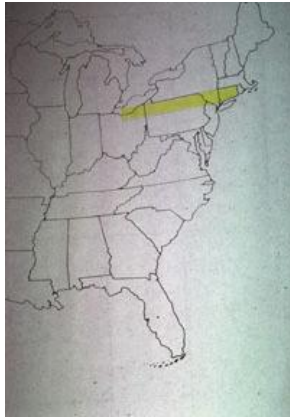


Ohio's Connecticut Western Reserve

When the British colonies were first established on the Atlantic Coast, no one knew what lay



Connecticut's land

beyond their western boundaries. Everything west belonged to England which had the power to deed all or any part of it to any person or company to whom King

Charles II might choose. Since these western lands had neither been surveyed nor mapped, the King's experts could define the boundaries of his land grants in only the vaguest of terms. Such loose grants were made to Virginia, Delaware, Pennsylvania, New York, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and others. The Connecticut grant of 1630, like many others, had an indefinite western boundary stretching to the Pacific Ocean. Legal descriptions of valuable lands read in magnificently puzzling and inadequate words.

The western boundary of Connecticut overlapped that of New York and Pennsylvania and on July 3, 1778, a bloody civil war ensued in the Wyoming Valley of the Susquehanna River over settlers' conflicting claims to the land. A federal ruling of 1782 awarded the disputed territory to Pennsylvania;

however, Connecticut refused to yield her title to the land west of Pennsylvania's fixed boundary. She still claimed title to this strip of the continent from Pennsylvania westward between the 41° and 42° 2' parallels.

The Revolutionary War temporarily halted the boundary disputes. Following the war, states holding western claims surrendered them to Congress to form the public domain. In 1786 Congress accepted Connecticut's claim and the state was allowed to reserve about 3 million acres for its future needs. Connecticut reserved the westernmost one million acres, known as the "Firelands," as reparation for its citizens whose property was destroyed by the British in the Revolutionary War. The rest was to be sold for not less than \$1 million to the Connecticut Land



The "Western Reserve"

Company, a group of private speculators. This reserved territory, never part of the Northwest Territory, was known by several

names: New Connecticut, the Connecticut Reserve, the Connecticut Western Reserve, etc., but it was soon designated in legal

records as the Western Reserve of Connecticut and in Ohio simply as the Western Reserve.

The Connecticut Land Company had to dispose of the entire Reserve before concluding the sale of any single portion of it. Proceeds of the \$1,200,000 sale were to be placed in perpetuity into a special fund the interest from which would support the public schools of Connecticut, terms still in effect today. Moses Cleaveland's share of the purchase was \$32,600 and he himself was made general agent of the Company to conduct the surveys of the reserve in person.

Moses Cleaveland and his party of fifty men reached the western border of Pennsylvania on July 4, 1796. They were not settlers but staff surveyors and their aids. It had taken them 68 days to make the trip from Dover to Conneaut. Their



Moses Cleaveland

job was to survey and mark with posts the boundaries of the Western Reserve, a land of nearly unbroken forest. It began at the western border Pennsylvania between 41° and 42° 2' north latitude and extended westward for 120 miles. The boundary line was to be drawn as far west as the Cuyahoga River and the land therein apportioned into townships five miles square.

On July 22, 1796 the party

reached the Cuyahoga River and it is here that Moses Cleaveland chose the site for the capital of the Western Reserve, first called Cuyahoga Town, later renamed Cleaveland by the surveyors in his honor.

An early winter prompted the surveyors' departure to Connecticut in October. They returned, without General Cleaveland, in 1797 to complete the survey of the Reserve. It was in the summer of 1797 that the present boundaries of the area known as "Slavic Village" were surveyed. Major modern streets such as East 71st, East 55th, Fleet, and Harvard, were the surveyors' original 100-acre lot boundary lines. The surveyors' notes indicated that they broke camp near Morgan's Run near the Worsted Mills valley near East 55th and Broadway. Their notes also indicate they traveled through the Burke's Run area near East 71st and Worley as they described the terrain and vegetation they found.