

Scioto County Early Railroad History

On March 13, 1849, a meeting was held to discuss a railroad coming through Portsmouth. On March 24, the townspeople voted overwhelmingly for a \$100,000 railroad "subscription". Private "subscription" money came in over the next few months.

The stockholders of the Scioto & Hocking Valley Railroad met at Chillicothe in May and elected seven directors. In May, the entire county was asked to vote, but the citizens in the county voted against the railroad. On May 25, 1850, another election was held in which the railroad passed.

On November 23, 1850, proposals for the building of the first 20 miles of the railroad were accepted. Work began on January 31, 1851.

On July 9, 1852, the first railroad ties were laid in Scioto County for the Scioto & Hocking Valley Railroad. On September 10 of the same year, the first locomotive appeared in Portsmouth. The railroad was completed 14 miles out of the city by November. On December 24, there was an excursion that traveled to Scioto Furnace for 25 cents round trip.

In March of 1853, the tracks were completed to South Webster, and by October, trains ran to Jackson. During this era the railroad served over 25 furnaces.

On April 30, 1862, the receipts were published as \$67,338.01, with expenses, \$41,202.03. In May of 1863, The Scioto & Hocking Valley Railroad sold for \$411,100 to a Providence, Rhode Island company for the second mortgage. Stockholders lost their stock, and the name was changed to Portsmouth & Newark Railroad.

The first railroad accident recorded in the county was April, 6, 1860, when Alex Boyer, an employee, was killed when he fell between the cars while jumping one to another.

In January 1864, the railroad was then sold to the Marietta & Cincinnati Railroad and Scioto County was known as the Portsmouth branch.

The railroad was said to be organized as the Portsmouth & Columbus Railroad on April 9, 1864, but it did not come to realization. In 1866, the Portsmouth Branch of the Marietta & Cincinnati Railroad was changed to correspond with the main line.

On July 26, 1870, the first train ran from Portsmouth to Columbus by way of Hamden and Athens. This run took 8 hours and 20 minutes at the price of \$5.90.

Throughout the county's history, many early railroads were bought and sold and changed names. Among them was the Ohio & Northwestern Railroad which became the Cincinnati, Portsmouth & Virginia Railroad on June 11, 1891. In March 1901, the Norfolk & Western Railroad (presently Norfolk & Southern) purchased the Cincinnati, Portsmouth & Virginia Railroad for \$2.5 million.