

Except for the quarrying of miller's burr stones and agricultural activities very little economic growth occurred in Jackson or Jackson County until the birth of the charcoal iron industry in the early 1850s. The iron industry in turn brought railroads to the Jackson area. This led to a solid and steady economic and population growth. The county's population was under 4,000 in 1820 and jumped to 10,000 by 1860.

With this combination, Jackson became an important part of the emerging charcoal iron industry. Before 1850, there were only two iron furnaces in the county. Twenty one furnaces were constructed in the Hanging Rock Iron Region between 1853 - 1856. Jackson County accounted for eight of these during that time and by 1856 eleven furnaces were operating in the county.

By 1860, the town of Jackson had a population of 1,077 and prosperity continued as the Civil War created a great demand for the high quality Hanging Rock charcoal iron. The iron used in the construction of the Union Ironclad, "Monitor", came from nearby Jefferson Furnace just west of Oak Hill. During the Civil War, General John Hunt Morgan and his Confederate troops paid Jackson a visit during his famous "Raid." He and his two thousand troops spent the night here, arresting all men and older boys, burning the railroad station and rolling stock, looting stores and destroying a local Yankee supporting newspaper.

However, by 1869 many of the charcoal furnaces began to go out of blast. They were being superseded by a series of new coke or coal fired furnaces which were able to draw upon the abundant coal resources of the region. Between 1864 and 1866 three new coke furnaces were established in the area. A second surge in coke iron furnaces occurred from 1872 to 1875 when six more stacks were built in the county. In 1882, Jackson County ranked third in the state in the production of pig iron.

Coal was a growing factor in the economic development of Jackson. Coal shipments rose from 10,000 tons in 1878 to 300,000 tons in 1890, making Jackson County tenth in the state's production of coal. By 1898 the county was the largest producer in the state with 89 mines and an annual tonnage of over 1,500,000 tons. This was in a time when all coal was mined by hand.

Because of its impressive position in industry and population, Jackson became a favorite location for national political figures to visit.

Jackson would host visits by William McKinley and President William Taft, starting a trend which would later bring candidates Warren Harding and still later Thomas Dewey. Iron production also received a temporary boost at the turn of the century. During the period 1899-1900, iron prices were soaring and Jackson experienced a tremendous boom between 1902 and 1906. Inter-urban railroad (street car) service was introduced with the construction of the Wellston Jackson Beltline Railway. It was at this point that Jackson reached its economic zenith.

As business increased Jackson saw the number of railroads serving this area expand. At its height Jackson was serviced by four railroads. The Baltimore and Ohio (B & O), The Detroit, Toledo and Ironton (DT & I), The Hocking Valley, later the Chesapeake and Ohio (C & O) and finally the Wellston and Jackson Belt Railway.

In 1908, Jackson County saw the construction of its last iron furnace. At the same time, the southern Ohio Iron Industry was beginning to decline because of increasing competition from cheaper and higher quality Great Lakes region ores.

By the 1930s the production of clay products had taken up some of the economic slack but the prosperous boom days associated with the iron and coal industries were over.

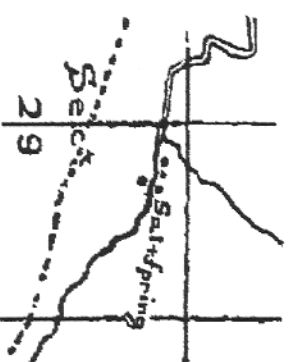
With the coming of World War II, Jackson found itself with two blast furnaces. These were prime employers in the area, continuing after the war with Globe Furnace closing in 1960 and Jisco closing in 1972.

Courtesy of:  
The Jackson Historical  
Society  
City of Jackson Tourism  
Board  
The Jackson County  
Genealogical Society

# EARLY JACKSON OHIO

- ~Established in 1795~
- ~One of the earliest settlements in the Northwest territory ~
- ~ First named "Salt Lick Town" because the "Scioto Salt Licks" were located there~
- ~Location of the Scioto Salt Works, Ohio's first industry.~

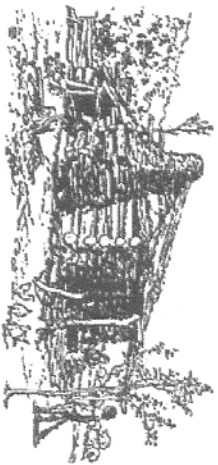
Jackson is located relatively at the geographical center of Jackson County along the banks of historic Salt Lick Creek. Its significance as an important early settlement lies in the fact that the "Scioto Salt Licks," or salt springs, were located here. Archaeological evidence indicates Indian and animal populations dating back to prehistoric times gathered at the licks to obtain salt.



Map of 1799  
showing  
Salt Springs at  
what is now  
Jackson

Because of the presence of the salt licks, many trails came from all directions into the licks like the spokes of a wagon wheel. These trails were so well engineered by the buffalo and other animals in regard to gentle grades and best directions, that many became highways in later years. A look at a modern road map illustrates this. Many fossils of ancient and extinct species

One species of the prehistoric mammoth, "Elephas Jacksoni," was discovered here and thus carries the name "Jackson." There are many accounts of early explorers and



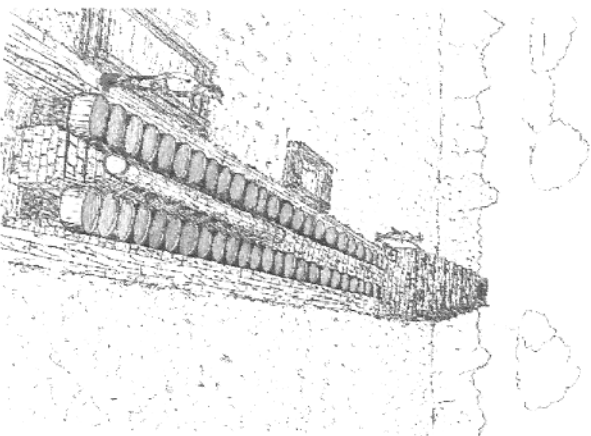
pioneers who were brought to the licks by their Indian captors to help make salt, including Daniel Boone. Even the celebrated explorer, Christopher Gist, visited here. Another sight the first settlers saw was on the public square where the Court House now stands. Here people found trees with their trunks charred and burned, along with evidence testifying to torturous deaths suffered by white prisoners who were burned to death.

Settlement did not begin here until September of 1795, after the Treaty of Greenville was signed. A community began to grow because of the need for salt. In a few short years this influx of people formed a community. It was named Salt Lick Town.

In 1798 Ross County was formed. The southeast corner of this county was Township Seven, Range Eighteen. This is the township in which the Scioto Salt Licks were located. Even though a part of Ross County, the Federal Government held title to the licks themselves. This was due entirely to the importance of salt. The United States Congress set aside a tract of land equivalent to a township (six miles square) comprised from parts of four townships around the salt licks. This became "The Scioto Salt Reserve." The main stipulations were: anyone could live within this reservation and make salt there, however, they could not purchase any land within the reservation.

Because of the rapid influx of settlers, salt was essential. Used mainly for preserving meat and seasoning, until the discovery of salt licks west of the Appalachian Mountains, salt had to be transported from the eastern part of the United States, making it very expensive. Those first who began making salt used single kettle affairs. This was a slow method and production yielded only small amounts.

Soon more ambitious methods of producing salt began. From single kettle affairs the new "salt furnaces" were arrangements with 50 to 60 kettles. These were capable of producing about 8 bushels of salt per 24 hour period, equivalent to about 400 pounds. This required boiling 3600 gallons of the brine rich waters from the licks.



A typical salt furnace arrangement  
Circa 1810

Each year, from 1800 on, the number of furnaces increased. Finally, in 1810 there were fourteen along the valley of Salt Lick Creek. The fuel (wood) required to operate the furnaces was incredible. The land, which became nude and bare of its magnificent forests. It was shocking how complete was the disregard in which the land was being handled. William Henry Harrison, who later would become President of the United States, visited the area in 1800 and recommended to the Congress that the Scioto Salt Reservation should be leased to prevent any further waste and destruction to the salt lands.

After Ohio became a state in 1803 one of the first things the new legislature addressed was how the Scioto Salt Licks would be managed. It was determined to appoint a

"Salt Agent" to oversee all operations. Taxes were levied on all furnace operations based on the number of kettles and their capacity. New regulations and changes to existing ones became a regular part of the salt works operations until their end in the mid 1820s.

After 1810, production of salt at the licks began to diminish. This was because a much richer salt brine was discovered along the Kanawha River in what is now West-Virginia. The brine was twice the strength of that at the Scioto Salt Works. This meant that twice as much salt could be produced from the same amount of salt brine.

By 1815 the need to establish a more accessible seat of justice was being discussed. To reach Chillicothe or Gallipolis took a full day by stage coach. This was a principal factor in the organization of what is now Jackson County. Jackson County was organized on March 1, 1816, and by order of the legislature this new county was named Jackson County, after General Andrew Jackson (a national hero at that time and who one day would become the President of the United States).

Acting on a request from the Ohio Legislature on April 16, 1816, the United States Congress gave authorization to select one section of land within the Salt Reservation which would make the most appropriate seat of justice. The salt licks, however, were excluded from any transfer of ownership. All proceeds from the sale of the lands within this section would be used to build a courthouse and other public buildings for use by the county. It was during this time that the town's name changed from "Salt Lick" to "Jackson-Court-House." Later it would become simply "Jackson."

The State of Ohio also sought to save the salt industry by drilling deep into the strata to obtain stronger salt brine. A richer brine was found at a depth of about 400 feet but it would not rise to the surface. By about 1820 the hand writing was on the wall. The salt industry, as an economic base for Jackson was doomed. From 1820, when there were five furnaces in operation, their numbers declined. Eventually production stopped altogether. In 1826 in the report of the Scioto Salt Works Agent's report, the last sentence reads: "The making of salt at the Scioto Salt Works has been entirely abandoned." Thus ended Ohio's first industry.