BOOSTERISM, RIVALRY, AND THE STRUGGLE
FOR INTERNAL IMPROVEMENTS IN SANDUSKY, OHIO
1822-1834

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by

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Introduction

Stories concerning the trials of an "upstart city" are rarely detailed in American history textbooks. The role and effectiveness of boosterism is discussed even fewer times. Daniel Boorstin's *The Americans: The National Experience* (New York: Random House, 1966) is one of the exceptions. Boorstin devotes a chapter to "The Upstarts." His discussion, "The Businessman as an American Institution," is particularly interesting reading. One can easily relate it to boosterism in Sandusky during the early canal building period. It also helps to explain the motivations of the citizens of an "upstart city" like Sandusky or Cleveland. He defines the 19th century American businessman as a community maker and a community leader. This accurately describes Alfred Kelley, Eleutherios Cooke, David Campbell and several others who sought to make their town the head of the Ohio Canal. He noted that not to promote one's town not only illustrated one's lack of community spirit, but also one's lack of business sense. Boorstin's excellent examples include William Ogden's accomplishments in Chicago, General William Larimer's in Colorado and Dr. Daniel Drake's activities in Cincinnati. After reading his account, one can readily see how the "businessman" (booster) and the upstart city emerged simultaneously. Boorstin also gives an adequate amount of attention to "The Booster Press." He discusses the necessity of the press as well as its ironic development in the United States. One will see later the important role of the press in Sandusky's struggle.

Other areas that this chapter addresses are hotels, new architectural styles, and the booster college. These subjects are very important
ones in urban history in general but have little significance in
Sandusky's plight for internal improvements. An important aspect of
this study, however, is the rivalry between Cleveland and Sandusky,
Ohio. In "Competitive Communities," Boorstin gives an overview of
rivalries in the west but concerns himself primarily with the rivalry
for "government handouts."

Another important source in the development of the West is
Richard Wade's *The Urban Frontier: The Rise of the Western Cities,
1790-1830* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959). The book was
not very useful in this particular study on Sandusky boosterism.
Though Wade does discuss boosterism and rivalry generally, only one
sentence summarizes the Cleveland-Sandusky rivalry.

Two excellent works on the Ohio canals were of great value in pre-
paring this study. The first was Harry Scheiber's *Ohio Canal Era: A
Case Study of Government and the Economy, 1820-1861* (Athens, Ohio:
The Ohio University Press, 1969). Scheiber's study concentrates on
the creation and administration of the canal policy, the economic
changes that occurred during the period and the introduction of the
railroad. The strengths of the book include the discussion concerning
the influence of public pressure and ideology on canal policy. The
second source is C. C. McClelland and C. P. Huntington's *History of
the Ohio Canals* (Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State Archaeological and His-
torical Society, 1905). It is not as detailed as *The Ohio Canal Era
in reference to the beginnings of the canals but fills in gaps left by
Scheiber by giving excellent accounts of the financial management and
the value of the canals to the state.
Histories of the cities such as Maurice Jobin's *Cleveland Past and Present: Its Representative Men* (Cleveland, Ohio: Fairbanks, Benedict and Co., 1867) and William Ganson Rose's *Cleveland: The Making of a City* (Cleveland, Ohio: The World Publishing Co., 1950) were of very little help in this study because they lacked depth in their discussions of the early development of the city. But Charles Frohman's *Sandusky's Yesterday* (Columbus, Ohio: Ohio Historical Society, 1968) provided more information on that period. Frohman included short but helpful chapters concerning proprietors of Sandusky, the canal period and the Mad River and Lake Erie Railroad Company. It must be noted, however, that this book is not a flowing chronological history but rather a compilation of related facts.

John S. Still's "Ethan Allen Brown and Ohio's Canal System" (*Ohio Historical Quarterly*, January 1957) was especially helpful in ascertaining Brown's role as a regional booster. Background information about James Kilbourne was found in C. B. Galbreath's "Colonel James Kilbourne" (*Ohio Archaeological and Historical Publications*, 1932), "James Kilbourne: New Light on His Story" edited by Paul C. Bowers, Jr. and Goodwin F. Berquist, Jr. (*Ohio History*, Spring 1978) and their article "Worthington Ohio: James Kilbourn's Episcopal Haven on the Western Frontier" (*Ohio History*, Summer 1976). The two Bowers and Berquist articles are extremely interesting in that they provide insight into Kilbourne's religious motivations.

Harry Scheiber's "Alfred Kelley and the Ohio Business Elite" (*Ohio History*, Autumn 1978) illustrates through Kelley and his activities, the interrelatedness of the businessman, politician and
town promoter of the period. More details of Kelley's involvement in the "Ohio canal era" are revealed in Honorable James L. Bates' Alfred Kelley His Life and Work (Columbus, Ohio: Press of Robert Clark and Co., 1888). This book was especially helpful because it included letters to and from Kelley some of which, for one reason or another, are no longer with the collection of his papers.

Specific actions of legislators are revealed in the Journal of the House of Representatives of the State of Ohio and the Senate Journal of the State of Ohio during the appropriate years. One can also follow the canal progress in these journals. John Kilbourn's Public Documents Concerning the Ohio Canals (Columbus, Ohio: I. N. Whiting, 1888) makes it easier to trace the canal progress. Detailed information is obtainable also from the Papers, Letters and Minutes of the Canal Commission and the Papers of the "Early Ohio Political Leaders" such as Alfred Kelley, Micajah T. Williams and Ethan Allen Brown all of which are housed at the Ohio Historical Society in Columbus, Ohio.

Other collections of persons who promoted the Sandusky route for the canal include the papers of Zalmon Wildman, Eleutheros Cooke and the Kilbourn Family (James Kilbourne). Useful collections at the Western Reserve Historical Society in Cleveland, Ohio include the papers of the Kelley Family (Alfred Kelley) Simon Perkins, the Trimble Family (Allen Trimble), and Elisha Whittlesey.

Without a doubt, the most helpful sources in completing this study were the newspapers. "The Booster Press," as Daniel Boorstin called it, was very instrumental in the creation, maintenance, growth and
even failure of a town. The editors of the Sandusky Clarion and the Cleveland Herald did indeed do all they could to promote the growth of their towns.

These are by no means the only sources used in this study. They are, however, those that provided the most information and in a couple of instances the least amount of information. Other sources are referred to in the notes.

As one can determine from the named sources, none of them deal specifically with boosterism or rivalry. For this reason, this study is the result of the difficult task of fusing many little details from scarce and sketchy sources. The only disappointment in writing the paper has been the inability to show conclusively that the proposed Sandusky-Scioto route was or was not best suited for the canal and that Alfred Kelley did or did not influence the choice of the route very early during the "Ohio Canal Era."
Chapter 1

The Beginning of the "Ohio Canal Era"

and Boosterism in Sandusky

All the major rivers in the Old Northwest flow in a north-south direction, eventually emptying into the Gulf of Mexico. Because of this natural phenomenon and the lack of technological development, no major efficient transportation network linking the eastern seaboard with the Old Northwest existed until the completion of the Erie Canal in 1825. Within a few years after its completion, the tolls collected had paid the entire construction cost. The success of the canal had a forceful impact on other cities and states. New towns appeared along the Great Lakes, and an era of internal improvements, primarily in transportation, began in the Old Northwest.

In 1822, Ohioans looked forward to the completion of the Erie Canal because it would provide an inexpensive means of transporting western goods to New York and other eastern markets. They now needed to find an inexpensive and efficient way to move their products from the interior to the lake. The early success of the Erie Canal convinced Ohioans that they too should build at least one major canal from the state's interior to Lake Erie. It is at this point in Ohio history that several prominent groups of town boosters became very active. Harry Scheiber effectively describes these promoters as "dedicated to molding an effective coalition of local interests within a region . . .".¹ These groups included farmers, merchants, landowners, newspaper
Editors, and politicians.

Improved transportation facilities would permit farmers to grow more without the worry of where they would market their products. They also knew that lower transportation costs meant higher profits from their products. Merchants would be able to purchase more eastern goods for the same amount of money. Landowners and speculators knew that a new transportation facility would increase land values. The potential for greater production, wealth, and prosperity united the state politically.

By 1824, newspaper editors had become prominent figures in boosterism. They did much to enlist support for improved transportation facilities by reporting on the developments in other sections of the country and editorializing about what Ohioans should do. The editors also did much to change regional boosterism into local boosterism by inciting jealousy and rivalry among cities.²

The Ohio Legislature and particularly its Canal Commission constituted another major group of boosters. The legislature created the Canal Commission in 1822 to determine the feasibility, probable cost, and means of financing a canal to connect the Ohio River with Lake Erie. The Commissioners were convinced that a canal system was indispensable to the future growth of Ohio. They became a booster group which used its influence and energy to win public support for the canal.

That same bill of 1822 also established five routes to be surveyed as possible sites for the Ohio Canal. The designation of these five routes led to sectionalized boosterism. Because local growth
depended on adequate transportation, local boosterism and rivalries
became fierce. In the minds of the town promoters, not to grow was
to die. The rivalries created by boosterism, Scheiber observes, were
marked by an intense ambition deeply rooted in the fear of failure.3

One of the most incendiary rivalries developed between Cleveland
and Sandusky, Ohio. Both lake towns aspired to become the head of
the proposed Ohio Canal and thus inevitably to become the most pop-
ulous commercial and industrial city in the west.

Boosterism is an often overlooked topic in American history. When
the topic is addressed, it is done so inadequately. In A History of
*Urban America* (1976), Glaab and Brown accurately note that:

> The importance of city promotion and city-building
> in the growth of the American economy in the
> nineteenth century has been insufficiently appre-
> ciated and little assessed. . . . Moreover, historians
> have tended to ignore the cultural drama in the
> enterprise of city-building. . . .

This study is concerned with city-building in Sandusky, Ohio.
It is about boosterism in that city during the early period of canal
building. Special attention will be given to the strategies of
the citizens of Sandusky and their effectiveness. Another important
aspect discussed is the activities of Clevelanders in their role as
Sandusky's rival. Finally, the paper will reveal the responses of
Sanduskiens to the attempts and success of Clevelanders to make their
town the northern terminus of the Ohio Canal.

One cannot fully understand the reasons for boosterism in Sandusky
during the early nineteenth century without also knowing how the canal
era in Ohio began. Governor Thomas Worthington began attempts to gain
support for the canal in the Ohio Legislature as early as 1816.5 The
early attempts failed until Governor Ethan Allen Brown proposed a canal study for the fourth time in his December, 1821 message to the legislature. This time, the legislature appointed a committee headed by Micajah T. Williams, a Cincinnati journalist and politician, to study the issue.

The Williams committee urged that a canal be built as a state enterprise and offered the Erie Canal as proof that such a venture could be profitable. The committee also reported that the route from the Scioto valley to Lake Erie by way of the Sandusky or Black River could be supplied with an adequate amount of water. This report received favorable results. In 1822, the legislature enacted a bill which provided for surveys of five routes from the Ohio River to Lake Erie; (1) from the Sandusky bay to the Ohio River following the Sandusky and Scioto Rivers; (2) from the mouth of the Cuyahoga River to the Muskingum River to the Ohio; (3) from the Black River to the Muskingum to the Ohio; (4) from the Grand River and the Mahoning to the Ohio; and (5) from the mouth of the Maumee River to the Great Miami to the Ohio.6 The bill also named seven Canal Commissioners: Ethan Allen Brown, who was then a United States Senator; Alfred Kelley, a Cleveland lawyer, banker and realtor; Benjamin Tappin, a Steubenville lawyer and former judge; former Governor Thomas Worthington of Chillicothe, then a merchant, farmer, land speculator, and manufacturer; Congressman Jeremiah Morrow of Warren County; Issac Minor, a former judge from Madison County; and Ebenezer Buckingham, a merchant and manufacturer from Putnam.7

The surveys, conducted from 1822 to 1824, aroused much response. It was the consensus of the commissioners that the canal should pass
through as many settled regions as possible. For that reason, the commissioners proposed a "diagonal route" that would run north from Cincinnati through the Miami Valley, then east to the Scioto region. From that point, the canal would run north to Lake Erie from the Muskingum River. Many Ohioans thought this route would not only be expensive, but also geographically impossible.

The Canal Commission employed James Geddes, one of the engineers on the Erie Canal, to begin surveying the Sandusky-Scioto route, the Muskingum-Black river route, and the Cuyahoga-Muskingum route. He found the Sandusky-Scioto route sufficient for the canal. But the route from the Scioto eastward to the Muskingum then northward to Lake Erie by the Black or Cuyahoga River could not satisfactorily serve as the canal route. Geddes presented these findings to the legislature in January 1823 and returned to New York because the Erie Canal was nearing completion. Because the commissioners could not find another engineer, they sent Alfred Kelley to New York to study the Erie Canal so that he could supervise the surveys in Ohio.

In June, 1823, the Commission appointed Micajah Williams and Alfred Kelley acting commissioners of the surveys. As a matter of such importance should be studied comprehensively, Kelley, Williams and their field staff proceeded to regauge the streams in the Sandusky-Scioto region, but their conclusions were just the opposite of Geddes'. They then surveyed the Scioto-Muskingum-Lake Erie line and a route not included in the original bill, from Cincinnati to the Maumee River to Lake Erie at the point that is now Toledo. As a result of the field surveys, the commissioners decided to abandon the Sandusky-
Scioto route despite the fact that this route, because of its central location, would be more acceptable to the citizens of the state and would arouse less local jealousy. In August of that same year, Erie Canal engineer David Bates concurred that the Sandusky route was doubtful. He based this conclusion, however, on the findings in the Canal Commissioners' reports. Bates also endorsed a canal route along the Scioto to just south of Columbus, then through the Licking Summit to the Muskingum, and then to Lake Erie.

During the canal surveys, a fierce rivalry developed between Sandusky and Cleveland. Throughout 1824, Kelley and Williams supplied newspaper editors with just enough information that they would know what was happening, but not enough to arouse local jealousies. But even with opposition building up in the "neglected areas" (particularly Sandusky), the 1825 Canal Law authorized the construction of the Miami Canal from Dayton to Cincinnati and the Ohio Canal on the Scioto-Muskingum route to the lake by either the Cuyahoga River or the Killbuck River.

Until the presentation of the 1823 report, Sandusky promoters primarily had been concerned with making their city the largest one in the west. Obtaining a canal route favorable to their location would guarantee this. Whether or not the Sandusky route was really best suited for the canal can probably never be known. One can only assume that it was or was not using the engineers' and commissioner's reports as a basis which means in one instance the reports of men who were not engineers and who had the potential to make partial reports. If one had the talent or the training of an engineer,
it would be possible to regauge the rivers and measure their levels. But even this might yield inaccurate information because with time, conditions have changed. For these reasons this paper cannot purport to prove the Sandusky River's superiority; rather, it shows what the residents of Huron County did to make the appropriate authorities think that their route was best and what alternatives they took when that proved futile.
NOTES

Chapter I


2See Sandusky Clarion, May 22, July 24, August 7, 1822; January 29, 1825.

3Harry N. Scheiber, "Urban Rivalry and Internal Improvements in the Old Northwest, 1820-1860," LXXI Ohio History (October 1962), 228.


5For an account of these attempts, see Harry Scheiber, Ohio Canal Era, 14-30; and John S. Still, "Ethan Allen Brown and Ohio's Canal System," XLVI Ohio Historical Quarterly (January 1957), 23-25.

6John Kilbourn, Public Documents Concerning the Ohio Canals (Columbus, Ohio: I. N. Whiting, 1888), pp. 13-14; Cleaveland Herald, November 27, 1821.

7Harry N. Scheiber, "Ohio Canal Movement, 1820-1825," LXIX Ohio Historical Quarterly (July 1960), 238; Cleaveland Herald, February 5, 1822; Sandusky Clarion, May 1, 1822.

8Harry Scheiber, Ohio Canal Era, p. 19.

9The Sandusky Clarion of July 31, 1822 reports that the Sandusky-Scioto route was sufficiently supplied with water. The Cleaveland Herald of May 21, 1822 reports that the Cuyahoga-Muskingum route was "feasible beyond the most sanguine expectations" and reported on August 13, 1823 that the Sandusky-Scioto route would not be feasible. Geddes' report reprinted in John Kilbourn's Public Documents Concerning Ohio Canals notes that carrying a canal from the Licking summit to the Cuyahoga River involved enormous difficulties. "Following the high land, on either side of the river, is rendered altogether impracticable, by the many deep ravines, through which every stream enters from either side" (pp. 40-42). Despite problems on the central route, such as permeable soil and seasonal influences on the water supply, he noted that with the Whetstone and Sandusky Rivers, there could be an ample supply of water for the canal summit.
CHAPTER II

Sandusky Promoters and their Tactics
1822 - 1825

As was true in the eastern states, Sandusky's leaders in the canal movement included many men with various business interests. Some had a personal stake in improved transportation, and others just looked forward to increased economic development in general and growth in population. A Cleveland expressed the general attitude very succinctly when he said: "The long and well-founded objection to this country, that we were shut out from market is about to be removed . . . Ohio, instead of being 'out of the world' as the Eastern people say, will be deemed a position sufficiently central, and a mart of no inconsiderable traffic."¹

Of the three earliest boosters during this era in Sandusky, David Campbell, editor of the Sandusky Clarion, was the most vocal. Campbell boosted the center route (Sandusky route) as the one for the canal, and upon learning that the Cuyahoga River would be the northern terminus of the canal, he called the commissioners "a band of speculators, intent upon aggrandizing themselves at the expense of the public." He dubbed the Cincinnati-to-Dayton (Miami) Canal "the sectional canal -- a bribe by which Cincinnati and the Miami country were drawn into the coalition."²

Eleutheros Cooke was another prominent Sandusky booster. Cooke was born in Washington County, New York in 1780, where he received all his formal education. He was admitted to the Bar Association in
1813, and in 1815 he traveled with his wife and several friends and relatives to Indiana by keelboat via the Allegheny River to Pittsburgh and then by the Ohio River to Madison, Indiana, where they decided to live. On his occasional trips back to New York, Cooke noticed the rapid growth of the city of Venice, on the south shore of the Sandusky bay about four miles from Sandusky. On one occasion when he was visiting Venice, the town's manager was conducting a sale of city lots. The terms of each sale were different and had to be written. Cooke, being a good lawyer and "a capital penman," wrote many of the contracts, all of them to everyone's satisfaction. He stayed in Venice several days to write contracts for dams, wharves, mills, and other properties, and after ten days had earned more money than he had during the whole previous year at Madison. He purchased several hundred acres of land and he, his family and friends moved there in November, 1817. Because the prosperity of Venice had abated, they moved on to Sandusky, where Cooke became prominently identified with all the early city enterprises. Taking particular interest in the first railroad project of the state, he advocated its construction as the Sandusky and Cincinnati Railroad.³

Though James Kilbourne lived near Columbus, he was a booster for the Sandusky route for the Ohio Canal. Born in New Britain, Connecticut, he was heavily involved in the settling of the Sandusky area. When he was thirty, he conceived the plan of organizing emigration companies, one of which was the Scioto Company. The company purchased a tract of land in what is now Franklin County,
Ohio, and in 1803 twelve families came with him and settled there.\textsuperscript{4} In 1805, Kilbourne explored the south shore of Lake Erie and selected Sandusky as the future northern commercial emporium of the state. Thus his town promoting efforts for Sandusky began. He returned to the east and successfully induced several hundred families to emigrate to Ohio.\textsuperscript{5} Though Kilbourne made his home in Franklin County, near where either the Central (Sandusky) route or the "diagonal" route would run, he vehemently opposed the construction of the "diagonal canal." This can partially be explained by the fact that he owned property along the center route.

As previously noted, before the commencement of the canal surveys boosterism in Ohio was generally regional. Concerned about the future of their state, all the citizens desired a canal for Ohio. David Campbell reported that the citizens of Sandusky were not "indifferent spectators" to New York's brilliant example of the successful promotion of internal improvements. He added that the Erie Canal example united all the Ohio statesmen on the necessity of building a canal in Ohio. Anyone who criticized the project often met with beratement. A citizen of Huron County who may or may not have been from Sandusky, criticized a Ross County native for writing to the \textit{Clarion} that a canal was impractical and too large a task for the state to undertake successfully. He further criticized the Ross County man for calling a road tax "grievous and useless." The Huron County resident felt that the Ross County native probably owned a large amount of land and was unwilling to pay the tax on it even though all the roads in the county were in need of improvement.\textsuperscript{6}
By the middle of 1822, boosterism had become sectional and localized, and Sandusky's most ardent booster was Clarion editor David Campbell. He began promoting Sandusky as the canal site by printing a letter supposedly from a traveler who had passed through Sandusky and expressed the opinion that the canal would only perfect the natural harbor that Sandusky "was blessed" with. The traveler added that, in addition to the excellent, spacious natural harbor, Sandusky's rich, fertile soil and active business community would unite to make Huron a prosperous county.\(^7\) No doubt the stranger, so impressed with Sandusky that he felt compelled to write a letter to the public, convinced Sanduskians of their superiority.

Sandusky's natural geography was its greatest asset and its boosters did not want it to go unnoticed. Sandusky is on the southern shore of the Sandusky Bay. The bay is formed by a peninsula on the west and a long ridge on the east and the city is directly opposite the entrance to the harbor from Lake Erie. Campbell noted that all intelligent men who had visited Sandusky knew it was in the "handsomest situation in the United States" and that it would without-a-doubt, become "the greatest commercial city in all the northwestern world."\(^8\)

By July, 1822, conditions were still favorable for Sanduskians procuring the Ohio Canal because preliminary surveys showed that the Cuyahoga River was 400 feet above the lake level, whereas the Sandusky River was sixty-three feet lower at 337 feet above the lake. A letter from Mr. Holmes, an assistant to Geddes and considered an official voice of the surveys, strengthened their hope by reminding them that the Scioto, Whetstone (Olentangy), and Sandusky rivers, Rush and Mill
Creeks, together with the water of the Great Cranberry Swamp, could all be brought to the Sandusky summit. But the legislature would have to make the final decision. After receiving this notice from Holmes, Campbell did not become alarmed when the editor of the Cleveland Herald reported that the supply of water on all the routes was abundant except for the Sandusky-Scioto route, and since it was impractical, the commissioners had abandoned it. Instead, Campbell asked the Cleveland editor to give him the authority upon which he based his assumption. Campbell also published Commissioner Alfred Kelley's letter stating that the Herald was indeed in error. So Campbell went on about the business of boosterism, boasting about the number of vessels entering Sandusky bay, the number of people arriving on those ships, and, most importantly, the superiority of the bay to others because of its ability to accommodate the largest class of vessels without difficulty.

1823 began favorably for the citizens of Sandusky. A Columbus correspondent for the Clarion notified Campbell that four routes could satisfactorily accommodate a canal: (1) the eastern or Mahoning route, though it would not be commercially beneficial to the state; (2) the Killbuck (also called the Diagonal Route), though it would require many "far-fetched feeders"; (3) the Central (Sandusky) route; and (4) the western or Maumee route, which would also need many feeders and, like the first, would not be commercially advantageous for the state. The Sandusky route, considering the probable cost, its utility to the state and the permanency of the revenues it would provide, "had the decided advantage."
After reading the canal report, Issac Mills, a local realtor and town promoter, dared the commissioners to locate the canal at any other place. But before the end of the year, the commissioners had done just that. After Williams and Kelley became commissioners of the surveys and announced that the Sandusky route was inadequate, the Commission suspended all surveys on the Sandusky route and ordered the surveyors to commence surveying the Killbuck route on either the Cuyahoga summit or the Black River valley, whichever proved better. Instructions also included the examination of a route from Cincinnati to Dayton that was not included in the original bill of 1822.

It became obvious after the publication of the January, 1824 Report of the Canal Commissioners that the Scioto-Muskingum-Lake Erie route was the favorite and that the Cincinnati-to-Dayton canal was also gaining support. But because the commissioners had ignored much of the debate concerning the other possible routes, the legislature required them to hire another engineer to supervise the final surveys, estimate construction costs, and provide "a disinterested comparison of the merits of the various routes."

The surveys of the Muskingum lines continued to make progress and by May the surveyors had passed the Muskingum and Scioto valleys and were gauging the east side of the Scioto River. The engineers and commissioners hoped to provide a full report at the next legislative session. It seemed that the Sandusky boosters had lost their fight to be on the canal route, but they would not acquiesce. Instead, they changed their tactics and proceeded to attack the constitutionality of the ongoing surveys and the qualifications of the
of the new engineer, Mr. Price. Campbell charged that the commissioners were negligent in waiting so long to contract a surveyor. Because of this delay, the first two engineers they chose (presumably the best ones) were unable to come to Ohio. They had to "settle with" Price and he did not arrive until three and one-half months before the report was due in the General Assembly—hardly enough time to make a thorough examination. And because the Cincinnati-to-Dayton line was not included in the Bill of 1822, some Sanduskians felt the surveys of it were unconstitutional.

With winter coming, the report was due soon and little time was left for completion of the surveys. They had taken two and one-half years and at least five engineers, including Commissioners Williams and Kelley, had supervised them. The people of the north-central section of the state had no representative among the commissioners and they felt strongly that the commissioners had made some decisions on the basis of personal interests and that the engineers had agreed because of the pressure from the commissioners. Nevertheless, the announcement of the final decision was only weeks away. In the Clarion's New Year's Day edition, in addition to wishing everyone the traditional "Happy New Year," Campbell took the opportunity to make some other wishes.

We wish some of the Ohio Canal Commissioners had no temptation to act with partiality; we wish the remainder not to forget the object of their appointment; we wish they had governed themselves by the laws of the last session; we wish our governor could recommend some better mode of paying the interest on the contemplated canal loans, than by a diversion from their legitimate object, the three percent and tax fund, and the tax for road purposes. We wish for a canal and wish for good roads. Our soil unrivaled in fertility, produces many
valuable things spontaneously; but experience has shown that roads will not grow without cultivation. We wish our legislature would ask Uncle Sam to lend us some of his engineers, for the purpose of exploring our canal routes, to remove all suspicion, if any exists, of the practicality in the location. ¹⁸

Such were the sentiments of many of the residents of Sandusky. They devoted more attention to the "unfairness" of the surveys, the possibility of procuring their own engineer to re-survey the Sandusky-Scioto route, and the unfairness of the anticipated tax. They proceeded to expose and publicize those things in hopes that they could delay the decision. They also pleaded with the legislators not to accept the opinions of the commissioners, who "however exalted their standing, or however strongly bound to act impartially, it may appear," still had selfish interests, and to examine the canal routes for themselves. ¹⁹

First of all, the Bill of 1822 did not include the surveying of a canal line from the Cuyahoga summit to Cincinnati via Columbus. Campbell interpreted the introduction of the new route as an attempt to divert public opinion away from the north-central section of the state. He charged that Geddes did not have time to survey fully the Sandusky-Scioto (center) route because he had spent all of the time on the others. Even so, Geddes still considered it preferable to the Cuyahoga route. It seemed that the commissioners predetermined that the Cuyahoga would be the route of the canal, and that they had appointed Kelley to assure it. The new surveys that Kelley directed after Geddes had returned to New York surprisingly revealed that the Cuyahoga river had 1,564 cubic feet more water than formerly thought,
while all the streams on the center route were lower than the earlier gauging revealed. Campbell concluded that, though it would best accommodate the state, the Scioto-Sandusky route would never receive a fair examination as long as the then present commissioners were the authorities.20

The Sandusky-Scioto route did not get another examination. On February 3, 1825, a new tax law passed in the Ohio General Assembly placing Ohio's tax system on an ad valorem basis and on February 4, 1825 the "1825 Canal Law" authorized the construction of two canals: the Miami Canal from Cincinnati to Dayton and the Ohio Canal on the Scioto-Muskingum-Lake Erie route.21

Sandusky's future was in jeopardy. At that time it was barely more than a village; and if the canal went through Cleveland, Sandusky might never have anything greater to attract more people. Eleutheros Cooke knew what impact the bill would have. He wrote to Zalmon Wildman that he now could not sell a house for within $500 of a previous offer. Cooke felt it was necessary to engage another engineer to re-examine the central summit.22 He reiterated, "unless something can be effected, this place will lose at once its importance and dwindle into insignificance; and all the lands in this region of the country will suffer a very great diminution in their value." He had just returned from examining the New Haven and Cranberry Marshes, where he found that, independent of the numerous streams that ran into the marshes, an abundant supply of water could be obtained. He added that a County Convention would be held in Huron County from which an organized effort would come to "avert the ruin
which threatens the state . . . and to defeat the machinations of the conspirators."\(^{23}\) A local farmer asserted, "... I cannot be silent when I see a set of traitors, triumph in their treason and the people and their representatives sleep. . . ." He described the canal route as "crooking almost all over the state to accommodate the commissioners," and "leaping from mountain to mountain" to unite their interests and deceive the people.\(^{24}\)

James Kilbourne, a former federal surveyor, was an active booster of the center route as early as 1822. In that year, he sent to the Canal Commission drafts of the route he thought could best accommodate a canal. The route went from Sandusky to Columbus by way of the Cranberry Marsh and the Sandusky River. He also forwarded all the notes concerning that area that he had collected during the previous fifteen years.\(^{25}\) Kilbourne's package did not change the opinions of the commissioners.

Though heretofore the Cleaveland Herald had given very little attention to the contentions of the Sanduskiains, letters to the editor began to note the activities of the promoters of the center route. In early February a letter appeared in the Herald expressing concern that Ohioans be united on the canal project. It asked that the public go along with the decisions of the legislators who had the state's best interest at heart when they made their decision.\(^{26}\) And after Kilbourne's essays were presented to the legislature, the Herald announced that the essays were boring--wonderful for putting one to sleep.\(^{27}\)

Kilbourne now realized that the Sandusky area had not and would
not receive a fair evaluation, so he decided to investigate further independently. He thought that much of the information concerning the surveys of the previous three years had not been released to the public and that which did appear in newspapers was often one-sided or completely erroneous. He intended to show all the facts. Kilbourne was an early adventurer in northern Ohio. Many of the first settlers in that area came at his insistence, and he felt responsible to them. The commissioners had asked the newspapers to refrain from publishing articles that might incite local jealousies and Kilbourne at first recognized this as "salutary counsel." But since those who gave it did not abide by it, he decided to present his own views. He sought to prove that the middle route was superior to the others both geographically and economically.

Kilbourne found at least 9100 cubic feet of water per minute could come from the Mad and Miami Rivers. The Sandusky River, with the water from the Cranberry and New Haven Marshes, could probably yield at least 350 feet. The two branches of the Whetstone would produce 400 feet and the main and Little Scioto could produce at least 76 cubic feet per minute, for a total of 10,146 cubic feet of water per minute. The official engineers had reported that the canal only needed 1,500 cubic feet of water per minute for lockage. What would become of the excess water? Though they did not use these figures, the Canal Commissioners said that a large amount of water would be lost by leakage, absorption, and evaporation, which Kilbourne denied.

Published information on the subject of evaporation was scanty, but it implied that it would be considerable, uniform, and perpetual.
Kilbourne asked when, how, where, and who conducted the necessary experiments. That there would be some evaporation, he did not question, but he maintained that no one could know how much water would be lost because environmental conditions changed constantly. He added that the loss would probably be small. Mudholes in brickyards stayed full of water all summer, as long as the bottom was "close and fine clay, rather than sand and coarse gravel. He also noted that Kentucky cattlemen often dug holes before the rainy season, two to four rods in diameter to collect rain. When full, they provided an ample supply for the cattle for the year. The implication that one of Ohio's major rivers could be lost by evaporation was absurd.30

The commissioners also considered the Sandusky route inadequate because they said it could not accommodate as many as the two hundred boats that they calculated would pass through the main summit daily. Kilbourne calculated that probably fewer than fifty boats would pass there daily and that, even in the busiest season, probably six hours would be enough to pass all of them over the main summit.31

As a final appeal to the public to see the injustice done, Kilbourne asked that the readers compare the Muskingum and Sandusky routes. The best of the Muskingum lines, from Portsmouth via the Licking summit, that is, the Muskingum, Tuscarawas, and Cuyahoga rivers, was 310 to 315 miles in length. The route from Portsmouth via Tyemochte to Sandusky was 200 to 210 miles long. The Muskingum route was very irregular. Indicative of that it became known as "the mad diagonal canal" and the "zig-zag route."32 The Sandusky route however, went from the northern border at the center of the state in
nearly a straight line to the south-central border. Kilbourne also maintained that the Muskingum route suffered from "deep valleys of streams . . . sidling and alluvial grounds, ledges of rocks, and large lateral rivers and creeks [existed in abundance]; at some of which, it will not be practicable to use aqueducts, nor safe to pass without them." Just as important, the canal would terminate at a point which would require the construction of an artificial harbor, whereas Sandusky had a natural one. Kilbourne also argued that, at that time, the northern terminus of the canal at Cleveland would only accommodate the third and lowest class of vessels. The larger vessels, usually drawing no more than six feet of water, had to ferry their passengers and freight to shore on smaller boats. The Sandusky bay "is accessible, capacious, and safe" and several feet deeper than any of the other lake harbors between Buffalo and Detroit.\footnote{33} Finally, the Muskingum route, located almost entirely on private property, would require a huge amount of money to compensate the owners. The Federal Government still owned a large portion of the land on the Sandusky route and much of it could be sold to pay part of the construction cost.\footnote{34}

Kilbourne hoped that after they had noticed these differences, perhaps the legislators, who had voted in favor of the act without seeing the route for themselves, would consider the matter worthy of more investigation. Or perhaps the farmers of the Scioto valley, who would benefit most by the centrally located canal, would organize and obtain enough support to demand new surveys or even to obstruct the construction of the "diagonal canal." And perhaps, after realizing
that the masses now knew that they had been deceived, the commissioners might feel compelled to conduct the business of internal improvements in a different manner. Exactly what Kilbourne hoped would happen can never be known. But as town promoter, he could not accept the decision of the commissioners when it meant that Sandusky, with all its natural advantages, would never benefit from them. His exertions did not go unnoticed.

Jacob Blickensderfer, a Tuscarawas County State Representative and a booster of the Muskingum-Cuyahoga route, expressed cognizance of Kilbourne's raging "against our route" and wished that the citizens of Franklin County would "leave him at Worthington next winter" rather than send him to the House of Representatives.35 But Kilbourne's raging invoked several other responses which illustrated another change in the tactics of the canal policy opponents. They now began to direct their work towards preventing the commissioners from raising the money needed for the canal.

One citizen proposed sending letters to each county asking the citizens' opinion on the subject. If the majority opposed the canal, they would petition the legislature, requesting that canal work proceed no further until the next legislature convened. If the legislature ignored their request, they would refuse to pay the tax.36

Another group, which included Eleutheros Cooke, after examining the middle route themselves and finding an abundance of water, vowed to expose the "fraud, falsehood and error" of the commissioners. They were willing to face the "galley fire from Mr. Kelley's battery and . . . the whole zig-zag line of self-interest." The citizens of
Sandusky were declaring war but asserted that, "shielded by truth," they would pass "steadily through the squibs . . . whether loaded by malice or fired by zeal."37

Though the Commissioners had succeeded in getting the canal route they wanted, financing the canal was another problem. They had had the foresight to link the canal bill of 1825 with a tax reform bill, so some of the necessary revenues were assured. But the complete financing of the canal was still an obstacle to the project's success. Two other shrewd maneuvers contributed to the possibility of successful financing. First of all, the commissioners selected a three-man Board of Fund Commissioners to obtain loans and manage the canal funds. The members were Senator Ethan Allen Brown, a close friend of DeWitt Clinton, and whose prominence would add prestige to the board; Ebenezer Buckingham, one of Ohio's wealthiest businessmen; and Allen Trimble, former Governor of Ohio, who shortly thereafter was replaced by Simon Perkins, the Ohio Agent for the Connecticut Land Company and a leading Ohio banker who had many business contacts in the East. Secondly, the legislature had placed the "full faith and credit" of the state behind the bond issue. With this backing the Fund Board began to solicit subscriptions to the approved $400,000 bond issue of 1825. The Ohio banks would not support the project, so the commissioners looked to the east.38

The boosters of Sandusky continued their attempts to thwart fundraising plans. Meetings were held in Norwalk (Huron County), Richland County, Geauga County, and Marion County. The Norwalk meeting resulted in the selection of a committee whose members drafted
resolutions which were unanimously adopted by the attendees. Both
Campbell and Cooke served on this committee. The resolutions charged
that the bond issue violated the state constitution and that the surveys
were unfairly conducted; and for those reasons, the residents of
Huron County were resisting the bills.\textsuperscript{39} Resolutions of meetings
like these were usually sent to eastern newspapers in hopes of fright-
ening off potential investors and defeating the loan. Still, several
New York capitalists offered to make the entire loan.

The citizens of Sandusky continued to make charges against the
commissioners. It appeared peculiar to them that for the first time,
a bill (Canal Bill of 1825) had passed with no major opposition.
One Sanduskyan described "the conspiracy."

Whatever may be said of the Black river, we have no
idea that the commissioners intend to suffer the canal to
terminate there although Judge Geddes considered it pre-
ferable to the Cuyahoga. The conviction therefore, is
forced upon us, that the commissioners foreordained that the
Cuyahoga should be its northern termination, and to bring
about its degree, they appointed Mr. Kelley acting commissioner
as his private interests would induce him to act for the
good of Cleveland, and for the advancement of his own
property. Mr. Buckingham lives on the Muskingum, and must
be accommodated $[\text{sic}]$ with a canal to increase his already
overgrown fortune. . . . Mr. Worthington lives at
Chillicothe, on the Scioto, and if the canal be carried
down the Muskingum valley, to the Ohio, his private interest
will not be promoted. It is therefore found necessary to
connect the interest of the commissioners by connecting the
Muskingum and Scioto, and every difficulty must be surmounted
to effect such an important union. But the difficulty did
not end here. Mr. Minor, who represents Columbus, and resides
on the Scioto, above the junction, had interests to look after
as well as the rest, and a navigable feeder to Columbus is
resolved upon, to secure his cooperation.

Here was a majority of the commissioners accommodated; but
to make the plan go smoothly, it was thought necessary to
bind Mr. Williams by the ties of interest. All attempts to
run the main canal to his door proved fruitless; but as he
was an acting commissioner, and the representative of Cincinnati
who can say that it would be too much to construct an accommodation canal, sixty-six miles long to secure the interest of such an important auxiliary.\textsuperscript{40}

And, though the commissioners held a meeting on May 5, 1825 to decide on the exact northern terminus of the canal, according to Campbell, the "Ohio 'Holy Alliance'" had determined this as soon as Mr. Geddes was relieved of his duties.\textsuperscript{41}

On July 4, 1825, the first shovelful of earth was removed for the Ohio Canal. The citizens of Sandusky began to accept that they could not have a canal. However, they continued the fight against the proposed land tax, the revenues from which were to pay the accrued interest on the loan. One opponent, identifiable only as "Bridgewater,\textsuperscript{*}" cited the Bible and the Ohio Constitution in his letters to the public to convey his message.\textsuperscript{**} He reminded the citizens that the state constitution established that "the inalienable right of acquiring, possessing and protecting property ought, and ever shall be held inviolate but always subservient to the public welfare, provided a compensation in money shall be made." He noted that the interest on the eight million dollars, which he alleged the canal would cost, was $450,000, half of which would be owed to New York financiers every six months.

\textsuperscript{*}It seems likely that Bridgewater is a pseudonym chosen by this person to suggest the Duke of Bridgewater, who in the mid-18th century, built the first modern canal from Manchester to Worsley, England. Though there were several towns in the East with that name, there were none in Ohio.

\textsuperscript{**}Five of his six letters (I could not locate the first one) begin: "For which of you intending to build a tower, sitteth not down and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it; lest haply after he hath laid the foundation and is not able to finish it, all that beheld it begin to mock him saying, 'this man began to build and was not able to finish.'"
"Bridgewater," predicted that the people of the state would become
exhausted by the land tax and lose their property. Private and
government collectors, said "Bridgewater," would convert the property
to public canal stock and there would be no compensation to the
"widows and orphan children" living one hundred and fifty miles from
the Miami Canal.42

"Bridgewater's" primary motive was to encourage the citizens
of Sandusky to "count the cost" of the canal and not to re-elect
the representatives who "wish to keep them under a yoke of perpetual
bondage to New York on account of canal loans." He called the serv-
titude to New York "worse than that of Esequi to his brother Jacob," and he asked that they not re-elect the representatives "who for thirty pieces of silver" would betray them and their descendants
to eternal indebtedness. In his final letter, he expressed pre-
ference for the "Plagues of Egypt" over the "Plagues" of the Ohio
Canal.43

Despite all these efforts, the construction of the canal continued.
Still, to the citizens of Huron County, the United States could have
more justifiably taxed Ohio to help build the Erie Canal than Ohio
could tax the citizens of Sandusky to finance the Cincinnati-to-
Dayton Canal. They would at least benefit from the former; they
would not from the latter. They had fought as hard as they could--
but lost.
NOTES

Chapter II

1Cleaveland Herald, November 26, 1821.


5Biographical Cyclopaedia, p. 1377.

6Sandusky Clarion, May 15, 1825.

7Ibid., May 22, 1822.

8Ibid., July 24, 1822.

9Ibid., July 31, 1822.

10Cleaveland Herald, August 1, 1822; Sandusky Clarion, August 7, 1822.

11Kelley's letter, published in the Cleaveland Herald on August 8, 1822 expressed concern that the errors in the article (if not corrected) could mislead public opinion and create sectional jealousies, which would hamper the successful completion of the canal.

12Sandusky Clarion, November 7, 1822. This article noted that the schooner "Michigan," allegedly the largest vessel on the lake excepting the "Steamboat," came up to Mr. Townsend's wharf and went out again without difficulty.

13Ibid., January 1, 1823.

14Isaac Mills to Zalmon Wildman, New Haven, Connecticut, February 25, 1823, Wildman Papers, Ohio Historical Society, Columbus, Ohio. This letter gives another excellent example of city-building of another kind. Mills and Wildman both worked at city-building through their real estate business. Mills on behalf of
Wildman, sold a lot to William Kelley of Sandusky for $350.00 under the condition that he build a "handsome two-story store or brick house on the lot." If the house were complete within one year, $50.00 would be deducted from the price. Hereafter cited as Wildman Papers.


17Sandusky Clarion, September 18, 1823.

18Ibid., January 1, 1824.

19Ibid., January 22, 1825.

20Ibid., January 29, 1825.

21Harry N. Scheiber, Ohio Canal Era, p. 28.

22Eleutheros Cooke to Zalmon Wildman, Sandusky, Ohio, February 26, 1825, Wildman Papers, OHS.

23Ibid.

24Sandusky Clarion, February 12, 1825.

25James Kilbourne to William Townsend, Sandusky, Ohio May 2, 1822, Kilbourne Family Papers, Ohio Historical Society, Columbus, Ohio. Hereafter cited as Kilbourne Papers.

26Cleaveland Herald, February 11, 1825.

27Ibid., February 25, 1825.

28Sandusky Clarion, February 12, 1825. The Cleaveland Herald reported on August 22, 1822 that Commissioner Kelley had suggested that the citizens of Cleveland refrain from publishing news on the Ohio Canal because it tended to create jealousies. But the editor of the Herald announced that he saw no reason why they should be silent on the subject, because those who made the final decisions concerning the canal would not be influenced by an exchange of sentiment.

29Sandusky Clarion, February 12, 1825.

30Ibid., February 26, 1825.
31 For details concerning his calculations, see Sandusky Clarion March 5, 1825.

32 These names were applied to the canal by "Bridgewater." See Sandusky Clarion, June 11, June 18, June 25, July 9, July 16, July 23, 1825.

33 Sandusky Clarion, March 19, 1825.

34 Ibid.

35 Jacob Blickensderfer to Alfred Kelley, New Philadelphia, Ohio, October 22, 1824, Kelley Papers, Ohio Historical Society, Columbus, Ohio.

36 Sandusky Clarion, April 2, 1825.

37 Ibid.

38 Harry N. Scheiber, Ohio Canal Era, pp. 36-37.

39 Ibid., pp. 37-38; Sandusky Clarion, April 9, April 30, 1825; David Campbell to Zalmon Wildman, Sandusky, Ohio, April 17, 1825, Wildman Papers, OHS.

40 Sandusky Clarion, January 22, 1825. The accommodation canal for Williams was the Cincinnati-to-Dayton canal.

41 Sandusky Clarion, May 14, 1825. That the route would run from the Muskingum to the Scioto was previously determined. This decision concerned whether to continue on the Cuyahoga or the Killbuck. Geddes preferred the Killbuck.

42 Sandusky Clarion, June 11, June 19, June 25, July 9, July 16, July 23, 1825.

43 Sandusky Clarion, July 16, 1825.
Chapter III

Sandusky's Rival: Cleveland, 1822-1825

"Does the mechanic cease to fret
Over the long unsettled debt
Due from the rich delinquent?
Can printers yet escape from care
And hope for punctual payment where
Their labor and their ink went?"¹

This New Year's Day poem clearly illustrated the poor fiscal condition of the village of Cleveland as the year of 1820 began. In 1820, Cleveland's population was approximately six hundred. Added to the lack of wealth among its small population, Cleveland's growth potential was also hampered by another major obstacle--its lack of a safe, major transportation facility.² The Erie Canal would soon provide the opportunity for Clevelanders and other westerners to participate in the east-west trade and transportation at more reasonable costs. But only with the approval and completion of the Ohio Canal to that village could it hope to tap the potentially wealthy agricultural interior.

Before the commencement of the surveys, Cleveland appeared to be a very poor choice for the canal terminus. The Cuyahoga River was an ample one with a mouth about fifteen feet deep, but the harbor on the lake into which it emptied was treacherous. A low sandbar crossed the harbor entrance and the water there was only three or four feet deep.³ Despite this disadvantage, with the help of relentless Cleveland promoters, Cleveland became the northern
terminus of the Ohio Canal and consequently Ohio's commercial capital.

Clevelanders began to work for improved harbor facilities as early as 1807, when citizens devised a plan to improve communications between the trading posts between the lake and the Ohio River. The plan included cleaning out the channels of the Tuscarawas and the Cuyahoga rivers so that boats could pass and building a twelve mile wagon road from Old Portage to New Portage connecting the two rivers. Twelve thousand dollars seemed to be enough money to cover the expenses. The legislature approved a lottery in which $12,800 worth of five-dollar tickets would be sold. The tickets were sold but the drawing never occurred, so the money was refunded. In 1815, the harbor, in the words of one historian, was still "frequently choked with sand, and sometimes to such an extent that persons could cross dry-shod." Only the smallest vessels attempted to enter the river. Larger boats anchored outside and were unloaded, their contents being placed on flat-bottomed barges (lighters). In 1816, some residents thought that a pier would be the best way to accommodate the incoming boats. After organizing a company and obtaining a charter from the legislature, construction began but a storm washed the works away and the plan was abandoned. There were no other efforts to correct the faulty harbor until the canal surveys began. But reparation of the harbor was imperative if Cleveland were to become the terminating city of the Ohio Canal. By 1822, efforts to win that title for the city were intense.

Outside of the legislature and its committees, those efforts centered around the Cleveland Herald and its editor, Zeba Willes.
Willes took a front seat in city promotion just as David Campbell did in Sandusky. Within government circles, the dominant personality was Alfred Kelley, whose efforts began just as the 1822 surveys began.

The Cleveland-Cuyahoga route did not at first seem a practical route for the canal to follow. When Geddes arrived at Cleveland in mid-April 1822, he proceeded with Kelley to explore three routes in the eastern part of the state. Those three routes were the Grand and Mahoning Rivers, the Cuyahoga and Tuscarawas Rivers, and the Black and Killbuck Rivers. The heights of the three summits were 360, 395 and 350 feet respectively. Though it was thought that they could be supplied with water, they were unexpectedly high, the Cuyahoga-Tuscarawas summit being highest of all. The January 3, 1823 Report of the Canal Commissioners reported that, although they would be studied later for comparable advantages and/or disadvantages, all five routes were practicable. A letter to the Clarion from assistant engineer Alexander Holmes informed the paper's editor that the Sandusky-Scioto summit could be supplied with a sufficient amount of water. Geddes' summary of his review of the Sandusky route pronounced the Sandusky and Scioto Rivers "favorable to conducting a canal along them. . . ." Yet the Cleveland Herald erroneously reported shortly thereafter that the Sandusky route had been eliminated, that all the routes had an abundant supply of water except that one and, that an adequate feeder was not attainable on that route. Though the "mistake" was quickly corrected, it caused the Sandusky residents to declare war on the Cleveland Herald and its
editor. It also launched Alfred Kelley's role as a "domestic diplomat" during the canal era.\textsuperscript{10} When Willes decided to "return fire," he noted that he had ignored the previous errors that appeared in the \textit{Clarion}. He added that if Campbell were sincere in his desire for internal improvements, he would trust those in charge of the surveys who were honest and impartial contrary to what Campbell thought.\textsuperscript{11} He argued that, despite Campbell's previous charges, Mr. Price, the new engineer, was not a second-rate one but rather one who came to Ohio highly recommended.\textsuperscript{12} Willes insisted that Clevelanders had no desire to enter a long controversy with the Sandusky editor about canals. He added that "if for the want of water, the editor of the \textit{Clarion} and his friends chose to kick up a dust, we shall not get into a passion about it; but trust to the sober sense of the people and the dictates of common justice, for the support of faithfull public servants."\textsuperscript{13}

The commissioners spent the fall and early winter of 1824 compiling the results of all their surveys into the report that was due in the legislature in January. During these months no surveying occurred. Until that due date, the commissioners only released vague and general information concerning their impending decision. When finally released, the report recommended the construction of two canals. The Ohio Canal was to run from Portsmouth up the Scioto valley to just south of Columbus, then eastward to the Muskingum tributaries. From that point it would go northward to Lake Erie by the Cuyahoga or Black River. The second one, the Miami Canal, would run through the Miami Valley from Cincinnati to Dayton. It
might later be extended to the Maumee River and terminate somewhere near Toledo. The report was approved by Engineer Bates. This report resulted in the Canal Bill of 1825 which authorized the construction of the two canals along the proposed routes. Within only a few short weeks, James Kilbourne began presenting his reports to the legislature containing his findings about the canal routes. Willes commented that the essays were "soporiferous" and added that their effects in the legislature were wonderful in producing somnolency.

Both the Cleveland and Sandusky editors participated in the same kinds of name-calling and mudslinging activities. But as Randolph Downes pointed out, the Cleaveland Herald "had the best exchange, referring to the cleverness of their epithets. Excellent examples of Downe's observation appear frequently in the Herald. For example, when the Clarion announced that Sanduskiens would hire their own engineer to re-survey their route, Willes replied that "they would go [?] well to have the streams gauged after a heavy rain." Campbell had also charged that the canal report was "false, fraudulent and corrupt" and that the ignorant and cowardly members of the legislature were tricked, bribed or frightened into accepting the report. In response to Campbell's persistent charge that the Cuyahoga harbor was inferior, Willes deftly replied:

This is nothing. It is said that small boats entering Sandusky Bay, during the present season, have sometimes run foul of the catfish in the channel, and been detained until the periodical return of the ague fits to which they are there subject, when their tremulous motion would enable the navigators again to get under way!
The anti-canal movement was organized in other counties as well as Sandusky. Huron and Trumbull County residents began holding meeting in February 1825 to plan strategies for preventing the acquisition of the canal loan. In Willes's opinion the meetings were slanderous and disgraceful. When the Philadelphia Democratic Press seemingly alligned itself with Trumbull County residents (by questioning the practicality of such a large debt), Willes explained that, since Ohioans traded extensively with Philadelphians, it was understandable that they would oppose the Cleveland route or any other in Ohio because it would divert much of their trade and thereby destroy an important branch of their commerce. Willes consistently assured his readers that the canal project not only was practical, but also it would secure financing easily. He added that the opposition was minor compared to that arrayed against the Erie Canal in its beginnings. The project had now been tested and there was an example "of the wealth and greatness which can be acquired by facilitating the means of internal communication. . . ." The self-interest of the opponents would not blind the canal men.

Shortly after the announcement that the canal would follow the Cuyahoga, eastern financiers offered to make the canal loan of $400,000. A Huron County resident responded that borrowing huge sums of money would "bewilder our understanding." The loans would create bankruptcies, poverty and crime. He added that the descendants of Ohioans would become slaves because of the enormous debt. Demonstrating again his deftness, the Cleveland editor replied that if the poor man really believed that, he was already a little bewildered.
Willes suggested that someone watch him closely because the digging was about to begin, warm weather was approaching, and unless he (the Sanduskian) was treated gently, "he may be as mad as a 'march-hare' before dog-days are over."21

Harry Scheiber notes that the history of internal improvements in Ohio illustrates the interrelatedness of local and regional rivalries and promotion.22 The regional movement for construction was strong between 1820 and 1822. Ethan Allen Brown was the most prominent early regional promoter. He emphasized the importance of the waterway for Ohio and New York. His rationale was similar to all those espoused at that time, that is, the canal would extend the benefits of the Erie Canal by providing easy, cheap transportation to a market that needed the products of Ohio; the canal also would reduce the loss of money, lives and property which occurred in shipping to the miasmic southern climate.23

DeWitt Clinton's secretary, C. G. Haines, wrote to Brown inquiring about the Ohio Canal. He asked: (1) whether the project was practicable; (2) what was the distance, fall and lockage required; (3) what would be the advantages to Ohio and other towns on the lake; and, (4) what lateral canals could be connected with it.24 Brown answered that an Ohio public surveyor had found that even in the dry seasons the two eastern branches of the Sandusky supplied an ample amount of water to run a "large run of milestones by an undershot wheel" and that those waters could be diverted into the Scioto. He had no information concerning the routes in the eastern part of the state. The distance, falls and
lockage could not be determined yet as no route had been established. But whatever the route, one of the primary advantages would be that Ohioans would be able to mine salt and iron in larger quantities than before because there would be a facility to move it and a market that needed it. 25 Apparently, Brown's responses were satisfactory to Haines because Haines promised to publish a small pamphlet to "show the intimate connexion between the 'Grand Canal' of New York and the contemplated canal from Lake Erie to the Ohio River." 26 Ethan Allen Brown, truly the "Father of the Ohio Canals," was not influenced by localism. He was the first active regional booster of the canals.

Alfred Kelley was the first political leader to promote the Cuyahoga route. He began to promote this route (privately if not publicly) in 1822. That he manipulated reports, engineers, or other commissioners during the early surveys cannot be substantiated. However, after the announcement of the elimination of the Sandusky route, he began a concerted effort to make Cleveland the northern terminus of the canal. He began this effort by writing to Ethan Allen Brown, then a U. S. Senator, in 1822 that though three recently examined routes (including the Cuyahoga) were much higher than anticipated, there still could be a good supply of water because the Cuyahoga River was a large and durable stream--some fifty to sixty miles long. He also informed Brown that he and Geddes had examined the Sandusky-Scioto summit and Geddes tentatively concluded that the country appeared capable of accommodating a canal if other waters could be brought to the
summit. His (Kelley's) personal opinion, however, was that the nearby streams could not make dependable feeders. He noted that since it would be necessary to unite as many people as possible when choosing a canal route, several commissioners supported a diagonal route which stretched from the southwest quarter of the state to the northeast quarter.27 He again informed Senator Brown in August that the Sandusky-Scioto route had very little potential of supporting a canal and added that none of the routes west of the Scioto River would be capable of handling such.28 By December, though, he reported that since the headwaters of the Great Miami could be directed to the Sandusky-Scioto summit, that route might be sufficient after all.29

Either Kelley had not predetermined that the canal would terminate in Cleveland, or he was a very shrewd politician and a very good actor. Indicative of this, in an earlier mentioned letter, he expressed concern that if the canal could not be located on the center route, the commissioners might not be able to get the needed support. Consequently, at his suggestion, they authorized an extensive re-examination of the Sandusky valley and the streams along the summit. Kelley performed this duty himself. Though one would wonder why Kelley would place himself in such a vulnerable position if he did not have ulterior motives, he recognized this and apparently was willing to take the risk. He again found the route unacceptable; but when the commissioners met to discuss his findings, they decided not to release a final
statement about it until the next year.\textsuperscript{30} In delaying the announcem-
ment, the commissioners supposed that rivalries would be held at a minimum.

The January 1824 commissioners' report stated that the adoption of the Sandusky route was "extremely doubtful." David Bates re-
viewed the report before it was presented to the Ohio General Assembly; based on the findings of Kelley and other commissioners, he agreed with their conclusion. One should, however, remember that Bates did not do the surveying himself. He concurred with the conclusions that the commissioners reached based on their statistics. Kelley and Williams, the acting commissioners of the surveys, were not engineers. They had gone to New York to study the Erie Canal for several weeks, the gained knowledge from which they would apply to the construction of the Ohio Canal. But, as another commissioner succinctly pointed out, "... ex-
perience is knowledge I agree but what experience a man will gain by looking at a canal already made I cannot well imagine. I have examined one hundred miles of the New York canal and I cannot tell exactly how ignorant I should be without such examination, but it appears to me not much more than I am now..."\textsuperscript{31}

Kelley also took advantage of his prominent position by esta-
blishing friendships with other prominent persons who might later have significant influence. One can already see that he maintained close contact with Senator Ethan Allen Brown throughout Brown's Senatorship and shortly after that. It appears that his communi-
cation with Brown ceased around 1828. By that time, the canal
construction was well under way.

Another important friendship that Kelley developed was with Allen Trimble who became Governor of Ohio and later Commissioner of the Canal Fund. Kelley did not hesitate to support Trimble in his bid for Governor as he was an ardent canal supporter. In his Inaugural Address, Trimble asserted that an engineer "whose situation would place him above suspicion or partiality in favor of either of the proposed routes and whose talent, experience and practical skill should attach public confidence to his report. . ." should conduct the surveys. For these reasons he applied to New York for an engineer. James Geddes was the engineer recommended and subsequently hired.

Though in 1823 the commissioners were conclusively against the Sandusky route, public opinion was not yet ripe for the announcement of a specific route. The choice would be between two of the eastern routes. In making their announcement in 1824, the commissioners again pled for the unity of the citizens. They warned that without a strong, unified attachment to the state, the jealousies would nullify any effort made. Without a doubt, the uncongenial spirit that the commissioners sought to avoid was very common. A Norwalk resident charged that Kelley sacrificed the interest of the north-central region to that of Cleveland. He thought that Kelley was an honest man but local ambition had influenced him. He concluded, "we understand that the commissioners are determined to report in favor of the Cuyahoga route and this we attribute to you altogether and we do therefore thoroughly hate
Kelley was indeed well on his way to insuring that the canal terminate at Cleveland. In a letter written to Brown earlier that year (1824), he mentioned a petition which had just been presented to the House of Representatives proposing the establishment of a port of entry at the Grand River. The Legislature appointed a committee to examine the possibility of building a lighthouse between Chagrin and Conneauht Creek. He informed Brown that Clevelanders did not object to either proposal as long as their realization did not take away the rights of Clevelanders. The former idea, if realized, would be an injustice in that it would cause the removal of the collector's office from Cleveland. Moreover, if only one lighthouse were to be built on the shore, it should be built at Cleveland because according to Kelley, more business was conducted there than at all the ports between Sandusky and Erie combined. He added that he was pointing out these things not out of jealousy but to assure that justice was done if the proposal went to the Senate. A new lighthouse at Cleveland and the maintainence of the collector's office there would certainly be necessary if the canal terminated there.

Kelley aided Cleveland's chances of being the canal city in another way, also. He successfully solicited land from the residents along the Cuyahoga and Black River valleys. He notified Trimble that he had received several offers from people who owned land near the mouth of the Cuyahoga at Cleveland. He added that the state would later be able to resell the land at a large profit.
Benjamin Tappan wrote to Kelley before the announcement of the route, "I think as soon as you have got [sic] the people of Cleveland and the Cuyahoga valley to give all they will give, that the line of canal from the Portage summit to Cleveland should be determined on, that the work may be commenced on that part as early as possible this season."^39 Kelley himself owned at least sixty acres of land at the mouth of the Cuyahoga and in 1825, he deeded about one-third of this land to the state to aid the canal progress.^40

Sanduskians were joined by Trumbull County residents in their opposition to the proposed canal. At anti-canal meetings held in Warren, citizens protested the tax inequalities that they felt would result from the new tax law. They also charged that Commissioners Trimble and Buckingham received their appointments illegally. Kelley wrote to Brown to explain the complaints of the Trumbull County residents. He explained that they objected to the appointment of the two commissioners on the grounds that they were already members of the General Assembly and that holding two offices violated the laws of the the state constitution. He pointed out that if such were true, then the commissioners could not have been members of the legislature. He felt that the opponents had misinterpreted the constitution and its definition of "office." He further explained that property taxes would be assessed according to the proximity of the property to the canal. The people who had attended the meeting had agreed to avoid paying the taxes. They hoped to publish the agreed upon resolutions in
New York. If they were published in New York, Kelley asked Brown to make sure that the publishers were aware that less than one-fourth of the voters in the county attended the meeting. He later told Brown that only about forty people at most actually voted at the meeting.

One of Trumbull County's most prominent citizens was Simon Perkins. Perkins, from one of the oldest families in the New World, was one of the representatives sent to explore the Western Reserve area in 1798. Kelley informed Perkins after the meeting that he did not think the resolutions from the meeting would prevent the commissioners from getting the loan; however, if the eastern financiers doubted the ability of the state to repay the loan, then it might result in the loan being made at a higher interest rate. Kelley was grateful that Perkins had not participated in the meeting, and using his prominence as a weapon, he warned Perkins that his (Kelley's) influence would be invaluable for Trumbull County in the future for "... even Trumbull County may at no distant day ask a favor from the state and ask aid to make some interesting improvement." To help reassure Senator Brown, Kelley asked Perkins to write to the Senator to inform him of the circumstances of the meeting because the Commissioners of the Canal Fund (then in New York) needed to be informed of the public feeling in that quarter of the state from a reliable, respectable and influential source.

The canal did terminate at Cleveland obviously much as a result of Alfred Kelley's politicking. Two activities in which Kelley
played an important role leave him in a questionable position. The first one involved the results of the first two surveys of the Cuyahoga and Sandusky routes. Geddes, a senior engineer on the Erie Canal, found the Cuyahoga route very much inferior to the Sandusky route. Yet the second surveys, conducted by Kelley and his field staff, found the reverse to be true. Kelley's choice to re-examine the Sandusky route himself "as a matter of such high importance to the state nothing should be left to conjecture" cast an even darker shadow on him because obviously he preferred the Cuyahoga route to the Sandusky one. Finally, it must be remembered that though the final survey report was endorsed by engineer Bates, Bates had not examined the routes for himself.

Kelley's politicking to influence other commissioners began after the choice had been narrowed to the two Scioto-Muskingum routes. When the board was faced with this dilemma, Kelley offered them free land and land at low pre-canal prices. He proceeded to warn those (Trumbull County residents) opposing the canal and rewarded those who acted positively.45

Kelley made alliances with those "respectable and influential individuals" who later might be helpful in his cause. He supported Allen Trimble for Governor in 1822 offering him all the support and influence that he (Kelley) had. Yet later when referring to the appointment of Trimble as Commissioner of the Canal Fund, he told Perkins "it was my own wish that you should have received the appointment instead of Trimble."46 In summary, it seems that
Kelley had become a "boss" in his little private political machine.
NOTES

Chapter III

1Cleveland Herald, January 1, 1822.


7Sandusky Clarion, July 31, 1822.


9Cleveland Herald, August 1, 1822.

10Cleveland Herald, August 1, 1822. For details of the charges, refutations and retractions, see Sandusky Clarion, August 7, August 14, 1822. For Kelley's response to Willes, see Cleveland Herald, August 3, 1822. Willes retraction is printed in the Cleveland Herald, August 22, 1822. For a good summary of the controversy, see Randolph C. Downes, History of Lake Shore Ohio, 3 vols. (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, Inc.), 1:107-109.

11Cleveland Herald, August 8, 1822.

12Ibid., August 27, 1824.

13Ibid., September 10, 1824.

*Cleveland Herald*, February 25, 1825. Kilbourne's essays were compilations of notes he had collected while earlier exploring Ohio. The essays are reprinted in the *Sandusky Clarion*, February 12, February 19, February 26, March 5, March 12, March 19, March 26, 1825.


*Cleveland Herald*, March 4, 1825; *Sandusky Clarion*, February 19, 1825.

*Cleveland Herald*, August 5, 1825.

*Ibid.*, March 18, 1825. Reports of anti-canal meetings held at Painesville may be read in the *Cleveland Herald*, April 29, May 6, 1825.


Ethan Allen Brown to DeWitt Clinton, Cincinnati, Ohio, May 29, 1820, Brown Papers, OHS. On deposit from the State Library of Ohio.


Ethan Allen Brown to Charles Haines, Columbus, Ohio, September 20, 1820, Brown Papers, OHS. On deposit from the State Library of Ohio.


Alfred Kelley to Ethan Allen Brown, Cleveland, Ohio, May 31, 1822, Brown Papers, OHS. On deposit from the State Library of Ohio.

29 Alfred Kelley to Ethan Allen Brown, Columbus, Ohio, December 13, 1822. Brown Papers, OHS. On deposit from the State Library of Ohio.

30 Harry N. Scheiber, "The Ohio Canal Movement, 1820-1825," LXIX Ohio Historical Quarterly (July 1960), 242-243. Scheiber later concludes that unless one is willing to accept that Kelley persuaded the chief engineers and other commissioners to find the amount of water on the center route inadequate, one must accept the charges made by Sanduskians as unfounded. See Harry N. Scheiber, "Alfred Kelley and the Ohio Business Elite, 1822-1859," 87 Ohio History (Autumn 1978), 373.

31 Benjamin Tappan to Micajah T. Williams, Steubenville, Ohio, Micajah T. Williams Papers, Ohio Historical Society, Columbus, Ohio. On deposit from the State Library of Ohio. Tappan did not oppose the canal but questioned whether the knowledge gained from the trip would justify or equal the amount of money spent for it.

32 Alfred Kelley to Allen Trimble, Cleaveland, Ohio, July 31, 1821, Trimble Family Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland, Ohio. Hereafter cited as Trimble Papers WRHS.

33 Allen Trimble, Autobiography and Correspondence of Allen Trimble, Governor of Ohio...reprinted from the Old Northwest Genealogical Society, 1909, p. 124.

34 Ibid.


37 Alfred Kelley to Ethan Allen Brown, Cleaveland, Ohio, February 23, 1824, Brown Papers, OHS. On deposit from the State Library of Ohio.

38 Harry N. Scheiber, "Alfred Kelley and the Ohio Business Elite," 373. Kelley repeated such action in 1827. The details including a map are in Alfred Kelley to Governor Trimble, Kendal, Ohio, August 15, 1827. Trimble Papers, WRHS.

40. Ibid., 368, n. 6.

41. Alfred Kelley to Ethan Allen Brown, Cleaveland, Ohio, March 11, 1825, Brown Papers, OHS.

42. Alfred Kelley to Ethan Allen Brown, Cleaveland, Ohio, March 23, 1825, Brown Papers, OHS. On deposit from the State Library of Ohio.


44. Alfred Kelley to Simon Perkins, Cleaveland, Ohio, March 13, 1825, Simon Perkins Papers, WRHS.

45. Perkins, who did not participate in the anti-canal meetings, was shortly thereafter invited to the Canal Commission meeting to be held on May 5, 1825. See Alfred Kelley to Simon Perkins, Cleaveland, Ohio, April 18, 1825, Simon Perkins Papers, WRHS. Perkins also was later appointed Commissioner of the Canal Fund.

46. Alfred Kelley to Simon Perkins, Cleaveland, Ohio, March 13, 1825. Simon Perkins Papers, WRHS.
Chapter IV

Internal Improvements in Sandusky by Means of Roads

Boosterism played an important part in city-building during the early nineteenth century. Though the boosters did not always succeed, their job was to help build a commercially, politically, culturally, and educationally independent city. As earlier mentioned, town promotion is a very neglected area in studies in American history. When boosters are mentioned, they are spoken of as merely people actively involved in enhancing their town's growth. This is one characteristic of boosters, but they were more versatile than that. It was also their job to prevent other nearby towns from getting too many advantages over them. For example, if a town could not grow the lumber necessary to sustain a shipbuilding industry but could produce hemp, then the town promoters boosted the production of hemp and a rope- and sailmaking industry. Or, as in the case of Sandusky, if they could not have the Ohio Canal, then they must have the best roads in the west, or something better.

Sandusky promoters knew this, and upon accepting that they were not going to have the canal, they redirected their energies towards improved roads and later towards a railroad project. The editor of the Mansfield Gazette reported:
Whether we have a canal or not upon the center route, let us not neglect our roads. . . .
Even if the Grand Canal should be constructed. . . it is only necessary to have good roads, and the necessary facilities to render travelling cheap, expeditious, and easy. . . . If we delay improving our roads until our more enterprising [sic] neighbors to the east or west take the lead of us, we shall then lose all the advantage of our natural location, and others will profit from our remisses.¹

In 1826, Eleutherios Cooke and other Huron County politicians heeded this good advice and began a campaign in the legislature for the creation of state roads from Mount Vernon to Sandusky and from Plymouth (Richland County) to Norwalk (Huron County), and for the improvement of the Sandusky to Columbus road.² But it must be noted that even though the promoters were busy pushing for the improvements of the roads in Huron County, they were still concerned with preventing the completion of the Ohio Canal and the Miami Canal. They also bickered back and forth via newspaper articles and legislative debates with citizens of Cleveland over the "sectional canal," with the citizens of Columbus about the lateral feeder to that city and later with the editor of the Milan Free Press about Ohio canal policies in general.³

Isaac Mills, a Sandusky realtor, fearing the possibility of Sandusky becoming a ghosttown, wrote to Zalmon Wildman, who owned a large amount of land in Sandusky, instructing him to come to Sandusky as soon as possible. He expressed the urgent need of much work in Sandusky to prevent Cleveland from acquiring too much of an advantage over them.⁴
Before becoming involved in too many other enterprises, however, Sanduski residents found it necessary to elect representatives who would be sympathetic to their needs, and more than that, to oust those who supported the 1825 Canal Law and the tax reform bill. David Campbell reminded the citizens of Huron County that they would have to do their job (of electing new representatives) first. He begged them not to re-elect the men who betrayed their hopes. He appealed specifically to Lorain and Cuyahoga County residents not to re-elect Mr. Chase, who represented those counties in the House of Representatives. Chase, a resident of Cleveland, not only supported the tax and canal bills, but also was responsible for distributing Lorain County's portion of the three percent fund to other counties. Apparently the voters accepted and took Cooke's advice for only one of the Canal Commissioners was sent back to the legislature. Four of the Commissioners (Allen Trimble, Benjamin Tappan, Ebenezer Buckingham, and Nathan Beasly) campaigned for re-election. Trimble won a seat in the Senate, but Buckingham and Beasly were defeated. Tappan withdrew from the race shortly before the election. Moreover, Huron County voters elected Eleutheros Cooke to the State Senate and David Campbell to the State House of Representatives.

When the canal program began in 1825, legislators agreed that the first canals would be an experiment in state financed transportation. If successful, the program would be expanded and transportation facilities would be extended to the neglected areas. Residents of the by-passed areas, however, were
not willing to wait their turn. Harry Scheiber attributes this impatience to the ideological view of state transport policy. Similar to egalitarian political ideology, that position asserted that the benefits of the state transportation policy should be "equalized" or widely dispersed. This ideology was very popular during the 1820's and 1830's and it provided a well developed rationale for those promoting the comprehensive expansion of state-financed public works.  

In this spirit, Eleutherios Cooke offered a resolution in the House of Representatives which began the shift of Sanduskiens' fight for a canal, to the struggle for the improvement of their roads.

Whereas, a judicious and well regulated system of Internal Improvements commenced, with reference to the general good; extending an equality of benefits to all; and prosecuted with a view to accelerate the operations of a commercial intercourse, and multiply the facilities of communications between distant communities, is a policy, sublime in object, magnificent in its tendency, and recognized by the wisdom of the present age, as affording the most important means for advancing the moral, political, and commercial prosperity of a people; and,

Whereas, the great object for which governments are instituted among men, is to improve the condition and advance the happiness of those who are parties to the social company; and,

Whereas, so far as relates to the above policy, that object can only be effectually promoted by a just and harmonious union between the interests and energies of the people, and the powers of the government, and by a judicious application of both, to the Internal Improvement of the country; and

Whereas, in the land and age in which we live, God and the Constitution have given an equality of rights to every citizen; and,
Whereas, every system of legislation which carries with it the burden without the benefit, which extends to one section of the state privileges which it denies to others; which disregards the internal connection that should exist between the imposition of taxes upon the people, and the benefit they should derive from their appropriation, tends to subversion [sic] of their rights, and to the defeat of the great end for which governments are invested with authority.

And, inasmuch as the exercise of delegated power, by any body of men, over their fellow men, can be justified only by the equal and impartial blessings it confers upon each and every division of the state, over which it is extended; therefore,

Resolved, that a committee of five members be appointed, with instructions to inquire into the expediency of providing by law for the establishment of a Board of Commissioners, for the Internal Improvements of the state, by means of Roads, with leave to report by bill or otherwise.

Cooke pushed for the adoption of this resolution and, though a similar board did eventually come about, the "internal improvements by means of roads" did not for some time to come. In a later speech, he asserted that the government was instituted for the promotion of the general good and therefore should adopt his resolution. He contended that the policy would enhance land value, invite immigration, encourage industry, and demolish distance. He added that because it would unite the interest of all, it would harmonize views, habits, and feelings and promote knowledge, virtue, and the blessings of individual and social happiness. This section of his speech epitomizes Scheiber's explanation of the ideology of internal improvements. Cook declared that
a local or less general system of internal improvements would operate with extreme hardship, inequality, and injustice upon the people. It would enrich one section of the state, at the expense and by the impoverishment of another. It would operate to the injury and oppression in the same ratio that it would advance the interest and prosperity of the few. It would impose burdens, while it withheld the necessary means to sustain them and by annihilating the principle which guarantees the enjoyments of equal rights and equal privileges, it would result in the prostration of the great and essential end for which governments are invested with authority. The principle which is to unite us can be found only in that enlightened and liberal policy, which imposes upon all without exception similar privileges and equal protection. Adopt this policy—pursue this principle and the people will rally around and bless the government. But refuse to them this equal justice; teach them by your practice the imposition of grievous taxes may be one thing and their privileges another and you at once alienate their affection, destroy their confidence, and dissolve the obligation of those great principles of reciprocal allegiance and protection, which bind together the elements, and constitute the strength and beauty of representative governments.10

Led by Eleutheros Cooke and representatives from other "neglected" areas, the campaign for improved roads continued throughout 1826. In July of that year, Isaac Mills, expressing deep concern for Sandusky's future, called it a crisis situation and advised Zalmon Wildman that they should watch every movement in and around Sandusky.11 Yet with all the active campaigning for internal improvements, in January 1827, David Campbell despairingly wrote that another year had passed and no important improvements had been made in Sandusky.12

Another citizen, seemingly in an attempt to keep the morale of Sanduskiens up, reminded them that, even though they could
not get aid from the government to improve their roads, they were fortunate to have excellent lands and good location. In cultivating that land, they would need no favors from the state. The country also had iron deposits which could be mined as soon as residents were able to acquire the machinery they needed. So Sanduskians were not totally doomed. Also, despite the fact that Cleveland was to be the northern terminus of the Ohio Canal, Sandusky Bay still enjoyed more lake activity than the Cleveland harbor.¹³

In 1827, Congress finally appropriated land to help make the Columbus and Sandusky Turnpike possible. The stockholders of the turnpike company met in April, elected directors and officers, and chose James Kilbourne surveyor and engineer. They established the by-laws and made arrangements to begin surveying for the location of the road. But a year after the act incorporating the company passed, the road had not started. Campbell reported that after the $40,000 to $70,000 parcel of land was granted, Sandusky's "neighbors to the west" who had poorer resources but more public spirit obtained the road.¹⁴

Other improvement enterprises also were thwarted. In 1824, a law incorporating a company to build a turnpike from Sandusky to Columbus via Mansfield was enacted (the previously mentioned one was via Delaware and Bucyrus), but the charter was forfeited. At about the same time, a charter was granted to build a turnpike from Wooster to Cleveland; by April 1827, it was almost completed. This was another victory for Cleveland.
proposed free turnpike from Mount Vernon to Sandusky met paralyzing obstacles because of administrative problems and divided interest.\textsuperscript{15}

Sanduskians had lost the canal race and it seemed that they were losing the struggle for the improvement of their county by means of roads. But that was still not the end of their fight. In the East, experiments were being conducted concerning the economic potential of "Rail Ways." These experiments, and the possibility of their success, would provide another avenue towards which Sandusky boosters could direct their energies.
NOTES

Chapter IV


2. Ibid., January 7, 1825; January 28, March 18, 1826.

3. Ibid., March 20, 1820.

4. Isaac Mills to Zalmon Wildman, Wrightsville, Ohio, August 22, 1825, Wildman Papers, Ohio Historical Society, Columbus, Ohio, Hereafter cited as Wildman Papers, OHS.

5. Sandusky Clarion, October 1, 1825.

6. Ibid., July 24, 1825.

7. Ibid., November 12, 1825.


10. Sandusky Clarion, March 28, 1826.


12. Sandusky Clarion, January 6, 1827.

13. The Cleveland Herald of April 20, 1827 showed four ships had arrived and eight had cleared since opening navigation there that season, whereas the Sandusky Clarion on April 28, reported during the same period, there were twenty arrivals and twenty-six clearances at Sandusky Bay.


15. Ibid.
Chapter V
The Beginnings of the Mad River and Lake Erie Railroad

Nature had limited the rivalries until this time. The growth of the cities and their superiority over another depended on their proximity to the lakes and rivers. With the railroad, however, geography could not limit town growth because railroads could be built anywhere. For this reason, the railroad became one mode of transportation that permitted towns with few advantages to triumph in regional dominance over better suited rivals. Though Sandusky did not lack the advantage of natural location, it had lost an earlier race for internal improvements. But the town promoters had enough spirit and determination that they would not let themselves and their town be defeated because of the "neglect" of the state government or the newly acquired advantages (canals and roads) of other, nearby towns. After the apparent cessation of road improvements in Sandusky, instead of resigning themselves to defeat, the boosters set their eyes on something better—a railroad.

Sandusky promoter David Campbell seemed to have foreseen the importance of the railways as early as 1826.¹ That was a profound perception, considering that construction of the first inter-urban railroad, the Manchester and Liverpool, began in 1825. One of the first articles in Sandusky concerning railways described
only the technical aspects. The article listed facts relating to friction, high pressure steam engines, relationships of horse power and tonnage to speed, ascension and descention speed rates, and cost of railroads and repairs.²

By 1827 Sanduskians were less vague in their writing about railways. Instead of writing that the wheels of a car should be a certain number of inches in diameter, they began to compare the possible economic advantages of a railroad with canal shipping. A writer in the Scioto Gazette in Chillicothe proposed that the residents of that area should consider the extension of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad to there. He asserted that the canal could not compete with a railroad. The railroad would shorten routes, and therefore save time. It would be cheaper and could be used all year.³ Campbell noted that, if completed, the Baltimore and Ohio would cause the dissipation of the anticipated profits of the Ohio Canal and it (the canal) would no longer be a thoroughfare for the commerce of Ohio. He predicted that the improvement of locomotive engines would supercede the necessity for canals in less than ten years, and by that time Ohio would be in a pitiable situation. The new prospects would require a change in Ohio's canal policy and require the attention of the next legislature.⁴

By 1830, the results of many experiments proved that railroads could be profitable assets to the state and national economies. Its development had taken it from the Quincy Railroad
and the Mauch Chuck Railway (horse-drawn cars) to George Stephenson's steam locomotive in England and Peter Cooper's "Tom Thumb," then working on the Baltimore and Ohio. During the previous year, experiments on the Manchester and Liverpool determined the speed and power of several steam carriages. A two and one-half ton engine moved twenty-eight miles an hour on level road and after attaching cars three and one-half times the weight of the engine, the machine still pulled them an astounding twenty and three-fourths miles per hour.⁵

Estimates made in 1830 indicated that in 1827 approximately $1,319,819.00 worth of goods had passed through Sandusky (destined for Kentucky, Indiana, and Tennessee) and the amount of goods transported increased annually in tonnage and value. Because of this, one Sanduskian suggested that the citizens of Sandusky consider building a railroad to Dayton.⁶ As editor of the city paper and a promoter of railroad transportation, Campbell seemingly published every significant fact concerning railroads of which he became aware.

The Ohio Legislature took up the matter and by January 1831, Eleutheros Cooke was convinced that the interest exhibited in Columbus was strongly in favor of passing an act to establish the railroad and that the engineers would soon begin surveying the route. He had no doubt that the state would ultimately subscribe stock equal to the value of the 360,000 acres of land that Congress in 1828 had granted for the construction of a railroad or canal from Dayton to the lake.⁷ The petition
had been presented to the Ohio Legislature for a railroad from Dayton to Sandusky Bay and had passed the Senate by a great majority. Because it was late in the session, however, it was postponed to the next General Assembly by the House.⁸

On June 23, 1831, disturbed by the legislature’s postponement of the deliberations on the bill, Sanduskians held a meeting to consider the subject of the railroad. At that meeting, led by John Turk, the citizens resolved that a railroad constructed from the northern terminus of the Miami Canal (Dayton) to Sandusky would be of great public utility. They established a committee of correspondence to seek the aid and advice of the people from other areas along the proposed route and also to obtain a united effort.⁹ One citizen noted that if the legislature provided a liberal charter they would be able to obtain a large amount of subscriptions to the stock from the East as well as from Ohioans.

According to articles which appeared in the New York Courier and the New York Enquirer that were subsequently reprinted in the Clarion, New Yorkers also realized the importance of the railroad. The author of one of the articles declared that the railroad was important not just for Ohio and the other states of the Mississippi valley, but more particularly to the state of New York. He held that the railroad would bring Mississippi and Mexican trade on the northern route to Lake Erie at Sandusky Bay and then to New York. If the petition were not granted, the writer contended, the people of the West and South (Mississippi valley) would seek the easiest and most expeditious way to the northeast, thus utilizing
the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. Probably because of the route, the southwesterners might buy their other needed supplies at Baltimore or Philadelphia, thus taking more money from the Ohio economy. The New York promoter knew that the railroad would bring a large amount of produce and money to New York that might otherwise go from Ohio to New Orleans or other southern cities. He noted that because of the importance of the road to northern, western, and eastern states (particularly New York), the project would become a national object.\footnote{10}

By the fall of 1831, the railroad project had become of primary interest to most Sanduskians. As it was nearing election time, George Anderson, a Sandusky physician, asked Huron County residents to put aside national politics because of the present circumstances and elect the "Railroad Candidate" to enhance their chance of getting their railroad.\footnote{11} Mr. Lindsey, the Railroad candidate, won the seat in the House in October.\footnote{12}

One of the most important meetings concerning the railroads was held in Sandusky on the first day of October 1831, to decide whether to send delegates to the larger "convention" at Bellefontaine. The purpose of the Bellefontaine meeting was to determine the best means of acquiring a "fair and liberal" charter incorporating a company to construct the Dayton-to-Sandusky railroad. Isaac Mills was elected chairman and the group adopted a preamble and several resolutions. The preamble called for improvements by railroads to afford "equal and individed advantages to the farmer, mechanic, and merchant." Resolutions noted that
citizens living along the proposed railroad route contributed their share of money to defray the cost of the canals without being directly benefited so they would cooperate with their fellow citizens in promoting the best interest of the state (building a railroad). At this meeting, citizens pronounced sentiments contradictory to earlier ones. Obviously to gain support, they said a railroad would add to the value of the canal and not interfere with the state's vested interest in the canals. A railroad would strengthen the state politically and economically. Finally, those attending the meeting elected two delegates to attend the railroad convention at Bellefontaine.\textsuperscript{13}

The Ohio Legislature granted the proposed railroad company its charter on January 5, 1832. The act specified the powers of the company and provided for the sale of stock and requirements for meetings. It designated certain connecting points along the line and gave the company the right to acquire needed property by condemnation or agreement. It also provided for the use of roads and turnpikes during construction. The only stipulation on those provisions was that the railroad be started within five years and completed within fifteen and that the state be allowed to purchase it after twenty years.\textsuperscript{14} It was indeed the liberal charter that Sanduskians desired. J. D. Parrish immediately began preparations for soliciting in New York for subscribers to the stock of the Mad River and Lake Erie Railroad Company.\textsuperscript{15}

In February, William Townshend and James Hollister of Sandusky became the agents for opening the books for subscriptions to the
stock of the company. Books were to remain open between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. each day for five consecutive days. One had to pay the first installment of ten percent of the total cost upon subscribing. Townshend, Hollister, and George Anderson also had permission to open their books at other times and places not previously designated, such as New York City, Albany and other eastern cities. They also could appoint others to serve as agents in procuring subscriptions outside the state of Ohio.\textsuperscript{16}

During the first week in August, the appointees opened the books for stock subscriptions of the Mad River and Lake Erie Railroad Company around the state. At Sandusky, prospectors bought $11, 400.00 worth of subscriptions and paid the first installment. A United States engineer was to begin the survey of the route, provided the company bore the expenses of the survey.\textsuperscript{17}

To keep the sales going, Campbell sought to show all the advantages of the railroad. With one object being to connect Lake Erie to the Ohio River at Cincinnati (Cincinnati was linked to Dayton by the Miami Canal) the railroad would be at least one hundred miles shorter than the canal from Cleveland to Portsmouth. Another advantage of the railroad was that it would provide a direct link from the lake to Cincinnati. By canal, once merchandise reached Portsmouth, it had to be reloaded on a steamboat and sent sixty to seventy miles down the river. River navigation was often hampered by natural conditions. In spring, the water could be too high; in summer, too low; and in winter, the river often froze over. The engineer added that, though Sandusky was sixty miles
further from Buffalo than was Cleveland, the harbor was so much more superior that the extra cost would be a small price to pay for better accommodations. He added that in reference to safety, Sandusky's harbor was better than any other on the lake because the peninsula forming the bay protected it from high winds and storms which often struck during the spring and fall. Another importance of terminating at Cincinnati was the size and location of the city. It was already larger than Albany, New York. Not only was it a focal point for goods being shipped to many portions of Ohio, Indiana, and Kentucky, but it was also a stopping place for travelers from the west and southwest. Until the completion of the railroad, those bound for the northeast from those areas stopped in Cincinnati before proceeding north to Cleveland via stage, then by steamboat to Buffalo; others went from Cincinnati to Pittsburgh and Philadelphia, then to New York; and still others went by Wheeling, Baltimore and Philadelphia. The completion of the railroad would supposedly provide a cheaper and more pleasant route than any of the preceding.18

But the Mad River and Lake Erie Railroad Company ran into problems. Though the Sandusky agents collected over $1,000.00 during the first sale, the entire amount collected did not come close to what they had anticipated. The editor of the Cleveland Herald seized the opportunity to label the enterprise a "flop," especially after learning that the railroad company asked for $800,000 for stock subscriptions outside the state. Campbell contended that the reason that the money was not raised was because
of the derangements of the public deposits from the United States Banks. The Cleveland editor inquired if the needed amount of money was already pledged, then why would the company ask Congress for a donation of 500,000 acres of land to aid the company? Campbell responded that no one pretended that the needed amount of money could be raised within the state and that since the railroad would draw some of the business of the canal, the state should indemnify itself by taking a portion of the stock. Finally he concluded that whether or not the legislatures of New York and Ohio acted favorably, the railroad would be built.\textsuperscript{19}

As early as 1830, Sanduskians had urged that the state build the railway in lieu of extending the Miami Canal. That proposition evoked opposition for two reasons. First of all, the residents of the Miami Valley had looked forward to the extension of the Miami Canal; and secondly, they strongly doubted the railroad's ability to move heavy freight. Because of the fight put up by the canal promoters and their effectiveness in preventing progress in the legislature concerning the railroad petitions, the Sanduskians had decided to build the railway as a private enterprise and began construction in 1834—over a year after the stock went on sale. The Mad River and Lake Erie Railroad would later become a major section of the first all-rail connection between the Great Lakes and the Ohio Valley.\textsuperscript{20}
NOTES

Chapter V

1In this year, the Sandusky Clarion carried many articles concerning the testing of railroads in other parts of the world. See January 7, 1826.

2Ibid.

3Ibid., September 22, 1827.

4Ibid., April 14, 1827.

5Ibid., January 9, 1830.


7Eleutherios Cooke to Zalmon Wildman, Four Corners, Ohio, January 26, 1831, Wildman Papers, Ohio Historical Society, Columbus, Ohio. Hereafter cited as Wildman Papers, OHS.

8Sandusky Clarion, October 5, 1831. The petition was presented by Mr. Samuel Lockwood, the Senator from Huron County, on January 19, 1831. It passed in the Senate on February 12, 1831. See Ohio, Journal of the Senate, (1830-1831) 29:220, 452.

9Charles E. Frohman. pp. 59-60; Sandusky Clarion, July 6, 1831.

10Sandusky Clarion, October 5, 1831.

11Ibid.

12Sandusky Clarion, October 26, 1831. The four candidates split 1,647 votes very closely. Lindsey received 488 votes or 29.6%. The other candidates had 420 or 25.5%; 378 or 23.5%; and 361 or 21.9%. (Percentages to nearest tenth.)

13Ibid., October 12, 1831.

14Charles Frohman, p. 60; Sandusky Clarion, January 4, 1832.

15F. D. Parrish to Zalmon Wildman, Sandusky, Ohio January 17, 1832, Wildman Papers, OHS.
16 Sandusky Clarion, February 29, 1832.

17 Ibid., August 15, 1832.

18 Ibid., September 18, 1833.

19 Ibid., November 27, 1833.

CONCLUSION

The completion of the Ohio Canal contributed greatly to the growth and wealth of Cleveland. Meanwhile Sandusky remained canal-less. Though the Mad River and Lake Erie Railroad was a stimulant to Sandusky's growth, it was not completed until 1848. So for twenty-three years Cleveland had prospered and grown tremendously while Sandusky grew only moderately.

Obviously, Sanduskians had turned to the railroad project out of frustration—frustrations that they really caused themselves. Campbell spent too much time and energy bickering with anyone who hinted that the canal should terminate anywhere except Sandusky. While he was doing this, Kelley was soliciting land donations as an enticement to the commissioners. While Campbell was name-calling and making more enemies, Kelley was making friends—with Ethan Allen Brown, Allen Trimble, DeWitt Clinton and others.

While Kelley maintained a united effort among Cuyahoga County politicians, those in Huron County began to waver. Though their votes would not have altered the outcome of the bills, the action of the Huron County representatives could have been used as proof that the actions of the Commission were supported by representatives of Huron County. The Clarion editor and letters to the editor from proponents of the center route were vehemently against the canal loan, yet the county's representative, Eleutheros Cooke, voted in favor of it.�

Another legislator from Huron
County may have been "won over." The promise of improvements of the Sandusky to Columbus road could have been an incentive for David Beardsly who voted in favor of the Canal Bill. He also may have been influenced by the "power of patronage" for he later became collector of canal tolls at Cleveland.  

So Sandusky's "capacious" harbor did not benefit the town in the canal race. Perhaps Sanduskians did not build a canal later because of the shortness of the canal construction period. The Erie Canal was completed in 1825 and by 1830 railroad experiments were well under way. Sanduskians realized that the railroad would soon supersede canals.

Sandusky's railroad was the success that it was hoped to be in that after completion, it ran between the cities as often as weather permitted (there was no schedule) fully loaded. Its ultimate failure lay in the fact that the rails were built of strap iron and were susceptible to cracking and breaking. Because of its construction, it ultimately could not accommodate the heavy volume of traffic and was therefore superseded by other railroad lines.

Just as the era of internal improvements underwent three major changes in Sandusky, so did the boosterism in area. During each phase, Sanduskians boosted a different type of transportation. Nevertheless, it was the means that changed, not the end.

During the canal era, the beginning of internal improvements in Ohio, it was first important to rally the support of as many
men as possible with similar sentiments, no matter what their background. The objective seemed to be to get so many residents on the bandwagon that their number would have much more influence than the names of a few Canal Commissioners. Because of the advantages that the canal would render, it was easy to get the support of all.

During this period the primary vehicle used for perpetuating the booster message was David Campbell's Clarion. Campbell used this paper to publicize the importance of the canal to that area, thus rallying support. It announced to other parts of the state and country that Sandusky was not sitting quietly by while important decisions were being made. After the designation of Cleveland as the head of the Ohio Canal, the Clarion informed easterners that they would do all they could to block construction. The paper suggested to easterners that they not invest their money in the project because, without the support of the western part of the state, it would surely fail.

The second period saw the emphasis shift from canals to roads—good roads—the only thing really necessary to "render cheap and expeditious travel." During the previous phase Sanduskians sought to prove that Sandusky was naturally better suited for the canal. But with the roads, it seemed no longer to be a matter of which area was best suited for the improvements, but only that they had been guaranteed equal rights and that the central and western part of the state would have to be accommodated with a transportation network that at least equalled the advantages of
the Ohio Canal. This period also witnessed more petitions to and debates in the legislature concerning the state's duty to its citizens.

The third period saw boosterism change from the promotion of public support of improved transportation to that of private financing. Sandusky boosters' visions and arguments changed as circumstances required them to. During the first period, it seemed only natural that they would emphasize their geography since they felt that they had the most superior harbor of all Ohio lake cities. After it became known that Cleveland would become the head of the Ohio Canal, Sanduskians knew that it was unlikely that the state would undertake another major canal, so they fought for better roads. And since their "natural" advantages did not benefit them before, why should they now? This time they emphasized their natural rights. Finally, in the case of the Mad River and Lake Erie Railroad Company, the State was already financially obligated to the progressing canal construction, so instead of fighting tooth and nail for public money as they had in the promotion of the roads, Sandusky boosters accepted the implied "no" from the legislature early and went on about the business of promoting their railroad company. These drastic changes in attitudes and methods indicate that, even if the Sandusky promoters were not ingenious or immediately successful, they were perceptive, persevering, and very adaptable. Unfortunately, none of their endeavors were sufficient in their struggle against Cleveland.
NOTES

Conclusion

1Cleaveland Herald, February 10, 1825.


3Because the lines were made of strap iron, they could not accommodate a lot of weight (i.e., so many cars). It was reported in 1847 that "warehouses, barns, sheds, and one unfinished church is converted not into a temple... but into a flour depot." This report noted that enough wheat and flour had accumulated to fill all the cars for two months. Randolph Downes, History of Lake Shore Ohio, 3 vols. (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, Inc.), 1:164-165.