



Kevin F. Kern and Gregory S. Wilson

# OHIO

A HISTORY OF THE  
**BUCKEYE  
STATE**

WILEY Blackwell

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# Ohio

*A History of the  
Buckeye State*

Kevin F. Kern  
and  
Gregory S. Wilson

 **WILEY-BLACKWELL**

A John Wiley & Sons, Inc., Publication



This edition first published 2014  
© 2014 John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

*Registered Office*

John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, The Atrium, Southern Gate,  
Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 8SQ, UK

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350 Main Street, Malden, MA 02148-5020, USA

9600 Garsington Road, Oxford, OX4 2DQ, UK

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8SQ, UK

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*Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data*

Kern, Kevin F. (Kevin Frederic)

Ohio : a history of the Buckeye State / Kevin F. Kern and Gregory S. Wilson.

pages cm

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-118-54829-5 (hardback : alk. paper) - ISBN 978-1-118-54843-1 (paperback : alk. paper) -

ISBN 978-1-118-54832-5 (epub) - ISBN 978-1-118-54840-0 (mobi) - ISBN 978-1-118-54847-9

(vitalsource) - ISBN 978-1-118-54854-7 (epdf) - ISBN 978-1-118-54858-5 (coursesmart)

1. Ohio--History. I. Wilson, Gregory S. II. Title.

F491.K47 2014

977.1-dc23

2013020167

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Cover image: Aerial view of Serpent Mound State Memorial, Ohio. © Tom Till/SuperStock/Corbis

Cover design by Simon Levy

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# Acknowledgments

Although this book may have only two authors, literally hundreds of people have contributed to it in one way or another. In some ways, this makes writing the acknowledgments section more daunting than writing certain chapters: the text of every historical survey probably neglects to mention figures who ought to have been included, but most of those people are usually immune from feeling undeservedly slighted. To anyone not mentioned below who deserves to be, please accept our apologies, and we will endeavor to include you in future editions.

Contributing most visibly to the look and experience of the book was the Ohio Historical Society, which supplied the lion's share of images and was supportive of the project above and beyond what we had even hoped it would be. In particular we'd like to thank Janice Tallman who went the extra mile in securing images and getting permissions and Jillian Carney, who approved the entire set for our use. Thanks, too, to Victor Fleisher and his staff at the University of Akron Archives for their help in supplying images at extremely short notice.

We have been extremely fortunate to find ourselves surrounded by colleagues in the historical community who have made this project much less difficult than it might have been otherwise. First and foremost, George Knepper has been of inestimable inspiration and gracious support to us ever since we took over teaching Ohio History upon our arrival at the University of Akron (UA). The fact that it has taken two of us to do this gives some indication of the size of the shoes we have been trying to fill. Similarly, Andrew Cayton's (Miami University) research and writing should be an inspiration not just to all Ohio historians, but also to all

historians anywhere. The field is fortunate to have a scholar of his caliber bend his considerable talents its way, just as we are fortunate that he has generously shared his time and expertise with us. We also must thank Bil Kerrigan (Muskingum University) and Donna DeBlasio (Youngstown State University), who provided invaluable suggestions after reading an earlier draft of this manuscript. We would also like to thank our colleague in the Political Science Department at the University of Akron, John Green, who took time out from his many media interviews during election seasons to offer advice and suggestions for research. Finally, we would like to offer our sincerest gratitude to our colleagues in the History Department at the University of Akron during the years this manuscript was in preparation: Shelley Baranowski, T.J. Boisseau, Connie Bouchard, Rose Eichler, Lesley Gordon, Michael Graham, Steve Harp, Walter Hixson, Janet Klein, Mike Levin, Elizabeth Mancke, Martha Santos, Michael Sheng, Martin Wainwright, Zachery Williams, and Gang Zhao. The fact that we have had the good fortune to work every day with such talented historians and collegial supporters has made our time at UA something approaching a dream job.

We would also like to thank our students in our Ohio History classes and Greg's Public History classes at the University of Akron. While you learned from us (we hope), you may not have realized that we learned from you as well. Not only have your thousands of term papers and other class projects contributed to our understanding of Ohio history, your course evaluations and individual meetings with us have helped us understand the best ways to form an Ohio History learning community every semester.

The people most directly responsible for the production of this book, though, are the truly gifted people at Harlan-Davidson/Wiley with whom we have the great privilege to work over the past few years. Sincere thanks to Annie

Jackson and Carol Thomas who had this project put on their respective plates relatively late in the process but nevertheless pushed it through with utmost professionalism and stunning alacrity. Linda Gaio and Andrew Davidson probably deserve a page of acknowledgments of their own for their tireless efforts on this project (and their incredible patience with us). There is no one else with whom we would have rather worked to bring this book to fruition, and we feel that any thanks we could possibly give to them would still be insufficient.

In addition to the many people we must jointly thank, both Greg and Kevin also would like to express sincerest thanks to a number of people who have inspired us individually. Dr. G. Richard Kern instilled an intense interest in history in his son from a very early age and provided a wealth of material for him when he first began to teach Ohio History. He is still Kevin's favorite historian. Kevin's mother, Marilyn Ruth Rayle Kern, has not only always been tremendously supportive of his every endeavor, but also always reminded him (as Macaulay said) that "no one who is correctly informed as to the past will be disposed to take a morose or desponding view of the present." His brother Christopher Garrett-Kern and his sisters Kathleen Kern and Carolyn Schlicher have long been the most supportive siblings one could ever wish for, even if he does not tell them nearly enough. Without even knowing it, Kevin's daughter Jennifer-Carolyn and son Kenton have kept him going on many days when he might have otherwise quit. And last, sincerest thanks and love must go to Kevin's wife Kristie, who bore the burdens of the countless late nights and weekends Kevin devoted to the project with grace and endless patience. With no offense intended to Greg, Kevin thinks that his life with Kristie has been his greatest and most satisfying collaboration.

Greg became interested in Ohio history by working on his dissertation (later book), which dealt in part with deindustrialization in Ohio and the nation. He then began teaching at the University of Akron, taking over the Ohio History course (along with Kevin) from the legendary George Knepper. He also worked with Kevin to start the *Northeast Ohio Journal of History*. Starting the journal and teaching the course - and doing so in the former rubber capital of the world, helped fuel the desire to contribute to a new book on Ohio's history.

Perhaps the single most important intellectual and professional activity that inspired Greg's work was his great fortune of having co-written and helped to run three Teaching American History grants. Work on these TAH projects and with the many people who made them possible deepened his knowledge and enthusiasm for Ohio history, and teaching and learning more generally such that this book and these grants are intertwined. Funded through the federal Department of Education, these programs brought K-12 teachers together with historians and professional staff from historical sites and organizations to train teachers in U.S. history content. The funding for the program ended in 2012. The grants used Ohio history as a lens to examine how events at the state and local levels intersected with national and international events. It modeled the way Greg teaches Ohio history and has inspired so many aspects of this book. He is deeply indebted to the K-12 teachers with whom he worked on these grants. Through the many journeys they made together across Ohio and points east, they continued to amaze him with their enthusiasm, passion for learning, dedication to their craft, and their sense of humor. The current project director, Erin Stevic, has brought so much enthusiasm and knowledge of Ohio history and material culture to the project and made Greg think in new ways about teaching and learning history. A special thanks

goes to the former project director, Sharon Hays, who passed away in 2012; she combined skill, grace, and patience with a deep knowledge of history and enthusiasm for learning. The partners over all three grants at the Akron Public Schools, the Cuyahoga Valley National Park, the National Constitution Center, the Ohio Historical Society, the Summit County Educational Service Center, and the Stark County Educational Service Center - especially Jody Blankenship, Mark Butler, Pat Clayton, Betsy Hedler, Dave Irvine, Gail Martino, Adam Motter, and James "Kimo" Tichgelaar taught him so much about teaching, learning, and Ohio history. The grant evaluators, Doug Clay, Carole Newman, and Isadore Newman, added further to his knowledge and understanding. Finally, Greg thanks all of the staff and volunteers at the many sites we visited in Ohio, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia and Washington D.C. and the many scholars who led seminars and workshops. Without them, neither these grants nor this book would have been possible.

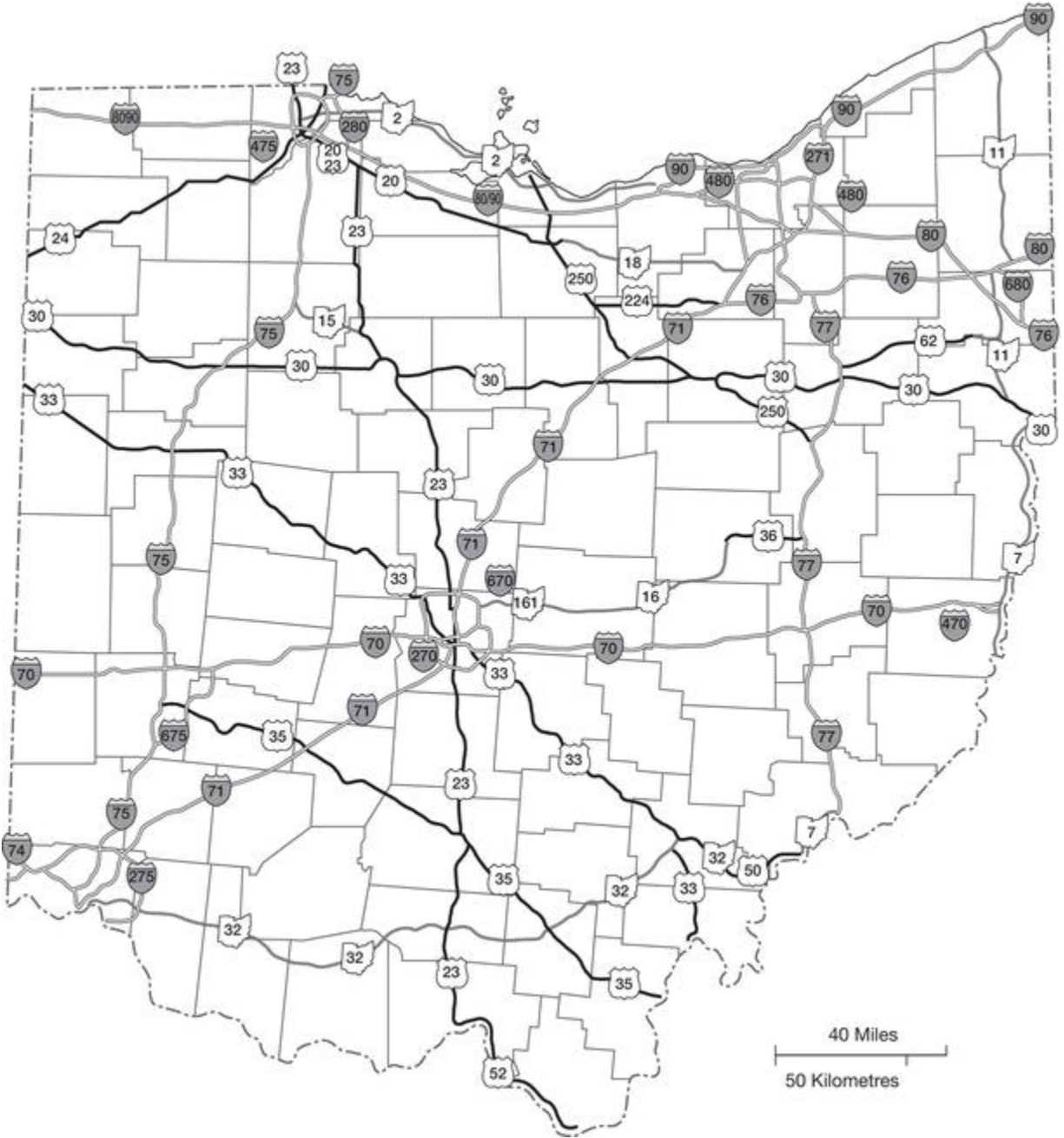
On a personal level, Greg's wife, Laura Hilton deserves his deep thanks - and a medal. She endured many days and nights of being a "grant widow" as he traveled with teachers during the academic year and in summers as part of the TAH projects. Busy with her own professional concerns as a historian and department chair, she - almost always with great patience - listened to ideas, offered criticism, and provided the support and encouragement he needed to see the book (and the grants) through. Greg and his wife share the joy and work of marriage, which includes taking care of their daughter, Kate, who grew up with this book and the grants as they evolved over several years since her birth in 2007. She always appreciated the gift items Greg brought back from sites around Ohio and elsewhere, and the stories he would tell her about where he'd been, even if she never quite understood why - sometimes - getting the book

finished and traveling for work were more important than playing school or flying like Supergirl.

Map of the United States.



Map of the highways of Ohio.





# 1

## Ohio Before Ohio

### *State Geology and Topography*

The history of Perry County, which sits in predominantly rural south central Ohio, is in many ways representative of the history of the state as a whole. The northern half underwent several phases of glaciation while the southern half lies in the more rugged unglaciated Allegheny Plateau. Lying just to the south of the famous prehistoric Newark Earthworks and Flint Ridge quarries, the county has numerous Woodland-period mounds as well as much older outcrops of the Flint Ridge and Upper Mercer flints that Ohio's earliest inhabitants prized highly. The county boasts several locations on the National Register of Historic Places, including Somerset's Saint Joseph's Church (the state's first Catholic Church) and Somerset's Old Courthouse (the oldest continuously used public building in the Northwest Territory). Although agriculture has always been important to the county other commercial pursuits have traditionally driven its economy. The National Ceramic Museum and Heritage center in Roseville celebrates only one of the many industries that once flourished in the area. Salt-making, centered in McCuneville, was the county's first industry, followed soon thereafter by lime production in Maxville. By the middle of the nineteenth century mining started in earnest, and for a while Perry was the largest coal-producing county in the state, with major operations in the "black diamond" region of Shawnee, Congo, and New Straitsville.

This combined with locally produced lime and the iron ore, found primarily in the southern part of the county, gave rise to a significant smelting industry with as many as seven blast furnaces operating within the county by the late 1800s. Commercial production of gas and oil in Corning and Junction City had augmented this economic boom by the early 1890s with the county reaching its peak population in the 1920s. As with the rest of the Appalachian region, Perry County faced increasingly difficult times starting with the Great Depression and has never fully recovered from the decline of its mining and iron industries. By the late twentieth century the county experienced increasingly low median incomes and high unemployment. Nevertheless, the county is still home to some of its historic industries, including the ceramic manufacturers Petro Ware in Crooksville and CertainTeed Corporation/Ludowic Roof Tile in New Lexington (the world's largest roofing tile firm).

However well Perry County may represent the highs and lows of Ohio's social and economic development it is an even better exemplar of the significance of Ohio's geology to its development. The flint obtained from Flint Ridge, which was such a valuable resource for early Native American groups, was a product of a unique set of silicon dioxide deposits made during the Pennsylvanian period. The saltwater that created Perry County's early salt mining industry was a remnant of Silurian period seas that covered the area, and one can trace its lime industry to the shells of the creatures that lived in those seas. The clays that formed the basis of the county's enduring ceramic industry—as well as the bricks that make up Saint Joseph's Church and Somerset's Old Courthouse—were drawn from deposits made by Mississippian and Pennsylvanian seas and by glaciers that came hundreds of millions of years later. The iron ore processed by Perry County blast furnaces, as well as the coal that made them run, came from the Pennsylvanian

period, while the limestone used as flux to remove impurities from the iron came primarily from the Devonian and Mississippian periods. Life forms from these periods probably formed the gas and oil that Ohioans began to use in the late nineteenth century. The 21 percent of Perry County's land that is used for agriculture has a complex geological signature with the rich soil having developed from both the erosion of ancient rock strata and relatively more recent glacial deposits. Although most residents there probably give it little thought, Perry County's history has been at least half a billion years in the making.

This case study of just one of Ohio's eighty-eight counties shows how important an understanding of Ohio geology is to understanding its history. To comprehend what happened to Ohioans through the ages, it is first necessary to appreciate what went on beneath their feet. Their stories and lives, explored in this book, are inextricably entwined with the nature of the land.

## Geology

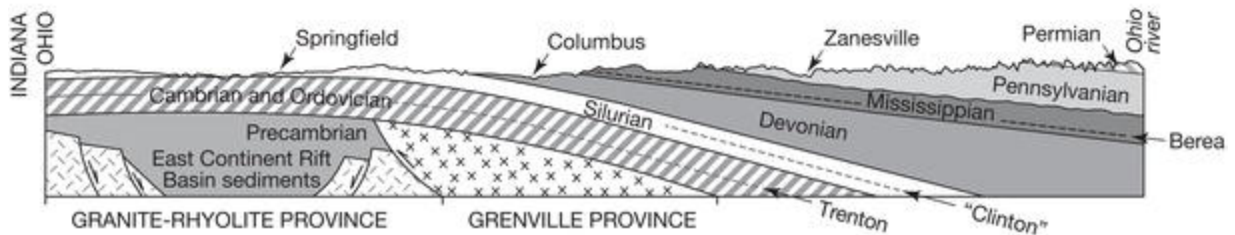
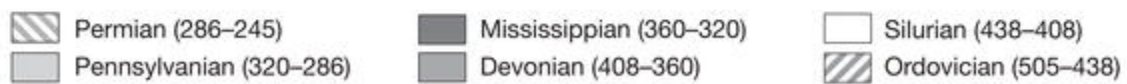
The substructure of Ohio can be thought of as a kind of multilayered cake that has been pushed up from the bottom and shaved off the top, leaving slanting edges of layers exposed on the surface. This differential exposure has given different regions of Ohio different surface rock types and resources. Each of these exposed strata, plus others that remain buried far beneath the surface, are the product of millions of years of geological processes. [Figure 1.1](#), a geologic map of Ohio, shows the formations beneath Ohioan's feet.

**[Figure 1.1](#)** Geologic map and cross-section of Ohio.

*Source:* Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Geological Survey



Geologic system (million years before present)



## **Precambrian era**

The oldest, “basement,” layer of Ohio’s substructure is a several-mile-thick and multilayered sheet of igneous and metamorphic rocks laid down between 1.5 billion and 800 million years ago. The most notable feature of this layer is the eastern edge of the “Granite-Rhyolite Province,” an uprising or “superswell” in the earth’s mantle under what is now Ohio and states farther west. This extending and splitting of the crust created a deep feature called the East Continent Rift Basin. At about the time that the superswell activity ceased, the continent that would become North America—of which Eastern Ohio lay on the edge—collided with another protocontinent to the east. The impact caused significant compression of the crust, the formation of faults, and a prehistoric range (known as the Grenville Mountains) that was gradually worn down over the following hundreds of millions of years.

Ohio’s Precambrian layer is not visible anywhere in the state, lying anywhere between 2,500 and 13,000 feet below the surface. Although it cannot be seen sometimes it can be felt. The relatively minor earthquakes that sometimes occur in Ohio arise from the rifts and faults of its basement layer.

## **Paleozoic era**

At the end of the Precambrian era (about 570 million years ago) the continent that became North America began to separate from the one it had collided with 300 million years earlier. Sitting on the edge of the continent Ohio was engulfed by the body of water geologists call the Iapetus Ocean. For most of the next 300 million years much or all of Ohio lay under water. This era is known as the Paleozoic and it marked by the proliferation of multicellular marine life forms worldwide. This era is the most significant to Ohio geology, not only because of the various resources these life

forms left behind, but also because nearly all of the strata that comprise Ohio's current surface were laid down during this time.

## ***Cambrian and Ordovician periods***

When the Iapetus Ocean flooded what is now Ohio it brought new geologic processes to bear on the landscape. It deposited layer after layer of silt, sand, mud, as well as shells and skeletons of countless sea creatures over the course of what is known as the Cambrian period. During the early Cambrian period most of Ohio was under a relatively shallow, tropical ocean shelf that left a thick layer (as much as 400 feet in some places) of sandstone. An above-water feature that geologists call the Korb Delta formed in north and central Ohio during the middle Cambrian period. At the same time ocean waters began to rise. By the late Cambrian and into the Ordovician period (505–440 million years ago), the entire state was again covered by a warm, shallow sea. Although low muddy islands emerged periodically in the western part of the state the sea eventually reclaimed all of the state by the later Ordovician. At this time, a growing abundance of more complex life forms appeared and flourished. Sponges, jellyfish, bryozoans (and their coral cousins), brachiopods (clamlike creatures), trilobites (one type of which, *Isoletus*, is Ohio's official state fossil), cephalopods (ancestors of octopi and nautilus), echinoderms (related to sea stars), snails, and even primitive fish left their traces in the geologic record—not only as fossils, but also as the ever-deepening layers of calcium carbonate from their shells and skeletons. These became the earliest layers of Ohio limestone that were hundreds of feet thick in some places. It is upper Ordovician strata that formed a large island known as the Cincinnati Arch in southwest Ohio. Sitting at the top of the Precambrian