Cincinnati History Museum
Gallery Guide for *Early Settlement*

In this unique exhibit, visitors experience the growth of Cincinnati, from the occupation of the area by Native Americans through settlement by Americans of European descent to the year 1860. A variety of artifacts, music, historically accurate vignettes and recordings of letters and documents created by people living in the area present the full gamut of life in early Cincinnati. Interpreters assume the persona of a person from one of several time periods—a frontier woman struggling to make a home in the wilderness, a steamboat captain on a 94-foot-long recreated steamboat docked at Cincinnati's Public Landing, or one of the many printers in the city.

Visitors learn about the differences in worldview between the Native Americans and the European settlers coming from the East, how improvements in transportation spurred the city's growth, the contributions of various immigrant groups to the city's culture and character and Cincinnati's importance in the American art scene.

Early Settlement: Opening America's New Frontier (1780-1802)

Themes

- Southwest Ohio was inhabited by diverse Eastern Woodland Indian tribes long before the first Europeans and Americans arrived.
- Cultural differences and attitudes between whites and Indians often, but not always, led to conflict.
- French, British and American explorers, traders and military men were active in the Miami Country well before the first permanent settlements were founded in 1788.
- Land speculators played a major role in the early settlement of Cincinnati.
- The Northwest Ordinance of 1787 was the basic framework of territorial government under which Cincinnati was founded. It shaped the terms of the Miami Purchase and the local government instituted in Cincinnati.
- Station settlements were fundamentally defensive communities. They were the primary mode of interior settlement in the Miami Country until after the Treaty of Greenville in 1795.
- The military's presence, especially as embodied in Fort Washington, was primarily responsible for the endurance of the Miami Purchase settlements and for the early prominence of Cincinnati.

Background

By the time the first permanent white settlers landed in the Miami Country in the fall of 1788, the area had been the site of Indian habitation for thousands of years. The earliest identifiable prehistoric inhabitants were mound builders. From about 1100/700 B.C. to about 700 A.D., burial mound builders, the Adena and the Hopewell, inhabited southwestern Ohio. Between 700 and 1500 A.D. the fortification mound builders of the Fort Ancient culture inhabited the area.

By the 1780s, the Shawnee Indians were living in villages on the Maumee River in northwestern Ohio although they still claimed southwestern Ohio as their hunting ground and were apparently considering moving their villages back into the Miami Valley. Other Indian groups in the area consisted of the Miami to the northwest, primarily on the upper Wabash, and the Lenape (Deaware) and Wyandot to the northeast, primarily on the upper reaches of the Scioto drainage.

Indian women performed most of the everyday labor around the village. They prepared all the meals, chopped all the firewood and did most of the heavy lifting. Both sexes helped to prepare the ground for planting crops and harvest the crops of corn, beans and squash (the *Three Sisters*). But only women and young children tended the growing crops.

The men were responsible for hunting, but it was usually the women who retrieved the carcasses from a staging point and brought them back to the village. In addition, the women were responsible for skinning the carcasses, butchering the meat and tanning the hides.

The men's other responsibilities were to protect the women, children and elderly during the march between village sites (the average life of a village was three to five years). Men carried little except their weapons while the women and children carried everything else. During the march, men had to be ready to fight at a moment's notice; if the men and older boys were burdened, the delay needed to shed their burden could be fatal.

When settled in a village, Indians lived in cabin-like dwellings called wigwams. A wigwam covered an area 14 by 28 feet with a frame constructed of small poles. Some were planted upright in the ground and served as posts and studs, supporting the ridgepoles and eve bearers. Other poles were firmly tied to the uprights with hickory bark thongs to form girders, braces, laths and rafters. In wintertime, the frame was covered with pieces of elm bark seven or eight feet long by three or four feet wide that had been pressed flat and well dried to prevent curling. These were fastened to the poles by thongs of bark to form the sides and roof of the cabin. In warm weather, the bark slabs were replaced with cattail mats. At one end was a narrow doorway about six feet high. The doorway could be closed when necessary by a single piece of bark, which could be fastened with a brace, set inside or outside as required.

Inside, the wigwam had two rooms separated by a bark partition. One was generally used as a pantry or spare bedroom; the other, with low frames on each side that were covered with bark and spread with deerskins, was used by the family as a common room for sitting, cooking, eating and sleeping. The fire was placed in the center of this room; over it a wooden trammel (a hook for raising or lowering a cooking kettle) was suspended from the ridgepole in the center of the smoke hole.

By the mid-18th century, French, British and American explorers, traders and military men were becoming active in the Miami Country. In 1749, a French military party traveled down the Ohio planting lead plates along its banks to lay claim to the Ohio country for the French king. By about 1750, British traders established a station in the Miami Country at Pickawillany on the upper reaches of the Great Miami. The earliest formal exploration of southwestern Ohio was probably that undertaken by Christopher Gist in 1751 for the Ohio Company. Upon his return, Gist published an account of his travels that included a glowing description of the territory north and west of the Ohio and greatly increased interest in settling those lands. During the next 35 years, European and American activity in the Miami Country increased as traders and military men fought for ownership and control of the Ohio Country and its trade. Between 1754 and 1763, France and England fought a major war, known as the Seven Years War, over this profitable empire.

The end of the Seven Years War for Empire and Pontiac's Rebellion, coupled with the establishment of the Indian boundary line by the Treaty of Fort Stanwix in 1763, ushered in a lively era of settlement in Kentucky. Unfortunately, by the early 1770s, the new Kentucky stations had become targets of Indian raiding parties from north of the Ohio River. In the decade immediately preceding settlement, military expeditions frequently passed through the Miami Country in pursuit of the Indian raiding parties. Benjamin Stites, a member of one such retaliatory expedition, was so impressed by the country and its possibilities that he returned East with the intention of engaging land speculators in the settlement of the Ohio country.

In New York, Stites met with John Cleves Symmes, a New Jersey congressman, state Supreme Court judge and fellow Revolutionary War veteran. Symmes was so intrigued by Stites' glowing descriptions of the lands in the Ohio Country that in the summer of 1787 he journeyed west with five companions to see the country for himself. Upon his return, Symmes formed a land company with 24 associates and in October 1787 petitioned Congress for the right to purchase "all the land lying between the Miami rivers, south of a line drawn due east from the western termination of the northern boundary of the grant", an area of roughly two million acres.

The final contract reduced the grant to one million acres and set the price at 66 2/3 cents per acre. In accordance with the Northwest Ordinance of 1785, the purchase was to be surveyed into townships of 36 miles square on a regular grid pattern. Each township was to be further subdivided into 36 sections of one square mile (640 acres) each. The Ordinance of 1785 also stipulated that certain sections in each township be set aside for specific public uses. Section 16 was to be used for the support of education and section 29 for religion. Congress reserved sections 8, 11 and 26 for its own future disposition. In addition, Symmes' grant stipulated one complete township be reserved for an academy or college.

Even before his contract negotiations with Congress were completed, Symmes began advertising and selling lands in the Miami Country. The first warrant was issued on December 17, 1787 to Benjamin Stites for a tract at the mouth of the Little Miami River. Other warrants followed quickly, including one to Matthias Denman in January 1788 for 474 acres opposite the mouth of the Licking River. Symmes reserved for himself a 40,000-acre tract at the mouth of the Great Miami River.

In the spring of 1788 groups of settlers began to head west. Benjamin Stites' group was the first to depart, followed a few months later by Symmes and his party. Stites and Symmes landed at Limestone now Maysville), Kentucky to replenish supplies and make final preparations for the final move downriver. Denman came west without settlers in order to make a preliminary tour of his site to determine its suitability for a town and ferry. He then went on to Lexington, Kentucky where he formed a partnership with Colonel Robert Patterson (founder of Lexington) and John Filson (a surveyor and schoolmaster who was later replaced by Israel Ludlow, also a surveyor).

After leaving Limestone, Stites and his party landed about a mile west of the mouth of the Little Miami River (near present-day Lunken Airport) and established the first permanent settlement, called Columbia. Ludlow and Patterson, Denman's partners, arrived at Yeatman's Cove on December 28, 1788 to establish a town they called Losantiville. Symmes' party arrived in February 1789 and landed near the mouth of the Great Miami River. When his original choice of location proved unsuitable due to flooding, Symmes moved upriver to establish his settlement at North Bend. From these three population centers, settlement spread throughout the Purchase. Losantiville (renamed Cincinnati in early 1790), the most centrally and strategically located of the three, became the site of Fort Washington and the seat of territorial government.

By the early spring of 1790, Symmes reported that three outlying stations "some distance up in the country" had been established. These were: Dunlap's (12 miles up the Great Miami), Ludlow's (five miles up the Mill Creek), and Covalt's (nine miles up the Little Miami). Further interior settlement was slowed by Indian raids and the defeat of both Harmar's and St. Clair's expeditions against the Indians in 1790 and 1791. In 1792, settlement again began to inch forward, primarily up the Mill Creek Valley. The defeat of the Indians in August 1974 at the Battle of Fallen Timbers cleared the way for advancement of the frontier to the limits of the Miami Purchase and beyond.

Outlying stations were small, fortified settlements that consisted of a small number of men and their families living in a single blockhouse or in cabins around a central blockhouse. Although they varied greatly in size and defensibility, stations served as both buffers against attack and beachheads for future settlement. Several of the more strategically located and substantial stations, such as Dunlap's, were sometimes garrisoned temporarily by military troops during the early 1790s. As the only "permanent" settlement on the Great Miami River between North Bend and Fort Hamilton, Dunlap's was the only station in the Miami Purchase to suffer a major Indian attack.

Although no regular troops accompanied the first groups of settlers to Columbia or Losantiville in late 1788, many of the settlers were Revolutionary War veterans and experienced military men. Initially, settlers defended themselves by erecting stockades and forming defensive expeditions against Indian raiding parties when necessary. Small detachments of regular Army troops from Fort Harmar and Fort Stueben provided some aid. In January 1790,Governor Arthur St. Clair formalized the militia establishment in the Purchase by appointing officers for four local militia companies.

The defense of the Miami Purchase entered a new phase when Major John Doughty and a company of 70 men arrived in 1789 with orders to construct a fort "intended to protect the settlers on the Symmes Purchase." Losantiville was chosen as the most desirable location and construction of a major fortification began in September 1789.

The fort was an impressive structure enclosing about an acre of open ground and consisting of four "strongly built" story-and-a-half log cabins, intended as barracks, about 180 feet long and connected by strong stockades to four corner blockhouses. The blockhouses extended about 10 feet beyond the walls on each side in order to command them by musket and cannon fire. Located in the center of the south wall, the main gate was about 12 feet wide and 10 feet high and could be secured by a stout gate. On the north or west side was a large triangular enclosure that contained shops, sheds and materials for the artificers who supplied the garrison. General Josiah Harmar named the new installation Fort Washington "on account of its superior excellence."

The presence of the Army during Cincinnati's early years had a profound influence on the city's development. Initially, and most importantly, Fort Washington and its garrison ensured the town's safety. The army's presence also had a notable effect on the city's economy. As the primary outfitting depot for expeditions against the Indians between 1790 and 1795, Cincinnati "from its very first days, profited from federal spending." In addition, the garrison provided a ready market for food, clothing and other goods and services. The presence of the garrison also influenced social life in Cincinnati. Throughout the 1790s, as some townspeople followed the lead of the garrison soldiers in drinking and gambling there were numerous conflicts over the sale of alcohol, drunkenness and disturbing the public peace. Entertainments given by the officers at Fort Washington set the tone for social life among the upper classes with frequent balls, banquets and other entertainments.

The Northwest Ordinance of 1787 provided the basic framework of territorial government under which the Miami Purchase and Cincinnati were settled. It defined the structure of government, the process of attaining statehood, and the relationship between the territory and the national government. Congress began implementing the Ordinance of 1787 by appointing territorial officers, with General Arthur St. Clair as the territorial governor. The first formal government in the Miami Purchase was instituted on January 4, 1790, when St. Clair publicly proclaimed the establishment of Hamilton County and appointed the necessary county officials. After Cincinnati was incorporated as a village in November 1801, its citizens became active in pushing for statehood. The process for statehood went quickly: Congress authorized a call for a state constitutional convention on April 30, 1802 and by November 20 of the same year, a constitution had been written and ratified. With its ratification, Cincinnati passed out from under territorial government into the new realm of state administration.

Vocabulary:

Wigwam – an Indian dwelling built of poles and covered with cattail mats in summer and large slabs of bark in winter

Northwest Ordinances 1785-1787 – a series of documents designed to provide for the orderly survey, sale, settlement and government of the new national lands north and west of the Ohio River

Miami Purchase – the agreement between John Cleves Symmes and Congress for the purchase of one million acres of land between the two Miami rivers

Station – small fortified settlements in the wilderness around Cincinnati

Stockade – wall of strong timbers fixed upright in the ground and enclosing a station

Garrison – the troops stationed in a fortified place such as Fort Washington

Focus Questions:

1. Observe and describe clothing on the Native American mannequins. How and why does it change?
2. Look at the topographical map and find the settlements of Columbia, Losantiville, North Bend and Dunlap’s Station. How many settlements were located in the Miami Purchase?
3. See if you can identify the stockade, blockhouse, parade ground and barracks in the model of Fort Washington. Then go over to the cabin and find the living, sleeping and cooking areas.

Regional Capital: Cincinnati, The Instant City (1802-1840)

Themes

- Cincinnati seemed to be an “instant city” as it matured quickly from a frontier outpost to the most important city in the West thanks to its strategic location, abundant natural resources, and civic leaders who worked to promote and improve the city.
- Improved transportation, including new roads and canals, helped develop interior settlement by giving farmers cheaper and easier access to Cincinnati markets that in turn, stimulated the development of manufacturing.
- The development of religious, social, educational and artistic institutions signaled an end to the “frontier” period and marked Cincinnati as an important urban center with sophisticated social and political customs.

Background Information
The Indian wars greatly impeded settlement in the Miami Country between 1790 and 1795 as early settlers left to return east or moved to safer areas in Kentucky. Despite the Indian troubles, people did continue to come to Cincinnati and, by 1795, the population had reached 500. The town now contained about 100 log cabins, about 15 frame buildings (some with chimneys), a frame school house, a Presbyterian church building and a new log jail. Ten years later, the population had almost doubled and 54 more buildings had been constructed.

Despite the hardships of life in early Cincinnati, churches, schools and other cultural amenities soon appeared. By the fall of 1790, a Presbyterian society was meeting regularly in Cincinnati and a Baptist congregation had been established at Columbia. The first school opened in Columbia in 1790, followed by another in Cincinnati two years later. By the early 1800s, there were a variety of schools teaching everything from the classics and mathematics to dancing and French. Public lectures, the Western Museum, books and newspapers supplemented this educational and cultural development. In addition, taverns and inns supplied drink, conversation and cards for many inhabitants while the social activities of the officers at Fort Washington provided balls, dinners, galas and amateur theatricals for well-to-do citizens. On special occasions, such as Independence Day or Election Day, public celebrations with parades, fireworks displays, dances and horse races were common.

Because the state legislature restricted what early towns and cities could do, private citizens or groups supplied most public services and help for the needy in the city. Volunteers formed fire-fighting companies and a "city-watch" citizen's group to augment police protection. During epidemics, doctors volunteered to staff temporary boards of health. Religious groups and private charities provided hospital care as well as temporary emergency assistance to the needy.

Cincinnati "boosters" and civic leaders worked to attract more people and businesses to the city and to improve the quality of life for its citizens. From the beginning, Cincinnatians supported efforts to educate their children and improve their own knowledge. In 1825, Nathaniel Guilford introduced state legislation that established a property tax to support Free Common (Public) Schools. William Woodward and Thomas Hughes both left estates that were to be used for the education of workingmen's children. Colleges and academies came and went as Cincinnatians attempted to establish institutions of higher learning. The Cincinnati College, established in 1819, failed and was revived by Dr. Daniel Drake, who attached it to the more successful Cincinnati Law School. A college opened in 1831 by the Cincinnati Archdiocese was rededicated as St. Xavier in 1840. Higher education for women was in separate schools with varied curriculums. The Wesleyan Female College (1842) offered "sound moral and intellectual training" while Catherine Beecher's Western Female Academy and the Ohio Female College offered coursework in the arts and sciences.

Other Cincinnatians increased their own knowledge and enriched the community's intellectual life by supporting literary clubs such as the Buckeye Club and the Semi-Colon Club and *The Western Messenger*, a literary journal. The Young Men's Mercantile Library (and later, the Public Library), debating societies, museums and lyceums offering public lectures also contributed to the cultural life of the city.

In the 1830s and 1840s, growing popular support for the arts and the increasing number of successful artists identified with Cincinnati earned the city a reputation as the "Athens of the West." Art academies, galleries and clubs that reflected the ambitions of the artistic community and its supporters were the center of much art activity. The Academy of Art and the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, through the Section of Fine Arts, offered lectures and

exhibitions. The Western Art Union held exhibits and supported regional artists through an annual lottery. Nicholas Longworth, the city's first millionaire, became a major patron of Cincinnati painters and sculptors. He provided advice and encouragement, paid for their studies, purchased artworks and encouraged his friends to purchase works by local artists.

Its strategic location in the center of three fertile river valleys and at the crossroads of the principal trade routes quickly made Cincinnati the commercial center of the upper Ohio Valley. But by the 1820s, civic leaders realized that unreliable and expensive transportation hindered the growth of population, manufacturing and agriculture. Even "improved" early roads were little more than a 20-foot wide swath cleared of trees and underbrush, with the larger trees being cut 18 inches from the ground so wagon axles could clear the stumps. Private investors chartered by the state formed "turnpike road" companies" in the 1830s to maintain and improve major wagon roads. In return for their investment, they were granted the right to set up tollhouses and collect fees from travelers.

In 1824, the Ohio legislature issued $4.7 million in bonds for the construction of two canals: the 333-mile-long Ohio and Erie Canal between Cleveland on Lake Erie and Portsmouth on the Ohio River, and the 67-mile-long Miami Canal between Cincinnati and Dayton. Work on the Miami Canal began at Middletown in July 1825, using only human muscle, simple tools and some animal-drawn wagons. Construction on the canal to Dayton was finished in 1828; in 1845, the Miami Canal was linked with the Wabash and Erie Canal, which ran to Lake Erie. The combined canals were renamed the Miami and Erie Canal.

The Miami Canal boosted wages, profits, manufacturing, agricultural production and property values, and stimulated population growth and trade throughout the region. Industrial production rose to $54 million by the 1840s while the value of trade rose from $1 million in the mid-1820s to $6 million 10 years later.

Vocabulary:
River – a natural waterway
Canal – a man-made waterway
Turnpike road – road built and maintained by private investors who charged a toll for using it.

Focus Questions:
1. Listen to the conversations between the individuals represented by the portraits and busts. What are their opinions about the city? Have they convinced you that Cincinnati is a good place to live?
2. What do the artifacts displayed in the Culture Gallery tell you about life in Cincinnati in the 1830s**?**
3. What is the difference between a canal and a river? Can canal boats be used on the river? Why or why not?
4. What is the purpose of a canal lock? How does it work?

La Belle Riviere: The Western Waters (1780-1870)

Themes
- Western rivers were "highways" connecting the principal white settlements west of the Allegheny Mountains.

- Through improvements in river craft technology, particularly in moving boats upstream, the Ohio River had a significant impact on the growth and development of Cincinnati.
- Flatboats provided economical transportation that allowed whole families to move west with their household goods, animals and occupational tools.
- Flatboats also provided area farmers with an economical way to ship their crops and animals to markets down the river.
- The introduction of the steamboat changed Cincinnati's economy by improving transportation, boosting immigration, opening new markets and encouraging the development of steamboat-related manufacturing and businesses.

Background Information

The Ohio and Mississippi rivers and their tributaries—known to early 19th century Americans as the Western Waters—provided the easiest routes for settlers moving west after the American Revolution. Although not always safe or reliable, these rivers were the "highways" west of the Appalachian Mountains that connected most of the principal white settlements and shaped their growth and character. The Ohio and Mississippi rivers, and the trade they carried, linked Cincinnati and the surrounding countryside to the rest of the country and to the world.

The early river trade moved goods and passengers from place to place in a variety of sailing vessels, flatboats, keelboat and barges. These crafts were all powered either by wind, river currents or human muscle—or a combination of the three. Flatboats required little skill to operate so their crews usually consisted of drifters or casual laborers hired for the trip and passengers working for their fare. Keelboats were more difficult to operate and required skilled boatmen for their crews. Most keelboat operators were businessmen and most crewmembers were dependable workingmen; only a minority were the hard drinking brawlers of folk tale renown.

Flatboats of various types were the most common and most important of the crafts found on the Western Waters. They were easy and inexpensive to build, required little skill to handle and had a tremendous cargo capacity. A Kentucky boat, used mainly by settlers moving west, looked liked a floating box with a cabin covering part of the deck. They were generally 35 to 50 feet long, four to five feet deep, and drew only about 30 inches of water when fully loaded. The flat bottom and shallow draft allowed it to slide over sandbars and snags that might damage or sink conventional vessels. Flatboats traveled with the river currents and the crew used long poles to push it away from the riverbanks and other hazards. New Orleans boats were commercial flatboats used for carrying raw materials, produce and finished goods to downriver markets. The largest commercial boats were 60 to 80 feet long, 18 to 20 feet wide and had a cargo capacity of 100 tons. They were almost completely covered with a roof where the crew stood to pole the boat or operate steering oars and sweeps. Because flatboats were "powered" by the current, they rarely returned upstream. Instead, when the boat reached its destination, it was sold to someone else or broken up and the wood sold or used for other purposes.

Until the introduction of the steamboat, flatboats shared the river trade with keelboats. Keelboats were more costly and complicated to build and handle than flatboats, but they were also faster and more maneuverable—and unlike flatboats, they could go upstream. Keelboats looked more like a regular boat. A long wooden beam (the keel) ran down the center of the hull; curved wooden ribs attached to the keel formed the framework for the boat and the planking for the sides and bottom was attached to the ribs. The bow (front), and often the stern, on a keelboat were pointed and usually were fitted with a mast for a sail. Very large keelboats, averaging 75 to 100 feet long and 16 to20 feet wide, had two masts and were known as barges. Barges carried more cargo and often had better passenger accommodations than small keelboats or flatboats but were slow and hard to maneuver. Small keelboats were faster, could

travel in lower water and carried passengers who wanted to travel quickly as well as more perishable cargo. Keelboat use declined in the late 1830s as steamboat use increased. Businessmen shipping bulky goods and families traveling downstream usually chose the less expensive flatboat while for upstream travel the steamboat was more comfortable, had more cargo capacity and traveled faster.

The steamboat era began in 1807 when the first successful steamboat, built by Robert Fulton, began operating on Eastern Rivers. In 1811, the *New Orleans,* financed by Fulton and Robert Livingston, became the first steamboat to successfully navigate the Ohio River, but early steamboat traffic was impeded by a monopoly on shipping operations on the Lower Mississippi River granted to Fulton and Livingston by the Orleans territory. The first western steamboats were built like eastern boats, with deep hulls that were unsuited to the shallower Western waters. In 1816, Captain Shreve launched the *Washington*, which had a broad, flat hull and the machinery mounted on the main deck. The success of this design and the disappearance of the Fulton-Livingston monopoly after a successful court challenge by Captain Shreve set off a boom in steamboat building and traffic in the 1820s and 1830s.

The steamboat building industry in Cincinnati grew quickly; between 1827 and 1839 local boatyards built at least 195 of the 686 steamboats launched on the Ohio River. Most local boatyards were just east of Cincinnati in the riverside communities of Columbia and Fulton; only a few were in the city on the edge of the Public Landing. Other businesses and industries in Cincinnati also grew quickly to meet the demands for boat building supplies while growing demand from Southern and Western markets stimulated production and trade.

Vocabulary:

Western Waters – the Ohio and Mississippi rivers and their tributaries.
Kentucky flatboat – a flat-bottomed boat with a cabin covering part of the deck, used by early settlers moving west.
New Orleans boat – a large commercial flatboat used to carry raw materials, produce and finished goods to downriver markets.
Keelboat – a river vessel with a long wooden beam forming the spine of the hull, curved interior ribs and planking on the sides and bottom.
New Orleans – the first steamboat to successfully navigate the Ohio River.

Focus Questions:

1. What would you take with you if you had to move on a flatboat?
2. What is the difference between a flatboat and a keelboat?
3. Why did steamboats become a primary form of river transportation so quickly?

Queen City of the West: An American Metropolis (1840-1870)

Themes

- In the 1840s, 1850s and 1860s, Cincinnati became the center of culture, education, commerce and manufacturing in the west.
- Cincinnati grew faster than any other city in the west as immigrants, including Germans, Irish and some African Americans, moved to the city and became part of the economic and social life of the city.
- Walking was the most common mode of transportation; markets, shops, factories and churches mingled with homes to form a “walking city” with all necessities located nearby.

- Manufacturing, with an increased labor force and more efficient production methods, helped redefine the character of Cincinnati.

Background

Cincinnati attracted thousands of new residents with jobs, as well as social and cultural opportunities greater than in any other city in the western states. Craftsmen found employment opportunities in the river trade, construction and growing industries such as pork packing. Rich lands near the city were still available for farmers. The city also needed professional people like doctors and teachers, as well as small businesses to supply groceries, entertainment and the like.

Immigrants coming from Europe between 1840 and 1870 fled a series of poor harvests, famine, falling agricultural prices and unemployment caused by overpopulation and displacement by the new machinery of the Industrial Revolution. Many chose to come to Cincinnati because they had learned about it from guidebooks or travelers' accounts. Others came through a process of chain migration in which the first family member or person from a town in Europe encouraged other family members or neighbors to follow them to the same city or state in letters home or by sending ticket money. Immigrants who encouraged or helped relatives and friends to join them in America contributed to the growth of ethnic neighborhoods in Cincinnati and other cities.

The predominantly white, native-born, Protestant community had mixed feelings about the arrival of so many immigrants. Many people welcomed the newcomers; others thought they brought only problems and blamed them for such things as falling prices and overcrowding. Catholic immigrants especially were viewed as a threat to American democracy. Blacks in Cincinnati faced racial prejudice and occasional violence. They established separate schools, businesses and other institutions to meet the needs of the black community. Most black Cincinnatians worked low-paying jobs connected with the river trade or construction; a few such as J.P. Ball and Henry Boyd started successful businesses that attracted both black and white customers. Irish immigrants faced both religious prejudice because they were Catholic and economic hardship because they arrived with little money and few job skills. German immigrants faced language barriers but tended to have more money, skills and education. By the mid-1800s, Germans made up one third of Cincinnati's population and the Over-the-Rhine neighborhood north of the Miami Canal had become the center of German cultural and social life. Native-born Americans from small towns and rural areas in Ohio and other states also migrated to Cincinnati in the 19th century for the same reasons the European immigrants came: employment, social and educational opportunities.

In the 1840s, most people still lived within four blocks of the corner of Fourth and Main, the center of the local shopping district. Because walking was the primary mode of transportation there was no distinction between residential and business areas. Churches, homes and businesses were often located in the same block. Similarly, economic classes were not separated; servants and the poor lived near the elegant homes of the leading families of the city. Even in the 1870s, despite "a considerable population increase in the residential hilltop districts" and the expansion of the city core in the basin, Cincinnati remained essentially a "walking city" in which it was seldom necessary to leave one's immediate neighborhood.

Early industries in Cincinnati were generally small-scale craft shops where employers and employees worked closely together. In these shops, master craftsmen and experienced journeymen used hand tools and worked together at their own pace to make their product and teach apprentices how to do the work.

During the 1840s and 1850s the number of large, mechanized factories in Cincinnati and other cities increased. New production methods, a growing supply of labor and capital, and a network of rivers, railroads and canals enabled Cincinnati businessmen to gather raw materials and distribute manufactured items profitably. Many new manufacturing enterprises were established by long-time Cincinnatians who invested the profits they earned in commerce or real estate or by immigrants who arrived with capital.

Factories turned out more products at lower cost than craft shops and provided hundreds of jobs. Unlike craft shops, which employed only a few people to perform all the steps of production of an item, factories employed hundreds of people but used them in specialized ways. Factory workers were trained to do only one or two steps in the production sequence and repeated those tasks day after day. The new machinery and labor techniques that improved the rate of industrial production reduced the importance of the individual skilled craftsman by utilizing low paid workers to perform the unskilled tasks. The factory system widened the social and economic distance between workers and business owners. The economic benefits to the factory owners became more visible even as the cost of food and housing between 1842 and 1850 increased almost three times as fast as the wages of laborers.

Cincinnati was the largest manufacturing center in the West in the 1860s and ranked third nationally, behind New York and Philadelphia. The city's factories produced a wide variety of goods, but by mid-19th century four types of manufacturing had emerged as undisputed major enterprises: pork packing, garment making, metalworking and furniture building.

Butchering and meatpacking had played an important part in Cincinnati's growth since the 1820s, when 25,000 to 30,000 hogs were processed annually for local and regional markets. In the 1830s, mass production techniques were adopted in the basic operations of slaughtering, cleaning, cutting. While this was still manual processing, a separation and specialization of labor occurred that gave a precise machine-like quality to each operation and allowed greater production. The rapid growth of the clothing industry was probably the result of the interaction between demand, a readily available workforce of immigrant German Jews and numerous women willing to work for local clothing manufacturers, and advent of the sewing machine. During the early part of the century, the products of the metalworking industry had been aimed at meeting the demands of the growing steamboat industry. By the 1830s metal and machine manufacturers were moving into mass production of stoves, pipes, hardware, architectural castings, machine parts and many other products. Furniture making had become an important industry in Cincinnati by the 1840s as the new steam machinery was introduced. Many manufacturers specialized in making particular items such as bedsteads, chairs or parlor furniture.

The *Public Landing* gallery in the Cincinnati History Museum recreates the appearance and atmosphere of Cincinnati in the 1850s. The buildings all contain historically accurate architectural details while the sounds represent the human presence. Live interpreters add important interpretive information, help bridge the years between the visitor and the setting, open minds and eyes to learning, and provide directions. The facades on Front Street represent the city's busy commercial and industrial center. Wholesale and retail businesses related to the steamboat shipping industry and barrels and crates of products provide a sense of the commercial activity that took place near the river. Main Street moves the visitor away from the commercial and manufacturing concerns of the city into the residential and retail areas. It represents Cincinnati as a "walking city," with homes, various businesses and markets all mingled together in one neighborhood.

Vocabulary:

Chain migration – the process by which the first family member to migrate to America encouraged other family members and/or friends to follow him or her to the same city or region.

Craft shop – a small shop owned by a skilled craftsman where a few men and apprentices performed all the steps necessary to make furniture or other goods.

Factory – large organizations that turned out goods quickly and cheaply by employing many people who performed only one or two tasks in the manufacturing process.

Walking city – an early city in which businesses, churches, homes and shops are all located within walking distance of each other.

Focus Questions:

1. Where did immigrants to Cincinnati come from?
2. What were some of their contributions to the city?
3. How did the production of things such as furniture change in the 1850s?
4. Identify five products manufactured in Cincinnati. What businesses produced them?
5. Why was Cincinnati called a “walking city?”