



## **University District Industrialization and Progressive Era Streetcars, Amusements Parks and Education**

### **Historical Context and Overview**

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, one of the most important technological advances was the expansion of railroads, which transported goods from rural areas to cities. Between 1860 and 1900, the miles of railroad track in Ohio increased from 2,950 to 8,950. By 1900, several transcontinental railroads crisscrossed the United States, and the country had 193,000 total miles of track. Railroads first came to Columbus in 1850, resulting in the subsequent growth of railroad-related industries in the Weinland Park neighborhood. Kilbourne & Jacobs Company, a manufacturer of scrapers for railroads, steel tubular wheelbarrows, warehouse trucks, and road graders opened in 1881.

By the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the arrival of millions of new residents coupled with industrial pollution resulted in poor living conditions in American cities. Progressive reformers sought to improve conditions in cities. One area of progressive reform was education. By 1900, 31 states had laws requiring children to attend school until age 14. However, only about 8 percent of students graduated from high school by 1910. In effort to keep adolescents in school after eighth grade, a new “junior high school” movement began, with the establishment of Indianola Jr. High in Columbus as the first such school in the nation.

A new group of middle-class Americans emerged as a result of the Industrial Revolution. This new middle class enjoyed the luxury of greater disposable income and increased leisure time. New forms of entertainment and recreation developed for the middle class in Columbus. In the University District, Olentangy Park opened in 1899 and eventually became the largest in the United States. Indianola Amusement Park opened in 1905 at the corner of N. 4<sup>th</sup> Street and E. 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Spectator sports also became a popular pastime. By the early 1920s, Ohio State football became such a popular spectator sport (in large part because of the sensational play of Columbus native Chic Harley) that a new stadium was constructed on the banks of the Olentangy River in 1922.

### **Standards Alignment**

#### **Ohio's New Learning Standards: K-12 Social Studies**

HS 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.

Content Statement 12. Immigration, internal migration and urbanization transformed American life.

Content Statement 14. The Progressive era was an effort to address the ills of American society stemming from industrial capitalism, urbanization and political corruption.

## Learning Objectives

- Explain how transportation developments contributed to industrial growth in Columbus.
- Discuss the effects of industrialization on urban residential patterns.
- Explain how industrialization contributed to the rise of the new middle class.
- Describe the new leisure activities that emerged in Columbus as a result of middle-class growth.
- Analyze the impact of the progressive movement on education in Columbus.

## Discussion Questions

1. What contributed to the development of the industrial section in the Weinland Park neighborhood?
2. What businesses and industries were established in the Weinland Park neighborhood?
3. Why were amusement parks created by the streetcar companies?
4. How did the growth of amusement parks reflect the rise of the new middle class?
5. How did amusement parks reflect a transition away from the Victorian Era?
6. Why was Indianola Jr. High established? What does this tell us about the importance of education in the Progressive Era?
7. How is the “college culture” of the 1920s described in the video? How and why does this change?

## Extension Activities

Have students research other leisure time activities associated with the rise of the new middle class. Topics could include: Vaudeville, spectator sports, movies, the circus, popular fiction, ragtime and jazz. Research projects should include local connections to the broader national trends. Student could demonstrate their learning through a multimedia presentation.

Have students research the history of their school and how it has changed over time with parallel developments in American history. Students can examine old yearbooks, interview veteran teachers and former students, and search for building photographs on Columbus Memory (<http://www.columbusmemory.org/>). Students can present their research through a hard-copy or digital timeline.

## Additional Resources

Indianola Park - <http://www.indianolapark.com/>

Teaching Columbus: University District - <http://teachingcolumbus.org/neighborhoods11.htm>

Funding provided by:

