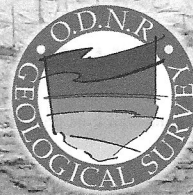


# Ohio Geology

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## Geology in the Public Square: Ohio Statehouses from 1800 to Today

By Mark E. Wolfe

The aspirations and accomplishments of a state are often reflected in the public buildings it conceives and constructs. A state capitol building is not only a place where important government functions are performed, but it is often a focal point of civic pride. Ohio has been fortunate to have beautiful and durable building stones, excellent clays and shales to make brick, and skilled masons to construct statehouses that embody the spirit of Ohio's citizens. In the more than 200-year history of Ohio, four statehouses were erected that represented the vision of the future for the state.

### Ohio's first statehouse in Chillicothe

A very early use of Ohio stone for building purposes occurred in 1800 when construction began on the first statehouse in Chillicothe, located approximately 45 miles south of Columbus in Ross County. Chillicothe was chosen as Ohio's first capitol due to its central location on two important early transportation corridors, Zane's Trace and the Scioto River, because it was the largest city in the state at the time and because it was home to influential Ohio politicians. The two-story stone building is believed to be the first public stone structure erected in the Northwest Territories. Major William Rutledge, a veteran of the Revolu-

tionary War, supervised the masonry work on the square, hipped roof and cupola style building. Ohio's first constitution was written there in 1802, and the building served as the state's capitol from 1803 to 1810 and from 1812 to 1816, when the capitol was temporarily relocated from Zanesville. Unfortunately, the historic building was razed after the "Great Chillicothe Fire" in 1852 to make way for the Ross County Courthouse. In 1940, the *Chillicothe Gazette* built a replica of the first statehouse as the headquarters for its newspaper operations.

Ohio's first statehouse was constructed of Devonian-age Berea Sandstone that was quarried by Major Rutledge to the immediate southwest of Chillicothe at Cemetery Hill. Fortescue Cuming, a traveler passing through Chillicothe in 1807, remarks in his diary that "...freestone...got in the neighborhood, is of whitish brown colour, and excellent for building." The Berea Sandstone in this area is usually 25 to 35 feet thick, with individual beds generally 6 to 12 inches thick. The Berea is a fine-grained, light gray sandstone that weathers to light brown. The Berea Sandstone was used to construct many homes and businesses in the Chillicothe area during the early 1800s, including the magnificent mansion constructed in 1807 by Thomas Worthington as part of his estate named

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Adena. Worthington was the sixth governor of Ohio and was considered a founding father of the state. The 300-acre estate and meticulously restored mansion are currently owned by the Ohio Historical Society and are open to the public.

### Competition to build Ohio's second statehouse in Zanesville

The Stone Academy at Putnam (West Zanesville) was constructed in 1809 to be used as the new statehouse, but after intense political maneuvering a competing brick building across the Muskingum River in Zanesville was chosen by the state legislature, instead. The Stone Academy is currently owned by the Pioneer and Historical Society of Muskingum County and represents the sole remaining public structure in Ohio from the early 1800s. The building stone for the Stone Academy, a Pennsylvanian-age Pottsville Group sandstone informally known as the "Homewood," is light brown, fine- to medium-grained, thick bedded to massive, micaceous, and is approximately 27 feet thick at the former quarry.

The statehouse in Zanesville was completed in 1809. The Zanesville statehouse was an imposing two-story brick structure with a cut-stone foundation and trim that resembled Independence Hall in Philadelphia. James Hampson is generally considered the builder of the statehouse in Zanesville, Jacob Houk supervised the stone and brickwork, and "Mr. Greene" was the mason responsible for cutting the sandstone into caps, window sills, and the 1809 date stone. The second Ohio statehouse, affectionately called "Old 1809" by the locals, was torn down in the 1870s to make way for the new county courthouse. The skillful mason work of the original building is preserved in the oval-cut, one-piece "1809" date stone transferred from the original statehouse and now found above the main entrance to the current Muskingum County courthouse.

The brick used to construct the statehouse in Zanesville was handmade by John Lee at his brickyard near Underwood Street. The brick was produced from the excellent Pennsylvanian-age clays and shales found near Zanesville. The Pennsylvanian-age sandstone used for the foundation and trim most likely came from the Townsend quarries north of Zanesville that supplied a large portion of the building stone used in Zanesville during the early 1800s. The sandstone quarried at Townsend is from the lower portion of the Allegheny Group and informally named the "Clarion." The "Clarion" is a medium-

to coarse-grained, light brown sandstone that is micaceous in part and often cross-bedded. The Clarion sandstone is 20 to 30 feet thick at the former Townsend quarries.

### The original statehouse in Columbus

After a brief return to Chillicothe (1812–1816), the Ohio state capitol was permanently moved to Columbus in 1817. Though still a small town in the early 1800s, Columbus was more centrally located than either Zanesville or Chillicothe, and most importantly, a large parcel of land had been donated to build a capitol. The new brick building had a foundation constructed of three tiers of hewn stone from Blacklick in eastern Franklin County. The finished building also had a belt of cut sandstone between the first and second stories. The nearby state office building was also built of brick and had a sandstone foundation and trim.

The building stone used to construct the original statehouse in Columbus was sandstone from the Mississippian-age Cuyahoga Formation. The Cuyahoga Formation at Blacklick consists of thin-bedded, gray sandstones and shales. The building-stone quality was variable primarily because of poorly cemented character, but the quarry furnished stone for many early Columbus buildings. The brick was produced on-site using alluvial clay taken from the Native American Mound originally located at the southwest corner of Mound and High Streets. The exterior of the original statehouse in Columbus deteriorated badly over the next 35 years, possibly due to poor building stone selection and brick manufacture, as well as insufficient maintenance, and was destroyed by fire on February 1, 1852, under mysterious circumstances. The dilapidated building had become known as "Rat Rabble" and no one regretted its destruction. Unfortunately, it is possible that some of the first geologic specimens from the Ohio Geological Survey were on display at the Statehouse and became lost prior to or during the fire. The original state office building was demolished in 1857 and the Governor and state legislative offices moved to the nearly finished Ohio Statehouse.

### Ohio's current statehouse

The cornerstone of the current Ohio Statehouse was laid in 1839, but it took 22 years of political intrigue, financial panics, industrial development, cholera epidemics, and engineering advancements before the building was completed in 1861. By late 1837, convicts from the