



Name _____

Date _____

Student Reading: 13.8 Transportation in Ohio: Making Connections

Transportation has played an important role in the growth of Ohio. From trails to highways, the story of Ohio's transportation is one involving industry and development. Ohio has been able to influence the movement of people, products, and ideas round the country because of its transportation.

Zane's Trace

In 1796, Ebenezer Zane asked Congress for permission to build a road through the Ohio region. The government agreed because they believed a road would encourage trade and settlement in Ohio. Zane built the road using existing American Indian trails and at first the road was only accessible by foot or horseback.

Zane's Trace was one of Ohio's earliest roads. It stretched across the Northwest Territory and connected Virginia to Kentucky. The road allowed Ohio to grow economically, bringing business leaders and farmers to the area. Settlers



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also came increasing the state's population. Zane's Trace continued to be a major road in Ohio until after the War of 1812.

The National Road

One of the first paved roads to cross the Appalachian Mountains was the National Road. Also known as Cumberland Road, Congress **commissioned** the road in 1806. Building of the road began in Cumberland, Maryland in 1815. The road continued across Ohio from 1825 to 1838. The National Road reached its end in Vandalia, Illinois in 1840.

The National Road improved transportation between the frontier and the East Coast. It opened Ohio and much of the Northwest



(The National Road in Zanesville. Courtesy of Ohio Memory.)



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Territory to travelers and settlers. New towns called Pike towns were founded along the road. These Pike towns offered saloons, inns, and supplies to travelers. Many of these towns are still in existence today.

Canals

The **canal** system was built in Ohio in the early 19th century. The main industry in Ohio was agriculture and the state needed reliable transportation to



(This image is an engraved illustration of the Miami River Canal. Courtesy of Ohio Pix.)

move products to the east.

The two major canals in Ohio were the Miami-Erie Canal, which connected Cincinnati and Lake Erie, and the Ohio-Erie Canal, which

ran from Portsmouth to

Cleveland. The canal system also included several **tributaries** to Ohio's major



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cities. These man-made waterways allowed for each and fast transportation of goods, crops, and animals.

More than four thousand workers dug the canals, including many immigrants. Pay for this grueling work was thirty cents per day, plus room and board. In areas where the land was elevated, locks were built. A **lock** is used to raise and lower boats between stretches of water that are on different levels. Flooding and freezing during the winter months caused some problems with the maintenance of the canals. However, these problems were minor when compared to the advantages the canals brought to Ohio.

The canals changed the way Ohio shipped goods. Most canals were in operation until the late



(An accurate representation of an old canal boat that was used in a Cincinnati parade. Courtesy of Ohio Pix.)



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1800s when railroads became popular in Ohio. There is a short stretch near Zanesville called the Muskingum River Canal that is still in operation today.

Railroads

Around the time that the canals were being completed, the building of railroads began. Railroad soon replaced canals as the major form of transportation in Ohio. Railroads had three major advantages over canals. They connected communities that did not have



(Pennsylvania #9 steam locomotive, most likely at the Upper Sandusky depot. Courtesy of Ohio Pix.)

canal service, they provided faster travel for passengers and **cargo**, and they did not freeze in the winter.

Most of Ohio's early rails connected towns within the state or only went a short distance to neighboring states. The first railroad completed in Ohio



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connected Toledo with Adrian, Michigan. This changed in the mid-1850s when the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad crossed the Appalachian Mountains and came to Ohio. This was the first railroad to connect Ohio with the eastern states.

By 1910 there were more than 9,500 miles of railroad track in Ohio. New track was usually built to accommodate new industrial centers like Cleveland, Youngstown, and Akron. This growth lasted until after World War II when cars and airplanes became a more popular form of travel. Today railroads still have an important role in the transportation of freight.

Interstate Highways

The United States government passed the Interstate Highway Act in 1956. This was the largest national transportation project in the history of the United States. Thousands of miles of paved highways would connect the country from coast to coast. It took several decades to complete, but it allowed transportation to become more efficient.



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This new highway system led to the rise of **suburbs**. Workers could travel to and from work very easily using the new highways. New communities grew quickly as families moved from the cities to the suburbs. In Ohio, interstates became important paths for both travel within the state and to other areas of the country.



(The men are paving road beds in Canton, Ohio. Courtesy of Ohio Pix.)



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Reading Comprehension Questions

1. Why did the government approve the construction of Zane's Trace?

2. Railroads had an advantage over canals because railroads _____ communities that were not located next to a canal or waterway. Railroads were also _____ than canals which meant this arrived quickly. Also, railroad did not _____ in cold temperatures.

3. The two major canals in Ohio were

- a. The Erie and Ohio
- b. The Miami and Cuyahoga



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- c. The Miami and Erie
- d. The Erie and Superior