

In spite of the nearby swampy lowlands and harsh winters, its waterfront location proved to be an advantage. The area began rapid growth after the 1832 completion of the [Ohio and Erie Canal](#). This key link between the [Ohio River](#) and the [Great Lakes](#) connected the city to the Atlantic Ocean via the [Erie Canal](#) and later via the [St. Lawrence Seaway](#) and the [Gulf of Mexico](#) via the [Mississippi River](#). Growth continued with added railroad links.<sup>[18]</sup> Cleveland incorporated as a city in 1836.<sup>[11]</sup>

In 1836, the city, then located only on the eastern banks of the Cuyahoga River, nearly erupted into open warfare with neighboring [Ohio City](#) over a bridge connecting the two.<sup>[19]</sup> Ohio City remained an independent municipality until its [annexation](#) by Cleveland in 1854.<sup>[11]</sup>