PROJECT SCROLL RESEARCH NOTE 2026-48

# Three thousand dollars, not ten: the act of 3 March 1825 for the Chicago Road through White Pigeon

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## SUMMARY

The county history of St. Joseph County, Michigan (1877), says that in 1825 Congress "ordered the survey of a highway one hundred feet wide, for military purposes, between Detroit and Chicago, and appropriated ten thousand dollars to complete the same." The act itself, chapter 120 of the second session of the 18th Congress, approved 3 March 1825, authorized three commissioners to "explore, survey, and mark" a road from Detroit to Chicago and appropriated "the sum of three thousand dollars" to pay them and their assistants. It says nothing of a width of one hundred feet. The ten thousand dollars belongs to the act printed just above it in the Statutes at Large, chapter 114 of the same day, for "surveying and making a road from Little Rock, to Cantonment Gibson, in the territory of Arkansas."

## THE RECORD

1. ***History of St. Joseph County, Michigan*** **(Philadelphia: L. H. Everts, 1877), p. 23**

> *"In 1825 the National Congress ordered the survey of a highway one hundred feet wide, for military purposes, between Detroit and Chicago, and appropriated ten thousand dollars to complete the same."*

Internet Archive · See the record (https://archive.org/details/bad1045.0001.001.umich.edu)

2. **An Act to authorize the surveying and opening of a road, from Detroit to Chicago, in the state of Illinois, 3 March 1825, ch. 120, sec. 2, *U.S. Statutes at Large*, vol. 4**

> *"there shall be, and is hereby, appropriated, the sum of three thousand dollars, to be paid out of any moneys in the treasury not otherwise appropriated."*

Internet Archive · See the record (https://archive.org/details/us_stat_4)

3. **An Act to authorize the surveying and making a road from Little Rock, to Cantonment Gibson, in the territory of Arkansas, 3 March 1825, ch. 114, sec. 3, ibid.**

> *"for opening and making said road, there shall be, and hereby is, appropriated, the sum of ten thousand dollars"*

Internet Archive · See the record (https://archive.org/details/us_stat_4)

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## WHAT IT CHANGES

The federal appropriation for the Chicago Road in 1825 is corrected from ten thousand dollars to three thousand, and its purpose from completing the road to paying the commissioners who surveyed it. The source of the error is identified as the Arkansas road act printed beside it.

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## LIMITS

The note concerns the act of 1825 only; later acts for the opening and improvement of the road carried their own appropriations and are not counted here. That the county historian took the sum from the neighbouring act is our reading of the two texts.

## WHAT WE SEARCHED BEFORE CALLING IT NEW

The county histories of 1877 and 1911; the Statutes at Large, vol. 4; Wikipedia's article on the road ("Territorial Road (Michigan)," to which "Chicago Road" redirects); web searches for the 1825 appropriation.

Our standard for calling a finding new is set out in How we research (projectscroll.com/how-we-research/), and how we weigh each kind of record in Scrollsigns (projectscroll.com/scrollsigns/).

"New" means new to print as far as we can tell. If you know of an earlier publication, tell us and we will credit it here and raise the note's version.

## WORKS CITED

Earlier work, catalogues and databases named in this note, besides the records quoted above.


1. "Territorial Road (Michigan)," Wikipedia (the title "Chicago Road" redirects to it). https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Territorial_Road_(Michigan)


## THE FULL STORY

The finding is set out in context, with the rest of its sources, in White Pigeon's run (projectscroll.com/news/white-pigeon-and-the-run/). In the discoveries register:

- `wp-chicago-road-act` (projectscroll.com/discoveries/#wp-chicago-road-act)

## HOW TO CITE THIS NOTE

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