



## **Downtown/Franklinton**

### **Progressive Columbus: Social Gospel**

### **The Franklinton Flood**

### **The City Beautiful Movement**

#### **Historical Context and Overview**

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, middle class reformers known as Progressives worked to correct some of the vices of urban industrial society. The ideas of the social gospel movement influenced progressives. Social gospel applied Christian ethics to issues of social justice such as poverty, alcoholism, crime, racial tensions, child labor, and workers' rights. In 1882, Rev. Washington Gladden, a leader of the social gospel movement, became pastor of First Congregational Church in Columbus. Elected to a two-year term on city council in 1900, Gladden was concerned about corruption in city government. As a council member, he worked to secure an equitable fare on the street railways and municipal ownership of a power plant large enough to provide electric lighting for the city.

The settlement house movement was also part of the broader progressive movement, and sought to help immigrant families adapt to life in American cities. Settlement houses were typically run by college-educated middle class women. The most famous one was the Hull House in Chicago, founded by Jane Addams in 1889. Rev. Washington Gladden established the Gladden Community House in 1905 as a neighborhood outreach mission.

The City Beautiful movement of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century was also a response to the problems of industrialization and immigration in American cities. The movement aimed to construct beautiful and orderly cities with healthy open spaces and public buildings that expressed the moral values of the city. City Beautiful advocates believed beautification would inspire morality and civic virtue. The 1908 Columbus Plan is a strong example of City Beautiful era urban plans that were created throughout the country.

#### **Standards Alignment**

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

HS American History 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**

- Describe the living conditions in industrial cities in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- Explain how the social gospel movement influenced progressivism.
- Describe the origins and purposes of the settlement house movement.
- Discuss the goals and outcomes of the City Beautiful Movement and how these are reflected in the 1908 Columbus Plan.

## Discussion Questions

1. How did the Gladden House reflect the typical characteristics of the settlement house movement?
2. What was the social gospel? Why was the social gospel message especially compelling around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century?
3. What kinds of issues did Washington Gladden address in his Sunday evening sermons? How did Gladden's messages reflect the major concerns of the Progressive Era?
4. What actions did Washington Gladden take to improve city life?
5. Describe the events of the Streetcar strike. How did the strike reflect changes in labor relations in the United States?
6. What was the purpose of the 1908? How did the plan define Columbus? How did it challenge Columbus? What did the plan call for?
7. What was the impact of the Franklinton flood? How did Gladden Community House respond to the flood?
8. How did Billy Ireland influence the transformation of Columbus?
9. Why was the Art Museum established?
10. What was the "crowning jewel" of the city? What message was this structure communicating?

## Extension Activity

Have students develop a model city plan for 21<sup>st</sup> century Columbus. The plans can include new buildings, parks, transportation systems, etc. The plans should be modeled after the 1908 Columbus Plan (see link below).

## Additional Resources

Washington Gladden – Ohio History Central  
<http://www.ohiohistorycentral.org/entry.php?rec=159>

The 1908 Columbus Plan - <http://teachingcolumbus.org/1908plan.htm>

Billy Ireland Cartoon Library - <http://cartoons.osu.edu/>

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