



## Bexley Industrial Boom and the Founding of Bexley

### Historical Context and Overview

In the decades following the Civil War, the United States was rapidly becoming an industrial nation. Although the area of present-day Bexley was rural, it was directly impacted by the industrial boom in Columbus and nationwide.

The industrial boom in Columbus led to new factories to produce steel, glass, and mining equipment. Population growth accompanied industrialization, as new waves of migrants and immigrants sought jobs in factories. Industrial city life also brought new vices that led many to seek a more peaceful life in the countryside. In 1876, Capital University moved from its location on High Street (on the present-day Short North Cap) to the countryside just east of Alum Creek, close enough to the furthest reach of the horse-drawn streetcar line.

In the late 1800s, the Jeffrey Manufacturing Company on East First Avenue became a national leader in the production of coal mining equipment. In the same neighborhood, Kilbourne & Jacobs Company, a manufacturer of scrapers for railroads, steel tubular wheelbarrows, warehouse trucks, and road graders, also employed hundreds of workers. While factory workers flocked to nearby urban neighborhoods, wealthier business owners moved east, with most crossing Alum Creek by the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Robert Jeffrey (of Jeffrey Manufacturing) and Lincoln Kilbourne (of the Kilbourne & Jacobs Company) built large mansions in Bexley, and were instrumental in the founding and naming of Bexley.

The industrial boom in the United States led many businesses to pursue new global markets for their goods. American economic interests in Cuba contributed to U.S. intervention and the Spanish-American War in 1898. The Ohio Volunteers were called up for service, leading to the establishment of Camp Bushnell near Broad and Drexel. The first troops arrived April 28 and were mustered into service May 7-14.

### 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.

##### Grade 4

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 23. The Industrial Revolution fundamentally changed the means of production as a result of improvements in technology, use of new power resources, the advent of interchangeable parts and the shift from craftwork to factory work.

#### High School American History

Content Statement 10. The rise of corporations, heavy industry, mechanized farming and technological innovations transformed the American economy from an agrarian to an increasingly urban industrial society.

## Learning Objectives

- Explain the relationship between industrial growth in Columbus and the growth of Bexley.
- Explain how national events in the Spanish-American War impacted local events in Bexley.
- Discuss the circumstances that led to the founding of Bexley.

## Discussion Questions

1. How did the growth of Columbus in the late 1800s lead to the relocation of Capital University to Bexley?
2. How was the “countryside” of Bexley connected to the city of Columbus in the late 1800s?
3. How did Spanish-American War and the sinking of the U.S.S. Maine in 1898 impact Bexley?
4. What was the lasting impact of Camp Bushnell?
5. Where did wealthier families originally live in Columbus? In what direction did wealthier families move?
6. What was the relationship between industrial growth in Columbus (such as Jeffrey Manufacturing) and new mansions in Bexley in the early 20th century?
7. Why did the two communities of Pleasant Ridge and Bullet Park form Bexley? How was the name Bexley chosen?

## Extension Activities

- Have students chart the population growth of Columbus in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and create a bar graph.
- Have students brainstorm a list of effects of population growth on a city, and identify which effects might cause people to want to move away from the city.
- Have students design an ideal mansion for a wealthy business owner in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## Additional Resources

- Touring Ohio: Bexley - <http://www.touring-ohio.com/central/columbus/bexley.html>
- History of Jeffrey Manufacturing - <https://www.jeffreyco.com/our-history>
- Camp Bushnell Historic Marker - <http://www.hmdb.org/Marker.asp?Marker=16931>