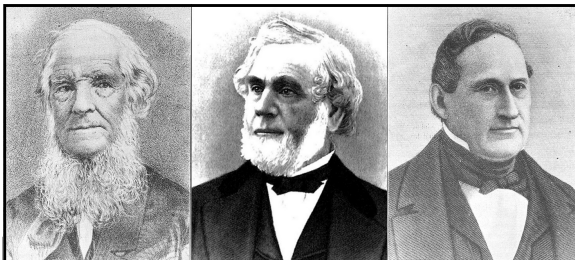


The first bridge proposed between Maumee and Perrysburg appears on an August 1836 map of Maumee City (as it was then known) and indicates a proposed railroad bridge for rail lines from Cincinnati and Akron. The proposed bridge was to be sited at the foot of Conant Street and generally follow the line of subsequent wagon bridges built at that location.

The first wagon and pedestrian bridge was financed by the investors of the Maumee & Perrysburg Toll Bridge Company and constructed during the winter of 1838 – 1839 at a reported cost of \$4,000. It was built of wood trusses supported on rock-filled log cribs. Isaac Hull handled the construction and the bridge opened for passage on April 22, 1839.



**Bridge investors Horatio Conant, Samuel Young and John Hunt**

No sketches of this first bridge are extant; however, it probably was a Town's Lattice Truss design that was patented in 1820 by Ithiel Town, a New England bridge builder. Amos Campbell (1778 – 1868), a master carpenter employed by Town, traveled throughout the country erecting Town's Lattice Truss bridges. A royalty of \$1.00 per

foot was paid to Town for the privilege of using his patented bridge design. The Maumee & Perrysburg Toll Bridge Company employed the services of Mr. Campbell in the design and erection of the first bridges at Maumee, as mentioned in his obituary.



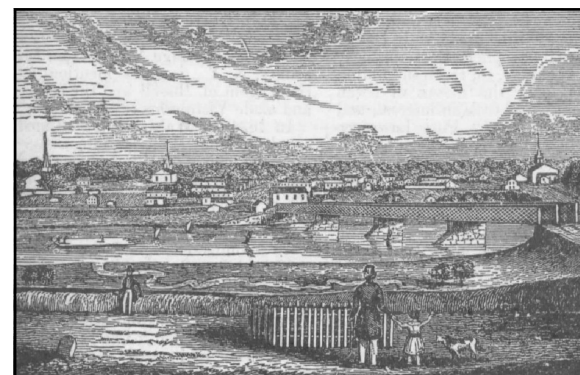
**Maumee & Perrysburg Toll Bridge Company 1863 token**

A thirty-year exclusive franchise granted by the Ohio Legislature on March 12, 1838 enabled the Maumee & Perrysburg Toll Bridge Company to collect tolls, e.g.: Pedestrians 2¢, Horse and Rider 12½¢, Sheep, Goats and Hogs 1¢ each, Four-wheeled Vehicle with Two Horses and Driver 37½¢, etc. Toll-free crossings were available to the U.S. Mail, funeral processions, students going to and from school, church attendees, and voters going to and from the polls.

Historian Henry Howe traveled throughout Ohio, documenting the settlement of the state and structures that had been erected by the early settlers. In 1846 he visited the Foot of the Rapids and sketched the bridge in existence at that time as shown on the next panel. His sketch shows three piers

supporting a four-span bridge structure. The wagon bridges for the next sixty years incorporated this three-pier design. The bridge appears to have three parallel Town's Lattice Trusses, the center truss splitting the bridge into two lanes of travel.

Breakup of the ice and high water destroyed the original bridge on April 6, 1843. It was rebuilt that same year and the second bridge stood until March 7, 1849 when spring floods de-



**The 1843 Bridge Across the River at the Foot of the Rapids**

stroyed it. Two-thirds of the bridge on the north side of the channel was carried away and lodged on Big Island downstream. A covered, two-lane toll bridge, 606 feet in length, built in forty-five and one-half days by Amos Campbell, of Woodbury, New Jersey, on the three existing limestone block piers in the fall of 1849, replaced the 1843 bridge. The stipulated contract price for the bridge was \$7,200 with the owners providing the timber. This bridge was also known as [Samuel M.] Young's

Bridge, as he was now one of only two principal stockholders of the Maumee & Perrysburg Toll Bridge Company, the other being Morrison R. Waite. The rebuilt bridge design probably duplicated the existing Town's Lattice Truss design; however, it could have used Long's Truss design invented ca. 1830, or even a Howe Truss design invented ca. 1840.

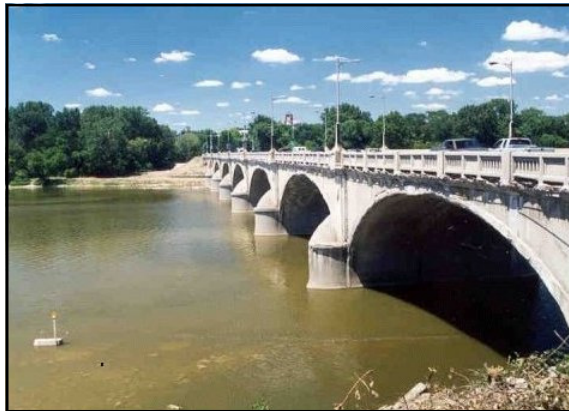
Rough-hewn oak logs from the 1840 and / or 1843 bridges' wood cribbing were dredged from the river during removal of the 1929 bridge in 2003. They were red oak varying from 12 to 18 feet in length and from 12 to 16 inches square. They all had marks indicating work with primitive wood tools, several of them exhibiting dovetail and wedge connections for assembly of the cribs. The growth rings of the timbers were closely spaced, the largest log having nearly 100 rings across its width.



The 1881 "Iron Bridge" built by the Robert Smith Bridge Company

With the slow demise of the 1849 bridge starting in 1878, plans were drawn up in early 1880 for its replacement. The contract for the bridge proper was awarded to The Smith Bridge Company, of Toledo, for \$23,880 as the best and lowest bid out of eight submitted in competition. The bridge, a Whipple Truss design, took about nine months to erect.

By 1925 the 1881 bridge had been weakened to such an extent that the Joint Board of County Commissioners imposed a load limit of ten tons on the structure. The replacement concrete bridge was completed in July 1929 at a cost of \$355,617.



The 1929 Fort Meigs Memorial Bridge

## Things You Should Know About Perrysburg, Ohio

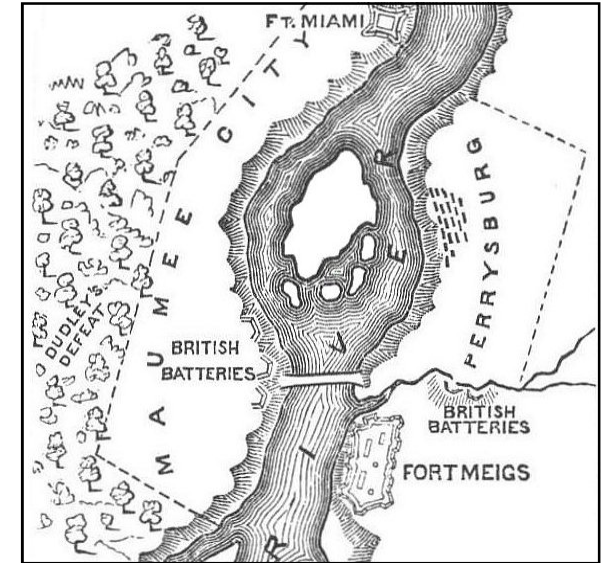
Copyright 2006 / 2008

By

**HISTORIC PERRYSBURG, INC.**

[www.historicperrysburg.org](http://www.historicperrysburg.org)

## THE FIRST BRIDGE The Maumee River Spans



Lossing's map of Fort Meigs depicts a fictitious bridge at the Foot of the Rapids of the Miami of the Lake in 1813

## Things You Should Know About Perrysburg, Ohio

One of a Series Presented By  
**HISTORIC PERRYSBURG, INC.**

