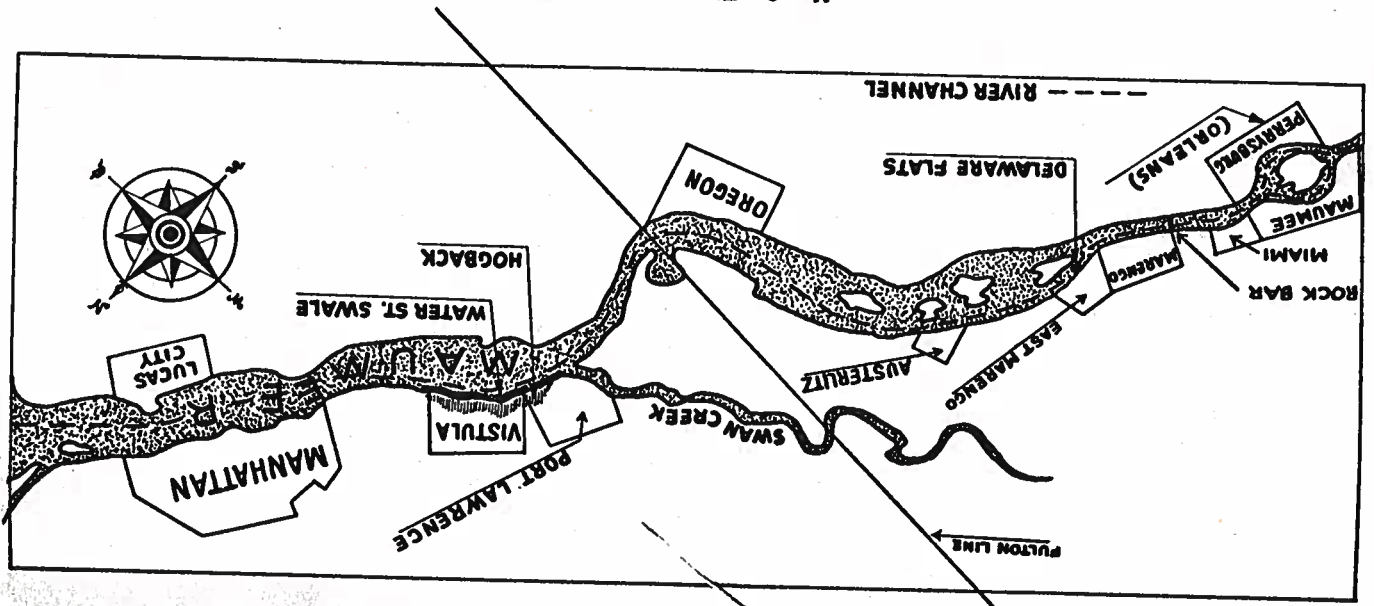


now the foot of LaGrange Street. Major Stickney was the prime mover in this venture, and he was impelled to do so by a conviction that the absentee Cincinnati owners could not be depended upon for improvements necessary to Port Lawrence's prosperity. He wanted a city in which he and other local residents would build town facilities without being held back by absentee landlords lacking in incentive and knowledge to do the right thing at the right time. Associated with him were several men of wealth of Lockport, New York, who brought not only their capital but themselves to the new project. One of these was Lewis Godard who had a store in Detroit, and who undertook to set one up in Vistula in exchange for some of Stickney's town lots. It was Godard's son Alonzo who dreamed up the name Vistula. He was studying his geography lesson during a meeting of the town planners at Detroit when the men asked him to find a name for the new town. It was the child who suggested the name of the Polish river in eastern Europe. Sanford L. Collins, Godard's clerk, set up the first Vistula store, and soon a warehouse, docks, and other facilities were constructed to enable the new town and its many new arrivals to take part in the trade of Lake Erie. Other Lockport men joined in the project including Edward Bissell, Samuel Allen and Oti. Hathaway. Bissell seems to have been most energetic and versatile in this work especially in clearing the land, building the saw mill a mile or so up Swan Creek, and doing the grading necessary for wharf and street purposes. Allen, moreover, appears to have been able to impress outsiders with his lordly manner. In 1832 one prospective buyer, Jesup W. Scott, was received by Allen "in that prompt business style and with an air that might have become one of the solid men of Boston, accustomed to shake State street by his stately tread."

The Hogback And Toledo Harbor. There was another factor in the locating of Vistula and Port Lawrence that was of profound importance for the future of Toledo. The two towns occupied a long hogback or land elevation extending about a mile along the north shore of the Maumee River from Swan Creek. On its river side was a steep bluff descending abruptly to the water. On the land side the hogback sloped more gradually into Mud Creek which was the old valley of Swan Creek and which had once cut "cross town" to

How Toledo Got Its Name
(one version)



Map 8. The Maumee towns.

Downes, Canal Days Vol. 2.

empty into the Maumee near what is now the end of LaGrange Street. Some geological movement had caused Swan Creek to change its course leaving the hogback with the Maumee on one side and the sluggish Mud Creek or swamp on the other. The hogback was just another one of those near islands—presqu' isles—that are so frequent along the banks of the Maumee. To visualize this one must think of



Before Water Street was filled in.

Summit Street as the crest of the hogback. It was much higher in 1832 than today, (20 feet in some places) and, of course, covered with trees. But to complete the visualization one must think of Water Street between Swan Creek and LaGrange as a swale of shallow water overgrown with weeds. In other words, the bluff of the hogback arched inward, but its two extremities (Port Lawrence and Vistula) fronted squarely on the deepest channel of the River so that Lake Erie ships could dock at Swan Creek (Port Lawrence) and at LaGrange Street (Vistula). That is why the Port Lawrence Company platted its town where it did, and that is also why Stickney picked his site for Vistula. Then in the years that followed the top of the hogback—Summit Street—was lowered by scraping and grading. The shallow water was thus filled in between the two towns so that eventually the filled-in area became Water Street and Toledo had a marvelous harbor about a mile long whose deep channel came so close to the shore that it was easy for wharves to be built for Lake Erie shipping along the entire water front.

Union of Port Lawrence and Vistula. Competition naturally led Port Lawrence (Upper Town) to have to keep the pace set by Vistula (Lower Town). Led by such town builders as Andrew Palmer, S. B. Comstock, W. P. Daniels, Richard Mott, and such Vistulites as Edward Bissell, who bought lots in Port Lawrence, the village soon had a hotel (later the Indiana House), stores, wharves, saw-mill, hay-scales, residences,

school, and church lots characteristic of an ambitious town. In the meantime, that is, late in 1833, the two towns united, taking the name of Toledo, after the city in Spain, as happened, it seems, as Stickney and his associates had chosen the name of Vistula. They were impelled to this act by the necessity of forming a united front to get the post office at Tremainsville on the Detroit Road transferred to the Maumee River. This transfer was not actually accomplished until 1835, after Toledo had laid out a passable road along the river to Maumee, and after the village of Manhattan farther down the river had completed this detour to the Detroit Road north of Tremainsville.

Another unifying step was the buying of a controlling interest by Toledoans Bissell, Daniels, Palmer and others in the stock of the Michigan-chartered Erie and Kalamazoo Railroad. This had been designed by Michigan as a horse-car line to connect Lake Michigan with Lake Erie via the lower Maumee River in the days when Michigan controlled the area. But after the Toledo War it was quickly turned into a Toledo and an Ohio proposition by vigilant capitalists. The land holders of Vistula and Port Lawrence, who continued as separate real estate "proprietors" after the political consolidation, vied with each other to provide facilities to make sure that the railroad would build its line beside the wharves of both Upper and Lower Towns, and to have a connecting link along the bogs that were to become Water Street. The road was opened in 1836 for horses and in 1837 for steam engines.

Toledo The Chosen City. Thus by 1837 the general spirit of boom resulted in a Toledo population claimed to be as great as 2,000—truly a phenomenal growth for the brief period of five years. One "W", writing in the Blade of May 1, 1839, told of streets "constantly thronged by people engaged in the perilous enterprise of amassing wealth. Industry and economy were for a time suspended, and village property and paper cities became the ruling passion of the day." In 1836 Toledo had seven "large" hotels, six warehouses, 35 shops, two steam saw mills, four lumber yards, twelve lawyers, three schools, and two newspapers. A "splendid" court house was being constructed, and the newly incorporated city elected John Berdan (Whig) first mayor over Andrew Palmer (Democrat). It received 138,000 tons of shipping (390