



Bexley

Early Settlements and Growth

Historical Context and Overview

Mound Builders were the first inhabitants of central Ohio. This name was given to these prehistoric American Indian groups by archaeologists because of the large earthen mounds they created for burial and ceremonies. The Adenas lived throughout the southern two-thirds of Ohio from about 1000 B.C.E. to about 100-300 C.E. The Adenas were the first group to live around the Alum Creek area. An early map shows the location of “McAlls Indian Mound” near present-day Wolfe Park.

In the mid-1700s, historic American Indians, including Wyandot, Delaware and Shawnee settled along the Scioto Trail in central Ohio. The first white settlers came to central Ohio in the late 1700s, with Lucas Sullivant establishing Franklinton in 1797 west of the Scioto River, and David Nelson settling along Alum Creek a few years later.

A veteran of the Revolutionary War, David Nelson and his wife Margaret moved from Pennsylvania to Chillicothe, Ohio in 1798, and later settled along Alum Creek. At the time, this area was part of the Refugee Tract, land set aside for people from Nova Scotia who lost their land for supporting the American Revolution. The Refugee Tract began at the Scioto River and ran east between present-day Fifth Avenue and Refugee Road. Those areas not given to refugees from Nova Scotia were made available in open sale. David Nelson purchased some of this land along Alum Creek in 1800, and built a log house, farm, and grist mill.

In 1811, construction of the National Road began in Maryland. The National Road extended across Ohio from 1825-1838, providing a gateway to the West for thousands of settlers. The National Road reached central Ohio in 1831. Entering Columbus along East Main Street, the National Road turned right on High Street and left on West Broad Street. Present-day U.S. Route 40 follows the original route of the National Road.

Standards Alignment

Ohio's Learning Standards: Social Studies

Grade 3

Content Statement 1. Events in local history can be shown on timelines organized by years, decades, and centuries.

Content Statement 2. Primary sources such as artifacts, maps, and photographs can be used to show change over time.

Content Statement 3. Local communities change over time.

Grade 4

Content Statement 3. Various groups of people have lived in Ohio over time including prehistoric and historic American Indians, migrating settlers and immigrants. Interactions among these groups have resulted in both cooperation and conflict.

Content Statement 14. Ohio's location and its transportation systems continue to influence the movement of people, products and ideas in the United States.

Grade 8

Content Statement 15. The movement of people, products and ideas resulted in new patterns of settlement and land use that influenced the political and economic development of the United States.

Learning Objectives

- Identify the first groups who settled along Alum Creek and describe the evidence of their settlement.
- Identify the first white settlers to arrive in the Alum Creek area and discuss their contributions to the area.
- Analyze the significance of the National Road in local and national history.
- Explain how the Bexley area has changed over time and how it has stayed the same.

Discussion Questions

1. Who were the first inhabitants of the area along Alum Creek? What evidence of settlement did they leave behind?
2. Who were the first white settlers to arrive to in the Alum Creek area? What contributions did they make to the area?
3. When did the National Road arrive in Columbus? Why was the National Road significant in the development of the American West?
4. What evidence of Bexley's past remains today? How was the Bexley area of the past different from modern-day Bexley?

Extension Activities

- Have students create an illustrated timeline showing the settlement of the area along Alum Creek beginning with the Adenas and ending with the creation of the National Road. Students can create their timeline on paper or using an electronic timeline builder such as Time Toast (www.timetoast.com) or Read Write Think (http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/timeline_2/).
- Have students research the population growth of cities along the National Road. Students can create bar graphs showing the population of cities and draw conclusions about the relationship between the National Road and population growth in these cities.

Additional Resources

- Teaching Columbus Historic Sites Archives: Adena Mound Builders - <http://teachingcolumbus.omeka.net/items/show/121>
- Traveling the National Road Lesson Plan - <http://www.nps.gov/fone/learn/education/classrooms/tnr-unit1.htm>
- National Road Map - <http://www.nps.gov/fone/learn/education/classrooms/upload/FONE-10-9-map-Converted-JPEG-WITH-TITLE.jpg>
- Touring Ohio: National Road - <http://www.touring-ohio.com/history/national-road.html>
- Teaching Columbus Historic Sites Archives: National Road Marker - <http://teachingcolumbus.omeka.net/items/show/155>