

Marietta, Ohio's First Permanent Settlement

The Northwest Ordinance opened the way for settlement in the Territory. The Ohio Company of Associates, (sometimes called The Ohio Company) was formed by a group of Massachusetts men with the purpose of land speculation in the Northwest Territory. **Land speculation** is a business venture in which land is bought, then hopefully resold at a higher price, to make a profit for the investors. They were interested in the land just north of the Ohio River, known as the Ohio Country. The Ohio Company was led by Generals Rufus Putnam, and Benjamin Tupper.

Dr. Manassah Cutler, an investor of the Ohio Company, worked with Congress to develop the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 and also the plan to grant war veterans land warrants. Both these enabled the Ohio Company to proceed with their business venture.

The Ohio Company chose a tract of land just north of the Ohio River which had been explored earlier by Generals Putnam and Tupper. Here they would have the benefit of the Muskingum and Ohio Rivers and also the protection of Ft. Harmar which sat at nearby.

The first group of settlers, 48 in all, began the first settlement in early April of 1788. The town was named Marietta, in honor of Marie Antoinette, the Queen of France. Many of the settlers were veterans of the Revolutionary War and were grateful to her for the help France had given the United States in the war.

Ohio Adventurers

This notice is to inform all officers and soldiers who served in the late war, and who are by an Ordinance of Congress to receive certain tracts of land in the Ohio Country, and also all other good citizens who wish to become adventurers in that delightful region, that an association by the name of the OHIO COMPANY has been formed.

The COMPANY has personally inspected the region and is fully satisfied that the lands are of much better quality than any other known to New England people. The climate, seasons and vegetation are equal to the flattering accounts which have been published.

In order to bring such a Company into existence we propose to meet at the Bunch of Grapes Tavern in Boston on Wednesday, the first day of March next, at 10 o'clock A.M to consider a plan for the association of said company.

RUFUS PUTNAM

BENJ. TUPPER

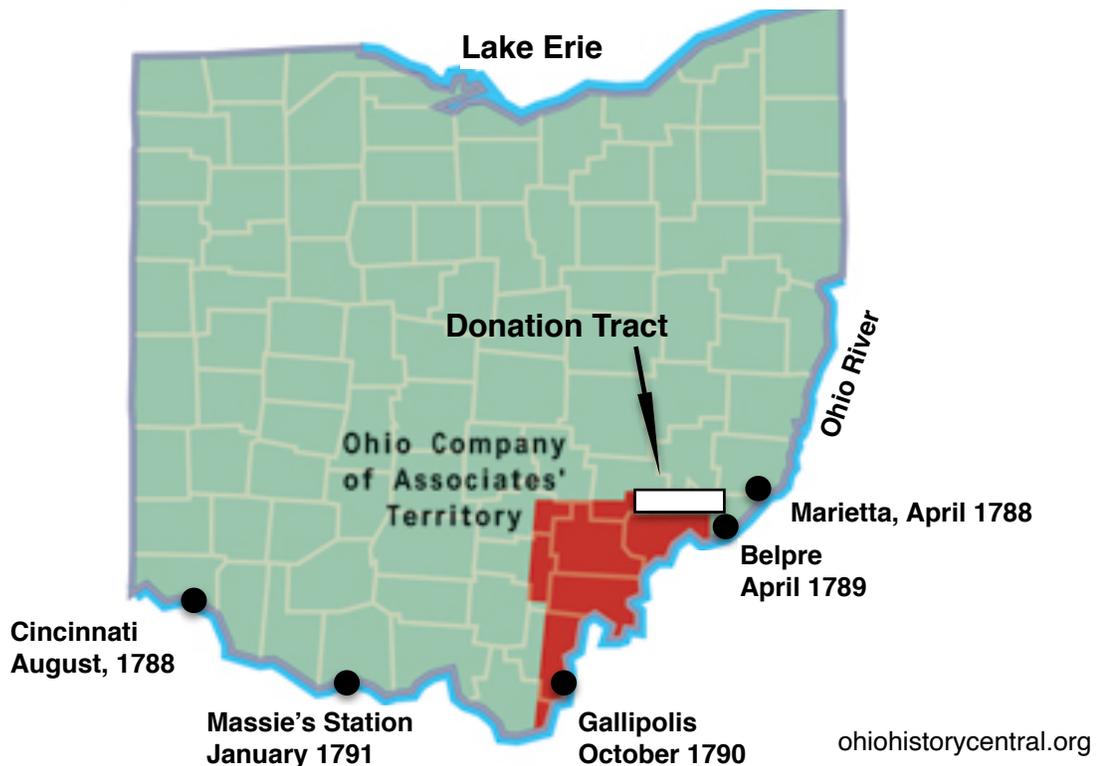
Rutland, Jan. 10, 1786

Settlement Encouraged by the Lure of Free Land

Many of the early pioneers came to the Northwest Territory to claim land with their land warrants. Still others were encouraged to move to the unsettled territory for free land in the Donation Tract which had been given to the Ohio Company by the Congress. This was land that sat on the northern edge of the Ohio Company's tract, which would be in more danger of attacks by the Indians. To be given the 100 acres of free land, one had to promise to live on the land and "improve" it. This meant the settler was required to build a home, plant fruit trees, and do other things to settle on the land. It was a brave and industrious family who chose this path to acquiring land!

The Ohio River became busy with flatboats carrying settlers. Shortly after Marietta was established, came the settlements of Belpre, Cincinnati, Gallipolis, and in 1791, a young surveyor named Nathaniel Massie settled Massie's Station.

Ohio Company of Associates Territory



Government Arrives in the Northwest Territory

Gov. Arthur St. Clair arrived in Marietta the following July. With his arrival, government had officially come to the Northwest Territory. Gen. Arthur St. Clair was elected Governor of the Territory by Congress. St. Clair was a wealthy businessman from western Pennsylvania. He had risen to the rank of Major General in the recent war to win independence from Great Britain. During the war, he had used much of his own personal wealth to cloth and feed his men. St. Clair had also held a number of elected offices and was serving as the President of Congress when he was elected to be Governor.



Congress elected Major Winthrop Sargent as Secretary of the Northwest Territory and three judges: Colonel John Cleve Symmes, Major General Samuel H. Parsons, and Brigadier General James Varnum. They all joined the Governor in Marietta which was to be the seat of government for the Territory.

The Northwest Ordinance put the government in the hands of these five men. They were to work together to see that the territory would be settled in an orderly manner.

Marietta enjoyed the importance of being the seat of government for the Northwest Territory, but that didn't last long. Gov. St. Clair moved the Territorial government to Cincinnati in 1790.