, and Columbus and Newark, \$2,500 each.

When the stockholders met on August 26 at Newark it appeared that \$18,500 in stock had been taken. Thirteen directors were elected of whom three were from Columbus: McCoy, Robert Neil and William Dennison, son-in-law of William Neil. The directors chose the officers, selecting Solomon Sturges of Zanesville as president. It is hard to say how much significance should attach to the fact that of the twenty-six corporators named in the charter only nine were present: five of the nine designated from Muskingum County, four of the twelve from Licking, and none of the five from Franklin.

The people of the latter county may have excused themselves on the ground that they were being importuned just then by too many railroad promoters. That summer at least four different rail ventures solicited Columbus funds, as follows:

Columbus and Xenia Railroad, books opened June 15;

Franklin and Washington Railroad, books opened July 6;

Central Ohio Railroad, books opened July 29;

Columbus and Sandusky Railroad, books opened September 13.

It is probable that the Columbus and Lake Erie Railroad also sought to raise capital at the same time, and perhaps other lines as well. The second and third companies on the list opened their books in the office of the mayor and were in direct competition since each aimed openly at a connection with the B. & O. In both of them, moreover, the Neil

⁶Ohio State Journal, Aug. 10, 1847.

family was represented. The Zanesville Courier thought that Columbus should support the Central Ohio in preference to the Franklin and Washington (sometimes called the Franklin and Ohio because of an error in drafting), to which the Ohio State Journal replied that Columbus meant no ill to Zanesville and was not deliberately disregarding the interests of that city.⁷

Two other events of the summer deserve mention: The B. & O. finally decided to submit to the mandate of the Virginia legislature and make Wheeling its western terminus; and eastern capital began to flow into certain Buckeye railroads, although not yet into the Central Ohio. In a short while, New England rail contractors were at work in the state, and later some will be found on the Central.

The B. & O.'s decision in regard to Wheeling did not make that city the connecting point with the Central Ohio. By rights, the latter should have terminated at either Bridgeport (long known as Kirkwood) or Martin's Ferry, two communities lying side by side across the river from Wheeling. Ferry service, and eventually a bridge when money was available, could have joined the traffic of the two lines.

But Wheeling for several years was most uncooperative and would not come to terms with the Central road, despite the fact that like so many other Virginia communities it was a very railroad-minded city. (Through 1856 it was to invest some \$1,050,000 in four other lines, none of importance to this work.) When it voted at last to put up \$250,000

⁷Ibid., June 17, 1847.

for the road from Columbus, which, it considered, had no alternative but to accept its terms, so many burdensome conditions were attached to the offer that the Central Ohio would have none of it.

The Buckeye railroaders finally located their eastern terminus at Bellaire, directly across the river from a stop on the B. & O. known as Benwood, some four miles south of Wheeling. The latter city went to court to block the connection at that point but after a year or so gave up struggling and finally reached an agreement with the carriers: it would make itself the interchange point and assist in securing a bridge over the river to Kirkwood. To this day, however, the B. & O. crosses the Ohio by a bridge from Benwood to Bellaire and has no crossing at Wheeling. In this study, Wheeling is sometimes called, for convenience, the connecting point between the two roads, whereas, strictly speaking, such point is obviously Bellaire-Benwood.

Jonathan Knight, one of the B. & O.'s consulting engineers, employed by the Central Ohio to make a "reconnaissance" of the line between Columbus and the river, presented his report in November, 1847.⁸ He was optimistic as to the value of the project; gave the probable average cost for grading, masonry and bridging as \$10,000 per mile from the river to Zanesville and \$5,000 from that place to Columbus. In line with the best practice of the day he favored using a heavy rail. Here we have the first of the errors in estimating costs which contributed to the eventual failure, for Knight's figures were much too low.

⁸ Ibid., Nov. 20, 1847.

Like the backers of earlier roads, the promoters of the Central Ohio soon found that popular private support for their enterprise was not forthcoming in sufficient amounts to get it under way and so for several years in succession they applied to the legislature for help. Their first appeal resulted in permission for Muskingum County to buy \$60,000 of the railroad's stock, provided Zanesville first bought \$30,000 worth,⁹ which the latter did in a few months. Such sums were insufficient, so the next year, to get somewhat ahead of our story, the act was amended to let the county subscribe for \$90,000 additional and the town to buy \$20,000 additional, a total from the two communities of \$200,000 in public funds.¹⁰ A charter provision giving the legislature power to fix the tolls after ten years was eliminated. The following year no less than seven more acts were passed which made easier the financing of the Central Ohio, part of the spate which prompted an editorial suggestion that perhaps only taxpayers should be permitted to vote on proposals to put public money into plank roads and railroads.¹¹

With the coming of spring in 1848 Ohio felt another burst of interest in the new mode of transportation. A Railroad Convention was held at Coshocton on May 19 to choose between five proposed lines which sought to connect the central part of the state with the East. One of the five, of course, was the road with which we are here concerned, and a second was the Steubenville and Indiana, to be considered later. The

⁹Ohio Local Laws, XLVI, 165.

¹⁰Ibid., XLVII, 176.

¹¹Ohio State Journal, Apr. 9, 1850.

remaining three never got out of the ectoplasmic stage. Columbus, perhaps because at that time it was very busy with its own two favorites, the Columbus and Xenia and the C.C. & C. roads, sent but one delegate, W. B. Hubbard, a prominent banker, lawyer and politician, later elected president of two railroads, who was chosen to preside. The convention endorsed no route but resolved to get detailed data and meet again in September, which, apparently, it never did.

The Coshocton convention is a reminder that although the Central Ohio was to exchange traffic with the B. & O. at Bellaire it had no exclusive connection with that great line. Even before the two roads had begun the exchange the Baltimore Company was working, through a subsidiary, on a line to Parkersburg (a point on the river south of Bellaire) and a ferry connection with the Marietta and Cincinnati Railroad. The latter stretched across the southern part of the state and, since it offered a much shorter and more direct route to the Queen City, could not fail to threaten the diversion of a great deal of traffic from the Central Ohio. After its completion in 1857 the Parkersburg route became a part of the B. & O.'s "main stem" between Baltimore and St. Louis.

In August following the convention the Central Ohio stockholders held their second annual meeting and election of directors. McCoy and Dennison from Columbus were re-elected, but not Robert Neil. Sturges was replaced as president by Colonel John H. Sullivan, also of Zanesville, who seems to have displayed more driving energy than sound judgment in the seven years he was to be head of the corporation. During his first year in office, it is true, little seems to have been

accomplished, other than to obtain the legislative assistance already mentioned and to build first the section of the line between Columbus and Zanesville, estimated to cost as follows:

Rails	\$ 422,500
Rolling stock	80,000
All else	<u>475,000</u>
	\$ 977,500

Rails and rolling stock could be paid for by bonds, as was customary, and the remainder would come from the sale of stock in this manner:

Muskingum County\$ 300,000
Licking County	100,000
Franklin County	100,000

The amount from Muskingum was based on the following expectations:

Already privately subscribed	\$ 175,000
Expected from county subscription .	90,000
Expected from town subscription . .	20,000
Balance to be raised	15,000

Presented in this way the project seemed reasonable enough, even if certain figures were open to question. For example, the item of \$175,000 "already privately subscribed" in Muskingum appeared in point of fact to include the \$90,000 already voted from public funds by the county and town.¹² The people of Zanesville at least seemed satisfied since they voted that summer to increase their public subscription by the \$20,000 permitted in the recent act.

¹²Ohio State Journal, July 18, 1849.

The Unsuccessful Railroad Elections

Presumably the large number of laws benefiting the Central Ohio which had been put on the books by the early months of 1850 should have evidenced a favorable climate of opinion for that road, at least in Columbus, but the voters of the city and its county went to the polls in May and soundly defeated a proposition for a public subscription to railroad stock. An enabling act passed March 1 of that year had authorized the city and county, (with the approval of the voters) to subscribe to such stock as follows:¹³

<u>Railroad Company</u>	<u>County Subscription</u>	<u>City Subscription</u>
Central Ohio	\$ 50,000	\$ 20,000
Lancaster	25,000	15,000
Franklin, Pickaway and Ross County	25,000	15,000

The act further provided that: (1) the county and city had to subscribe to all or none; (2) they might borrow to pay for the stock, which was to be held to pay off the borrowings; (3) in the county, but not in the city, a special railroad tax had to be levied to pay for the stock; (4) if the vote was adverse, the proposition might be re-submitted in 1851. A "rider" to the act permitted Pickaway County to subscribe for \$50,000 of stock in the Franklin, Pickaway and Ross County road.

The Lancaster Railroad, chartered February 14, 1848, to run from Lancaster to Columbus, was a strictly Fairfield County affair with no man recognizably from Columbus among its organizers, although a number

¹³Ohio Local Laws, Vol. XLVIII, 306.

of the Lancastrians were men of prominence, such as Darius Tallmadge and Thomas Ewing. Its only appearance before the public was at this election.

The charter for the Franklin, Pickaway and Ross County Railroad had been granted March 20, 1850, less than two months before the election. It is discussed, along with some other aspects of the company, in Chapter Five. Robert Neil was a corporator. One wonders why the Zanesville lobbyists, if one may call them that, who had been so successful in getting the same session of the legislature to approve authorizations for a considerable number of other, and relatively unencumbered, municipal subscriptions to Central Ohio stock, in this case let the lawmakers link their project in the Columbus and Franklin County vote to what were two very weak companies.

In comparison with the columns in the press in 1847 when the C.C.& C. and the Columbus and Xenia roads sought public aid, the newspaper space given to this election was negligible. The Democratic Ohio Statesman, as equivocal in railroad matters as it was forthright in political ones, published an official advertisement in reference to the election and a letter from President Sullivan of the Central Ohio, urging support for the subscriptions -- and that was all.¹⁴ The Whig Ohio State Journal hardly did better; it copied Sullivan's letter from the Statesman, it printed a letter signed "X" which supported the subscriptions while pointing out that an eleven percent rise in local land taxes would follow, and it printed a letter signed "Z" from a person in

¹⁴Ohio Statesman, Apr. 17, May 9, 1850.

Zanesville not too warmly favoring an affirmative vote.¹⁵ Neither paper gave the proposition an editorial blessing.

When the votes were counted it was found that the city, always more railroad-minded than the county, had rejected the subscriptions by 531 to 348. Two of the five wards, those lying north of State Street, had favored it; the three southerly wards, where the Democratic feeling was strongest, were opposed. In the county not a single township went for the railroads and the proposal was defeated by about five to one.¹⁶ Four reasons were advanced to explain the outcome.

An editorial note in the Ohio Statesman followed the "party line," to use the modern term, and disposed of the matter in one sentence:

"This vote was not against the roads but against further debts of that sort."¹⁷ The Ohio State Journal saw three causes for the defeat:

(a) the vote had to be for all or none of the subscriptions; (b) jealousy between the north and south ends of the city; (c) opposition to the principle of voting public funds to aid railroads.¹⁸ No one suggested that the voters may have objected to paying higher taxes.

The directors of the line did not falter at this blow. Within a month they let contracts to build the section between Zanesville and Newark and in November they contracted for the part between Newark and

¹⁵Weekly Ohio State Journal, May 14, 1850.

¹⁶The Weekly Ohio State Journal, May 21, 1850, and the Ohio Statesman, May 14, 1850, differ as to the actual vote.

¹⁷Ohio Statesman, May 14, 1850.

¹⁸Weekly Ohio State Journal, May 21, 1850.

Columbus,¹⁹ encouraged, no doubt by the affirmative vote in Guernsey County for a stock subscription of \$100,000. (The Jeffersonian, a Democratic newspaper in that county, referred to those who favored the subscription as "fund mongers" and "Shylocks.")²⁰ The great success of the Columbus and Xenia Railroad, which had begun operations in February of that year, probably added to the optimism of the directors. When the contracts were awarded in November, Irish names predominated among the successful bidders, as was often true on mid-western railroads.

The actual construction work for the stretch between Columbus and Zanesville was heavier than anything encountered by the first two lines to enter Columbus, a fact to be kept in mind when comparisons are made between the Central Ohio and its predecessors. In one section (No. 13), 60,000 cubic yards of embankment were called for; in the famous Black Hand gorge east of Newark (flooded by the modern Dillon dam)²¹ a cut was to be made through 700 feet of coarse-grained sandstone, at one point 64 feet deep, a task that took just twelve months to complete; to cross the valley of Big Walnut Creek, near Columbus, some 300,000 cubic yards of embankment and a considerable length of trestle, a part of it 50 feet high, were needed; an iron bridge more than 500 feet long was specified over the Muskingum at Zanesville.²² None of this was of

¹⁹Central Ohio R.R., Third Annual Report (for 1850-51), n.p., n.d.

²⁰Quoted in Weekly Ohio State Journal, Oct. 22, 1850.

²¹Columbus Sunday Dispatch, Feb. 17, 1952.

²²Ohio State Journal, Jan. 31, 1853; William Prescott Smith, The Book of the Great Railway Celebrations of 1857, New York, 1858, Part II, p. 18.

inordinate difficulty but it all made for a heavy expenditure of money and time.

Once under way the construction progressed without incident at a rate that gave no cause for complaint. The management should have had time to attend to its public relations in preparation for the election in April, 1851, when the propositions as to railroad stock subscriptions by Columbus and Franklin County were to be resubmitted to the voters. If the railroad, its friends, or anyone else made a real effort to win popular support for an affirmative vote at the second try there is no evidence to show it. The matter was virtually ignored in the newspapers, the Ohio State Journal²³ printing nothing except one tepid endorsement of the subscription and the Ohio Statesman mentioning the election and the Democratic candidates but not mentioning the railroad vote. Three months earlier it had opposed public aid for railroads.²⁴ The result, when finally printed, showed a total in the city of 316 yes votes and 3543 no votes. Not a ward in the city favored the carriers and only one was even close. Naturally, no township supported them and in six townships not a single yes vote was tallied.²⁵

Six weeks before the election the C.C. & C. railroad had begun operating trains into Columbus and very quickly was proving a success. The Columbus and Xenia Railroad had been doing a profitable business for more than a year. The Central Ohio by then had let two contracts

²³Ohio State Journal, Apr. 5, 1851.

²⁴Ohio Statesman, Jan. 18, 1851.

²⁵Ibid., April 11, 1851.

and looked, at that stage, like a worthwhile venture. The entire state was railroad-minded and becoming more so. Why, then, the people of the city and county so overwhelmingly rejected the proposal to aid three railroads is hard to explain. There is no direct evidence, but one is led to surmise that the same reasons prevailed in 1851 as in 1850.

The loss of the \$70,000 in stock subscriptions which were at stake was a blow to the railroad, but not a crippling one. As will be seen, the company's difficulties lay more in how its money was spent than in raising it.

Estimated Profit: 25% per Annum

The first comprehensive estimate of the cost of the road from Columbus to the river is found in the Exhibit (such a pamphlet is today called a prospectus) issued in New York in 1851 in connection with the sale of \$450,000 first mortgage bonds.²⁶ The obligations were a lien on the western division, so-called, between Columbus and Zanesville, some 58 miles. (The Columbus and Xenia road put a first mortgage of \$300,000 on its 54 miles, but the comparison must not be pushed too far.) The pamphlet claimed the whole undertaking would cost as follows:

Western Division	\$ 877,000
Eastern Division	1,467,000
Depots, etc.	50,000
Additional rolling stock	<u>250,000</u>
	\$2,644,000

²⁶Exhibit of the Central Ohio Railroad Company, New York, 1851.

It was pointed out that the company possessed a "very liberal charter," which conferred the right to appropriate lands for ancillary purposes, and that when it came to paying for such lands, "benefits shall be assessed as an offset to damages." (The courts, it was later found, would look askance at land prices arrived at by that sort of computation.) A return of 25% on invested capital could be anticipated, according to the Exhibit.

The bonds were sold on reportedly good terms, the proceeds going to pay for 6,000 tons of rails (made in England) and equipment. President Sullivan also sold to the same bond buyers a total of \$180,000 bonds issued to the railroad by Zanesville and the counties of Muskingum and Licking in exchange for its capital stock to which they had subscribed. These municipal obligations went at a price of 92% of par. About three-quarters of the first mortgage bonds were resold in England for cash, at a good price, the president happily informed the stockholders.²⁷ The company thus got off to a satisfactory financial start, at least as far as borrowed money was concerned.

In respect to equity capital the available evidence is not so conclusive. About the time of the bond sale, a financial advertisement in the New York Tribune announced an offering of \$200,000 capital stock of the railroad, but how much was sold was not revealed. A year or two later, the president stated in a "Memorial" to the state House of Representatives that "Of stock in the Central Ohio Road there is not six thousand dollars owned out of the State." He added the interesting

²⁷Central Ohio R.R., Third Annual Report.

comment that subscriptions to the road's stock "were not made with a view to dividends as the first consideration. The anticipated influence on labor, produce and real estate" was responsible for the backing given the road.²⁸

The Third Annual Report showed that some \$40,000 in stock had been subscribed by individuals in Franklin County and that the Columbus and Xenia Railroad was to buy shares in the sum of \$60,000, for which it would pay by giving its bonds in that amount. Upon the Central Ohio rested the counter-obligation to take an equal amount of stock in the line to Xenia. As of the date of the Report, probably August 1, 1851, the total stock subscribed in the Central road amounted to \$508,600 of which \$306,643 had been paid in. This reasonably satisfactory showing was in line with what other roads were doing at a time when the state was seething with rail activities.

First Section Opened

Meanwhile, construction work on the Central Ohio had been going forward and by January, 1852, the twenty-five mile section between Zanesville and Newark was opened for traffic, less than two years from the time the contracts were let. Since the iron railroad bridge over the Muskingum at Zanesville was still incomplete, passengers alighted on the west bank of the river and took hacks across the famous "Y"

²⁸ J. H. Sullivan Memorial - To the Honorable, the House of Representatives of the State of Ohio, n.p., n.d.

bridge to reach the town. The railroad span went into use in November, 1853.²⁹ It may prove enlightening to consider briefly two probable reasons why the Zanesville-Newark section was the first to be built.

Zanesville was the town most interested in the road and the place most likely to support it, so it was a canny move to let the inhabitants see some tangible evidence of their investment, in the hope that they might put up still more money. Also, at each end of this stretch of rail a connection could be made with existing transportation facilities: at Zanesville with Muskingum river traffic, especially for coal, and at Newark with both the Ohio canal and the railroad of over-sized gauge which went to the port of Sandusky. This line, frequently mentioned in earlier chapters, is the one called, for convenience, the Sandusky, Mansfield and Newark, a corporate title it did not properly assume until 1853.

Work on the Central Ohio's second section, between Newark and Columbus, went ahead despite various obstacles: cholera broke out among the laborers, and one report told of fourteen deaths "causing quite a stampede among the survivors;"³⁰ a contractor ran off with \$6,000 due his workmen; unexpectedly heavy and costly work was required at the crossing of Big Walnut creek; freshets led to interruptions. President Sullivan's labors to surmount these difficulties are

²⁹Norris F. Schneider, Y Bridge City, The Story of Zanesville and Muskingum County, Cleveland and New York, 1950, pp. 131-2.

³⁰Ohio State Journal, Aug. 24, 1852.

told with gusto and given a Herculean tinge in Smith's brief history of the Central Ohio, a history that the records of the B. & O. indicate was written by Sullivan himself.³¹

The actual opening of the road into Columbus, the city's third railroad and its first direct line toward the all-important east, was rather anti-climactic. On January 19, 1853, the day the first train arrived, the Ohio Statesman recorded the fact briefly and without enthusiasm, while the Ohio State Journal ignored the local road and waxed jubilant over the opening of service on the B. & O. into Wheeling. The following day that paper reported that passengers on the new local line had been landed at the C.C. & C. depot in Columbus and added: "Our citizens were not looking for the train yesterday and were somewhat taken by surprise. We shall have more to say of this important consummation in our next."³²

"Our next" made no reference to the road, but a few days later an item appeared which read in full as follows: "The trains continue to run regularly twice a day to and from Zanesville on the Central Road."³³ The Zanesville Daily Courier³⁴ and the Newark Advocate,³⁵ published in towns vitally concerned with the new line, were equally brief but less tart. The Lords of the Press in Ohio in due course allowed the railroad

³¹Smith, Great Railway Celebrations of 1857, Part II, Chapter III.

³²Ohio State Journal, Jan. 20, 1853.

³³Ibid., Jan. 25, 1853.

³⁴Zanesville Daily Courier, Jan. 20, 1853.

³⁵Newark Advocate, Jan. 26, 1853.

to "deadhead" them to Zanesville for an "Editorial Supper," a few days before the customary junket of the state legislature and other notables to that town. The two trips were part of its celebration to mark the opening. Columbus appears not to have celebrated.

Soon after the commencement of regular service on February 1 (two trains daily each way between Columbus and Zanesville), the company authorized an issue of \$800,000 first mortgage non-convertible bonds covering the eastern division between Zanesville and the river, by that time under construction. Half the issue was sold in Baltimore and \$200,000 additional in New York, the latter amount at prices of 95 to par. The balance was to be offered later as needed. A prospectus, presumably issued in connection with this borrowing, gives us a financial picture of the company at the time.³⁶

The division between Columbus and Zanesville, estimated in 1851 to cost \$877,000 actually had come to \$1,150,000. The estimate for the eastern division had risen from \$1,467,000 to \$1,844,000, and for the entire undertaking from \$2,644,000 to \$3,300,000, including the Central Ohio's share of a proposed bridge at Bellaire or Wheeling. Arranged in convenient form the figures show as follows:

³⁶Statement of the Condition and Prospects of the Central Ohio Railroad, March 3, 1853, New York, 1853.

PROPOSED FINANCIAL PLAN FOR CENTRAL OHIO RAILROAD - 1853

<u>Item</u>	<u>Western Div.</u>	<u>Eastern Div.</u>	<u>Total</u>
Capital Stock	\$ 508,000	\$ 927,000	\$ 1,435,000
Mortgage Bonds	450,000	800,000	1,250,000
Surplus Real Estate		100,000	100,000
Floating Debt	192,000		192,000
To be Provided For	<u> </u>	<u>17,000</u>	<u>17,000</u>
TOTALS	\$1,150,000	\$1,844,000	\$ 2,994,000
Share of Bridge			<u>306,000</u>
GRAND TOTAL			\$ 3,300,000

The next half dozen years were to reveal how unrealistic these figures were.

Financial matters, aggravated by the general money stringency in the last half of 1853, assumed larger proportions as the contractors struggled to build the eastern division. Undoubtedly because they thought their action would enhance the value of the company's securities and stimulate the sale of stock (an error of judgment common to many early Ohio railroad managements), the directors were reported to have declared a four percent cash dividend out of the earnings of that part of the line between Columbus and Zanesville from the time it opened on January 19 to June 30, 1853.³⁷

Hazardous as this action was, it may perhaps have cost the company less in the long run than its policy of paying eight percent interest on

³⁷Railroad Record, June 30, 1853: Ohio Statesman, June 18, 1853.

stock subscriptions from date of purchase until regular dividends were inaugurated. This plan was followed by not a few railroads. To the Central Ohio directors, a four percent dividend from nearly half a year's operations probably looked cheaper than interest at eight percent per annum. This was because they soon ran out of cash to pay the interest and had to resort to what were called "due bills," or notes, which in turn bore eight percent interest on the first eight percent.³⁸ If this looks like extortion, one should remember the risk taken by the purchasers of the capital stock. When the railroad was re-organized a few years later they were given forty cents on the dollar for their investment, payable in new common stock of dubious worth.

But in the summer of 1853 the prospects of the Central Ohio (as of most other railroads at that time) still looked favorable. Business on the road was reported good in the face of the remarkable fact that it operated in the beginning "without the facilities of a single freight or passenger house for the accommodation of trade."³⁹ Stock was sold to the amount of \$200,000 in addition to \$800,000 second mortgage bonds covering the entire line. It gave the embryonic Cincinnati, Wilmington and Zanesville Railroad, which it looked upon as an "auxiliary" line offering a short route to the Queen City, \$100,000 of its bonds in exchange for a like amount of the latter's stock.

When business turned bad in the latter part of the year, such railroad schemes as had not yet reached the construction stage faded

³⁸From text of "due bill" in files of B. & O. Railroad in Baltimore.

³⁹Railroad Record, Mar. 24, 1853.

away and for the most part were no more seen. The majority of those which had broken ground, however, managed to stumble on until they linked two termini between which they could maintain some sort of service. The Central Ohio distinguished itself by completing a long stretch under difficult conditions which for part of the time included the money market stringency -- but it did so, as will appear, at the price of its solvency.

The Eastern Division

The seventy-nine mile stretch of road between Zanesville and the river was constructed in about two and one-half years, some of the way over relatively rough country which required four tunnels. One of the principal contractors was Bradley, Whittemore and Company, Vermonters who apparently did not come up to the standard of caniness usually ascribed to that section since they agreed to take thirty percent of the contract price in stock. They also held a contract to build part of the Marietta and Cincinnati Railroad,⁴⁰ a competing line.

The principal intermediate point on the stretch just mentioned is Cambridge, county seat of Guernsey County. When service was opened there in the spring of 1854 the customary celebration was held, stimulated, no doubt, by the fact that the county had subscribed for \$100,000 capital stock, paying for it with county bonds, and that rather heavy individual subscriptions had been made by Guernsey residents. The subsequent history of the county's investment is interesting: part of

⁴⁰Smith, Great Railway Celebrations of 1857, Part II, p. 18.

the \$100,000 block was sold and the proceeds invested in stock of the Pittsburgh, Maysville and Cincinnati Railroad, better known to fanciers of the early iron horse as the "Calico Railroad," a transaction that resulted in a total loss. The balance of the Central Ohio holding was eventually sold and the cash applied toward the cost of the present courthouse.⁴¹

The first train of cars to run the entire distance to Columbus from the Ohio River was the special "inauguration" train on November 1, 1854. On board were several hundred dignitaries from Baltimore, including Thomas Swann, president of the B. & O., and, very probably, Chauncey Brooks who had been elected a Central Ohio director that August and succeeded Swann as B. & O. president in November, 1855.⁴² The presence of the Baltimoreans was in part because of the importance ascribed to the new Buckeye line as a western connection, the B. & O.'s first beyond the river.

Another reason for their presence was doubtless because some \$1,500,000 Central Ohio bonds had been sold through Robert Garrett and Sons, the great Baltimore banking firm which was successful in finding buyers for the securities after the New York market had been canvassed in vain.

President Sullivan, for all his boastings and controversies,

⁴¹William G. Wolfe, Stories of Guernsey County, Ohio, Cambridge, Ohio, 1943, pp. 205-208.

⁴²Smith, Great Railway Celebrations of 1857, Part II, p. 20; Janney in Lee, History of Columbus, II, 261.

appeared to have done a satisfactory job of railroad building, according to the probably tendentious report made a few months before the opening by Wendell Bolman. The Master of Road of the B. & O. had been sent out to Ohio by his employers to inspect the new line which seemed to promise so much for Baltimore. He pronounced the work well done, in a substantial manner, the right of way nearly all fenced, few curves, easy grades, and ample equipment on hand or on order. Heavy T rail (sixty pounds to the yard) was used throughout and the line was considered very favorable for economical transportation. Coal was reported present along eighty miles of the route. The Ohio was to be crossed by a steam ferry-boat able to carry all the people on a passenger train or half the load of a freight train, according to Bolman whose tone was both optimistic and laudatory. Unfortunately he shed little light on one of the principal problems of the road -- why the project as a whole cost so much.⁴³

From various other sources we know some of the reasons, but they explain only in part why a railroad which in 1851 was to cost \$2,644,000, in 1853 \$3,300,000, and in 1854 \$4,661,557, reached in 1858-9 a figure for total liabilities of \$6,810,432. Certain of the causes are clear. The scale on which the road was built was too expensive, even when well done: all tunnels and bridge masonry and much of the grading were wide enough for a double track in anticipation of future needs, which even to this day have not yet required a second

⁴³ [Wendell Bolman] Report of Mr. Bolman in Relation to the Central Ohio Railroad, Baltimore, 1854.

pair of rails. A great deal of the work was done at a time when commodity prices were rising -- the influence of the newly-found California gold was being felt -- and costs were said to be up thirty percent. A slight change in the route also added to the expense. It is probable that too much rolling stock was bought although this matter is uncertain. Why the section of the line from a point near Cambridge to the river was first estimated to cost \$995,546 and finally came to almost \$3,000,000 was not explained.

Had there been improprieties connected with these matters on the part of the management, it is probable that they would have been aired in the acrimonious and well-publicized controversy which broke out between President Sullivan and certain critics in Zanesville who claimed that he was slighting some of the business interests of that place in favor of out-of-town suppliers. From the pamphlets hurled back and forth one gets a picture of an ambitious little railroad risking some of its capital (or at least its credit) in aid of a local iron company which had begun the manufacture of passenger and freight cars; it was said to be the third such business in the town.⁴⁴ The line is also seen as planning to risk still more for a new rail mill, in both cases doing so with the hope of developing traffic for itself. One does not, however, get the impression that the road's investments of this nature were either reprehensible or so great as to endanger its financial

⁴⁴Railroad Record, Apr. 14, 1853.

position. Similar investments by other railroads have been common.⁴⁵

Regular Operations

Once the line had been completed and regular service started, the company found that far from having put most of its troubles behind it, it had merely exchanged construction problems for operating ones, a number of them connected with the Ohio River. The woes commenced at once. An early freeze in the river, in December, 1854, blocked water-borne traffic between Cincinnati and the B. & O. at Wheeling and threw an impossible burden on the rail lines. The Central Ohio was in no condition to handle any great volume: much of its road-bed was brand new, as was its equipment; its staff was for the most part inexperienced. It quickly found that some of its rolling stock was of the wrong type for the work at hand; the sidings were insufficient for such heavy traffic. In consequence, the shippers and travellers were dissatisfied, the road got a bad name, extraordinary expenses to correct shortcomings ate into the earnings.⁴⁶

The problem of getting traffic across the river from its terminus at Bellaire on the Ohio side to Benwood on the Virginia side and the connection with the B. & O. long plagued the Central road. The steam

⁴⁵Three pamphlets issued during the controversy were: Report of the Committee of the [Zanesville] City Council in relation to the management of the Central Ohio Railroad, n.p., n.d.; Reply of the Central Ohio Railroad Committee to application of City Council of Zanesville in relation to late car and locomotive contracts, Zanesville, 1854; and Rejoinder by Henry Blandy, Zanesville, 1854.

⁴⁶Smith, Great Railway Celebrations of 1857, Part II, p. 20; Central Ohio R.R., Ninth Annual Report, (for 1856-57) in Railroad Record, Oct. 1, 1857.

ferry-boat, or ferry steam-boat as it was also called (named "Brown Dick") must have been subjected to about the same hazards of flood, ice and low water which troubled boats plying up and down the river, and traffic ferried between the two railroads suffered accordingly.

A second handicap to a convenient interchange was the hilly nature of the land on the Ohio side. To get its trains down to the river's edge, the Central Ohio had to use an inclined plane, or "rail-stairway," which apparently was a nerve-shaking affair. (Similar ones were located at Marietta, Ohio, and Madison, Indiana.) A newspaper article pointed out that "should the brakes give way or the locomotive suddenly get out of order, the whole train would roll back into the Ohio."⁴⁷ Because of the magnitude of the undertakings and the delays caused by the Civil War, railroad bridges at Bellaire and Parkersburg were not built until 1871 when the B. & O. controlled the lines that used them.

Both the Central Ohio and the B. & O. were to suffer because the stronger one delayed so long in coming to the aid of its struggling colleague. The year 1855 saw new troubles besetting the Central road: competition waxed keen with the Ohio and Pennsylvania line; the roof of the tunnel at Cambridge collapsed during the summer, making necessary a makeshift and costly transfer arrangement that was to last half a year; revenues declined in consequence, financial woes multiplied, creditors grew more pressing; the Licking County sheriff seized three cars from an express train to satisfy a debt.⁴⁸

⁴⁷Daily Ohio State Journal, Nov. 13, 1855, from the Cincinnati Times.

⁴⁸Ohio Statesman, Dec. 1, 1855.

The road got a breathing spell when the B. & O. helped out to some extent by "lending" a general superintendent and buying \$400,000 of the fourth mortgage seven percent bonds issued early in 1856 to liquidate part of the floating debt. The Baltimore company paid for its purchase by giving its own six percent bonds rather than cash, but no interest was ever paid on the securities which it received.

The previous summer President Sullivan, facing many enemies and factions among the stockholders, had refused re-election and was succeeded by Elias Fassett of New York.⁴⁹ The new president had had considerable financial experience in the East but his recourse to the fourth mortgage loan merely put off the evil day. The company issued no report for the year ending July 31, 1856. That fall, however, hopes revived when the Cleveland and Pittsburgh Railroad extended its tracks from Wellsville southwards to Bellaire (and also to the northeast), giving the Central road all-rail connections with the two important termini of its new neighbor. Traffic volume soared and the Central Ohio could not handle all the business offered it.

There was a hectic flush to the affairs of the railroad which matched the boom conditions prevailing generally throughout the country as business rose to the speculative heights preceding the panic of 1857. The failure of the Ohio Life Insurance and Trust Company, which touched off the great decline in prices and business activity, occurred in August of that year, the month following the end of the period

⁴⁹Ohio State Journal, Sept. 1, 1855; but see also Smith, Great Railway Celebrations of 1857, Part II, p. 23.

(1856-57) covered by the Ninth Annual Report of the Central Ohio.⁵⁰

The Report presented a large amount of encouraging information about the company at a time when traffic was still heavy and general business at a peak; an optimist might have inferred that the line would be able to extricate itself from its difficulties.

The twelve months ending July 31, 1857, produced total transportation revenues of \$712,213, or about 44% over the previous year.

A brief operating statement, included in the Report, showed as follows:

OPERATING STATEMENT FOR YEAR ENDING JULY 31, 1857

Receipts: Passengers	\$ 276,369
Express	10,029
Mails	29,281
Freight	<u>396,532</u>
	\$ 712,213
Expenses: Total	<u>577,842</u>
Net Earnings	\$ 134,370

The report stated that the net earnings amounted to over eight percent on the capital stock. It was carefully explained that the item of Expenses was swollen because of "Extra-ordinary Repairs" to the road due to its unfinished condition and because of large expenditures to remodel some rolling stock found to be unsuited to local conditions.

The condition of the road was given in the following statement:

⁵⁰ Railroad Record, Oct. 1, 1857.

Statement of the Central Ohio Railroad as of July 31, 1857

ASSETS

Construction Account	\$ 5,249,154
To be added to Construction Account	250,897
Real Estate and Shops	131,516
Machinery	788,664
Stock in C.W. & Z.R.R. (deposited as collateral)	100,000
Other Assets	<u>298,502</u>
TOTAL	\$ 6,818,733

LIABILITIES

Capital Stock, net	\$ 1,626,856
Bonds, First Mortgage, 1861	450,000
" " " , 1864	800,000
" , Second Mortgage (net)	785,000
" , Third Mortgage (net)	2,000
" , Fourth Mortgage (net)	994,500
" , Income	562,300
" , Income, in re C.W. & Z. stock	100,000
Unfunded or floating debt	1,285,572
Other obligations	<u>212,505</u>
TOTAL	\$ 6,818,733

Certain comments on this statement are in order. The "(net)" amounts of mortgage bonds are for bonds outstanding exclusive of those in sinking funds or deposited as collateral to other obligations. A comparison of the two asset items of Construction and Machinery (i.e., rolling stock) with those of the Little Miami-Columbus and Xenia line for the same year (with the reminder, as already pointed out, that such comparisons are dangerous even when illuminating) shows that the latter combined companies with almost the same length of road did some

seventy percent more business with a slightly smaller investment in cars and locomotives and that their construction account was about sixty percent less per mile than the Central Ohio's.

The unfavorable elements in the foregoing picture, compounded by the panic, may have proved too much for President Fassett. In any event he resigned in the fall of 1857 and was succeeded by the vice-president, Hugh Judge Jewett. Even though he was unable to stem the tide which was fast sweeping the Central road to a receivership, Jewett did well enough to become in time a celebrated American railroad leader.⁵¹

A native of Maryland, Jewett moved first with his brother Thomas L. Jewett, who also became a famous railroader, to St. Clairsville, Ohio, and then, by himself, in 1848, to Zanesville. Here he practiced law, headed a bank, served as a state senator and in other political offices, joined the board of directors of the Central Ohio and became its president. After the B. & O. obtained control of the Central road, Jewett was elected president in 1868 of the profitable Little Miami Railroad. With characteristic chill decisiveness he leased it a year and a half later to the Pennsylvania's subsidiary, the Pittsburgh, Cincinnati and St. Louis, of which his brother was then the president. The subsidiary, known in those days and even today as the Panhandle road, made him its vice-president. In 1874 he reached the summit of his career when the Erie Railway chose him for its president.

⁵¹Black, Little Miami, pp. 141-2.

Its notoriously bad condition -- the Gould days were not far behind -- was in Jewett's mind when he said at the time of assuming the office: "I have not taken charge of the road for the purpose of losing my reputation as a railroad man."⁵² He demanded and received a salary of \$40,000 a year, the largest ever paid a railroader up to then. In that post he stayed ten years during which he reduced the line's famous six-foot gauge to the standard gauge of four feet, eight and one-half inches, and built the 250-mile link which gave the Erie an entrance into Chicago.

Even Jewett's unquestioned ability was not enough to prevent a decline in earnings on the Central Ohio in the years 1857-58 and 1858-59, a time when many of the recently formed rail lines were in great trouble because of the panic of '57 and the usual aftermath. In the case of the Central Ohio the ills of the panic were aggravated by the financial difficulties already mentioned and also by a severe blow to its traffic volume. In 1857 it lost its exclusive position as the only westward connection of the B. & O. when the latter's subsidiary was opened to Parkersburg on the river where it made a ferry connection with Marietta and a new line to Cincinnati. From there another new line simultaneously was opened to St. Louis. In consequence, Baltimore became connected with Cincinnati and St. Louis by a virtually continuous rail line (although the gauge was not uniform for the entire length) which took much through business from the Central Ohio.

⁵²Edward Hungerford, Men of Erie, New York, 1946, p. 200.

Relations with Other Railroads

The boom in railroad construction in Ohio in the years just before the panic of '57 presented a series of problems to the management of every Buckeye line, since the opening of each new road in turn called for reconsideration of existing traffic patterns. In the case of the Central Ohio, three new lines connected to it within two years after it was completed for its full length, and a fourth new line, the combined Marietta and Cincinnati -- B. & O. route, produced as we have already seen, a great change in its through traffic.

In April, 1855, some five months after the Central had opened for service, the Steubenville and Indiana Railroad began operations between Steubenville, a town on the Ohio about twenty-six miles upstream from Bellaire, and Newark where it reached the Central. The new line sought to tap the trade of the west via Columbus and channel it to Pittsburgh (and the Pennsylvania Railroad) over a proposed Pittsburgh-Steubenville connection. But the plan went awry at both ends of the route. The company could get no further west than Newark and its own direct rail link from Steubenville to Pittsburgh did not materialize for several years.

The Steubenville road was basically a competitor of the Central's since it offered a through route to the east, by way of Pittsburgh and the Pennsylvania Railroad, which rivaled the other's through route by way of Bellaire and the B. & O. Nevertheless, the Central was able to derive some benefit from it since the only access to western traffic available to the Steubenville and Indiana was over the line of the

Central Ohio. At first, indeed, there was no physical connection between their tracks at Newark, but in the spring of 1857, while business was still booming, the prosperous Columbus and Xenia Railroad put up \$20,000 to finance the connection, buying the necessary land and taking title in its own name.

At its eastern end the Steubenville road had to use river steamers to reach Pittsburgh for the first year and a half until, in the fall of 1856 as told above, the Cleveland and Pittsburgh Railroad extended its line in two directions. From Wellsville that company pushed its tracks south along the river to Steubenville and on to Bellaire, thereby making connection with both the Steubenville road and the Central Ohio. It also built to the northeast to a junction with the Fort Wayne line which gave access to Pittsburgh, and the Pennsylvania Railroad. Such a connection with the B. & O.'s great rival should have enabled the Central Ohio to play off one trunk line against another but it seemed unable to do so successfully.

The third new line connected to the Central was the Cincinnati, Wilmington and Zanesville Railroad which resembled the Steubenville and Indiana to this extent, that they both competed with the Central Ohio and, at the same time, by having one of their termini along its line, had to give it some traffic. In the beginning, the C.W.& Z., as it was sometimes called, apparently got off to a good start, for at the

⁵³Burgess and Kennedy, Pennsylvania Railroad, p. 70; O. Comm. of R.R. & Teleg. Annual Report for 1867, pp. 252-3.

first meeting of stockholders, it was reported,⁵⁴ a grand total, with and without conditions, of \$874,100 of stock had been sold. Among its organizers and directors were several Muskingum County men associated also with the Central, including H. J. Jewett, Solomon Sturges and D. H. Lyman, at one time secretary of the latter road which in 1853, as already told, had encouraged its new neighbor to the extent of \$100,000 in bonds. In May, 1856,⁵⁵ the C.W. & Z. joined its tracks to the Central's at Zanesville and ten months later it went into receivership. It is unlikely that the traffic it either added to or diverted from the Central Ohio amounted to much.

Another neighboring line which also had slight influence on the Central was the Sandusky, Mansfield and Newark Railroad with which one can hardly say that the Central connected at Newark since they were of different gauges. In later years, however, when both roads found themselves part of the B. & O., they were adjoining segments of that line's through route to Chicago.

At its western terminus in Columbus the Central Ohio exchanged traffic with the Columbus and Xenia and the C.C. & C., whose histories have already been told in Chapters Six and Seven respectively. Since Columbus was the eastern terminus of the Columbus, Piqua and Indiana Railroad, that line and the Central Ohio would have made an ideal through route for east-and-west traffic had it not been for two

⁵⁴Weekly Ohio State Journal, May 27, 1851.

⁵⁵Railroad Record, Feb. 26, 1857; but see Daily Ohio Statesman, Nov. 9, 1855 and Daily Ohio State Journal, Nov. 19, 1855.

impediments: the former was built on the Indiana gauge of four feet, eight and one-half inches and hence could not connect with any other road coming into Columbus; and it ran into financial difficulties so early in its life that it was not able to push its tracks westward to any real traffic connection until six years after it had begun service. The story of this concern, including its efforts to reach a working agreement with the Central Ohio, will be told in the next chapter.

To the competition of the various railroads which have been described must be added, in the final phase of the Central Ohio's history before the receivership, the unlooked-for competition of the Ohio River. Unusually good river conditions for about two years had caused a boom in traffic on the waterway, so that steamboat rates could be set below those by rail and still yield a profit. The B. & O., to make matters worse for the Central, was giving its westbound business to the steamers instead of to that road, President Jewett complained, by setting the all-rail through rate at too high a figure.

The consequence was that westbound freight went by B. & O. to Bellaire and thence by boat, leaving the Central road with empty cars. If the B. & O. did as thus alleged, it was probably because it reasoned that by giving the boats its westbound traffic, it might draw their eastbound traffic away from the Pennsylvania Railroad. Jewett of course threatened to retaliate by routing his company's eastbound business over the Pennsylvania if the B. & O. did not prove more cooperative.⁵⁶

⁵⁶Letter of H. J. Jewett, President of the Central Ohio Railroad Company, to the President and Directors of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company in regard to the connection between the two roads. Baltimore, 1858.

To threaten futilely was all that the tottering Central Ohio had the power to do, and soon even that was beyond its strength. On May 1, 1859, the road was placed in the hands of a receiver, to which position the court appointed President Jewett. The receivership was sought by the trustee for the first and second mortgages, on which for some time no interest had been paid, because of

the total inability of the Company to meet all its obligations, and the apparent determination of certain parties, controlling a portion of the insecured sic indebtedness of the Company, to compel the payment of such indebtedness, regardless of the rights and interests of others.⁵⁷

Since the course of the Central Ohio was uneventful from the start of the receivership to the outbreak of the Civil War -- at which point this study terminates -- the story of the road's mishaps is nearly at an end. One curious item, however, deserves mention. The Central's Master Machinist reported for the year 1858-59 that continued trouble had been experienced in burning coal in the freight engines and that it had been necessary to renew the entire firebox after nine to twelve months of use. One large engine had been changed from coal to wood the previous year and five more similarly changed in the year that followed. "I would therefore recommend the use of wood as fuel," he wrote.⁵⁸ Other roads experienced similar difficulties in their early efforts to burn coal. As one of the first Ohio lines to make

⁵⁷Central Ohio Railroad, Eleventh Annual Report (for 1858-59), Columbus, 1859.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 46.

the attempt (starting in 1854) the Central nevertheless deserves credit for pioneering in the right direction.

In 1859 D. W. Caldwell became superintendent of the Central Ohio with which he made such a distinguished record during the war that although a civilian he earned the nickname "General" which he never thereafter lost. In later years he was to become general manager of the Panhandle, president of the Nickel Plate and president of the Lake Shore and Michigan Southern Railroad.⁵⁹

Epilogue

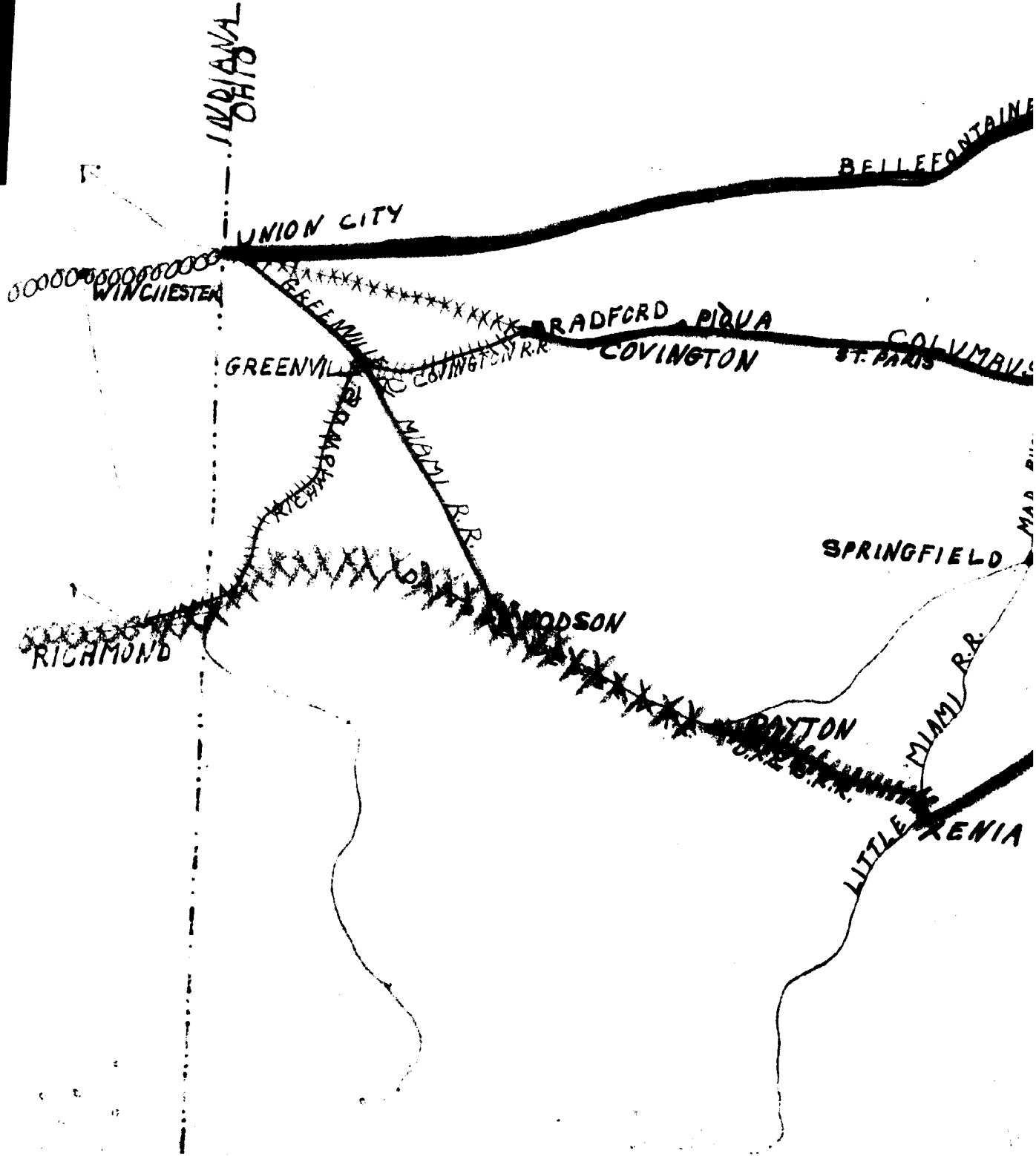
During the more than six years the company was in the hands of Jewett as receiver perhaps its most important single act was to sell to the Steubenville and Indiana Railroad in 1864 an undivided half-interest in its line between Newark and Columbus. The purchase price of \$775,000 was applied toward the \$950,000 third mortgage, a lien against the entire line which was thereupon paid off. To this day that stretch of road is owned jointly by the B. & O. and the Pennsylvania railroads, or their subsidiaries, successors to the parties to the original transaction.

December 1, 1865, with the Civil War over, the Central Ohio emerged from receivership under the name of Central Ohio Railroad Company as reorganized, purged of many of its old debts and with its

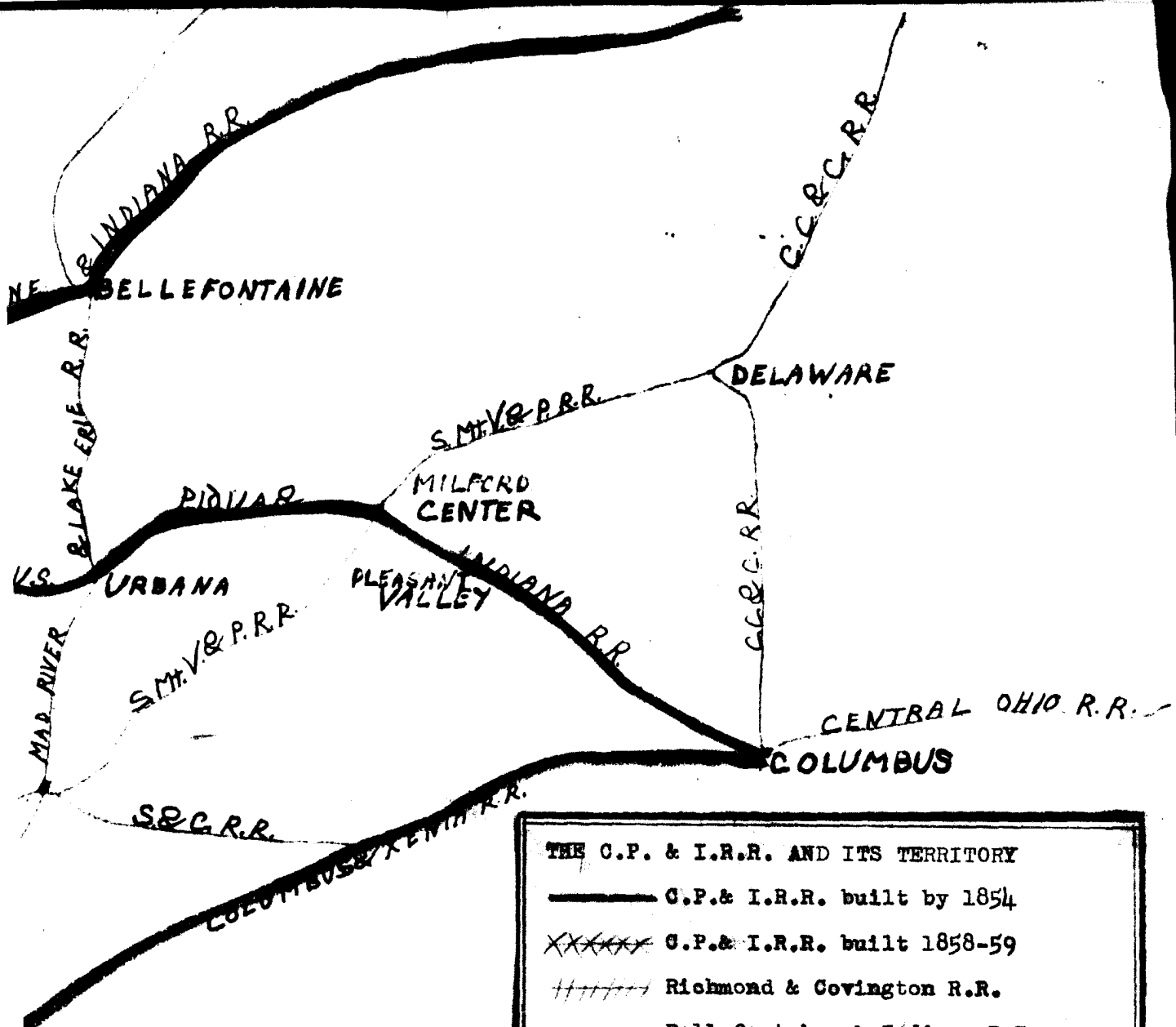
⁵⁹ Taylor Hampton, The Nickel Plate Road, Cleveland and New York, 1947, p. 210.

old capital stock written down to forty percent of the original value. A year later the B. & O. leased the road and thereafter operated and maintained it as its Central Ohio Division. The corporate existence of the lessor was continued and for some time proved useful to the B. & O., apparently in enabling the latter to evade certain legal objections to leasing railroads in Ohio. In 1869 the property of the Sandusky, Mansfield and Newark Railroad, that life-long invalid, was leased to the Central Ohio and in 1890 the property of the Columbus and Cincinnati Midland Railroad (which was really the B. & O.'s "short line" between those two cities) was leased to the same concern which in ease case acted on behalf of the Baltimore company.



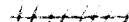

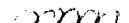






Thereafter for nearly a quarter of a century the Central Ohio continued its shadowy existence as a subsidiary and sub-holding corporation until in the fullness of time its great overlord decided to simplify its own corporate structure. November 16, 1914, the stockholders of the B. & O. voted to absorb certain of its underlying properties, the Central Ohio among them. In due course, therefore, the company which had built the first railroad to run east from Columbus toward the great centers of trade, and which that city had supported so sparingly, was dissolved, and payment of its outstanding bonds assumed by its corporate successor.



MAP 4. THE C.P. & I.R.R. AND ITS TERRITORY



THE C.P. & I.R.R. AND ITS TERRITORY

-  C.P. & I.R.R. built by 1854
-  ~~C.P. & I.R.R. built 1858-59~~
-  Richmond & Covington R.R.
-  Bellefontaine & Indiana R.R.
-  Indianapolis & Bellefontaine R.R.
-  Greenville & Miami R.R.
-  Columbus & Xenia R.R.
-  Dayton, Xenia & Belpre R.R.
-  ~~Dayton & Western R.R.~~
-  ~~Indiana Central Rwy.~~
-  Other Railroads

One Inch: 8 Miles

CHAPTER NINE

THE COLUMBUS, PIQUA AND INDIANA RAILROAD: VICTIM OF THE GAUGES

Of the four railroads to reach Columbus which are the subject of detailed consideration in this study, the one now to be described was the most unsuccessful. Its financial weakness was a characteristic that it shared with most early roads; its inability to hold its own with stronger competitors was not at all unique, but the misfortunes which overtook it because of the difference in track gauges then existing in the state gave it a rare and unenviable distinction.

The years 1848-1851, as related in Chapter Five, saw the chartering of seven railroads to run from Columbus westward to Springfield or Dayton or the Indiana boundary. Five of them never got past the paper stage, another was built for half its intended length, and only one, the Columbus, Piqua and Indiana Railroad, after endless vicissitudes completed its allotted span of rail.

The C.P. & I., to return to the abbreviation, was conceived in Piqua and chartered by the legislature on February 23, 1849.¹ Determined opposition was raised by the Democrats in the House of Representatives to the clause in its charter giving to any county, or in certain cases to any township, through which the road would pass the

¹Ohio Local Laws, XLVII, 155.

right to subscribe up to \$50,000 of the capital stock, subject to the approval of the voters.² Public assistance of this sort which resulted in increased taxes was often, although not invariably, considered to be contrary to Democratic principles. In this case the opponents were not able to defeat the proviso, but later they received indirect vindication in the rather small total of public funds actually voted for the enterprise.

The incorporators from Franklin County were Joseph Ridgway, Jr., William S. Sullivant and William Dennison, Jr., all of them interested also in other railroads and all close to the Neils who ultimately were to play such a large part in the fate of this concern. From Miami County, in which Piqua was located, came six of the incorporators, including Moses G. Mitchell, one of the organizers of the town's first rail venture, the Fort Wayne and Piqua Railroad, chartered in 1836 and put to rest by the panic of the following year.³ Madison, Champaign and Darke counties between them supplied eight more incorporators. Contrary to the usual practice, the charter did not describe the individuals which it named as being either "corporators" or "commissioners" but merely created them a "body corporate and politic by the name and style of" the railroad in question. (See Chapter Two.)

The route prescribed ("the route of the drovers" it was sometimes called) ran from Piqua eastward to Columbus, or some other place on

²Xenia Torchlight, Feb. 22, 1849.

³John A. Rayner, comp., The First Century of Piqua, Ohio, Piqua, 1916, p. 156; Ohio Local Laws, XXXIV, 556.

the Columbus and Xenia Railroad, by way of Urbana, and westward to an unspecified point on the Indiana boundary by way of Greenville, Darke County. The apparent intention was to have it connect at the border with the most likely Indiana railroad it could reach. Since a charter was effective only as far as the boundaries of the state which granted it, the problem of making connections with roads in adjoining states was a serious one.

More than three years were to pass before the C.P. & I. finally selected an Indiana railroad to which to link itself. This was the Indianapolis and Bellefontaine, at a proposed new town named Union, or Union City, as it was more commonly called, which was to be laid out astride the boundary line by two promoters, the Smith Brothers. Within a very few years five roads were radiating out of this spot which rivaled Richmond, Indiana, a few miles to the south, as a gathering point for rail lines crossing the border. These two ~~towns~~ towns are to this day refutations of the more extravagant claims of the early backers of the iron horse, since despite the excellent rail service they have long had, they are not yet places of great importance.

Piqua took the lead in getting the new company organized, apparently with no help from Columbus, although that city in 1849 was experiencing a mild boom. In the fall, Piqua, (Washington Township) by 652 to 3 votes favored a subscription by the township of \$50,000 to the railroad. The voters of Columbus and Franklin County were never asked for public support.

Early in 1850, enough stock having been sold, the incorporators met at St. Paris, a little place between Piqua and Urbana, probably selected because it was close to the middle point in the line. They chose as directors Dennison who was to become the first Civil War governor of Ohio and a prominent railroad man, Joseph Vance of Champaign County, who had been governor in 1836-1838, Ira A. Bean, "the active manager" of the project, M. G. Mitchell, J. R. Hilliard, and two others who do not appear again in this story. Dennison was the only director from Franklin County. At a subsequent meeting Mitchell was chosen president and surveys were ordered for a route between Urbana and Jefferson in Madison County. It was at first apparently planned to use the tracks of the Columbus and Xenia Railroad from the latter place to Columbus.

Help from the Legislature

No time was lost in asking the legislature for some of those alleviatory enactments of the sort which all early railroads hoped would remove obstacles in their path. In this case the lawmakers authorized Washington Township to subscribe to \$25,000 more stock and empowered the counties through which the road passed to pay for the surveys within their respective limits.⁴ Such a provision, seen in the case of almost no other Ohio railroad, was an intimation that the company's resources were scanty from the beginning. By the time

⁴Ohio Local Laws, XLVIII, 310.

the surveyors' report was received the directors believed they had actual and prospective funds enough to build seventy-eight miles of road from Columbus to Covington.⁵

An idea of the actual value to a railroad of the stock subscriptions made by municipalities is gained from a resolution by this board that a block of Champaign County bonds be sold at not less than 90, after the road had guaranteed the principal and interest. A month later, presumably in order to make them still more saleable, the C.P. & I. had to authorize the conversion of these bonds into its own common stock at any time at the holder's option. The end of the year saw the letting of the first construction contracts for the section between St. Paris and Covington.

When the stockholders held their annual meeting in February, 1851, they elected three new directors, one of them Samuel Medary, editor of the Ohio Statesman, the great Democratic newspaper of Columbus. They took the places of Dennison, Vance and a third member. Dennison, incidentally, who had a hand in so many rail companies centering around Columbus, seems never to have attended a directors' meeting. From the votes cast by the stockholders it can be deduced that the total amount of private capital invested in the company was still small. At the first meeting of the new board of directors a committee was appointed to seek further legislative aid to complete the road.⁶

The lawmakers responded generously. To encourage municipal support,

⁵C. P. & I. R.R., Minute Book, July 6, 1850.

⁶C. P. & I. R.R., Minute Book, Feb. 19, 1851.

the taxpayers in any county or town which subscribed to the stock were to be given scrip equal in amount to the railroad tax they paid (it was a separate levy, like a school tax), which scrip was convertible into capital stock of the road. The company was given permission to borrow any amount at any rate of interest, to pledge all its assets, to change its eastern and western termini, and to increase the number of its directors, regardless of all other laws to the contrary.⁷

The veiled threat to change the termini was made plainer ten days afterward when a law was put on the books giving specific authority to Franklin County and the city of Columbus to subscribe up to \$50,000 in capital stock and to any township in the county to take up to \$20,000. The inhabitants of those places, however, both as taxpayers and as private investors, did not rise to the bait but continued to maintain a great indifference to the enterprise which had not yet, it was reported, been able to attract a dollar of Columbus capital.⁸

This cheerless picture brightened a few months later when William Neil, the stage-coach capitalist of Columbus, began to show an interest in the company. At a meeting of the directors on June 16, 1851, Medary, who was associated with Neil in many business affairs although they were in opposing political camps, made his first appearance as a board member. The directors ratified a contract to buy from Neil 110 acres of land for depot purposes near the penitentiary in Columbus, to be paid for by 2,000 shares of railroad stock. At the same time they

⁷Ohio Local Laws, XLIX, 478.

⁸Daily Ohio Statesman, Mar. 8, 1851.

released Neil and Medary from an earlier contract (not specified) and cancelled Neil's previous subscription for 100 shares of stock.

On top of this the board agreed to build a switch to Medary's stone quarry near the Scioto River, to give him a discount on carrying his stone, and to give him space on the depot land in Columbus for a stone yard for ten years, free of charge. The economic history of Columbus, it might be noted in passing, contains many references (some of them humorous) to the role of the local limestone quarries, which to this day are of prime importance to the city. Three of the leading citizens of the period with which we are dealing, Medary, William Neil and William S. Sullivant, were among those who had interests in quarries as well as in rail lines.

Typical of many early railroad operations was a requirement set by the directors the following month when they let contracts for work on the fifty-six-mile stretch between St. Paris and Columbus. Contractors had to accept as part of their payment ten percent of the contract price in railroad bonds and eight percent in railroad stock.

At the same meeting, July 28, the board ratified an agreement with two little lines running out of Greenville, one of the points named in the C.P. & I.'s charter. The Greenville and Miami Railroad was under construction from Greenville southeasterly towards Dayton, planning to use the tracks of the Dayton and Western Railroad for part of the way. The Greenville and Winchester Railroad, still on paper, proposed to go westerly from Greenville to Winchester, Indiana, a place a few miles west of Union City. Since the terms of the agreement introduce the

subject of gauges, that topic must now be considered.

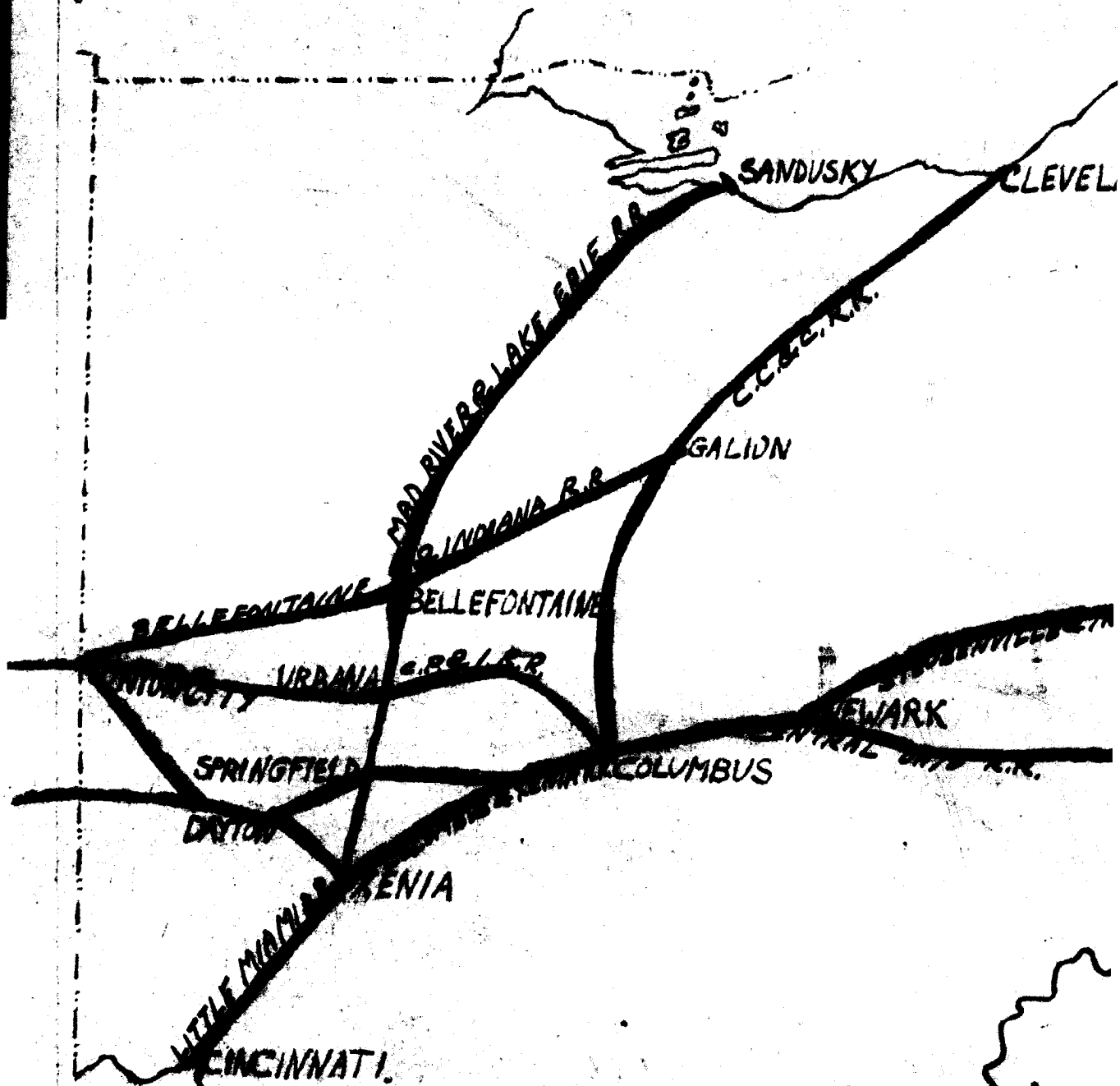
The Problem of the Gauges

The easily stated question of how far apart the rails should be placed in building a railroad track was harder to answer in the early days of the iron horse than would seem reasonable to a modern traveller. The difficulties were not unlike those arising today in the broadcasting world from AM, FM and short wave, and in the phonograph world from the various turntable speeds, to mention but two sorts of twentieth century problems of comparable nature. The trouble arose, of course, not in constructing or operating the line but in connecting it with adjoining routes, for all railroads sought as many connections as possible.

The variations in gauges in the United States, at the time with which we are dealing, were to a considerable extent sectional. The predominant gauge in the east was four feet, eight and one-half inches, usually called the eastern or Manchester gauge (it originated in England). In the south, five feet was the most popular track width. Indiana had the same width as the east, but named it the Indiana gauge. Ohio, lying between Indiana and the east, required all roads within its borders (with certain exceptions) to build to a width of four feet, ten inches, which it labelled the Ohio gauge.⁹ This was also used by some early roads in New Jersey.

Two exceptions to these generalizations should be noted: the

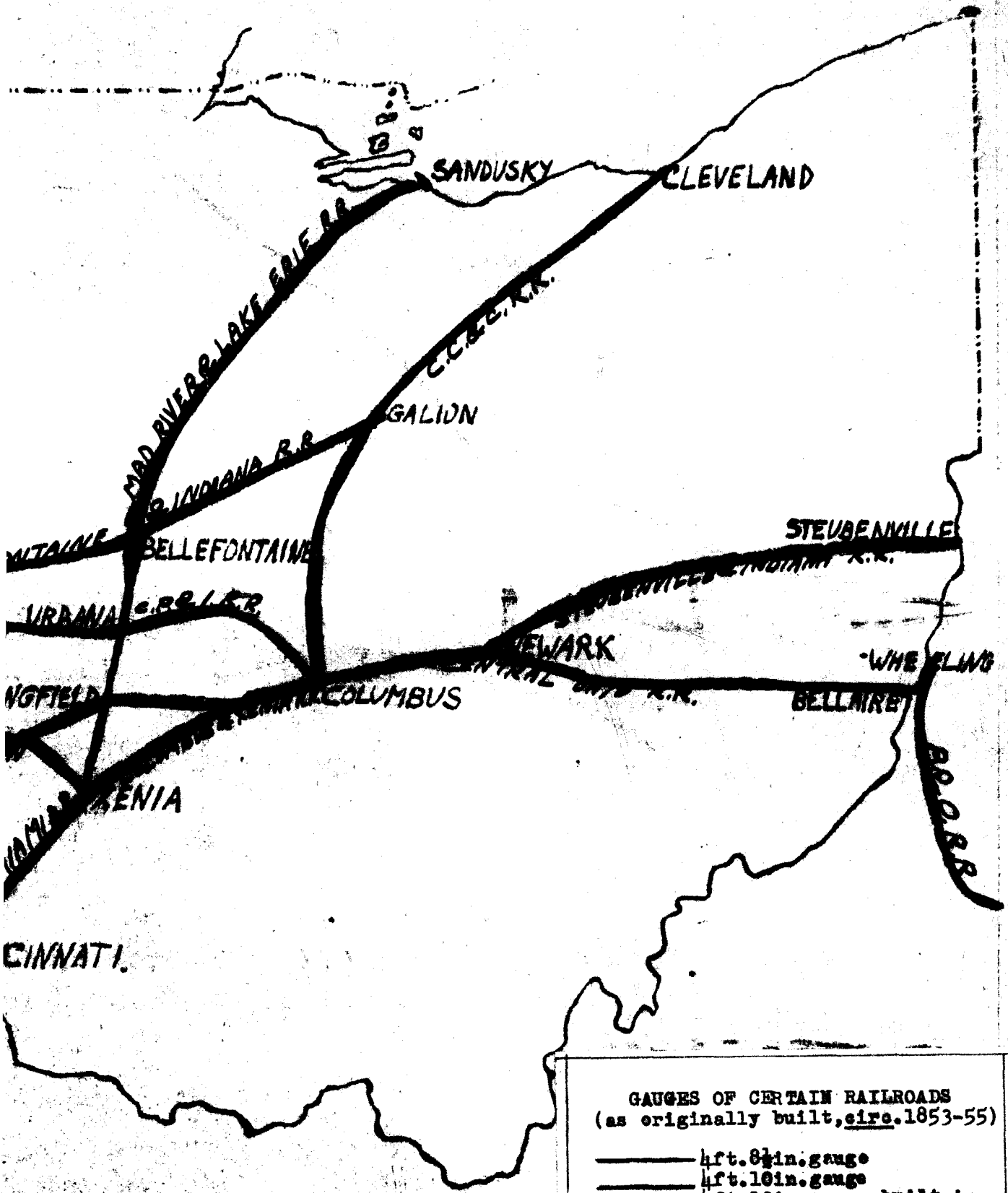
⁹Ohio General Laws, XLVI, 40, and L, 126.



GAUGES OF C
 (as originally
 ————— 4ft. 6
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 16

One 1

MAP 5. GAUGES OF CERTAIN RAILROADS



GAUGES OF CERTAIN RAILROADS
 (as originally built, circa 1853-55)

- 4ft. 8 1/2 in. gauge
- ==== 4ft. 10 in. gauge
- - - - 4ft. 10 in. gauge built in 1858-59

One Inch: 2 1/2 miles

great Erie line, entirely in New York State, laid its rails six feet apart and hence was sometimes referred to as the "broad gauge" road. In Ohio, the perennially unsuccessful Sandusky, Mansfield and Newark Railroad and its woebegone little partner with which it was never able to connect, the Scioto and Hocking Valley Railroad, ran on their own unique gauge of five feet, four inches. Aside from these two, the Ohio lines which suffered most from this tangle were the east-and-west ones which had to connect at the state borders with lines for the most part of gauges different from theirs. North-and-south lines, like the C.C. & C., were troubled comparatively little.

The joint agreement just mentioned between the C.P. & I., the Greenville and Miami and the Greenville and Winchester railroads declared that, provided the C.P. & I. adopted either the Ohio gauge or the Indiana gauge, the other two lines would adopt the same one, the choice to rest solely with the line to Columbus. It was further agreed that the latter would build its road via Greenville (where it would connect with the other two), that all three roads would use T rail (rather than strap rail) and that the work would be completed within two years.

This arrangement, apparently a move by the C.P. & I. to insure itself a good western connection, was not successful. The Greenville and Winchester Railroad was not built and the C.P. & I. itself never went to Greenville, although a dozen years later its subsidiary was extended through that point. Furthermore, there is a question whether the Greenville and Miami was acting in good faith. In the May

preceding it had contracted for joint operation and the closest kind of co-operation with the Dayton and Western Railroad, at that time its only outlet to the east and south, and over whose tracks it was planning to run for some miles.¹⁰ Since such an agreement implied an interchange of rolling stock and since the Dayton and Western's gauge had apparently already been settled upon,¹¹ one may doubt the propriety of a promise by the Greenville and Miami to put the determination of its own gauge entirely in the hands of a third party.

Although by a charter amendment the C.P. & I. no longer was required to go by way of Greenville, the company may have still desired to do so since the place seemed likely to become a rail center worth reaching. From it two lines were planned to extend west to Indiana and at least two more in other directions. It was not, however, the goal of the Indianapolis and Bellefontaine Railroad, a Hoosier line which was building, on the Indiana gauge, toward the Ohio border where it hoped to connect with some likely Buckeye carrier. The connecting point it chose was the real estate promoters' town of Union City which eventually became the western terminus of the C.P. & I., the Greenville and Miami and also of a third Ohio railroad, the Bellefontaine and Indiana. (The latter must be distinguished from the Indianapolis and Bellefontaine with which it subsequently merged.)

¹⁰"A Corporate History of the B. & O. R.R. Co., as of June 30, 1918, prepared in accordance with the requirements of Valuation Order No. 20, issued by the I.C.C.," May 13, 1915, IV, 291.

¹¹Weekly Ohio State Journal, May 13, 1851.

At its easterly end the C.P. & I. had another difficult gauge problem on its hands, one that it never was able to solve satisfactorily. To set up a through route across Ohio of which it would be the western half, the road needed imperatively an eastern connection, a partner, as it were, of the same gauge as its own. The Steubenville and Indiana Railroad seemed to fill the bill, on paper at least, since it was designed to be built on the eastern (or Indiana) gauge from Columbus to Pittsburgh where it would be joined to the mighty Pennsylvania Railroad.

Such a through route, exciting in its possibilities for profits, was described in the prospectus issued by the C.P. & I. in June, 1852, in connection with an offering of mortgage bonds in New York. From Pittsburgh to Terre Haute, Indiana, it was set forth, would stretch a line of railroads, all of eastern gauge, by way of Steubenville, Columbus, Piqua and Union City. The different lines would run their trains in common (i.e., co-ordinate their schedules), with no change of cars for freight and baggage. Passengers were not specifically referred to.

That this through route should be depicted in the prospectus as virtually an accomplished fact rather than as an agreeable prospect was in keeping with the standards of railroad publicity in the days when Jenny Lind was appearing in Columbus under the banner of P. T. Barnum. The prospect did not become reality, however, until more than a dozen years had elapsed and after the companies involved had spread their rails to the wider Ohio gauge. Later the rails would be brought back

to the eastern gauge which became in 1886 the standard gauge of today.¹²

Two main hindrances blocked the realization of this dream while it could still be of value to the C.P. & I.'s stockholders: (1) The only rail entrance into Columbus from the east was over the Ohio gauge tracks of the Central Ohio Railroad which at first merely approached but did not connect with the eastern gauge tracks of the Steubenville and Indiana Railroad at Newark. They were not physically connected until 1857 (see Chapter Eight), by which time the latter's gauge had been changed to the Ohio one and the C.P. & I. was in receivership. (2) At Steubenville, the Ohio river was not bridged for the railroad and an unbroken track connection made with Pittsburgh until 1865. In consequence, the Steubenville and Indiana line, despite the bright picture in the prospectus, was at first of little use to the Piqua road which for some years could reach it only over a bothersome stretch of intervening track, as shown on the map accompanying this chapter.

The break in gauge at Columbus seemed for a while to offer advantages to that city. A comment in the Columbus Directory for the Year 1852 said of the C.P. & I. that its adoption of the Indiana gauge "will create the necessity for a large amount of transfer at this city instead of the change taking place at the State line."¹³ At Erie, Pennsylvania, the following year, when it was proposed to change gauges and end the profitable transfer business in that city, the celebrated

¹² Exhibit of the C.P. & I.R.R. Co., New York, 1852, p. 5.

¹³ Columbus Directory for the Year, 1852, Columbus, 1852, pp. 96-7.

"Erie War" was the consequence.¹⁴

By referring to the map showing the gauges of certain Ohio railroads one can see that the decision of the C.P. & I. to adopt the Indiana gauge was not a rash one. Had it been successful in constructing its road to a meeting with an Indiana railroad (it got three-fourths of the way before it failed) and had its obvious ally and extension to the east, the Steubenville and Indiana, been able to run its own tracks into Columbus all the way from Steubenville (it got four-fifths of the way before it failed) the two would have formed a cross-state route with good prospects for profits. In coping with the vital problem of gauges the C.P. & I. was unsuccessful, not because it planned wrongly, but because it was unable to carry out its plan.

Raising Money

The signing of the agreement with the two little roads running into Greenville was followed by a pause in what might be called the C.P. & I.'s strategic moves and by an increase in its money-raising efforts. It was so short of cash it had to pay a \$19,000 debt to one of its contractors with \$9,000 bonds of Rush Township, \$6,000 individual stock subscriptions (i.e., notes) by residents of Wayne Township, and \$4,000 in notes, "those which mature first," given by residents of Rush Township.¹⁵ At the same meeting at which the directors discussed of the \$19,000 debt they began preparations to sell \$600,000 first mortgage

¹⁴Harlow, Road of the Century, pp. 269-274.

¹⁵C.P. & I.R.R., Minute Book, Oct. 6, 1851.

bonds, to be negotiated by a committee of two of their number, Ira A. Bean and William Neil.

During the winter of 1851-52, \$140,000 of these bonds, bearing interest at 7%, were reported sold, and \$200,000 more were offered for sale in New York in June by Winslow, Lanier and Company, whose extensive activities in financing early middle western railroads have already been mentioned. It was characteristic of the ill-managed C.P. & I. that an error was made in the first mortgage when originally executed, and it had all to be done over.¹⁶

It became apparent almost at once that despite the tempting Exhibit issued to promote the bonds, sales were very slow, although the American Railroad Journal was reporting that funds for rail investments were plentiful. The Indiana Central Railroad, a competitor of the Indianapolis and Bellefontaine's for traffic between the Indiana capital and the Ohio border, received for its bonds an average price of 95½, said to be the highest ever paid for bonds of an unfinished western road.¹⁷ The hard pressed C.P. & I. had recourse to bank loans, one of \$25,000 from the Bank of ^{Orange} Organé, New Jersey, and another, not detailed, for which the collateral was some of the municipal bonds the railroad had received, valued for such purposes at eighty cents on the dollar.

Even the friends of the road had reason to grow wary of its obligations. The firm of Ridgway and Kimball in Columbus, which had

¹⁶Church, Corporate History of the Pennsylvania Lines West of Pittsburgh, III, 37 et seq.

¹⁷Weekly Ohio State Journal, June 15, 1852.

launched a business of making railroad cars when the Columbus and Xenia line was built, agreed to accept payment on an order for cars as follows: \$12,000 in railroad stock; \$15,000 in railroad bonds valued at 87½; \$15,000 in cash and \$19,210 in a note. Six months later the terms had to be modified to give the sellers more cash.

As their answer to these pressing financial problems, the directors of the C.P. & I. seem to have turned to an issue of second mortgage bonds, although the minutes are not clear as to just when they did so. In any case they determinedly went ahead with the building of their road, ordering rails and locomotives as best they could, and contracting with William Neil for ballasting and track-laying.

Meanwhile the matter of the road's western connections arose again. Apparently the contract with the two lines to Greenville had proved useless, for about half a year after it was signed the C.P. & I. directors were considering a rival proposition from the Indianapolis and Bellefontaine Railroad. This was as follows: (1) the two lines would meet at Union City on the state border; (2) they would be considered a through line between Columbus and Indianapolis, and (3) the through receipts would be divided proportionately to the mileage of the two roads. The proposal was signed by Oliver H. Smith, one of the two brothers who owned the land on which Union City was to be constructed. He was a colorful figure in Indiana railroading of whom Harlow writes entertainingly in The Road of the Century.

After four months of thinking it over, the directors of the Piqua road on June 8, 1852, approved a contract to the above effect. They

further agreed (1) they would use the Indiana gauge "if the law allows;" (2) at Union City would be built a depot, half of it lying in Ohio and half in Indiana, and (3) transshipment of freight at that place would not be required. With their eye on the sale of securities, the directors thereupon ordered the immediate preparation of a map showing "a continuous line of Railway from St. Louis to Boston, New York, Philadelphia and Pittsburgh."¹⁸

The Indianapolis and Bellefontaine company worked energetically to make a reality of its part of the line on the map and by the end of 1852 its rails had pushed into Union City. There they met, not the tracks of the C.P. & I. which were still far in the offing, but those of the Greenville and Miami, one of the two little lines which had made the discarded agreement with the Piqua road. This was the first rail connection between Ohio and the capital of Indiana, and it ran on Indiana gauge.

Half a year later when the Bellefontaine and Indiana Railroad tracks from Bellefontaine and Galion, Ohio, entered Union City, in July, 1853, they were laid to Ohio gauge, which meant that trans-shipment was necessary. Had the C.P. & I. at that time been in operation between Columbus and Union City, the through route linking the capitals of the two states would have come into existence as called for in the contract of June 8, and Ohio railroad history would have taken a different turn. But the C.P. & I. was still unfinished and could provide no outlet to

¹⁸C.P. & I.R.R., Minute Book, June 8, 1852.

the east for the Indianapolis and Bellefontaine. The latter had to choose another connection toward the seaboard and, as will be told, it linked itself with the Bellefontaine and Indiana.

1853

As was the case with so many other railroads, in Ohio and elsewhere, to the C.P. & I. the year 1853 was of particular importance. It commenced with a resolution by the directors of the Pennsylvania Railroad commending the mortgage bonds of the Piqua road "to the citizens of Philadelphia in general and especially to the stockholders in the Pennsylvania Railroad," and declaring that the line "cannot fail to be profitable to its proprietors." The Pennsylvania did this in response to the request of three C.P. & I. directors who apparently were in Philadelphia for that purpose: Mitchell, the road's president; Bean, recently made its financial agent in the east, and Neil.¹⁹

The Pennsylvania's commendation of the C.P. & I. bonds (seemingly the second mortgage issue) must have been reasonably effective. By the end of 1853 it was reported that 161 persons, mostly in Philadelphia, had purchased them and that payment of interest thereon had been secured by the deposit in Philadelphia of \$100,000 of the road's capital stock which the Pennsylvania would be allowed to vote.

The Exhibit in which the approbation appeared gave further information about the struggling company: it was estimated that the entire

¹⁹ [Exhibit of] The Columbus, Piqua and Indiana Railroad Company.
n.p., n.d. [Philadelphia, 1853?]

cost of the road would be \$1,900,000 (the Exhibit of the year before had estimated \$1,250,000); the sellers of the rails, which had been manufactured in Wales, had taken half the purchase price in bonds at par; total stock sold up to then amounted to \$967,500. These statements should be accepted, however, with the greatest caution.

The directors on the C.P. & I. executive committee certainly displayed no caution at their meeting which followed the Pennsylvania's recommendation of the bonds when they agreed to put \$50,000 of their company's scanty resources into stock in one of two proposed railroads to run from Union City northwest to Peru, Indiana, on the way toward Chicago. They even dared to add that they would operate the line if asked to do so.²⁰ A little while later, President Mitchell was elected head of one of these roads. Within a month, according to the Ohio State Journal, the C.P. & I. by arrangement with the Marion and Mississinewa Valley Railroad (of Indiana) was in control of and proposed to operate a through line from Columbus to Chicago.²¹ Such a line was built some years later and was in fact operated by the C.P. & I.'s corporate successor.

It is obvious that one should take with considerable salt newspaper accounts of the C.P. & I.'s grandiose ambitions to control a line from Columbus to Chicago, although some such idea was probably teasing the imagination of its promoters. Their imagination was not restricted to the northwest, however, for another report credited them

²⁰ C.P. & I.R.R., Minute Book, Feb. 8, 1853.

²¹ Weekly Ohio State Journal, May 31, June 21, 1853.

with also envisioning a link with the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad which lay to the southeast. The link was to consist of a proposed road from Columbus through the Hocking Valley country to a connection with the B. & O. at the Ohio River, thereby completing a through route with a gauge of four feet, eight and one-half inches, all the way from Baltimore to Chicago. This was surely imaginative thinking of a high order -- and hardly less practical than certain similar schemes which were turned into reality within a few years.²²

The chaotic condition of the C.P. & I.'s finances even at this early date, just as it was about to operate its first train, can be gathered from a financial advertisement. The unsold half of the issue of \$600,000 first mortgage bonds, authorized a year and a half earlier, was to be offered at public auction in New York -- and, incredible as it appears, the railroad was at that same moment marketing its second mortgage bonds and authorizing up to \$300,000 income or domestic bonds.²³ The directors approved the terms of a loan of \$100,000 from the Pennsylvania Railroad, very well secured, but it is not evident that the advance was ever consummated. The sale of \$30,000 capital stock at 80 was ratified and Bean, the financial agent in the east, was authorized to sell more at that price.

From the minutes of a special meeting of the stockholders, held July 23, at Piqua to ratify the contract with the Indianapolis and

²²

Daily Ohio Statesman, July 30, 1853.

²³

American Railroad Journal, May 14, 1853; C.P. & I.R.R., Minute Book, June 29, 1853.

Bellefontaine Railroad described above, we get information as to the owners of the company. The stock voted had a par value of \$492,800 compared with \$967,500 stock reported sold in the Exhibit of six months earlier. The principal stockholders from Columbus voted the following amounts held in their own name:

William Neil	4,000	shares
Ambos & Lennox	100	"
M. L. Sullivant	40	"
William Dennison, Jr.	30	"
Robert Neil	20	"

Aside from David Hunter (his residence was not given) with 1,100 shares, and five municipalities with amounts from 160 to 2,529 shares, there were no other large holders. Of William Neil's block of 4,000 shares, 2,000, as already told, had been issued in exchange for 110 acres of land in Columbus. Since he also held a contract with the road for ballasting and track laying, part of it undoubtedly payable in stock, it is clear that only a portion of his investment could have represented cash.

Later that fall some Neil cash rather dramatically came to the rescue of the railroad. According to the resolution unanimously adopted by the directors, the company had imperative need of \$34,118.71 to aid in paying United States Customs duties on the imported iron rails laid between Columbus and Urbana and to meet a \$10,000 bill of exchange held by a Columbus bank. Neil agreed to lend the amount on condition that (1) the contract between the railroad and himself for ballasting and track laying be cancelled (the road to do the work itself), and (2) the collateral would consist of \$50,000 income bonds

and a deed of trust to most of the land which Neil had previously sold to the road for depot purposes.²⁴

In the middle of this picture of queasy finances the corrosive element of gauges suddenly reappeared. The directors learned that the Indianapolis and Bellefontaine Railroad with which, just a year before, they had signed the contract for a through line based on the Indiana gauge, might change to the Ohio gauge. President Mitchell was authorized to take legal steps to halt the change, should it be attempted. When the case came before Judge McLean of the U.S. District Court, he upheld the contract and ordered the defendants to relay the fifteen or twenty miles of rail they had already moved.²⁵

Just about this time the dynamic John Brough, Ohio politician, Indiana railroad promoter and Cincinnati newspaper editor, who ten years later was to be elected Ohio's third "war governor," succeeded Oliver H. Smith as head of the Indianapolis and Bellefontaine. A few days afterward, the Bellefontaine and Indiana Railroad, which was built to the Ohio gauge, opened for business between Union City where it met the Indianapolis and Bellefontaine line, and Galion, Ohio, where it met the C.C. & C.

The situation that now faced the four lines terminating actually or prospectively at Union City is seen in part by reference to the accompanying map of certain railroad gauges in Ohio. The problem may be reviewed thus:

²⁴C.P. & I.R.R., Minute Book, Oct. 26, 1853.

²⁵Urbana Citizen & Gazette, Sept. 23, 1853.

(1) The Indianapolis line, to give it for the moment a short title, was completed to Union City where, by contract, it was to exchange through business with its "gauge mate" the C. P. & I.

(2) The Piqua line, as the C. P. & I. was sometimes called, was just beginning operations at that time (the middle of 1853) on a few miles of track at its end farthest from Union City and did not look as if it would have enough strength to extend its rails to that place.

(3) The Greenville and Miami, of the same gauge as the first two, was in operation to Union City and would naturally have welcomed through business from the Indianapolis line, business that would have moved east via Dayton and Columbus.

(4) The Bellefontaine and Indiana, which had just started operating over its entire length, offered to the Indianapolis line another and better route for through business, by way of the C.C. & C. and the Lake Shore lines to the seaboard. Its Ohio gauge, however, did not match that of the other three roads.

The Indianapolis line, in dire need of an outlet to the east, at first stood by its contract with the C.P. & I. and proposed in August that they both change to the Ohio gauge, offering to pay half its partner's expense in so doing. From several points of view the proposal must have been tempting to the sickly little road, but after President Mitchell had informed the directors of conversations he had had at Philadelphia with holders of their bonds, as the minutes guardedly reported, the offer was declined. Had the gauge been changed, through traffic on the Piqua road would have moved to and from the east over

the Central Ohio and the B. and O. instead of over the Steubenville and Indiana and the Pennsylvania rialroads, in the latter two of which there was a great deal of Philadelphia capital.²⁶

Of necessity, one could well say, the Indianapolis and Bellefontaine thereupon turned to the other two lines which met it at Union City and decided to cast its lot with the Bellefontaine and Indiana. It thus chose the road which offered it by far the best through route to the east rather than the one (the Greenville and Miami) with the same gauge as its own. It immediately began to change its gauge to conform to that of its new partner. The C.P. & I. hastened to court and obtained an injunction to stop the change. Within six months, however, the condition of the latter road had so deteriorated that a "Committee of Ways and Means and Connections," consisting of President Mitchell and two other directors, was established with virtually dictatorial powers, including the right to change to the Ohio gauge if desirable and to make appropriate contracts with any connecting lines.²⁷

The First Train

So preoccupied were the directors with problems of gauge and finance, one is led to conclude, that the running of the road's first train and the commencement of routine operations passed unnoticed in the minutes, as indeed they almost did in the Columbus and Urbana

²⁶ C.P. & I.R.R., Minute Book, Aug. 17-18, 1853.

²⁷ Ibid., Jan. 17, 1854.

newspapers. In an off-hand way the two daily papers in Columbus mentioned that some forty or fifty people had gone on an excursion as far as Pleasant Valley (known today as Plain City), about eighteen miles from Columbus, on the C.P. & I. on Sunday, June 5. The next day, it was advertised, mixed freight and passenger service would start over the same route. The fare for passengers was twenty-five cents.²⁸

None of the conventional hallmarks of an authentic railroad opening was present: no newspaper editorial praised the public-spirited supporters of an enterprise that was sure to help the community grow still faster; no ~~writer~~ or speaker (there were no speeches) platonically hailed the new road as a link in a chain; the conductor of the train was not mentioned, let alone described in what had already become a formula when writing of a railroad, "the gentlemanly and urbane Mr. So-and-so."

Between the time when the first train ran to Pleasant Valley and the opening of regular service from Columbus to Urbana, a distance of 46 miles, on September 19, the operations of the railroad attracted attention only once. The Columbus Odd Fellows travelled on a Fourth of July excursion train to Pleasant Valley where they held a picnic.²⁹

Even the start of operations to Urbana yielded but little revenue to the unfortunate C.P. & I. That town, which boasted of a "university," was on the line of the Mad River and Lake Erie Railroad running

²⁸ Daily Ohio Statesman, June 3, 1853; Daily Ohio State Journal, June 6, 1853; Urbana Citizen & Gazette, June 10, 1853.

²⁹ Daily Ohio State Journal, July 5, 1853.

between Sandusky and Dayton, and should have contributed a fair amount of traffic to the Piqua road, but if it did so the results seemed not to matter. Apparently no more successful was the effort of S. G. Brecount, one of the road's directors, to create a new town between Urbana and Piqua, named Conover, perhaps in honor of A. G. Conover, the chief engineer of the railroad. The promoter offered fifty lots free to persons who would build on them. Nearly half a century later it had attracted a population estimated at only 400.

It is hard to find even the mildest fillip of interest or support that accrued to the Piqua road as the result of offering regular service. The fact is all the most surprising when it is remembered that Ohio was, during the first three-quarters of 1853 in the throes of a very lively railroad boom. From April to September seven other rail lines commenced operations in the state and a good many more were projected, most of which withered in the recession later that year. The hard times in the fall forced the C.P. & I. to go as far afield as Hartford, Connecticut, for a bank loan of \$25,000 and to authorize up to \$600,000 third mortgage seven percent convertible bonds. The company's first mortgage seven percent bonds were selling then at about 80 in New York.

The new year brought a continuation of the same distress. Even the offer of the Steubenville and Indiana Railroad (the C.P. & I.'s prospective eastern-gauge connection from Columbus to the east) to endorse

\$300,000 of the latter's third mortgage bonds, "upon the suggestion and urging of the Pennsylvania Railroad" which in turn was endorsing \$500,000 of the Steubenville and Indiana's second mortgage bonds, failed to help matters.³⁰ The offer was declined, probably because the terms were too severe. The annual meeting of the C.P. & I. stockholders in February was nevertheless routine and saw the unanimous re-election of all directors including the three from Columbus -- R. E. Neil, Medary and Dennison. But in the life of that railroad the time for routine actions had passed, and only the most drastic steps held out any hope of salvation.

The Contract with Neil and Dennison

What came next was an amazing, involved contract which drew together into a single whole the three leading strands which we have been tracing in the story of this railroad: the role of the Neils, the tangle of the gauges, and the struggle to raise money. The substance of the contract, executed on February 25, 1854, and reported to the directors by the Committee of Ways and Means and Connections on March 3, was as follows:³¹

³⁰ Minutes of the Board of Directors of the Steubenville & Indiana Railroad, Jan. 18, 1854.

³¹ Details of the transaction are pieced together mainly from the following sources: (a) C.P. & I. Railroad, Minute Book, Mar. 3, 1854; (b) Christian A. Zabriskie v. C.C. & C. Railroad Company, etc., text of Judge John McLean's decision, given in Railroad Record, Mar. 24, 1858; (c) C.C. & C.R.R., Minutes of Directors' Meetings, Mar. 6, 1854, Jan. 8, 1856; (d) Circuit Court for the Northern District of Ohio, The Cleveland and Columbus (sic) R.R. Co. and Divers Bond-Holders, Ats. Christian A. Zabriskie (sic), T. Ewing (brief) for the Bond-Holders, n.p., n.d. and (e) Annual Reports (1857) of the Indianapolis, Pittsburgh and Cleveland R.R. (successor to the Indianapolis & Bellefontaine) and the Bellefontaine and Indiana R.R.

(1) William Neil, father of R. E. Neil, and William Dennison, Jr., son-in-law of William Neil, would pay to the C.P. & I. the sum of \$305,000, in return for which the railroad would convey to them the entire issue of \$600,000 third mortgage seven percent convertible bonds. Two thirds of the issue, namely, \$400,000 of the bonds, would be guaranteed jointly and severally by the C.C. & C., the Indianapolis and Bellefontaine and the Bellefontaine and Indiana railroads. The bonds would mature in ten to twenty years as Neil and Dennison might direct.

(2) Neil and Dennison were given full power to adjust the C.P. & I.'s differences with the Indianapolis and Bellefontaine and permanently to establish on the former road any gauge they wished. That is to say, they might change the C.P. & I.'s gauge to four feet, ten inches, if that became a part of an agreement with the road to Indianapolis. The C.P. & I. further agreed to make a suitable contract with the Central Ohio Railroad, which was built to the Ohio gauge and ran eastwardly from Columbus, in competition with the Steubenville and Indiana Railroad of four-eight and one-half gauge.

(3) Neil and Dennison were required to obtain from the Indianapolis and Bellefontaine Railroad, as part of any agreement they might enter into with that company, a written undertaking that it would agree (1) to make a permanent contract with the C.P. & I. as to running arrangements and co-operation for a through line, and (2) not to make any discriminatory arrangements favoring any other railroads, especially the Bellefontaine and Indiana.

(Plus an unspecified amount of interest due on bonds.)

At the meeting when the above information was presented, the president was empowered to offer in payment of debts the road's five-year domestic (income) bonds at sixty cents on the dollar. To make the offer appear better it was to be good for only about a month. An additional hardship was that prices were rising so that it soon became necessary to grant to the contractors an allowance of twenty percent over the agreed amounts, payable in stock at par. The effect of this action was probably more moral than practical, for the stock was then almost unsaleable.

Since the critical condition of the C.P. & I.'s finances, at least in a general way, was no doubt known to the C.C. & C. and its two railroad allies, their endorsement of that road's bonds must have been motivated by an extremely compelling reason. It presumably was this: Chicago had good connections with the east by way of the Lake Shore Route, but Indianapolis, St. Louis and the southwest had unsatisfactory ones. The most promising route was from Indianapolis to Cleveland over the tracks of the three lines endorsing the Piqua road's bonds. The gauge of the Indianapolis and Bellefontaine, however, not only differed from that of its two co-signers but it could not be changed as long as the court injunction stood in the way. In order to obtain the right to change the gauge and thus operate an effective through route between Indianapolis and Cleveland, the endorsements were given. The high price which these three companies were thus willing to pay for

their privilege shows what importance attached to through traffic even in those early days.

A contract between the C.P. & I. and the Indianapolis and Bellefontaine, embodying the terms outlined above, changing the gauges of both roads to four feet, ten inches, and adding a provision for the construction of a depot at Union City jointly by the two roads, was approved by the board of the former at its next meeting, March 22. A week later the same board contracted for the completion of the road to its western terminus at the new depot. That day also an agreement for a through line was made with the Central Ohio Railroad, (which ran from Columbus to the Ohio River), but it was not submitted to the board for approval until a year later.³²

At last, it seemed, the road to Piqua was to be free of the difficulties caused by gauges. Its situation may be set forth as follows: (1) It had renounced the eastern or Indiana width; (2) it had abandoned the alliance with the Steubenville and Indiana road (and an eventual connection with the Pennsylvania) in favor of one with the Central Ohio (and a link by ferry with the B. and O.); (3) it had agreed to adopt the Ohio gauge, which was the width used by the three lines guaranteeing the major part of its third mortgage bonds and also the width used, or about to be used, by every other railroad connecting with it; (4) it had secured for itself, as soon as it could push its own tracks to Union City, a link, actual and not prospective, with Indianapolis and the west.

³²C.P. & I.R.R., Minute Book, Mar. 13, 1855.

Even with the vexing matter of gauges out of the way the C.P. & I. was still not able to go ahead. Although it had let a contract to complete its line to the terminus at Union City there was no money in the till to pay for the work, despite the trains shuttling back and forth between Columbus and Urbana. Creditors grew less patient, including the Pennsylvania Railroad which had advanced \$31,000 to meet bond interest before the gauge had been changed, and so once again recourse was had to Neil and his associates. Neil, having disposed of his Ohio stagecoach interests, was at this time also promoting another new line, the Atlantic and Ohio Railroad, which hoped to be a Buckeye affiliate of the Erie Railroad.

President Mitchell was authorized to sell to Neil and Dennison \$29,000 first mortgage bonds and \$71,000 second mortgage bonds for a total price of \$75,000, payable \$35,000 "in money" and \$40,000 in iron rails at cost. Additional resolutions authorized the president to borrow any sums he could on any terms he could get, with no requirement for the board's approval; the company's land in Columbus was to be cut up into building lots and sold; stock subscriptions could be paid in land, and the domestic bonds were to be offered for sale at the price of 60.³³ After this meeting the minutes show that the directors did not assemble again for five months.

Even in the face of such acute financial distress, however, members of the board still supported their enterprise. Three directors

³³Ibid., May 24, 1854.

personally endorsed a \$10,000 bank loan. Mitchell, who was one of them, endorsed in addition two other notes totalling \$5,756.30. Another of the same three men, Hilliard, who also served as superintendent of the road, advanced \$19,000, which he had borrowed, and in return the company gave him \$20,000 of its latest issue of securities, five-year, seven-percent real estate bonds.

An an offset to this brave support was the grim fact that of the 2,000 tons of rails obtained from Neil and Dennison under the agreement just mentioned, 850 tons had to be sold to the Pennsylvania Railroad to satisfy that creditor. The pressing nature of the obligation can be surmised when one considers how essential it was to the C.P. & I. to complete its line to Union City and start operation of the through route with the Indianapolis and Bellefontaine road. It was at this time, the fall of 1854, that the directors contracted to have the gauge on the division between Columbus and Urbana widened to the Ohio standard (some of the western division had already been changed) and expressed hopes that the rails would be laid to Union City by spring. The grading and bridging to that point were reported completed and ready for the "iron."³⁴

Service Opened to Piqua

Unrecorded in the minutes and almost unnoticed in the newspapers was the opening for service of the section between Urbana and Piqua on October 16, 1854, an event that produced no noticeable improvement

³⁴ Urbana Citizen & Gazette, Oct. 20, 1854.

in the affairs of the company. Times were still not prosperous: the Urbana and Champaign Mutual Insurance Company had failed; the Springfield, Mount Vernon and Pittsburgh Railroad, which intersected the C.P. & I. at Milford Center, had suspended operations; railroad conventions were being held right and left in a vain effort to stop cut-throat competition and get back on a profitable basis.

The C.P. & I.'s miserable financial plight was made more evident at every meeting of its directors. Bond interest to the amount of \$21,000 due in January, 1855, had been advanced by Neil and Dennison. Employees were offered their pay in the new real estate bonds, valued at 70. By May, President Mitchell was reporting that \$2,200,000 had been spent on the project thus far and it was still unfinished. Bean, the former director who had been made eastern financial agent, was accused of collusion with the seller of rails and the two were said to owe the road \$78,825.

When it came to the matter of rails, the directors truly were faced with an almost insoluble problem. Until the line was finished and a connection made at Union City the road had almost no traffic and hence no net income. But it had no resources with which to complete the twenty-four remaining miles to the border. Rails which it had previously ordered, on credit, would not be delivered, it was reported, in time to have trains running for the all-important fall harvests. This and much more was made clear at a two-day meeting of the board in Columbus on May 22-23, 1855. The directors, rather heroically, one would think, finally agreed to endorse personally "in

connection with the principal stockholders of the company," the obligations necessary for buying rails to finish the line to Union City and the link with the Indianapolis, Pittsburgh and Cleveland Railroad as the former Indianapolis and Bellefontaine was now called. The lease of the entire road, if needed to complete it, was also authorized.

Armed with the necessary endorsements a committee of two directors, Mitchell and a new member, Joseph Ridgway of Columbus, who earlier in the year had joined the board, travelled east and west in search of rails which proved hard to find and harder to buy. The most they could obtain was 300 tons, not enough to finish the line. That was the situation which confronted the stockholders when they were called together at a meeting in the Neil House in September, 1855. The liabilities reported at that time were as follows:

LIABILITIES OF THE C. P. & I. RAILROAD
September, 1855

First Mortgage Bonds, due 1862	\$ 600,000
Second " " , due 1863	400,000
Third " " , due 1869	600,000
Domestic (Income) Bonds, due 1858	132,000
Real Estate Bonds, due 1859	81,000
Capital Stock paid in	771,450
Floating debt	87,538
Interest due October 1, 1855	21,000
Interest due July 1, 1855 (paid from proceeds of a loan)	<u>35,000</u>
Total liabilities	\$2,727,988

The following supplemental information was also presented:

(1) the total sum needed to complete the road and put it in running

order was estimated at \$191,840; (2) the rolling stock on hand consisted of five locomotives, eight passenger cars and about 100 other cars of various kinds.³⁵

The interest shown as due October 1 was on the \$600,000 third mortgage bonds, of which \$400,000 had been endorsed by the three co-operating railroads forming the route between Indianapolis and Cleveland. The endorsers paid the interest, since the C.P. & I. was obviously unable to do so, but their own stockholders commenced legal proceedings to enjoin them from making any more such payments.³⁶ In one of these suits it was alleged that the C.P. & I. bonds so guaranteed were void, mainly on the grounds that Dennison, one of the individual parties to the agreement, was also a director of that road.

In point of fact, Dennison had been re-elected a director at the annual meeting of stockholders on February 14, 1854, and at the meeting of the directors on March 3 it was recorded in the minutes that he had declined to accept the election. The contract for the endorsement of the bonds was dated February 25. The court upheld the validity of the endorsements which ultimately resulted in large losses to the guarantors, \$189,178 in the case of the Bellefontaine and Indiana, and \$164,028 in the case of the Indianapolis, Pittsburgh and Cleveland. The loss to the C.C. & C. was not made plain, but it was at least more than either of those two sums. (See Chapter Seven)

³⁵C.P. & I.R.R., Minute Book, Sept. 26, 1855; C.C. & C.R.R., Minutes of Directors' Meetings, Oct. 28, 1855.

³⁶Seventh Annual Report of the Bellefontaine and Indiana Railroad for the Year 1856, Cleveland, 1857, p. 10.

At the stockholders' meeting in September, just referred to, a committee of three experienced railroad men, one from each of the endorsing roads, was named as a sort of "rescue squad" to work with the directors. They were able to accomplish nothing, neither the completion of the twenty-four mile stretch between the western end of the tracks and Union City, nor the leasing of the line which from a traffic viewpoint had but one terminus. Inexorably the end of the company was drawing near, a fact which was recognized by the C.C. & C. when, a few months later, it wrote off as worthless the \$10,000 in C.P. & I. stock and an obligation of that road for \$4,700, which it had been carrying as assets.³⁷

The stockholders of the Piqua road at their annual meeting in February, 1856, replaced several of the old directors by new ones including William Neil, Thomas L. Jewett, president of the Steubenville and Indiana Railroad which had been "jilted" by the C.P. & I., and B. E. Smith, later to become a celebrated Ohio railroader. The directors in turn elected William Neil (his son was also on the board) as president in place of Mitchell who had held that office since the company was founded and now resigned rather than step down to the vice-presidency. Hilliard resigned as superintendent when told that he would be expected to devote his full time to the position.

Several months passed without improvement in affairs and then, suddenly, the directors demanded of Mitchell that he account for his acts while in office. The executive committee was instructed to

³⁷C.C. & C. R.R., Minutes of Directors' Meetings, Jan. 8, 1856.

investigate his administration. This inquiry, which seemed like the last tortured spasm of a dying thing, inexplicably came to naught however and Mitchell's own report when received was ordered filed without comment.

The strategic possibilities of the road had, that spring, been reduced almost to the vanishing point by the creation of a joint committee to operate the Indianapolis, Pittsburgh and Cleveland road and the Bellefontaine and Indiana road as a single line, but as separate corporations, under the name of Bellefontaine Railroad Line. The C.C. & C.'s interest in these companies was growing steadily. Any chance, therefore, that the Piqua road might have had to secure some of the through business to and from Indianapolis, could it have completed its line to Union City, was pretty much a thing of the past. Its main raison d'être, in other words, was no longer valid.

Interest on bonds had meanwhile gone unpaid and the holders at length claimed their due. On June 23, 1856, the Court of Common Pleas in Franklin County appointed Lowell Holbrook and J. A. Roosevelt as receivers.³⁸ The next month Neil resigned as president, to be succeeded by Jewett who retained the presidency of the Steubenville and Indiana road. The minutes close with his election.

During the first two years of the receivership the several classes of creditors were unable to come to any agreement and the line remained unfinished with twenty-four miles of roadbed waiting for rails. Even

³⁸J. A. Roosevelt was probably James Alfred Roosevelt (1825-1898) founder in 1878 of the banking house of Roosevelt and Son, and a fourth cousin, once removed, of Franklin D. Roosevelt.

an offer by the trustees of Washington Township (Piqua) to pay a bonus up to \$25,000 in the stock which it had bought, provided the road were completed, was in vain. The stalemate was broken at last when John Brough, the president of the two companies forming the Bellefontaine Railroad Line, resolved to take an active part in the C.P. & I.'s affairs and brought the creditors together. In the fall of 1858, John H. Bradley of Indianapolis, who had been installed by the Brough interests as president, started to finish the road and by March 25, 1859, the line was open for its entire length.

It was the third and last time that this company was to put in operation an important segment of its track -- and the attention paid to the event by the newspapers was as negligible as it had been on the earlier occasions. One can only wonder why there was so little interest in a railroad so strategically located.

Epilogue

Seven years after the start of the receivership a plan of reorganization was approved whereby the C.P. & I. on December 1, 1863, became the Columbus and Indianapolis Railroad Company and \$1,151,108 of the stock and debts of the former company was wiped out. Holders of the old capital stock received twenty-five cents on the dollar in stock of the new concern. During the next few years a series of mergers added to the stature of this road until it became of very real importance and a prize to be struggled for.

During 1864 the Columbus and Indianapolis Railroad Company, the Richmond and Covington Railroad Company and the Indiana Central Railway Company merged under the name of the Columbus and Indianapolis Central Railway Company. In consequence, Columbus became connected with Indianapolis by a continuous line of road under single ownership. The line went by way of Richmond, Indiana, a route some eight miles shorter than via Union City as originally planned by the builders of the C.P. & I.

Three years later the Columbus and Indianapolis Central merged with the Union and Logansport Railroad Company and the Toledo, Logansport and Burlington Railway Company to form the Columbus and Indiana Central Railway Company which provided a continuous line from Columbus to the western border of Indiana.

Later the same year (1867) the Columbus and Indiana Central Railway Company merged with the Chicago and Great Eastern Railway Company to form the Columbus, Chicago and Indiana Central Railway Company, thereby giving Columbus a direct entrance to the great rail center of Chicago.

By this time the railroad system which had developed out of the original C.P. & I. had attained a length of 581 miles and attracted the attention of the celebrated Jay Gould who wanted it as one of the western adjuncts to his Erie Railway. The Pennsylvania Railroad also wanted it, as their second-choice entrance to Chicago, in case Gould succeeded in his plan of getting control of the Pittsburgh, Fort Wayne and Chicago line which was their first choice.³⁹ The consequence was perhaps the

³⁹Burgess and Kennedy, Pennsylvania Railroad, pp. 198-9; Report of the Investigating Committee of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company, Philadelphia, 1874, p. 44.

most dramatic moment in the life of this troubled road.

The stockholders of the Columbus, Chicago and Indiana Central Railway Company met at Columbus on January 29, 1869, to approve a lease of their property to the Atlantic and Great Western Railway Company, the Erie's six-foot-gauge affiliate in Ohio, as proposed by their directors. The morning of the meeting a last-minute proposal for a lease was also received from the Pittsburgh, Cincinnati and St. Louis Railway Company (the Panhandle Line) which was a subsidiary of the Pennsylvania Railroad. Clearly there had been no opportunity to give notice of this offer to the stockholders when the call for the meeting was issued.

The directors hastily met, found that the Pennsylvania had outbid Gould for the property and so notified the stockholders. The lease was thereupon made out in the name of the Panhandle, was approved forthwith and took effect two days later.⁴⁰

The lessee had been created the year before by a combination of the Steubenville and Indiana (erstwhile ally of the C.P. & I.) and two other little lines to form a through route between Pittsburgh and Columbus. At the end of 1869, the same year it leased the successor to the C.P. & I., it also acquired the Little Miami and the Columbus and Xenia railroads. Thus within less than twenty-four months the Pennsylvania Railroad, acting through the Panhandle, one of its two

⁴⁰ Columbus, Chicago & Indiana Central Railway, Minutes of Stockholders' Meetings, Jan. 29, 1869.

principal subsidiaries for the territory west of Pittsburgh, had obtained control of three of the first five rail lines to enter Columbus. In 1921 whatever individuality the Panhandle may have retained as an operating subsidiary of the Pennsylvania was lost when it leased itself to its overlord for 999 years.

CHAPTER TEN

THE ROUNDHOUSE: CONCLUSIONS

The part played by Columbus and its citizens in building the city's first four rail lines has been considered from time to time in the preceding chapters. The reverse of that picture, the effect of the rail lines on the city, instead of being included in the pages that have gone before, has been summed up, in the interests of a more orderly arrangement, for presentation in this final chapter.

The most striking thing about the impact of the railroads on Columbus is that, in material affairs which can be embodied in statistics, it was so slight during the decade 1850-1860 when the rail lines were actually beginning to serve it. Even the impact from all four of them starting operations within the brief period of three and one-half years (February 1850-September, 1853) seems to have left Columbus relatively unmoved. In the preceding decade, when no important betterments in its transportation facilities took place, the population gained 195.7 percent; in the decade before that, during which the canal and the National Road were opened to the city, the gain was 148.4 percent, but in the ten-year span during which the railroads arrived, the number of inhabitants grew only 3.8 percent.

This scarcely visible increase in population was (1) the smallest in the city's entire history, approached but once, during the depression era of 1930-1940; (2) barely a third of the gain made by the state as a

whole, and (3) not to be compared with the increase in other important Ohio cities or even in its own county. The following figures tell the story.

POPULATION AND PERCENTAGE OF INCREASE OF CERTAIN
PLACES IN OHIO, 1850-1860¹

<u>Place</u>	<u>1850</u>	<u>1860</u>	<u>Increase(%)</u>
State of Ohio	1,980,329	2,399,511	18.1
Cincinnati	115,435	161,044	39.5
Columbus	17,882	18,554	3.8
Cleveland	17,034	43,417	154.9
Dayton	10,977	20,081	82.9
Toledo	3,829	13,786	259.6
Franklin County	42,909	50,361	17.4

Analysis of the changes in Columbus and Franklin County during that decade shows the gain was uneven rather than constant. Increasing a little for a few years after 1850, the population seems to have declined between 1854 and 1857, if one may judge by figures for marriage licenses and school attendance, and then to have risen slightly. Over the entire period the Negro population went down about twenty-one percent and the whites increased about five percent. The three central wards in the city lost residents and the two outer ones gained.²

¹ U.S. Bureau of the Census, Ninth Census of the U.S.: 1870, Compendium, Washington, 1872; Thirteenth Census of the U.S.: 1910, Abstract, (with Supplement for Ohio) Washington, 1912.

² Studer, Columbus, pp. 70, 98-99; Martin, History of Franklin County, pp. 394, 405; Unstad, "Industrial and Economic Development," p. 353.

There appears to have been a noticeable exodus from Columbus, and from Steubenville and Zanesville as well, both of those places actually losing population. In the case of the capital city the principal reason given for the departures was "western fever," that is, lure of rich farm lands in the west. Iowa attracted many settlers from Ohio, not to mention much of the stock and equipment of the Ohio Stage Company (the Neil stage coach line) which was moved there when rail competition put the firm out of business in 1854. That year Michael L. Sullivant, one of the three well-known sons of Lucas Sullivant, the founder of Franklinton, sold his Ohio estate and bought 80,000 acres in Illinois. Fear of a recurrence of the cholera epidemic of a few years earlier was also given as a reason for some departures.³

The loss in population was followed by an appreciable decline after 1857 in the value of taxable personal property in the city; real property values were down slightly. In the county as a whole, property decreased twenty-seven percent from 1853 to 1859. The number and value of new structures erected in the county were somewhat lower in 1859 and 1860 than in 1858, but the drop was not very significant.⁴

In value of manufactured products Franklin County showed a noticeable gain in the decade but satisfactory comparable figures for the city could not be got. By 1860 among all the towns and cities

³Ohio Commissioner of Statistics, Annual Report for 1857, pp. 488-491; Rodgers, Noble Fellow, pp. 98, 258; U.S. Census Office, Preliminary Report on 8th Census, 1860, Washington, 1862, p. 242.

⁴Lathrop's Columbus Directory (for two years ending 1862), Columbus, n.d., p. 138; Ohio Commissioner of Statistics, Annual Reports, for 1858, 1859, 1860.

in the country of 10,000 or more population, Columbus stood forty-ninth in number of inhabitants and seventy-eight in value of manufactured products, thereby confirming the statement of a local historian who wrote in 1858 that Columbus people of means used their money more for buying and selling than for manufacturing. The leading products of the county were flour and meal, followed by distilled liquors.⁵

The foregoing statistics certainly cannot be correlated in any acceptable way with the entry of the four railroads into Ohio's capital. About the most that can safely be said is that the existence of rail transportation made it easier for those who wished to move from the city to do so, a fact that could be considered the railroads' revenge for the slight support they received there. Even the example of doing business as a joint stock company, like a railroad, was not followed by Columbus capitalists, if we may accept the statement that there were only three companies of that nature in the city by 1860.⁶

There were, to be sure, a number of not very important activities which showed railroad influences. In Chapter Six several small businesses were cited which had taken the word "Railroad" into their titles, such as a hotel, a restaurant, and some more. A few other obvious influences might be added, like Peter Hayden's "Railroad Chair

⁵U.S. Census Office, 8th Census, 1860, Final Exhibit, Washington, 1866, p. xviii; Martin, History of Franklin County, p. 296; U. S. Census Office, Eighth Census, Manufactures in the U.S. in 1860, Washington, 1865, pp. 450-451.

⁶Lathrop's Directory, p. 133.

Manufactory," started in 1853 to make wrought iron fittings used in attaching the rails to the ties; the probable addition to the local population of Irish laborers drawn there to work on the rail lines, although no specific individual of that sort was encountered; the holding in the city from time to time of conventions of railroad officials and also of railroad labor.⁷ To sum up these little items and those cited earlier, one might say that the arrival of the trains seems to have brought no important addition to local business.

One writer, after a detailed study of the city's economy, reached the conclusion that "in the 1850's the east-west railroads threatened the future development of the city...The bulk of the pork, livestock and grain industries moved...to the newer western states and territories."⁸ Since the value of manufactures in Franklin County in 1860 was about seventy percent more than in 1850, this statement seems like an exaggeration. After the period covered in the present study, however, the freight rate structure for a time put Columbus at a disadvantage.⁹

Nevertheless, because of its location almost in the center of the state and because it was on the line of general separation between the

⁷ Railroad Record, passim, and especially Aug. 18, 1853; Jan. 8, 1857.

⁸ Unstad, "Industrial and Economic Development," pp. 526-527.

⁹ U.S. Census Office, Compendium of the Seventh Census, 1850, Washington, 1854, p. 295; U. S. Census Office, Eighth Census, 1860, Manufactures in the U. S., pp. 45-451; Report of Special Committee of Ohio Legislature on Fast Freight Lines, Boston, 1867, passim.

territories served respectively from the lake and the river; the city's obvious potentialities as a distributing center must have been greatly enhanced when the rails came. By the end of the decade the C.C. & C. and the Columbus and Xenia roads found it necessary to erect a large new freight depot for their joint use, although as just shown, the city's population had risen hardly at all. After 1857, when the Steubenville and Indiana Railroad began running through trains as far west as Columbus (see Chapter Eight), the city was connected with the East by three different routes, with all the strategic advantages of that fact.¹⁰

The intangible benefits to Columbus were no doubt just as real, but they are even harder to isolate and identify. Thanks to the improved means of transportation a larger number of prominent visitors than before could make their way there, to address the Lyceum or otherwise to reach the minds of the city's inhabitants. In the first few years of the decade they included Amin Bey (a Turkish commissioner), Jenny Lind, Kossuth and Henry Ward Beecher, to name but a few. The "cars" seem also to have brought a number of gamblers.¹¹

The railroads might perhaps be credited with attracting to the

¹⁰Gephart, Transportation & Industrial Development, *passim*; Andrews' Report, 32nd Congress, 1st Session, Sen. Ex. Doc. No. 112, Washington, 1854, pp. 630-631; A. L. Kohlmeier, The Old Northwest as the Keystone of the Arch of American Federal Union, Bloomington, Indiana, 1938, p. 180; Roseboom, Civil War Era, p. 28.

¹¹Studer, Columbus, Chapters 5 & 6; Ohio State Journal, Dec. 22, 1860, 1850-1860, *passim*, and espec. July 15, 1851.

capital a number of prominent men, active in the world of the iron horse, who moved their homes to Columbus, among them W. B. Hubbard, James Alexander, Benjamin E. Smith, M.M. Greene, J. R. Robinson and no doubt others. But to enter a credit of that sort is to draw a very long bow, and should be avoided.

The cold fact is that not until the Civil War did the city capitalize appreciably on the benefits to be derived from the new carriers, and not until after the war was a road built which would give Columbus a mighty push forward. The famous Columbus and Hocking Valley Railroad, as it was first called, opened in 1868, brought in the cheap coal which enabled local industries to compete successfully.¹²

During the years with which we are concerned a number of evidences of progress in Columbus can be found; how much the railroads had to do with them is highly problematical -- in most cases, it would seem, little or nothing. What the Railroad Record said of Indianapolis in 1855 was applicable also to Ohio's capital: "Indianapolis, however, is relying too much on railways and too little on home industry. The crossing of roads may make a village; but cannot make a city without internal resources to support them."¹³

To sum up finally the relations of Columbus and the rail carriers, it is clear that the city was not very railroad-minded in the decade under consideration. A list of all the roads in the state in 1856 gave

¹²Roseboom, Civil War Era, p. 28.

¹³Railroad Record, Feb. 15, 1855.

a total of forty-six, of which five were "located" (had their headquarters) in Cincinnati, three in Cleveland, and only one, the Columbus and Xenia which was but semi-independent, in Columbus.¹⁴

When one considers the rather meagre support that the capital of Ohio gave to the many infant rail projects which sought its help, and in turn the anything but impressive benefits that were the first fruits of the rails, one is led to conclude that in early Ohio railroading, as in so many other things, one got out of it what one put in.

Individual and Collective Credit

One final matter remains on which a little must be said: the nature of the individuals and groups responsible for launching the early railroads. Is it predominantly to the engineers, the financiers, the lawyers, the businessmen, the politicians or the members of some similar category that we owe the beginnings of the Ohio rail system? No clear-cut answer is possible since the groups overlapped to a great extent and the men involved have not been sufficiently identified. It seems fairly evident, however, that the designation "businessman" fits the largest number of those involved, a conclusion also reached in the case of the early rail enterprises in Massachusetts.¹⁵

In some instances the support for a railroad appears to have been widespread enough to warrant calling it virtually a community undertaking,

¹⁴Ibid., July 3, 1856.

¹⁵Charles J. Kennedy, The Early Business History of Four Massachusetts Railroads, n.p., n.d., pp.74-75. (Reprinted from Bulletin of the Business Historical Society, Mar.-Dec., 1951.)

as in the case of Zanesville and the Central Ohio road. (Columbus never appeared as wholly behind any of its lines as Zanesville did in that case.) Such support, as we have seen, was two-fold: (1) individual donations and investments in the company's securities, and (2) municipal subscriptions to the capital stock or some similar forms of monetary aid. Certain additional Ohio roads, not among the four running to the capital, were also the objects of widespread backing from communities which they served, a phenomenon in keeping with the pioneer or near-frontier character of those places.

The pioneer spirit, of which rugged individualism was often a large part, must not be over-rated in its relation to the early rail lines. The spirit was much in evidence, but it nearly always operated hand in hand with aid from public funds and eastern bankers. The extent of public (i.e., county, town and city) subscriptions to railroad stock may be gauged from the fact that forty of the state's eighty-eight counties were levying special "railroad taxes" to pay for such stock in 1860, by which time Franklin County and perhaps others had already paid off their obligations of that nature.¹⁶

Public assistance for certain enterprises was no new thing, for the first important highway in Ohio, Zane's Trace, received in 1796 what was perhaps the first federal land grant for internal improvements.¹⁷

¹⁶Ohio Auditor of State, Annual Report for 1860, p. 72.

¹⁷Beverley W. Bond, Jr., The Foundations of Ohio, Carl Wittke, ed., History of the State of Ohio (Columbus), I (1941), p. 388.

No federal land grants were ever made to Ohio railroads, however.¹⁸

The extensive aid given by public authorities to incorporated companies to build the early rail lines had been characterized as "a thoroughly mercantilist union of governmental policy and private interest."¹⁹

It was in fact a thoroughly pragmatic, thoroughly American way of getting results.

What was even more typical, more American, it may be, than the means the railroad builders used was the belief underlying their efforts, that their enterprise, like their country, "was destined for greatness, but this greatness was growing, and would grow, out of beginnings that were small indeed." The author of the quotation gave as the most popular expression of this belief the couplet heard for so many years on all sides:

Large streams from little fountains flow;
Tall oaks from little acorns grow.²⁰

Except for a few special cases, every pioneer railroad, in the eyes of its sponsors, was destined to grow, to become a part, perhaps the most important part, of a great rail system. There was a "manifest destiny" for each line as for the country at large (although,

¹⁸Ralph S. Henry, The Railroad Grant Legend in American History Texts, n.p., n.d., p. 194. (Reprinted from Mississippi Valley Historical Review, Sept., 1945.)

¹⁹Robert C. Black, III, The Railroads of the Confederacy, Chapel Hill, 1952, p. 42.

²⁰Arthur E. Bestor, Jr., "Patent-Office Models of the Good Society: Some Relationships between Social Reform and Westward Expansion," The American Historical Review, LVIII (Apr. 1953), 514.

surprisingly, the term has not been observed in connection with the carriers.) To support a railroad in that springtime season of our history was to support a cause, a movement, in which spiritual values and hoped-for material rewards were in most satisfying balance.

TABLE 2.

NUMBER OF OHIO RAILROAD CHARTERS AUTHORIZED

Part I - Charters by Act of Legislature

<u>Legislative Session^a</u>	<u>All Railroads</u>	<u>Railroads Related to Columbus</u>
1829-30	1	-
1830-31	-	-
1831-32	12	3
1832-33	-	-
1833-34	6	-
1834-35	7	-
1835-36	32	6
1836-37	11	-
1837-38	2	-
1838-39	4	-
1839-40	2	-
1840-41	1	-
1841-42	2	-
1842-43	-	-
1843-44	3	1
1844-45	8	2
1845-46	11	2
1846-47	4	1
1847-48	15 ^c	2
1848-49	12 ^d	2
1849-50	20	3
1850-51	21	2

Part II - Charters by Administrative Procedure^eCalendar Year

1852	7	-
1853	37 ^f	4
1854	15 ^f	1
1855	6 ^f	1
1856	4 ^f	-
1857	3 ^f	-
1858	3 ^f	-
1859	23 ^g	1
1860	5 ^h	-
Totals	277	31

^aWith very few exceptions, railroad charters were passed by the legislature in the later year of each session.

^bSee Appendix A for explanation of this term.

^cNegligible little mine "railroad" omitted.

^dIncludes an Indiana railroad constituted a corporation in Ohio.

^eSee Chapter Five for remarks on date of incorporation under this procedure, and on matter of street railways.

^fProbably includes one street railway.

^gIncludes 21 street railways, one in Columbus.

^hAll street railways.

TABLE 3.

RAILROADS RELATED TO COLUMBUS - ORGANIZED 1830-1860
(Exclusive of street railway)

<u>No.</u>	<u>Name of Railroad</u>	<u>Date of Incorporation</u>
Part I - Charters Obtained by Act of Legislature		
1	Mad River & Lake Erie	Jan. 5, 1832
2	Columbus, Delaware, Marion & Sandusky	Feb. 8, 1832
3	Milan & Columbus	Feb. 11, 1832
4	Columbus, Delaware, Marion & Upper Sandusky	Feb. 29, 1836
5	Columbus, London & Springfield	Mar. 12, 1836
6	Columbus & Marysville	Mar. 14, 1836
7	Cleveland, Columbus & Cincinnati	Mar. 14, 1836
8	Muskingum & Columbus	Mar. 14, 1836
9	Urbana & Columbus ^a	Mar. 14, 1836
10	Columbus & Xenia	Mar. 12, 1844
11	Columbus & Lake Erie	Mar. 12, 1845
12	Franklin & Washington ^b	Mar. 12, 1845
13	Columbus & Pittsburgh	Mar. 2, 1846
14	Springfield & Columbus	Mar. 2, 1846
15	Central Ohio	Feb. 8, 1847
16	Lancaster	Feb. 14, 1848
17	Dayton, Springfield & Columbus	Feb. 24, 1848
18	Springfield & Columbus ^c	Feb. 16, 1849
19	Columbus, Piqua & Indiana	Feb. 23, 1849
20	Bellefontaine & Columbus	Mar. 7, 1850
21	Mad River & Miami Central	Mar. 7, 1850 ^d
22	Franklin, Pickaway & Ross County	Mar. 20, 1850
23	Great Eastern & Western	Mar. 24, 1851
24	Dayton	Mar. 25, 1851

Part II - Charters Obtained by Administrative Procedure^e

25	Atlantic & Ohio	June 18, 1853
26	Columbus, Dublin & Marysville	June 20, 1853
27	Columbus & Hocking	July 11, 1853
28	Scioto Valley	Sept. 21, 1853
29	Ohio	Jan. 3, 1854
30	Columbus, Bellefontaine & Chicago	May 20, 1855

^aName changed to Urbana & Pittsburgh, March 7, 1851

^bName changed to Franklin & Ohio, March 20, 1851.

^cOstensibly a revision of No. 14, but actually a new railroad.

^dDate of amendment to charter creating in effect a new railroad.

^eSee Chapter Five for remarks on date of incorporation under this procedure. The charter of the Columbus Street Rail Road Company, filed June 10, 1859, is not included.

Madary, Samuel										
Dennis, William (Jr.)	2	X	X			X	X	X		X
Andrews, John W.	2	X	X							X
Miller, John G.		X	X					X		X
Ransom, Leander			X							
Adams, Demas	2									
Neil, Robert	2	X		X		X	X			
Latham, Bella										
Butler, Joel										
Sullivan, Michael L.				X		X	X			
Perry A.F.							X	X		X
Decker, D.W.							X	X		
Heyl, Louis (Lewis)							X	X		
Hibbs, Odin, G.							X	X		X
Armstrong, William							X	X		
Graham, John							X	X		X
Hayden, Peter							X	X		X
McCoy, Robert W.							X	X		X
Stone, A.F.							X	X		X
Milligan, J.W.							X	X		
Bartlit, John F.									X	
Gill, John L.									X	
Devis, Samuel B.									X	
Sells, Fletcher									X	
Wright, Daniel									X	
Fuller, Holcomb									X	
Graham, William									X	
Borland, Charles									X	
Borland, John									X	
Fulton, J.W.									X	
Moore, Eliakim H.									X	
Parsons, George M.									X	
Comstock, Theo.									X	
Storing, James H.									X	
Waldutt, J.M.									X	
Eldridge, Joseph									X	
Swaine, M.H.									X	
Carrington, Henry B.									X	
Hubbard, W.B.									X	X

NOTE: Numbers in columns 2 and 7 refer to first, second and third charters of the railroad in question.

APPENDIX A

CHARTERS AND INCORPORATORS

I. The Charters

The number of Ohio railroad charters authorized in the years 1830 to 1860, inclusive, and the number of those which were for railroads related to Columbus are shown on Table 2. By "related to Columbus" is meant (1) naming Columbus as a point on their route, or (2) containing the names of Franklin County residents among the incorporators. There are two exceptions: the Ohio Railroad (chartered January 3, 1854) is included, although it meets neither requirement, because it was unmistakably intended to pass through Columbus; the Scioto and Miami Valley Railroad (chartered March 18, 1839) is omitted, although it named some Franklin County incorporators, because it seems to have had no relation to Columbus.

During the first years of the new procedure to incorporate a company the movement for street railways got under way in Ohio. The charters issued to the earliest street railway companies cannot, in many cases, be distinguished from those for steam railroads. Consequently, rather than to include some and omit others, they have all been included in Table 2 which gives the number of charters. Since there is no doubt, however, as to the nature of any charter referring to Columbus, Tables 3 and 4 relate only to steam railroads.

One way of determining how much interest in railroads there was in Columbus is to compare the number of "local" charters with the totals for the state as a whole. The result is as follows:

OHIO RAILROAD CHARTERS AND COLUMBUS'S SHARE THEREOF

Period	<u>No. of Charters</u>		Approx. Ratio: Cols. To State
	Total In State	Related To Cols.	
1830-1851 (Legis. charters)	174	24	1 to 7
1852-1860 (Admin. charters)	103	7	1 to 15
Total	<u>277</u>	<u>31</u>	1 to 9

With the omission of charters clearly or presumably for street railways the above figures will read:

1830-1851	174	24	1 to 7
1852-1860	<u>72</u>	<u>6</u>	1 to 12
Total	<u>246</u>	<u>30</u>	1 to 8

The amount of interest in railroads in Columbus is discussed in Chapter Ten.

The thirty railroads related to Columbus are listed by name and date of charter on Table 3. Twenty-eight of them obtained one charter each, one obtained two charters (the C.C.& C.), and one obtained three (the Columbus, Delaware, Marion and Sandusky.) Seven of the thirty

actually built all or part of their line, namely:

Mad River and Lake Erie
 C.C. & C.
 Columbus and Xenia
 Columbus and Lake Erie
 Central Ohio
 Springfield and Columbus
 Columbus, Piqua and Indiana

One or two others may have started construction but did not do much more than that.

Three of the seven reaching the stage of operations did not build as far as Columbus, namely:

Mad River and Lake Erie
 Columbus and Lake Erie
 Springfield and Columbus

The first named had no intention of going there; it merely designated some commissioners from Franklin County in the hope, it would seem, of raising money in that section. The two last named were too feeble to complete their undertakings.

One road, the Steubenville and Indiana, whose trains entered Columbus in 1857, is not listed at all because when it was chartered it had not planned to build to the capital and designated no incorporators from Franklin County.

II. The Incorporators

Listed on Table 4 are the names of all the commissioners or corporators designated in the foregoing charters whose place of residence was given as Franklin County, with the exceptions noted, and

with the further exception that in the cases of the Columbus and Hocking Railroad (of July 11, 1853) and the Scioto Valley Railroad (of September 21, 1853) the names of all their incorporators are listed since their charters give no place of residence. The total of sixty-five names includes as a result some that do not belong there but which cannot be removed, lacking adequate identification.

More than a third of the incorporators, most of whom were among the wealthier and more prominent citizens, were associated with at least two rail enterprises. William Neil's name appeared on nine charters. In the following tabulation of the number of different railroads in which certain individuals were interested, the names of those concerned with three or more are given.

<u>Number of Railroads</u>	<u>Number of Individuals Interested</u>	<u>Names of Individuals</u>
9	1	William Neil
7	2	Ridgway, (Sr.), Dennison
6	1	Medary
5	2	Robert Neil, Goodale
4	2	W. S. Sullivant, Johnson
3	6	(Ridgway, (Jr.), Thomas, Andrews, (Miller, M.L. Sullivant, Perry
2	11	-----
1	<u>40</u>	-----
Total	65	

In Chapter Two will be found some remarks on the subject of the role of the incorporators, variously known as commissioners and incorporators, and the importance of knowing who they were.

APPENDIX B

PRAETERITIO

Before the last page is reached a scattering of topics must be barely mentioned, lest they be crowded out altogether by the inevitable limitations of time and space. Although certainly not of the first order of importance they are useful suggestions for further study in an area of history that has much to offer.

(1) Ohio Railroad Conventions - Just as railroads were among the early large-scale enterprises in Ohio based on private capital in corporate form, so conventions of railroad leaders were probably among the pioneer trade groups. It is not unlikely that out of some of them grew the pools and other restrictive practices which eventually led to government regulation. There is considerable material at hand about these gatherings, many of them held in Columbus, which sometimes took place more often than once a year, in the decade before the Civil War.

(2) Ohio River as Obstacle - The Ohio was such an important artery of trade that one is prone to forget it was also a great barrier: politically, because to bridge it Congressional approval was needed; physically, because of its width, depth, current and the steep banks which flanked it. The principal railroads in this study could not cross it by bridge until after the Civil War.

(3) Eastern Dynamism and Ohio Boom - Competition between the five great ports on the Atlantic seaboard to get, each for itself, all it could of the "western trade" caused them to stretch to the limit of their abilities the lines of transportation to the wealth beyond the mountains. Their first important impact on Ohio railroads was felt towards the end of the Mexican War when the state had recovered from the panic of 1837 and was resuming its upswing. The interactions of eastern expansion and Ohio "good times," to which would soon be added the flow of gold from California, played a vital part in the development of the state's rail lines and merit further study. Of particular interest might be a comparison of the relations with Ohio railroads enjoyed by the B. and O. Railroad of Baltimore and the Pennsylvania Railroad of Philadelphia, between which companies and places rivalry became intense.

(4) The Neils and the Erie - The reverse of the foregoing situation is found in the attempts of an Ohio capitalist to build a railroad in his state that he could link to an oncoming eastern trunk line. William Neil of Columbus made numerous efforts to do this but always failed, once, it appears, after what must have been a dramatic struggle with his fellow-townsmen Alfred Kelley. The former, at the head of a delegation from Ohio, appeared before the directors of the great Erie Railroad in New York to plead for a rail link to a line he was fathering. Kelley and a rival delegation pled in opposition and carried the day. Neil himself, both as stager-turned-railroader

and as one who was seemingly (although the point is by no means clear) an unquenchable promoter, would be an arresting figure in any study of Ohio's economic history. His importance to a work centered on Columbus is obvious.

(5) Columbus and the Hocking Region - Since it was the coming of Hocking coal that started Columbus on its first great expansion the relations of the city and the region are significant. The people of the capital were very early aware of what the mineral wealth in the valleys would mean to them, but it was not until several years after the Civil War that effective steps were taken to bring it in large quantities to their city. The reasons for the delay would encompass a helpful study of Columbus and its economy, with perhaps some side glances at that "apathy" in industrial matters which editorial writers viewed with such alarm.

(6) The S.M.& N. and the S.& H.V.R.R.'s - The story of two tragic rail enterprises, having little to do with Columbus but ramifying into almost every aspect of the early Ohio iron horse, deserves a telling. The Sandusky, Mansfield and Newark Railroad began as one of the pair of lines -- the other was the Mad River road -- starting operations in 1838 in the lake port of Sandusky. For reasons still obscure it changed its gauge from the Ohio norm to the out-size of five feet, four inches, had reached inland as far as Newark by 1851, and dreamed of a route of the same gauge from top to bottom of the state. It persuaded a group of naive souls in Portsmouth, on the Ohio

River, to adopt the same gauge on a line they were seeking to build northward to the central part of the state under the name of the Scioto and Hocking Valley Railroad. The two roads were to meet at Newark, completing the cross-state line. The southern portion was left unfinished, the work more than half completed, when financial disaster overtook it. The northern part became involved in questionable dealings of one sort and another and wrote one of the first dark chapters in the rail history of the state. One might profitably study this early case of Ohio railroad financiering, a subject which in later years was to bulk so large in the public's mind.

Also useful and more heart-warming would be a study of the misguided little partner line from Portsmouth. The commonplace, small-town men who started that venture on a shoestring displayed, before going down for the last time, a degree of courage, decency and determination worthy of a better fate and typical of the great majority of the builders of Ohio's early rail lines.

A SELECTIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY

From the rather large amount of material examined the items listed below have been found, in general, the most useful. Certain obvious aids to scholarship, such as the Dictionary of American Biography and other standard reference works, are omitted.

I. UNPUBLISHED MANUSCRIPT OR TYPESCRIPT MATERIALS

a) Minutes of Meetings of Railroad Company Stockholders and Directors.

In some cases the minutes of both sorts of meetings are in the same volume. They are all in manuscript, in the main offices of the successor corporations (which are indicated below in parentheses). Minutes of the following companies were read, in nearly every case in their entirety, to the extent that they were available.

Cleveland, Columbus and Cincinnati Railroad (NYC)

Cleveland, Painesville and Ashtabula Railroad (NYC)

Columbus and Indianapolis Railroad (PRR)

Columbus and Xenia Railroad (PRR)

Columbus, Chicago and Indiana Central Railway (PRR)

Columbus, Piqua and Indiana Railroad (PRR)

Columbus, Springfield and Cincinnati Railroad (NYC)

Sandusky, Mansfield and Newark Railroad (B & O)

Scioto and Hocking Valley Railroad (B & O)

Springfield, Mt. Vernon and Pittsburgh Railroad (NYC)

Steubenville and Indiana Railroad (PRR)

b) Miscellaneous Unpublished Material

In addition to the items below, registers, account books, securities, notes and papers of various railroads were also examined.

Cincinnati, Hamilton and Dayton Railroad, MSS Collection at the Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society, Columbus.

Columbus City Council, Journal of, for 1847.

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II. PUBLISHED WORKS

a) Annual Reports of Railroads.

Practically all early railroads seem to have printed their annual reports in pamphlet form. In certain cases where they were not readily available as originally printed, they were read as reprinted, in whole or in part, in a newspaper or magazine. One or more, nearly always more, reports were read of each of the following railroads:

Baltimore and Ohio
 Bellefontaine and Indiana
 Bellefontaine Railroad Line
 Central Ohio
 Cincinnati, Hamilton and Dayton
 Cleveland, Columbus and Cincinnati
 Clinton Line
 Columbus and Xenia
 Dayton and Western
 Eaton and Hamilton
 Franklin and Warren
 Indianapolis, Pittsburgh and Cleveland
 Little Miami
 Mad River and Lake Erie
 Mansfield and Sandusky City
 Marietta and Cincinnati
 New York and Erie
 Ohio and Pennsylvania
 Pennsylvania
 Sandusky, Dayton and Cincinnati
 Sandusky, Mansfield and Newark
 Springfield, Mt. Vernon and Pittsburgh
 Steubenville and Indiana

b) Government Reports and Publications

(Ohio) Auditor of State, Annual Reports, 1837-1851, 1860.

(Ohio) Board of Public Works, Special Report in Relation to the Building of Railroad Bridges Across the Canals of the State by Railroad Companies, March 10, 1852.

(Ohio) Commissioner of Railroads and Telegraphs, Annual Reports, 1867, 1870, 1880.

(Ohio) Commissioner of Statistics, Annual Reports, 1857-1865.

(Ohio) House of Representatives, Report of the Committee on Public Works to Whom was Referred the Petition of Thomas Pinkerton and Others, Asking the Sale of the Public Works Owned by the State, March 15, 1854.

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Ohio General Laws, 1830-1852.

(Ohio) House of Representatives, Report of the Select Committee on the Memorial of the Columbus and Sandusky Turnpike Company Praying for Relief. Presented by Mr. [S.] Parsons, January 24, 1844.

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(Ohio) Secretary of State, Map of the Railroads and Canals in Ohio. Columbus, 1855.

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d) Newspaper Files

A few papers, in which only one or two issues were examined, are not included.

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Cleveland Herald, 1846-1847.
 (Columbus) The Columbian, 1853.
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 1845-1855, 1857, 1859-1860.
 (Columbus) Ohio Statesman, 1844-1851, 1853-1855, 1859.
Columbus Sentinel, 1832.
Delaware County Journal & Ohio State Gazette, 1831-1833.
 (Springfield) The Republic, 1843-1845.
 (Steubenville) The American Union, 1855.
 Urbana Citizen & Gazette, 1853-1855, 1859.
 Xenia Torchlight, 1841-1850.

e) Railroad Pamphlets and Reports Other Than Annual

There is a large body of printed matter, mostly in pamphlet form, which was put out by the railroads and their friends, a great deal of it helpful. In particular, the Reports of Proceedings of the frequent railroad conventions, many of them held in Columbus, are important. Since the latter type pamphlet was issued under a wide variety of titles, all such material has been grouped here for the sake of convenience under a single title.

i-Reports of Proceedings of the following railroad conventions:

- 1852, May 4, at Columbus.
 1852, December 7,8, at Columbus.
 1854, January 18, at Columbus.
 1854, November 28, at Cleveland.
 1856, October 1, at Cleveland.
 1860, October 10, at Columbus, (photostat).

ii-Other Railroad Pamphlets and Reports (grouped by railroads)

Considerations Respecting the True and Proper Route for the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, Wheeling, 1850.

Reports of the Majority and Minority of the Committee on Western Connections of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, Baltimore, 1857.

Exhibit of the Central Ohio Railroad Company, New York, 1851.

Report of the Canal Injunction Case, Argued at Mt. Vernon, Ohio, March 25, 26, 1852. Columbus, 1852.

Address to the Stockholders of the Central Ohio Railroad, Zanesville, 1852.

[Central Ohio Railroad], Memorial, to the Honorable, the House of Representatives of the State of Ohio. n.p., n.d. (1852?).

Statement of the Condition and Prospects of the Central Ohio Railroad, March 3, 1853, New York, 1853.

Exhibit of the Central Ohio Railroad Company, March 1854, Baltimore, 1854.

Report of the Committee of the [Zanesville] City Council in Relation to the Management of the Central Ohio Railroad, n.p., n.d. (1854?).

Reply of the Central Ohio Railroad Committee to Application of City Council of Zanesville in Relation to Late Car and Locomotive Contracts, Zanesville, 1854.

Rejoinder by Henry Blandy to the Reply of J. H. Sullivan, President of the Central Ohio Railroad to the City Council of Zanesville, Zanesville, 1854.

Report of Mr. Bolman in Relation to the Central Ohio Railroad, Baltimore, 1854.

Letter of H. J. Jewett, President of the Central Ohio Railroad Company, to the President and Directors of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company in regard to the Connection Between the Two Roads, Baltimore, 1858.

Statement of the Existing Controversy Between the Two Lines of Railroads from Cincinnati to Lake Erie, (Letter to stockholders of the Cincinnati, Hamilton & Dayton Railroad), Cincinnati, 1854.

Report of the Investigating Committee of the Cincinnati, Hamilton and Dayton Railroad Company, Cincinnati, 1858.

Williams, C., Report on the Preliminary Surveys of the Cleveland, Columbus and Cincinnati Railroad to the President and Directors. Cleveland, 1846.

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Exhibit of the Columbus, Piqua and Indiana Railroad Company. Piqua, June 25, 1852, New York, 1852.

[Exhibit of] Columbus, Piqua and Indiana Railroad Company. n.p., n.d., (Philadelphia, 1853?).

Columbus, Piqua and Indiana Railroad Company, Brief for the Company, George S. Coe, Trustee, vs Columbus, Piqua and Indiana Railroad and Others, Common Pleas of Franklin County, June, 1857.

Second Exhibit of the Dayton and Michigan Railroad Company. May 1, 1854. Troy, Ohio, 1854.

Exhibit of the Hillsborough and Cincinnati Railroad Company. Cincinnati, 1849.

Mitchell, O.M., Engineer, Survey of Little Miami Railroad, Reports and Estimates Made to the Board of Directors. Cincinnati, 1837.

Explanatory Letter to the Stockholders of the Little Miami Railroad Company. Cincinnati, 1854.

Report of the Joint Committee to the Directors of the Mansfield and Sandusky and of the Columbus and Lake Erie Railroad Companies. Sandusky, 1849.

Report of the Investigating Committee of the Ohio and Pennsylvania Railroad Company. Pittsburgh, 1855.

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Report of the Investigating Committee of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company, Philadelphia, 1874.

Sandusky, Dayton and Cincinnati Railroad Company, Report to the Stock and Bondholders of, Columbus, 1858.

Report of the Committee of the Bondholders of the Sandusky, Dayton and Cincinnati Railroad Company, Boston, 1860.

Exhibit in Relation to the Present Condition of the Springfield, Mt. Vernon and Pittsburgh Railroad Company, Philadelphia, 1852.

Exhibit of the Steubenville and Indiana Railroad Company, Baltimore, 1854.

f) Other Published Material

A great many local histories were consulted, in most cases to no avail. Only the ones most helpful are listed below. A few general histories and studies of railroads were also examined and in some cases read but they had little to contribute to this study.

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AUTOBIOGRAPHY

I, Walter Rumsey Marvin, was born in Montclair, New Jersey, August 15, 1900. I received my secondary school education at l'Ecole Nouvelle, Chailly-sur-Lausanne, Switzerland, and St. Paul's School, Concord, New Hampshire. My undergraduate training was obtained at Yale University from which I received the degree Bachelor of Arts in 1922. After a number of years in newspaper work, politics and banking I received a commission in the United States Navy in 1942 and served therein for thirty-six months. At various times during the years 1945 through 1948 I obtained at the Graduate School of Columbia University the number of credits required for the degree Master of Arts but I did not complete my Master's Thesis. During the years 1946-1948 I was joint head, with my wife, of Columbus School for Girls. In the latter year I entered the Graduate School of the Ohio State University, since which time I have been completing the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy.