



## Worthington Agriculture and Enterprise

### Historical Context and Overview

The typical pioneer farmer in Ohio grew wheat, corn, oats, apples, peaches, hay and other grains for livestock feed. Important livestock included dairy and beef cattle, sheep, and hogs. Crop and livestock diversity was the key to becoming a self-sufficient farmer. As in many pioneer Ohio towns, agriculture was the backbone of the economy in early Worthington. Some Worthington landowners worked their own land, while others rented out land to tenant farmers.

Not all of Worthington's early settlers made a living from farming. Many were skilled tradesmen and entrepreneurs. Arora Buttles was a brick mason who built many of Worthington's earliest brick structures, including St. John's Church and the Masonic Lodge. As in New England, brick structures were associated with durability.

Orange Johnson (who purchased Buttles original brick home) was a hornsmith, who specialized in comb making. Johnson later earned great wealth in banking and real estate, and became an investor in the first railroad to come through Columbus.

James Kilbourn, Worthington's founder, was also a businessman and entrepreneur. In 1812, Kilbourn established the Worthington Manufacturing Company. Kilbourn's vision was to create a chain of retail stores across central Ohio and extending north to Lake Erie. The store's products were to be created on the fifty-two acre site Kilbourn purchased southwest of Worthington along the Olentangy River.

Ezra Griswold earned success by diversifying his business interests. In addition to printing a local currency, he leased his farmland, while managing an inn and tavern.

Worthington's heritage of agriculture and enterprise continued well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Worthington Foods grew out of the Harding Hospital's vegetarian menu to become one of the largest manufacturers of vegetarian foods, including Morningstar Farms.

### Standards Alignment

#### Ohio's New Learning Standards: Social Studies

##### Grade 3

Content Statement 5. Daily life is influenced by the agriculture, industry, and natural resources in different communities.

Content Statement 17. A consumer is a person whose wants are satisfied by using goods and services. A producer makes goods and/or provides services.

##### Grade 4

Content Statement 10. The economic development of the United States continues to influence and be influenced by agriculture, industry and natural resources in Ohio.

Content Statement 23. Entrepreneurs organize productive resources and take risks to make a profit and compete with other producers.

##### Grade 5

Content Statement 15. The availability of productive resources (i.e., human resources, capital goods and natural resources) promotes specialization that leads to trade.

## Learning Objectives

- Explain the importance of farming in the daily life of early Worthington settlers.
- Identify the skills and trades of early Worthington settlers.
- Analyze the costs and benefits of entrepreneurship.
- Describe the key characteristics of Ezra Griswold’s and James Kilbourne’s entrepreneurial activities including use of productive resources, trade or business, products, and areas of specialization.

## Discussion Questions

1. Why was farming the foundation of daily life for early settlers in Worthington?
2. The large stones in the ground in the segment are mill stones, used to grind flour in early Worthington. How has food production changed since the early 1800s?
3. What was the specialization (skill) of Arora Buttles? Why was his skill important in Worthington? How did this reflect the New England heritage of Worthington?
4. What risks did James Kilbourn take by starting the Worthington Manufacturing Company? Why would he be willing to take these risks?
5. How did James Kilbourn plan to build and grow his business? How did he organize productive resources in order to make a profit?
6. Why was it necessary for a trusted representative in Worthington to print “money” or “credits” that were specific to Worthington?
7. What made Ezra Griswold a successful entrepreneur and businessman?

## Extension Activities

- Have students investigate how bricks are made. Students should identify the productive resources involved and trace the history of brickmaking over time. Why were bricks such a popular building material in the early settlement days of Worthington? See the following web links for helpful information on brick making: Brickmaking in the USA—A Brief History: <http://brickcollecting.com/history.htm> (explains the process and contains pictures of old brick molds, etc.) and How Bricks are Made Video: <http://youtu.be/hoMkFtXJJ6o>.
- Using information from the video, have students create a production/consumption map of early Worthington. (e.g., who were the producers and consumers of local farm products, bricks, consumer goods, etc.?)

## Additional Resources

- James Kilbourn: [http://www.ohiohistorycentral.org/w/James\\_Kilbourne](http://www.ohiohistorycentral.org/w/James_Kilbourne)
- Orange Johnson: [http://www.worthingtonhistory.org/Resources\\_Links/Articles/Orange\\_Johnson/orange\\_johnson.html](http://www.worthingtonhistory.org/Resources_Links/Articles/Orange_Johnson/orange_johnson.html)