



Chapter 13: Statehood to Statehouse

Early Ohio History

Ohio's first inhabitants were prehistoric Native Americans. According to archeologists, these early Ohioans lived in the area as early as 13,000 B.C.E. and were Stone Age hunters and gatherers. More advanced Native American cultures, notably the Adena and Hopewell, appeared in the Ohio area later, about 1,000 and 100 B.C.E., respectively. By the time Europeans (first the French, then the British) began entering the Ohio region in the late 1600s, these and later prehistoric Native American cultures had disappeared, but in the 1700s, the Miami, Wyandot, Ottawa, Delaware, and other tribes moved into the area.

In the mid-1700s, competition between the French and British for trade with Ohio Native Americans grew increasingly bitter. The spread of British settlement westward alarmed both the French and the Native Americans, and the French and Indian War ensued, resulting in a victory for the British and their control of the Ohio region. Tensions remained, however, between the British and the Native Americans. The Native Americans were bitter about the defeat of their French allies. Through trade regulation and licensing as well as restriction of westward movement imposed on her colonists, Britain continually attempted to quell Native American hostility. Many colonists, however, felt that the British were protecting their own interests at the colonists' expense. Conflicts between Britain and the colonies intensified, culminating in the American Revolution, which lasted from 1775 to 1783 and secured independence for the United States.

After the war, the United States Congress intended to convert the public domain into organized states. The area now known as Ohio became part of the Northwest Territory, the land north and west of the Ohio River. The Northwest Ordinance of

1787 provided for an orderly administration of this territory and its transformation into settled states.

By 1802, the population of the eastern division of the Northwest Territory had reached 45,000, and Congress authorized an election of delegates and the drafting of a state constitution in preparation for Ohio's admission to the Union. A constitutional convention held in Chillicothe in November 1802 drafted Ohio's first constitution. (For more information about Ohio's first constitution, see Chapter 1.) After elections held in January 1803, the first Ohio General Assembly convened in Chillicothe on March 1 of that year.

History of Ohio's Capital City and Statehouse

When Ohio joined the Union in 1803, a two-story stone building in Chillicothe served as the state capitol. In 1810, for political reasons, the General Assembly moved the capital temporarily to Zanesville, holding sessions in the new brick courthouse. Legislation enacted on February 20, 1810, provided for the selection of a permanent site for a capital "not more than 40 miles from what may be deemed the common center of the state," ruling out both Chillicothe and Zanesville. In 1812, the General Assembly restored Chillicothe as a temporary capitol until the new capitol could be built.

On February 21, 1812, the General Assembly created a new capital city and named it after Christopher Columbus. As part of a deal to move the capital to its present location, four prominent Ohio landholders in the Franklinton area gave two ten-acre parcels to the state, one for the site of a statehouse, the other for a penitentiary. On June 18, 1812, the first public sale of town lots in the new capital city took place. In 1816, the General Assembly

met for the first time in the new brick Statehouse built at the corner of High and State Streets.

By the mid-1830s, Ohio's growth had given rise to discussions about construction of a larger Statehouse. In 1838 the General Assembly appointed three commissioners, none of them trained architects, to solicit designs for a new capitol. After conducting a nationwide competition, the commissioners awarded prizes to the top three designs. First place went to Henry Walter, architect; second place went to Martin E. Thompson, architect; and third place went to Thomas Cole, landscape artist. It is generally agreed that the current Statehouse, built in the Greek Revival style, is based in part on each of the three designs.

On July 4, 1839, the cornerstone of the Statehouse was laid. A cholera epidemic, budget shortages, and an eight-year work stoppage delayed construction. Seven architects, with seven different points of view, supervised construction, which accounts for the numerous design changes that occurred. Prisoners performed much of the work done on the Statehouse. Many of them, having labored on the Ohio Penitentiary, were experienced stone cutters. Both the Penitentiary and the Statehouse were built of Columbus limestone taken from a quarry on the west bank of the Scioto River. The Statehouse was completed in 1861. Although original cost estimates to build the Statehouse totaled \$450,000, its actual final cost exceeded \$1,300,000.

Ohio's government outgrew the new Statehouse within a quarter-century. In 1897 the General Assembly authorized construction of an annex to house the Ohio Supreme Court and several other departments of state government. The Annex, now the Senate Building, was completed in 1901 at a cost of \$450,000.

Restoration of the Statehouse

The Statehouse is considered one of the finest examples of Greek Revival architecture in the United States and is one of the oldest working capitol buildings in the country. It is on the National Register of Historic Places and has been designated a National Historic Landmark. By the 1980s, however, changes in the building, including the division of its original 53 rooms into 317, had deprived the Statehouse of much of its early dignity. Moreover, the structure did not meet contemporary building code standards. Deficiencies included lack of a sprinkler system, unclear emergency exit paths,

antiquated electrical, heating, and cooling systems, asbestos requiring abatement, leaky roofs, and lack of a security system. The revitalization of Capitol Square began in 1985 with the work of a volunteer team of landscape architects. Renovation of the grounds around the Statehouse followed, and in 1989 an architectural firm presented a master plan for restoration and rehabilitation of the Statehouse itself.

Beginning with the restoration of the Senate Building in 1989, the project took seven years to complete. The project's accomplishments included the removal of more than 220 rooms that had been added over the years, reopening of the skylights in the House and Senate Chambers and the Rotunda dome, and reopening of the building's four interior light courts. In addition to restoration, the project provided many technological and other improvements and enhancements:

- A safer environment within the Statehouse and Senate Building for the state employees who work there and for the Ohio citizens who come to participate in the legislative process;
- Additional public and educational facilities, including the Ohio Statehouse Museum Education Center, for the thousands of people who tour the Capitol each year;
- Access to Capitol Square and its buildings for people with disabilities;
- Creation of a television studio to produce educational programs and to broadcast legislative sessions; and
- Creation of the Atrium, an enclosed space connecting the Statehouse and Senate Building that is used for meetings and functions of governmental groups and nonprofit organizations.

The restoration project, which cost \$121 million, was completed in 1996. Since then, additional enhancements have been made to Capitol Square. The most notable are the following:

- Ohio Veterans Plaza on the east side of the Statehouse grounds;
- Ohio Holocaust and Liberators Memorial on the south side of the Statehouse grounds;

- George Washington Williams Memorial Room, honoring Ohio's first African-American state legislator, on the first floor of the Statehouse; and
- Ladies' Gallery, also on the first floor, honoring the first women legislators who served in the General Assembly.

In addition, eight Statehouse hearing rooms are dedicated to the eight United States presidents from Ohio and house collections of artifacts relevant to each. The Statehouse Museum, located on the Statehouse ground floor, provides a wealth of information on Ohio history and government through interactive exhibits, historical artifacts, and audiovisual media. Also located on the ground floor is an education classroom that is used for orientations and multimedia presentations for groups at the Statehouse.

Capitol Square Review and Advisory Board

The General Assembly created the Capitol Square Review and Advisory Board in 1993 to oversee the Statehouse restoration and to maintain and preserve the Capitol Square buildings following completion of the renovation project. The 12-member Board consists of two current representatives and a former Speaker of the Ohio House of Representatives, two current senators and a former President of the Ohio Senate, four members appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate, and the clerks of the House and the Senate. Gubernatorial appointees include the Governor's chief of staff and representatives of the Ohio Arts Council, the Ohio History Connection, and the public at large.

Daily operations of the Board are performed by an executive director and a staff of about 50 employees. The staff manages the maintenance, operations, and security of the Capitol Square buildings and grounds and operates the underground parking garage and the Statehouse Museum Shop. The Board also grants permits for public activities occurring on the Statehouse grounds and oversees the operations of the Statehouse restaurant. Through the Statehouse Museum, the Board coordinates tours of Capitol Square and provides educational resources and programming about the buildings, their history, and Ohio's government. Information about Statehouse tours is available at www.ohiostatehouse.org, (614) 728-2695, or (614) 728-3726.

Capitol Square Foundation

The Capitol Square Foundation was established in 1987 to increase public awareness of and to involve citizens in the history of the Statehouse. Its purpose is to raise funds to obtain, restore, and maintain artifacts and other items related to the history of the Statehouse and to support the work of the Statehouse Museum. Examples of Foundation efforts include the establishment of the Great Ohioans Award that commemorates the historical contributions of honorees and the School Transportation Grant Program that helps schools defray the transportation expenses of school visits to the Statehouse. The Foundation is a nonprofit organization that does not receive government funding. More information is available on its website (http://www.capitolsquarefoundation.org/about_the_foundation.htm).