

CHAPTER XIII

THE TOWNSHIP OUTSIDE THE CITY

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Scioto Township is the background of Chillicothe in more ways than as a figure of speech, since it was created six years after the town was laid out by General Massie. One of the first acts passed by the new State Legislature of 1803 was to "regulate the election of justices of the peace, and for other purposes." Previous to the passage of that measure, justices of the peace had been appointed by the governor.

SCIOTO TOWNSHIP ORGANIZED

The first section, which was passed with the act as a whole, on April 16, 1803, reads as follows:

"Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Ohio, That the associate judges of the Court of Common Pleas, in each and every county within this State, shall meet on the tenth day of May next, at the places where courts are to be held, and shall proceed to lay out their counties respectively into a convenient number of townships."

The second section provides "That the judges aforesaid shall, at the time and places aforesaid, appoint to each township a proper number of justices of the peace, who shall be elected on the twenty-first day of June, at such place in each township as the said judges may direct, agreeable to the provisions of an act entitled, 'An act directing the mode of conducting elections.'"

SHRINKING TO ITS PRESENT AREA

Reuben Abrams, William Patton and Felix Renick, associate judges for Ross County, met at the courthouse in Ross County, on Tuesday, the tenth day of May, 1803, agreeable to the law, and proceeded to regulate and establish the boundaries of the different

townships in this county, and to apportion the justices of the peace to be elected in and for each. Eleven townships were thus established for Ross, and the boundaries then assigned to Scioto Township were as follows: "Beginning at the forks of the road above the house of Henry Massie, thence south twenty-five degrees, west to the road leading to Swearingen's mill; thence with said road to Paint Creek; thence up Paint Creek to the big narrows, below Vincenthollers; thence south from the lower end of said narrows to the upper boundaries of Peepee township; thence with said boundary to the beginning." The qualified electors in this township were required to meet at the courthouse in Chillicothe, on the twenty-first day of the following June, then and there to elect four justices of the peace for the said township.

Not long after this, the Board of County Commissioners was created, having jurisdiction in all matters pertaining to the erection of new townships, the change of township lines, etc. The territory of Ross County has been greatly curtailed since that time; some of the townships then established being comprised in the new counties, those that remained being diminished in size and new ones added. All the changes affecting the boundaries of Scioto Township, are as follows:

September 9, 1806, the south part of Scioto Township and the north part of Peepee (now in Pike County) were united to form the present Township of Franklin.

August 13, 1807, the line dividing Scioto and Twin townships was established "by beginning at Paint creek, at the upper end of the narrows at the mouth of the Cattail run; thence a due south line to the dividing ridge between Sunfish and Paint creeks."

August 23, 1809, it was "ordered that the line between Union and Scioto townships be run as follows: Beginning on the east bank of North Paint, on the line between James Porter and Robert McDill; thence a straight line to the junction of the Deer Creek and Limestone roads."

June 20, 1810, a part of Union Township was set off and attached to Scioto Township, "by a line beginning at the fork of the Deer Creek and Limestone roads; thence a straight line to the southeast corner of Colman's survey on main Paint; thence with the southwest line of said survey to the creek."

March 5, 1811, a portion of Scioto Township was taken from the southwest part, to form the township of Huntington.

April 8, 1818, it was "ordered that Scioto township be extended from the mouth of the North Fork of Paint creek; thence up main Paint, with the meanders thereof, to the mouth of the Cattail run; thence a straight direction to the bridge on the North Fork of Paint creek; thence down said creek to the intersection

of a line run by Jeremiah McLane between Scioto and Union townships.'"

The township lines, as these changes, and perhaps a few others, have left them, are exceedingly irregular, as are those of all the townships in the military district. The townships bounding Scioto (beginning at the north and passing around by the east) are Springfield, Liberty, Franklin, Huntington, Twin and Union. The township has a greater extent of water boundary than any other in Ross County, the Scioto River forming its boundary for about eight miles on the northeast, and Paint Creek for about five miles on the south.

PHYSICAL BEAUTIES

A large portion of Scioto Township is composed of the bottom lands lying along the river and Paint Creek, and the tributaries of both. These lands are among the richest in the state, and served as the chief attraction to Massie and his men when locating their land warrants in this district. At the "station prairie," two or three miles below Chillicothe, in the spring of 1796, his colony of pioneers turned up the first furrows in this virgin soil, which, although it has yielded to the plough for more than a hundred consecutive summers, seems as yet to have lost nothing of its marvelous fertility.

But outside of the area watered by the streams, the land rises into irregular, undulating hills, some of which reach the height of 500 or 600 feet. All of these were originally covered with a fine growth of timber of the most valuable kinds, among which the beech and sugar maple were largely represented. Many of the original trees, of enormous size, are yet standing but, for the most part, the first growth has been removed, and, where the surface is too steep for cultivation or pasturage, second and third growths already large enough for profitable use, have taken its place. On the summits of many of these hills, however, there are broad tablelands of excellent soil, which produces good crops of Indian corn and other grain.

It is the immediate neighborhood of these hills that gives to Chillicothe its beautiful setting. There are, perhaps, a dozen summits in its immediate neighborhood (some of them, like Mount Logan, lying just across the eastern line, in the adjoining township of Springfield) from any one of which a charming view is obtained, of the city and surrounding country. But the finest outlook is from the top of Cemetery Hill, just south of the city, which marks the angle between the Scioto and Paint valleys, commanding a view of both and of their junction. It was this point which,