

HISTORY

OF THE

CITY OF COLUMBUS  
OHIO

FROM THE FOUNDING OF FRANKLINTON IN 1797,  
THROUGH THE WORLD WAR PERIOD,  
TO THE YEAR 1920

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## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### THE RAILROADS.

*Colonel Kilbourne's Vision of 1825—Many Paper Companies Early Incorporated—Construction of the Columbus & Xenia Railroad in 1847-50—First Station—Road to Cleveland Completed in 1851—The Central Ohio and the Columbus, Piqua & Indiana in 1854—The Hocking Valley and Its Troubles—The C., A & C., the Cincinnati Midland, the Columbus & Toledo, the Columbus, Shawnee & Hocking and Other Roads—Favorable Situation of the City for Transportation and Travel—The Union Depot Company*

*By Clarence Metters*

Even while canals were being built, railroads were in prospect, and there were far-sighted men here, among them Colonel James Kilbourne, sr, who had a vision of lines of railroad, usable as well in winter as in summer. Colonel Kilbourne went so far as to suggest the location of desirable lines of railroad across the State and as early as 1825, in a published pamphlet, advocated a system of railroads instead of a system of canals. With a view to future possibilities many companies were incorporated for the construction of lines out of Columbus. The first of these was in 1832 for a Columbus, Marion and Sandusky railroad—first by Lincoln Goodale, Gustavus Swan, Joseph Ridgway, Daniel Upson and Aurora Buttles, and later by William A. Neil, A. Chittenden, Orange Johnson, Daniel Kellogg, Charles Stanbery and William A. Platt. Another company for a road north to Milan was incorporated by James Robinson, John Bishop and A. V. Payne, and still another to be called the Columbus, Delaware, Marion and Upper Sandusky, was projected that year by William Neil, Joseph Ridgway, J. N. Champion, Lyne Starling, Wray Thomas, Robert Brotherton and Moses H. Kirby

In 1836 Gustavus Swan and W. S. Sullivant associated themselves with men of other counties and secured a charter for a Columbus, London & Springfield railroad, and in the same year John McElvain and men of other counties projected a Columbus & Marysville railroad. A Cleveland, Columbus & Cincinnati railroad was incorporated in 1836, also an Urbana & Columbus railroad, and a Muskingum & Columbus railroad. In 1845 a Franklin & Ohio River railroad was proposed by W. S. Sullivant, Lincoln Goodale, Samuel Medary, Samuel Parsons, Leander Ransom and Orange Johnson. In 1846 there was another Columbus & Springfield Railroad Co., in which Michael Sullivant and Wray Thomas were the Columbus men interested. In 1847 came the Central Ohio Railroad Co., organized to build a road east to the Ohio river. Robert Neil, Samuel Medary, Joel Buttles, Joseph Ridgway and Bela Latham, of Franklin county, were interested in this, as were men of Licking and Muskingum counties. Then in 1849 came the incorporation by Joseph Ridgway, Joseph Sullivant and others of the Columbus, Piqua & Indiana Railroad Co.

These proceedings are interesting because they show the purpose of Columbus men to get into the business of railroad construction as soon as possible, or at least a determination that no outsider should come in and seize the opportunity without paying for it. The plans and the charters looked like good investments; and such, indeed, some of them were.

The first railroad actually built into Columbus was the Columbus & Xenia. The company was incorporated in 1844 by Joseph Ridgway, Samuel Medary and William Dennison of Franklin county and others from the counties through which the road was to run. When the Little Miami road had been completed from Cincinnati to Xenia, there was a great effort in Columbus to secure enough subscriptions to bring the road on to Columbus. When the subscriptions amounted to \$200,000 the stockholders met and elected as directors William Neil, Joseph Ridgway, sr., Joseph Ridgway, jr., W. S. Sullivant, D. W. Deshler, Samuel Medary, Charles H. Wing, A. F. Perry, Joshua Martin, R. E. Neil, Orange Johnson and William Dennison. William Neil was elected president, Joseph Ridgway, jr., secretary; D. W. Deshler, treasurer. Sylvester Medbery was appointed engineer and completed the survey in 1845. In 1847, under an act of the General Assembly passed in 1846, the people of Columbus voted—828 to 214—to authorize a subscription for \$50,000 of the stock. Franklin county under the same act, subscribed for \$50,000, and the city and county were each given repre-



sentation on the board. When there seemed to be doubt of success even with this help, the Little Miami Railroad Co. offered to build a Greene county branch and gave assurance of a return of 6% on the investment. The struggle to get the money was followed by a controversy as to the location of the station, each section of the city wanting the benefit, and this was finally settled by the choice of a site—that of the present Union Station—then at the extreme north end of High street. The rails for the road were bought in England and cost three cents a pound delivered here, the transportation charge being more than the original cost of the rails. A locomotive was shipped from Cincinnati by river and canal to assist in the track-laying. Alfred Kelley succeeded William Neil as president of the road in 1847, and had direct charge of the construction during the next two years, completing the work early in 1850 at a cost for road and equipment of \$1,403,145.99. On February 22, an experimental trip was taken over the road to Xenia, 54 miles, on open platform cars, in three hours and five minutes. On March 2 following, the State officers and members of the General Assembly took a trip over the line to Cincinnati and back. A station at Franklinton was first used, but in December, 1850, the High street station was ready and the first train entered it on the 14th. In 1853, a brick building for the offices of the company was erected on the west side of High street south of the tracks, where it still stands. In the same year, by a partnership contract, the Little Miami and the Columbus & Xenia roads were operated as a unit and so continued until 1869, when the C. & X. was perpetually leased to the Little Miami Co., which in turn, the following year, perpetually leased the entire line to the P, C. & St. L. Railroad Co., now one of the Pennsylvania Lines.

In 1845, men representing the several charters for a road to the north met and decided to build a road under the charter to the Cleveland, Columbus & Cincinnati Railroad Co., which was revived for the purpose. The Franklin county representatives in this company were Lyne Starling, William Neil and John A. Bryan. Alfred Kelley was elected president and began the work of construction in 1848. Rails were bought in England, as for the Columbus & Xenia, and the last one was laid February 18, 1851. A train was waiting to come in from the north, at once came into the station and returned to Cleveland. On the 21st, the State officers and members of the General Assembly celebrated the achievement by taking a trip over the road to Cleveland and return. After completing the road Alfred Kelley resigned as president and was succeeded by Henry B. Payne. This road was a success from the very beginning, the next year a dividend of 7% was declared, and the Franklin County Commissioners, who had bought \$50,000 worth of the stock, sold it at a profit of \$15,000. Two dividends were paid every year till 1868, when the road was consolidated with the Indianapolis road as the C., C., C. & I, now Big Four.

A railroad east to Zanesville and the river—the Central Ohio—and a railroad west to Piqua and the Indiana line—the Columbus, Piqua & Indiana—were built almost contemporaneously, from 1852 to 1854. There was an effort to secure city and county subscriptions to the former in 1850, but by that time the sentiment had turned against such participation and the people by a vote of 5 to 1 negatived the proposition. However, the private subscriptions were numerous, and by April, 1852, the road was under contract. R. W. McCoy, Robert Neil and William Dennison were the Columbus representatives on the board of directors. By January, 1853, the road was complete to Zanesville and the first train delivered passengers here on the 20th. The building of the bridge over Big Walnut was a great job, interfered with by an attack of cholera which caused the death of more than 50 workmen. State officers and members of the General Assembly took a trip to Zanesville and return February 4, 1853. By June, 1854, the road was completed to Cambridge, and D. S. Gray was appointed Columbus agent. In October of that year, regular through trains began running in connection with through trains over the Baltimore & Ohio to the river. The Central Ohio had cost \$6,200,000 and in 1855 fell into financial difficulties from which it never entirely escaped. H. J. Jewett was president and later receiver until the road was leased to the Baltimore & Ohio. Subsequent changes, which cannot here be enumerated, have resulted in the present arrangement of a double track over the original right of way from Columbus to Newark, operated jointly by the Baltimore & Ohio and the Pennsylvania Railroad Companies.

Track-laying on the Columbus, Piqua & Indiana line began at Columbus, November 20, 1852, and was completed as far as Pleasant Valley by the following June. The first passenger train was run from Columbus to Piqua October 16, 1854, and the first over the entire line,



April 19, 1859. The road and its franchises were sold in 1863 for \$500,000, over a million dollars of its original stock being sunk. That year B. E. Smith became president and later the road became a part of the Pennsylvania system.

A railroad into the Hocking Valley was projected as early as 1853 at a meeting in Lancaster addressed by Joseph Sullivant, Wm. Neil and Wm. Dennison; but nothing was done till 1864, when M. M. Greene and others organized the Mineral Railroad Co., capital \$1,500,000, to build a road from Athens to Columbus. When the stock subscriptions had reached \$830,000, the subscribers met, December 19, 1866, and elected the following directors P Hayden, G M. Parsons, Wm. Dennison, B. E. Smith, W G Deshler, Theodore Comstock, Isaac Eberly, D. Tallmadge, W B. Brooks, J C. Garrett, Wm. P Cutler, E. H. Moore and M. M. Greene. P Hayden was elected president, M. M. Greene, vice president; J J Janney, secretary and treasurer. The name was changed in 1867 to the Columbus & Hocking Valley Railroad Co., and its purpose was said to be to bring coal, iron and salt out of the valley. The road was completed to Winchester July 16, 1868, and to Athens in January, 1871. The General Assembly dedicated the road as usual by a trip to Lancaster January 13, 1869, twelve coaches carrying 720 passengers, and the road was opened for business in July, 1870. In 1871, B. E. Smith was elected president vice Peter Hayden, and in the following year 28 acres of ground was bought for round house, tracks, etc. In 1874, Henry C.



*Union Station, High Street Front*

Noble, B. S. Brown, P W Huntington and H. W Jaeger became members of the board, and in 1876, the road was operated in connection with the Toledo road, mentioned later, Orland Smith general superintendent. It was brought into co-operation with the Ohio & West Virginia in 1881, and then, when M. M. Greene was president, there came a bit of high financing by which the stock of the three roads was sold, ostensibly to M. M. Greene, but in reality to a syndicate of which Stevenson Burke was the head. Good prices were paid for the stock—more, it was said, than the stock had ever been sold for; and yet by a combination of the railroads and coal lands and an inflation and sale of stock, the syndicate made, it was estimated, about \$9,000,000. The deal created a great sensation in Columbus, where Hocking Valley stock had become a great favorite, and there was a feeling of deep resentment, periodically renewed with the litigation that followed. In 1881 the stock of the road amounted to \$2,387,950, and of this 78% was still held by the original subscribers. The company had paid 17 semi-annual cash dividends or 4 or 5% and had made four stock dividends. As a result of the deal, all this investment was destroyed. M. M. Greene was president of the road till 1887, when C. C. Waite succeeded him. The troubles continued and about five years ago the road passed into the control of the Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad Co., which in 1917 completed a \$2,000,000 bridge over the Ohio river at Sciotoville, a short distance above Portsmouth and, by means of a cut-off to Waverly and a right of way over the Norfolk & Western tracks, operates its trains direct to Columbus and the lakes.



The railroad to Springfield was built in 1871 and what was afterward the Cleveland, Akron & Columbus was built to Mt. Vernon in 1873. The Columbus & Cincinnati Midland Railroad Co. was incorporated in 1882, and the road was built by Colonel Orland Smith, Gilbert C. Hoover and others as far as Wilmington where rail connection with Cincinnati was secured. The Columbus Board of Trade dedicated the road by a trip to Cincinnati, November 13, 1884. This line is now a part of the Baltimore & Ohio system, and the Cleveland, Akron & Columbus road is now a part of the Pennsylvania system.

The Columbus & Toledo Railroad Co. was incorporated in 1872 by M. M. Greene, P. W. Huntington, B. E. Smith, W. G. Deshler, J. A. Wilcox, and John L. Gill. On the board of directors there were men representing the subscribers in various counties through which the route passed, those from Franklin county being William Dennison, B. E. Smith, W. G. Deshler, H. J. Jewett and D. S. Gray. M. M. Greene was president and J. A. Wilcox secretary and treasurer. At an election in 1873, Columbus voted to subscribe \$300,000, but was prevented, the law under which the vote was taken having been declared unconstitutional. In May, 1876, the subscriptions totaled \$1,023,000 and the construction was begun and was completed the next year at a cost of \$3,338,507 14.

A railroad down the Scioto valley became a certainty, after long discussion, in 1875, when a company was incorporated by Wm. Monypeny, E. T. Mithoff, John G. Mitchell, T. Ewing Miller, W. B. Hayden, John C. English and John Joyce. The work of construction began in August and was completed to Chillicothe in July, 1876, and to Portsmouth in December, 1877. The company having defaulted on its interest, the road was sold in 1890, under pressure from New York, and many of the original subscribers lost all. The same year the road was leased to the Norfolk & Western Railroad Co.

The Columbus, Shawnee & Hocking Railroad Co. was incorporated October 6, 1889, by D. S. Gray, P. W. Huntington, H. D. Turney, W. E. Guerin and F. J. Picard. In the same month it bought the Columbus & Eastern road which extended from Columbus to Cannelville with authorized branches further on. The latter had been built in 1882-84 by a company of which G. G. Collins was president and F. Siegel secretary, but had fallen into the hands of a receiver.

What is now known as the Toledo & Ohio Central railroad is the result of the consolidation of the Columbus, Ferrara & Mineral Railroad Co., incorporated in 1871, and the Atlantic & Lake Erie Railroad Co., incorporated in 1869. The latter was to construct a road from Toledo to the Hocking valley coal fields, and the former was to build a road from Columbus into the same region. A joint meeting of the stockholders of both roads was held in 1872 and progress reported. The name of the Atlantic & Lake Erie was changed to Ohio Central, and that of the C. F. & M. was changed to the Columbus & Sunday Creek. In 1879 the two were consolidated, the road was completed, the company fell into the hands of a receiver and in 1885 was sold for \$1,000,000. The road reached Columbus by a branch from Thurston, though its first access to the city was over the Pennsylvania and the B. & O. tracks. Later the company secured a direct entrance into Columbus from its main line at Truro on Big Walnut creek and, building a road through South Columbus entered the West Side, using the bank of the Columbus feeder of the Ohio canal as part of its right of way. A passenger station was erected at West Broad and Starling streets, and the western division of the road was built northwesterly through Marysville, Kenton, Findlay and Bowling Green to Toledo.

In 1891 the Columbus, Shawnee & Hocking Railroad Co., requiring a lake outlet for its coal, joined with Sandusky capitalists and built the Sandusky and Columbus Short Line, which was opened for business in 1893. Later the Short Line was consolidated with the Columbus, Shawnee & Hocking under the name of the Columbus, Sandusky & Hocking. This road went into the hands of a receiver and the Short Line property was sold to the Pennsylvania Railroad Company and is now known as the Sandusky division of that system. The other portion was bought from the receiver by the Toledo & Ohio Central Railway Company and is now a part of the New York Central lines. In order to secure terminal facilities for these roads in Columbus, the Columbus Terminal and Transfer Railroad Co. was incorporated in 1893, and the road after it was built was leased to the Columbus, Sandusky & Hocking Co. This terminal property later passed into the control of the Norfolk & Western and forms the connecting link between the main line of that road and the San-



dusky division of the Pennsylvania for the passage of the immense tonnage of West Virginia coal to the lakes.

Columbus is most favorably located with reference to the great highways of commerce. It is on the main line of the Pennsylvania system between the seaboard to the Mississippi river, as well as to Cincinnati. The line of the New York Central system connecting New York and Cincinnati passes through Columbus. The Baltimore & Ohio system also connects Columbus with the seaboard cities. On the map Columbus appears as a hub with railway lines radiating like the spokes of a wheel and reaching to every part of the State. The Ohio Central and Hocking Valley lines give direct service to Toledo and intervening points, the Pennsylvania and Baltimore & Ohio to Sandusky and intervening territory, the Big Four and Cleveland, Akron & Columbus to Cleveland and intervening territory, the Hocking Valley, Ohio Central and Baltimore & Ohio to the southeast; the Norfolk & Western to the south; the Big Four, Pennsylvania and B. & O. Southwestern to Cincinnati and the southwest. Columbus is next door, so to speak, to a large part of the coal producing territory of Ohio, and has the advantage of an abundant and never-failing supply of cheap fuel, an essential to a manufacturing community. The situation as to ore is assured by the number of railway lines connecting with Lake Erie ports. In fact every variety of raw material can be had in Columbus with an average minimum of transportation cost, insofar as it is influenced by geographical location and length of haul.

When the railroads were taken over by the Federal Government in 1918 as a war measure vast improvement in tracks, yards and shops were projected because of the recognition of the importance of Columbus as a railroad center, but little was actually done and some of the work was left in confusion by the sudden termination of hostilities and the financial difficulties of the railroad administration.

#### *The Union Depot Company*

The first frame passenger station admitting three tracks was built by the Columbus & Xenia and the Cleveland, Columbus & Cincinnati companies in 1850. A dining hall was opened on the north side of the station, September 9, 1859, and put in charge of S. E. Ogden. The Union Depot Co. was incorporated in 1868, but no action was taken until 1870, when the Cleveland, Columbus & Cincinnati and the Pittsburg, Cincinnati & St. Louis companies formed the Union Depot Co., with a capital stock of \$500,000 and six directors, three from each company. In 1873, by an agreement between the constituent railroad companies and the Union Depot Co. the latter was to issue bonds and build a passenger station, with the understanding that all existing railroad companies or thereafter constructed should have the privilege of leasing track on the same terms as the original parties. The station was built at a cost of \$177,940, the cost of the grounds, tracks, etc., running the cost up to \$320,000. The first regular passenger train was run into the station February 14, 1875. It was a Pan Handle train, Edwin Morrell conductor, Morris Littell engineer. Barney McCabe became depot master January 29, 1875, and continued as such for many years.

The new station was a great improvement, but the grade crossings, which were even more objectionable than the frame station, remained to annoy and menace. The High street tunnel under the tracks, constructed in 1875, was a poor makeshift, and there was no satisfactory solution till the city built the viaduct and the Union Depot Co. built the present Union Station in 1894, as narrated elsewhere.