

Terradise to Cincinnati Expedition

State Route 348 Bridge to the Ohio River

Scioto River

October 4, 2014

9:15 AM to 4:00 PM 15.1 miles

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Preface

Last week, we skipped a weekend on the river to celebrate two very special birthdays – Jed turned 36 and Susannah 31. This week, Jed couldn't make this leg of the trip, so my oldest daughter Sarah joined us.

Completion of the Scioto River to the Ohio River

Technically, I still have to go back and pick up the 12.5 miles north of Chillicothe, but this segment had a lot of meaning to it, since it is the end of the rivers in Ohio, and the next leg toward Cincinnati will be on the Ohio River, which belongs to Kentucky!



1- Loaded up and ready to leave!

Josh, Lego (his dog) and I left Cincinnati at 6:15 AM, stopped for gas and headed once again out State Route 32 toward the Scioto River. The weather had turned cold, with a low of 45 degrees and a high of only 54 expected. This time, we would meet Sarah at Lucasville, at the State Route 348 bridge.

We arrived about 8:30 and unloaded, and Sarah pulled up soon after. Sarah and I then took the truck down to the mouth of the Ohio, to the area near the Portsmouth

Raceway. Since the private road out to the landing was gated, we parked the truck under the St. Rt. 104/73 overpass and headed back north.

By 9:15 we were on the river, looking forward to a cool but exhilarating day on the Scioto.

The first thing we encountered on the river was a big island, which a few weeks before had been scouted on Google Earth as a possible camping place if we did an overnight. Since that never happened, we just glided by, choosing the left (east) side of the island for our passage. A few minutes later, the right channel joined us again and the river widened out to its typical 300 foot



2- Josh, Sarah and Lego - ready for action

width. One rule to remember – wide usually means deeper water and slower current, so prepare to paddle without rest! When the channel narrows, the same water has to move faster, and we can take advantage of the current to rest a few minutes.



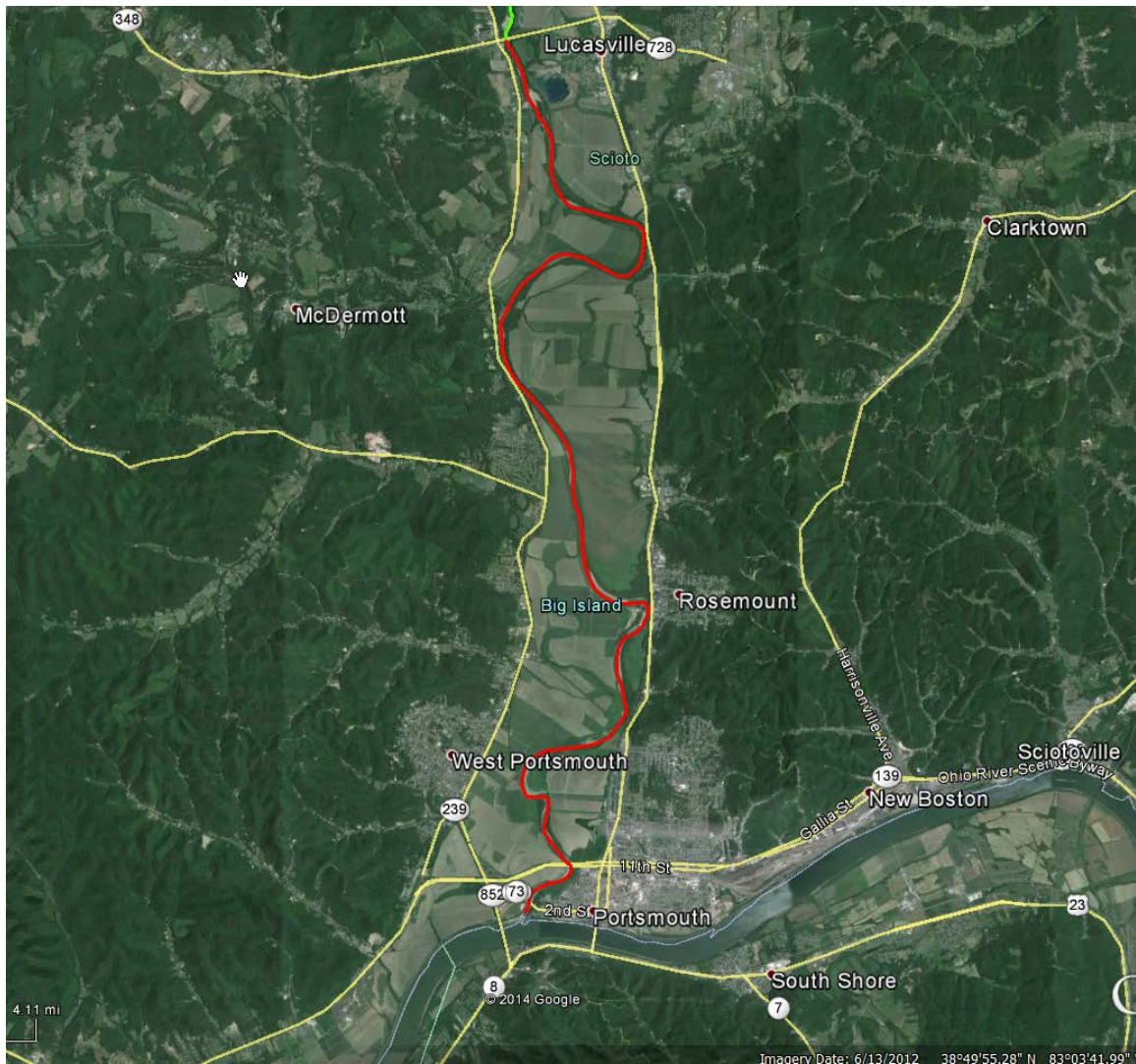
3- Josh and Sarah boarding the canoe near Lucasville, Ohio

As the day wore on, clouds came and went, and with them the wind. Most of our trip the winds were in our face, which made for tough paddling. But here, approaching the US 23 side of the valley, the winds subsided:



4- Approaching US Rt 23 at one of three meanders

This segment of the expedition winds through the large former Teays River Valley, which has seen many lives as a pre-glacial river precursor to the Ohio River, the lower end of the now New River out of West Virginia, an outwash channel for the melting glaciers (at least 4 of those) and now the dribbling Scioto, which could never have cut this 2-3 mile wide valley. The amount of gravel is astonishing – it starts south of Columbus and never ends until the Ohio River. In cleaning out the kayak from the last segment, I found the mud and gravel had formed a kind of cement in the bottom, which took some scrubbing to loosen.



5- Last leg of the Scioto River

This valley is a natural for all kinds of transportation. The Native Americans used it as a major route from Kentucky to Lake Erie. It held the Ohio and Erie Canal. “The canal carried freight traffic from 1827 to 1861, when the arrival of railroads killed the market. From 1862 to 1913, the canal served as a water source to industries and towns. In 1913, much of the canal system was abandoned after important parts were severely flooded.”¹

¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ohio_and_Erie_Canal



The railroads found this and another parallel valley ideal for carrying coal from West Virginia into the industrial parts of Ohio, and the Chessie System(CSX) and Norfolk Southern still send many freights a day through the valley.

Here's an aerial view (courtesy Google Earth) of the railroad bridge just north of Portsmouth which takes a line along the western edge of the valley:



6- Aerial View



7- River View

Seeing this bridge signaled that we were approaching the mouth of the Scioto and the end of our southward direction. Once we are on the Ohio, the river heads west and northwest to Cincinnati and home.

Another mile or two, and the US 52 highway bridges were looming:



Now, the river turned westward for a final blast of wind, which made our progress excruciatingly slow, until at last, the final bridge, State Routes 104 and 73 appeared:



8- Those are Kentucky hills!

The Ohio was full of whitecaps from the wind, so I decided to avoid a little sneak preview of the trip on the big river. That will have to wait until the next trip!



9- Ready for the Ohio River!